2020

“The Very Essence of French Cinema”(?): Jacques Feyder’s Return to France, 1944–1948

Barry Nevin

Technological University Dublin, barry.nevin@tudublin.ie

Follow this and additional works at: <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/aaschlanart>

Part of the [Film and Media Studies Commons](#), and the [French and Francophone Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Barry Nevin (2020) “The Very Essence of French Cinema”(?): Jacques Feyder’s Return to France, 1944–1948, *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 37:5, 456-483, DOI: 10.1080/10509208.2019.1662671

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Languages at ARROW@TU Dublin. It has been accepted for inclusion in Articles by an authorized administrator of ARROW@TU Dublin. For more information, please contact arrow.admin@tudublin.ie, aisling.coyne@tudublin.ie, gerard.connolly@tudublin.ie.
Funder: Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France (ASMCF); Society for French Studies (SFS)

"The Very Essence of French Cinema"(?): Jacques Feyder's Return to France, 1944–1948

Barry Nevin

To cite this article: Barry Nevin (2020) "The Very Essence of French Cinema"(?): Jacques Feyder's Return to France, 1944–1948, *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 37:5, 456–483, DOI: [10.1080/10509208.2019.1662671](https://doi.org/10.1080/10509208.2019.1662671)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509208.2019.1662671>

Published online: 06 Nov 2019.

Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)

Article views: 132

View related articles [↗](#)

View Crossmark data [↗](#)

“The Very Essence of French Cinema”(?): Jacques Feyder’s Return to France, 1944–1948

Barry Nevin

Introduction: Feyder, from émigré to exile

As German forces expanded throughout Europe in June 1940, Jacques Feyder (1885–1948) fled from France to Switzerland with numerous critical and commercial successes spanning two decades to his name including *L’Atlantide* (*Atlantis*, 1921), *Gribiche* (1926), *Le Grand Jeu* (*The Full Tarot*, 1934) and *La Kermesse héroïque* (*Carnival in Flanders*, 1935). Like fellow émigré directors Julien Duvivier and René Clair, he would attempt to resume his career there after the Liberation. However, whereas Duvivier released *Panique* (*Panic*) in 1946 and *Le Silence est d’or* (*Man About Town*) marked a triumphant return for Clair in 1947, Feyder would die in Switzerland in 1948 without a single film-directing credit to his name since the Liberation. Considering Feyder’s success as a leading director in French cinema during the interwar period and the ideological views advanced by both Feyder and his films, this article seeks to answer one fundamental question: why did Feyder’s career in post-war France remain so restricted until his death?

Before proceeding, it is important to note that Feyder’s return lasted just under four years, largely as a result of his own lifetime of heavy drinking, and this sets his circumstances apart from those of his contemporaries, such as Clair, Duvivier and Jean Renoir. Despite the brevity of his post-war career, he constitutes an important case-study for two reasons. First, this phase of his career has been largely neglected by previous studies of French émigré directors: Janet Bergstrom’s insightful analysis considers Clair, Duvivier and Renoir’s respective attempts to reintegrate into the French film industry with varying degrees of success after leaving France for America during the war years, whilst my recent analysis of Feyder’s experience as a transnational director focuses on the pre-war phase of his career, specifically 1928–1938.¹

Barry Nevin is assistant lecturer in French at Technological University, Dublin. His research centres on French cinema of the interwar period, primarily the films of Jean Renoir, Marcel Carné and Jacques Feyder. He is the author of *Cracking Gilles Deleuze’s Crystal: Narrative Space-time in the Films of Jean Renoir* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018) and his research has previously appeared in a range of journals including *Studies in French Cinema*, *French Studies* and *French Cultural Studies*. He is currently writing a book-length analysis of Feyder’s oeuvre.

This article has been corrected with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

Second, an analysis of Feyder's post-war reception potentially allows us to understand the reasons underlying Feyder's broader critical neglect, which persists in current scholarship. André Bazin asserted that after Clair's departure from France in 1934, Feyder (alongside Duvivier, Renoir and Marcel Carné) ranked as one of the major names in French cinema of the 1930s and, by the early 1920s, certain critics already considered Feyder France's finest director, alongside Clair.² In fact, writing in 1933, journalist Roger Francis-Didelot even associated Feyder – who was Belgian by birth – with the most intrinsic qualities of the French and their cinema: “He represents the very essence of French cinema. [...] I repeat that what dominates everything in Feyder's work is French spirit. By spirit, I mean the soul, the character of the masses and of the French individual among the masses.”³ It might have appeared to many that Feyder's legacy was secure when he died in 1948: his death was followed by a collection of essays, *Jacques Feyder ou le cinéma concret* (1949), which included contributions from co-workers including Jean Grémillon (who filmed Feyder's screenplay for *Gardiens de phare* [*The Lighthouse Keepers*, 1929]), Charles Spaak (Feyder's four-time screenwriter) and Charles Vanel (who acted in *Le Grand Jeu* and *La Loi du nord* [*The Law of the North*, 1939]), as well as admirers such as Clair, Alberto Cavalcanti and Orson Welles, whose testimonials lend credence to Éric Rohmer's recollection that “many people still considered Feyder to be the greatest” before *Cahiers du cinéma* radically altered critical perceptions of the canon.⁴

However, in an era when other national cinemas were perceived by the journal's critics as more innovative than their own, especially those of America (George Cukor, John Ford and Howard Hawks) and Italy (Vittorio De Sica, Roberto Rossellini and Luchino Visconti), renewed attention to Renoir's signature deployment of deep space, lateral camera mobility and location shooting would progressively eclipse Feyder's work. Meanwhile, Feyder's most famous film of the 1930s, *La Kermesse héroïque*, was attacked by François Truffaut for its high production values, which had by then become synonymous with the *tradition de qualité*.⁵ Yet whereas other prolific victims such as Carné and Duvivier have since been re-evaluated, especially in recent years,⁶ Feyder's career has not constituted the focus of a book-length study since Victor Bachy's *Jacques Feyder, artisan du cinéma: 1885–1948* (published in 1966) and Charles Ford's *Jacques Feyder* (published in 1973) and his films have received only limited attention from academic journals.⁷ The present analysis addresses current neglect of Feyder's post-war career and the social, industrial and economic factors that affected it in three main stages: first, it details Feyder's career during the war years; second, it analyses the relationship of his limited post-war output and unfilmed projects to the films he directed during the

interwar years; third, it elucidates the factors conditioning both his reputation after the Liberation and his ability to work in the post-war era.

By the end of the 1920s, Feyder had already elevated France's reputation as an internationally competitive producer of artistic adaptations during the silent era: his audacious colonial epic, *L'Atlantide*, was screened for a full year at Aubert's Madeleine-Cinéma and was distributed internationally;⁸ *Crainquebille* (1922) was a domestic and international success; and *Gribiche* proved even more popular within France.⁹ Such was the success of his Franco-German adaptation of Émile Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* (1928) that he was invited to Hollywood to direct Greta Garbo in her final silent film, *The Kiss* (1929).¹⁰ From this production onward, his experience as a contract-director was beset by executive interference and quickly saw Feyder delegated multiple-language versions of films whose English-language versions had been offered to anglophone studio stalwarts. However, his homecoming project, *Le Grand Jeu*, and his next two films – *Pension Mimosas* (1935) and *La Kermesse héroïque* – ranked among the top ten box-office successes of their respective seasons (*Le Grand Jeu* at number one, *Pension Mimosas* at number ten and *La Kermesse héroïque* at number seven) in a period when industrial production had fallen 20 percent below that of 1930 and was yet to show any sign of recovery.¹¹ It should be noted that Feyder's success in these years was bolstered by the popularity of Françoise Rosay, his wife from 1917 until his death. Following her career as an opera singer and theatre actress, Rosay played major roles in Feyder's films of the 1920s (*Gribiche*), his Hollywood output (*Si l'Empereur savait ça* [*If the Emperor Only Knew That*, 1930]) and, most notably, his triad of 1930s box-office hits (*Le Grand Jeu*, *Pension Mimosas* and *La Kermesse héroïque*), not to mention other major films by leading directors such as Duvivier (*Un Carnet de bal* [*Life Dances On*, 1937]) and Edmond T. Gréville (*Remous* [*Whirlpool*, 1935]), and she was ranked annually among the ten most popular female stars in France by *La Cinématographie française* from 1936 to 1938.¹² By the mid-1930s, Feyder sought to expand his international success and travelled to Alexander Korda's recently renovated Denham studios in England to direct a lavish adaptation of James Hilton's *Knight Without Armour* (1937). However, the film was a costly critical and commercial failure which dented his reputation. He subsequently travelled to Tobis's Munich studio to direct *Les Gens du voyage* (*People Who Travel*, 1938) in German and French versions. Although the film received generally positive reviews, the threat posed by Nazism was becoming increasingly apparent in Germany, where Feyder and Rosay, according to the latter, were constantly tailed by the Gestapo during production.¹³

The following years were derailed by historical circumstances beyond Feyder's control. *La Loi du nord*, Feyder's only foray into the adventure

genre, was hotly anticipated and was selected as a French entry for the first Cannes Film Festival, which was scheduled to take place from 3 to 20 September 1939. However, the festival was ultimately postponed when the Second World War broke out, delaying the inaugural event until 1946.¹⁴ By the time Britain and France declared war on 3 September, *La Loi du nord* had been screened in its entirety on only one sole occasion for corporate personnel in 1939, and was shelved.

The *drôle de guerre* between France and Germany continued from September 3 until the Nazis invaded France on 10 May 1940. Bachy writes that Feyder and Rosay left in June 1940 following the German attacks on Holland and Luxembourg, the Battle of Boulogne (22–25 May 1940) and the British flight from Dunkirk (26 May–4 June 1940), all of which jeopardised the future of the French capital.¹⁵ However, whether Feyder and Rosay were still in the Île-de-France region when German forces entered Paris (10 June 1940) is unclear and Rosay's own recollections problematically constitute the only record of their departure. Three points made by Rosay are nevertheless worth noting: first, neither she nor Feyder was interested in working with the Germans; second, after the invasion of Belgium, both were preparing their home in Gambais (a commune in the Yvelines department, located west of Paris) for refugees, still under the impression that Germany would never succeed in reaching Paris, but "then events sped up and we had to think about leaving";¹⁶ third, they abandoned their home with Bernard Zimmer (who had contributed to the screenplay of *La Kermesse héroïque*), their maid, and their sons Paul and Bernard (Marc, the eldest, had been mobilised), and were staying in a hotel in Orléans (approximately eighty miles from Paris) on the night of June 15th where an air-raid killed actors Charles Lamy and his son, Adrien, and resulted in Rosay misplacing a handbag containing 40,000 francs.¹⁷ The family stayed at the home of Rosay's father in la Creuse, which was in the *zone libre*, for one month thereafter.¹⁸ Feyder subsequently relocated to Tarbes and Rosay continued to work in the *zone libre*, Algeria, and Switzerland until 1941, performing sketches previously written by Feyder.¹⁹ In her absence, Feyder worked on the screenplay of *Une Femme disparaît* (*Portrait of a Woman*, 1942), a story written by Jacques Viot (who had previously provided the stories of Feyder's own *Les Gens du voyage* and Carné's *Le Jour se lève* [*Daybreak*, 1939]).²⁰ Rosay and the film's crew travelled to Switzerland on 17 August 1941 thanks to visas she had secured in Vichy. After the film was completed, Feyder stayed with their sons, Paul and Bernard, in Switzerland,²¹ where he remained active in filmmaking in a comparatively limited capacity, providing filmmaking and acting classes at the Geneva conservatoire. Meanwhile, Rosay returned to act in the *zone libre*, made broadcasts praising the allied advances in Tunisia and later starred in two

British films – *The Halfway House* (Basil Dearden, 1944) and *Johnny Frenchman* (Charles Frend, 1945) – for producer Michael Balcon.²²

The reason for Feyder and Rosay's geographic separation during the war years is unclear. One possible reason is that Feyder was reluctant to work under German rule in the Occupied north or in the *zone libre* at a time when the best production facilities and the majority of production capital were almost exclusively available in the north, whereas the south, whilst hosting exceptionally talented craftsmen (not least Grémillon, Spaak, set-designer Alexandre Trauner, screenwriter Jacques Prévert and producer-director Marcel Pagnol), was largely under-resourced in terms of technology and finance: apart from Pagnol's Marseilles studio, only two studios located in Nice – Victorine and Saint-Laurent-du-Var – were equipped to produce sound films in the southern zone.²³

Such a dilemma between equally unacceptable choices had already led to the departures of Renoir and Duvivier. Whilst Feyder notes the perilous lack of federal funding available in Switzerland in his autobiography, he praises the country's technical resources and artists.²⁴ This brings us to another factor in Feyder's decision to remain in Switzerland. Documents curated by the Cinémathèque française indicate that Feyder signed a contract with a Swiss studio, Suva, on 16 November 1942, to direct a project entitled "Fanfares." The satire, penned by Feyder, centres on two men from different areas of a fictional village in Romandy, each of whom is vying to be recognised as the greatest bugler in the locale.²⁵ However, the project fell through before shooting could even begin.

Feyder continued to work during the war, albeit in alternative roles. During the latter half of 1942, he acted in an unspecified capacity as supervisor of Sigfrid Steiner's *Maturareise* (1943) and, in 1943, began co-writing an autobiography with Rosay which was published the following year.²⁶ In summer 1944, during the making of *Johnny Frenchman*, Paris was liberated, and Feyder, Rosay and their three sons returned to France following the armistice of June 22 1944.²⁷ Rosay writes that after the Liberation, Feyder was eagerly reading scenarios and considering his next projects.²⁸ However, unlike many of his best-known contemporaries, he would struggle to re-establish his career as a director during the years that followed.

From Liberation to *épuración*: Feyder's Return to Post-war France

After the war, Feyder planned a number of films, but would not ultimately sign his name to a single directing credit. On 21 March 1945, he was contracted to direct *La beauté sur terre* (*Beauty on Earth*) by the French Régna and CCC Film (Central Cinema Compagnie-Film GmbH), a production company established in post-war Germany by Artur Brauner, a Polish Jew

who had survived the Nazi era by escaping to the Soviet Union.²⁹ Evidently, Feyder was planning on completing a Franco-German production that followed the example set by *Thérèse Raquin* and his Tobis projects. He had already discussed the project with its author, Swiss writer Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz, and had agreed to co-write the story with Jean Laviron and André Cerf.³⁰ However, foreshadowing the fate of a number of Feyder's projects to come, shooting never commenced. He subsequently turned to the stage and directed *Le Séducteur* (*The Seducer*) in the théâtre Antoine in 1945, a play André Birabeau had written for Rosay in 1942 and which had already been staged in Switzerland. Feyder's interpretation of the play received a cool reception.³¹ One dissatisfied critic wrote: "nothing in its banal movement evokes the auteur of *Le Grand Jeu*. The theatre proves to us that Jacques Feyder is truly a man of the cinema."³² Further disappointment followed when *Une Femme disparaît* (released in Switzerland in 1942) was finally screened in France in 1946 and received largely unfavourable reviews.³³ One particularly stinging critic asserted: "Today, the time of wisdom and retirement has come to claim Jacques Feyder and he seems to have understood this. *Une Femme disparaît*, or: the last goodbye of a great director."³⁴

Feyder's only credited contribution to post-war cinema was as "artistic director" on *Macadam* (*Back Streets of Paris*, 1946). The film's official director was novice Marcel Blistène, and Feyder accepted his own role reluctantly when Rosay, Louis Page (cameraman on the German version of *La Kermesse héroïque*) and production-designer Jean d'Eaubonne expressed their concern for Blistène's limited abilities.³⁵ Page later recalled that Feyder "had been forced to accept this thankless task to earn a basic living but still more, undoubtedly, out of nostalgia. Nostalgia for the studio, lights, and everything that was his *raison d'être* and from which he had been separated for so long."³⁶ The film was shot from 12 June to 24 August 1946,³⁷ after which time Feyder's prospects dried up once again. Asked during shooting why he had not directed any of his own projects since his return to France, Feyder claimed to have turned down an opportunity to remake *Thérèse Raquin* – one of his most critically successful silent films – on the grounds that "one should never restart with what has already proven successful ... These days, one must go boldly forth!"³⁸

All of his attempts to direct his own film after *Macadam* fell through. Feyder announced on 11 February 1947 that he intended to direct an adaptation of Alexander Pushkin's *The Queen of Spades*, based on a screenplay written in collaboration with Zimmer and Jean Laviron, and starring Gaby Morlay, who had previously played a major role in Feyder's own *Les Nouveaux Messieurs* (*The New Gentlemen*, 1929).³⁹ However, correspondence between Feyder and the film's prospective production company,

Laurent Films, reveals that the company failed to deliver on a number of pre-production payments before the project fell through.⁴⁰ Feyder considered directing three other projects including *Un homme à la mer* (*A Man at Sea*), a screenplay he had penned himself, an adaptation of an original story by Viot entitled *L'Impasse des Deux-Anges* (*Dilemma of Two Angels*), and *La Fête cannibale* (*The Savage Feast*), which he had written in 1938 and planned to direct before the outbreak of war.⁴¹ Despite Feyder's public insistence on broaching new territory, various elements of *The Queen of Spades* and *La Fête cannibale*, including cast, crew and genre, indicate the extent to which Feyder was attempting to resume his career where it had ended in France before the war. Eventually, a critic inquiring into Feyder's future projects in a later interview in February 1947 observed that Feyder's optimism had finally run out: "He seems more reticent. 'Nothing has been set as of yet,' he tells me."⁴² Unable to secure contracts with any film-producers, Feyder translated and directed Thomas Job's *Uncle Harry* for the Théâtre Antoine in a production starring Rosay, who continued to tour in Switzerland and Belgium in an ultimately failed endeavour to retain their second home in Gambais.⁴³

By 1950, France's "almost destroyed" film industry was finally experiencing the greatest boom in its history.⁴⁴ However, Feyder was not alive to participate in it. Suffering from ill health owing primarily to heavy drinking, he was flown to Geneva, where he spent his final months.⁴⁵ Rosay writes that in order to assuage Feyder's despair over his depleted funds and failure to mount new projects, she asked Clair to write a letter to Feyder, requesting that the latter sell him the screenplay for *La Fête cannibale*. On 10 May 1948, an elated Feyder dictated a letter to Rosay, stating: "The sadness I may feel by not being able to direct *La Fête cannibale* myself is largely compensated by the joy that I feel with the knowledge that you will be its champion."⁴⁶ Feyder died in Prangins at 12.30am on 25 May at the age of sixty-two,⁴⁷ secure in the illusion of his renewed importance to an industry that had failed to provide him with the work he sought.

In terms of quantity, the disparity between the four years encompassing Feyder's post-war career and any other four-year period during his career as a feature-length filmmaker is indisputable. What explanation can be given? One reason that could be proposed is Feyder's poor health. Numerous co-workers including Carné, Rosay and Vanel refer in their memoirs to Feyder's habit of drinking excessively during shooting.⁴⁸ The effect of Feyder's alcohol consumption on his appearance was already evident during the making of *Macadam*, during which Blistène reportedly published images of the ageing Feyder in newspapers, an act for which Rosay never forgave him.⁴⁹ Moreover, the physical and psychological toll of Feyder's exile during the Occupation is suggested by

André Bazin, who described Feyder as being “aged and profoundly marked by the events [*les événements*].”⁵⁰ This factor alone would seem sufficient to justify Feyder’s limited output. However, Feyder’s input toward *Macadam* suggests that his ability to work, however compromised, was far from expended. Page, for one, recollected that Feyder actively moulded the visual style of the film:

More than usual, he took responsibility for testing angles, shots, and framing, and he surprised us with his visual inventions very often. Sometimes, he asked me to try particular styles of lighting and every time, he awaited the result with juvenile impatience.⁵¹

The film focuses on the strong-minded Madame Rose (Rosay), a hotel-owner in Paris who once killed her husband because his honesty was a hindrance to her backstreet dealings. A former accomplice, Victor Menard (Paul Meurisse), entrusts her with a suitcase full of cash whilst on the run from the police. A series of betrayals and interweaving webs of desire, greed, and revenge lead to the deaths of both Rose and Menard. The film’s focus on a Parisian hotel based in a studio-recreated Montmartre (Figure 1) evokes key poetic realist works such as *Hôtel du nord* (Carné, 1938) and Feyder’s own *Pension Mimosas*, whilst Rosay’s role as its self-sufficient owner recalls the similar roles she played in Feyder’s *Le Grand Jeu* and *Pension Mimosas* (Figure 2). Furthermore, this very attribute challenges the regressive gendered stereotypes that Noël Burch and Geneviève Sellier identify across French post-war cinema and which they associated with the crisis of masculinity that reverberated throughout French cinema and society of the period:⁵² whereas the misogynist backlash in French cinema of the post-Liberation years demonised women, *Macadam* suggests that Madame Rose felt compelled to begin a bootlegging business and murder her husband years before the narrative unfolds because she had little access to capital and no property rights. As she clarifies for her daughter, “he gave you a good example but I gave you food to eat.” In doing so, Rosay’s performance is of a piece with Feyder’s interrogation of gendered relations during the 1930s in *Le Grand Jeu*, *Pension Mimosas* and *La Kermesse héroïque*. Crucially, in all three, Rosay plays an organised and sociable hostess who runs her business in the absence of a husband who is either lecherous (as in *Le Grand Jeu*) or downright ineffectual (the men played by comic Henri Alerme in *Pension Mimosas* and *Kermesse*). By extension, the sociological concerns of *Macadam* and its visual style demonstrate Feyder’s ability to continue working as an auteur in the Fourth Republic. Unsurprisingly, Bachy, Colin Crisp and Georges Sadoul also detect Feyder’s influence on the film.⁵³

Clearly, for an understanding of the factors contributing to Feyder’s decline, we must look elsewhere. The remainder of this article proposes four

Figure 1. Jean d'Eaubonne's studio-bound reconstruction of Montmartre in *Macadam* (Blistène, 1946).

Figure 2. Rosay's characteristically defiant performance as Madame Rose in *Macadam*.

reasons: the first two – post-war working conditions and discourses of *épuration* – affected a wide range of directors whereas the latter two – Feyder's xenophobic public comments and the post-war ideological resonance of his interwar work – are more specific to his own career and partially

explain his relative critical neglect. The first of these concerns France's well-documented post-war working conditions. French cinema of the Liberation was undermined by oppressive taxation, the perilously short supply of film stock, a reliance on sound technologies whose patents were all held by foreign companies, and poorly maintained plant and equipment, not to mention the fact that some studios had been physically destroyed.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the economic purposes of the Comité de Libération du Cinéma Français (the Liberation Committee for French Cinema), which operated as the cinema's main administrative body in the post-war period, were partly supplanted by its hunt for collaborators. By September 1944, the first *épuration* committees in the cinema – *ad hoc* bodies which had no official legitimacy – had been established to determine which colleagues had been guilty of assisting the enemy but they primarily served as platforms for distributing arbitrary justice and fulfilling personal vendettas, and created a culture in which reprisals “tended to be visited upon the most celebrated of the film community rather than the most guilty.”⁵⁵ Noting the lack of resources and productive administration in January 1946, Feyder wrote “we can do nothing – or very little – to contend with three-quarters of these major difficulties [*maux*]” and even suggested that French directors emigrate abroad with French personnel to direct projects that France was not in a position to support.⁵⁶ These conditions were aggravated three months after Feyder's statement by the ratification of the Blum-Byrnes agreement (signed on 28 May 1946), which allowed an unprecedented number of American films to enter French cinemas in exchange for a national loan (American films represented forty-one percent of all new films screened in 1946), exacerbating fears for the future of the industry.⁵⁷ Thus, Evelyn Ehrlich convincingly argues that “the French film industry suffered more after the Liberation than it had during the occupation.”⁵⁸

The second is the problematic position occupied by returning franco-phone directors within the post-war period's Manichean discourse of *épuration*. Whereas Feyder's return from Hollywood in 1933 was welcomed as “the return of one of our own,”⁵⁹ no such greeting awaited him when he returned to his home on 195 rue de l'Université in Paris after the capital was liberated. It is worth remembering that France had previously been slow to welcome directors returning after periods of major war: Maurice Tourneur, after working in the USA throughout the First World War, was accused of having emigrated to avoid military service and, after a short trip to France in 1921, certain French journalists even demanded that he be prevented from travelling to America again.⁶⁰ The reception of returning émigré directors in France was doubly problematic after World War Two, largely due to France's active involvement (*concoure actif*) in the Occupation. Pierre Billard aptly describes these returning directors as *les*

revenants (which translates literally as “the ghosts” or “the strangers”) – specters of days gone by who raised questions of whether it was less honourable to stay and work under the German powers (like Carné, Jacques Becker and, notoriously, Henri-Georges Clouzot) or opt to leave the country (as in the cases of Feyder, Clair, Duvivier and Renoir).⁶¹ By emigrating and subsequently returning, these prolific former exiles challenged the convenient illusion that France in its entirety had collectively resisted the Occupation forces and, as Bergstrom notes, were viewed by some as treacherous opportunists who had abandoned France during the war years in favour of advancing their careers elsewhere.⁶²

The case of Feyder was even more problematic than that of Clair, Duvivier and Renoir because, unlike these three émigrés, he demonstrated no determination to aid the French resistance during the war years, either directly or indirectly. Clair, who had been legally stripped of his French nationality by the Vichy government, volunteered to act as translator for the French and Allied troops in North Africa but was instead delegated the task of organising the Cinema Division of the Army in Algiers (a trip that was not ultimately taken due to the army’s failure to purchase the necessary resources).⁶³ Renoir, for his part, directed *This Land is Mine* (1943), which illustrated the social hardships and moral challenges of French life under the Occupation, and co-directed *Salute to France* (1944) with Garson Kanin in both French and English-language versions to indoctrinate Allied troops preparing for the invasion of France by acquainting viewers with France’s history and customs.⁶⁴ Duvivier shot the propagandist *The Imposter* (1944) which, like *This Land is Mine*, intended to lend American audiences a more sympathetic perspective on the French surrender and to portray France as an allied country in need of (and deserving of) liberation.⁶⁵ Conversely, Feyder’s only film project during the period was *Une Femme disparaît*, which was not released in France until 1946, and his only new French release during the Occupation was the recut version of *La Loi du nord*. Like Feyder’s film, those by Duvivier and Renoir would not be released in France until 1946 (both premiered in Paris on 10 July) and neither was well received, but both Duvivier and Renoir demonstrated a concern for France’s plight in ways that Feyder’s did not.⁶⁶

Feyder cinénaziste

Although post-war working conditions and the problematic positions occupied by returning Francophone exiles more broadly undoubtedly affected Feyder’s prospects and demand consideration, they do not fully account for Feyder’s critical decline in the post-war years. More specifically, two other rarely discussed factors entered into dialectic with contemporary discourses

of *épuration* and further undermined Feyder's attempt to re-establish himself. The first of these was Feyder's own criticism of the French film industry, which not only revealed his own xenophobic views on cultural diversity within the French film industry during the 1930s, but also placed him in stark contrast with Renoir, then finally emerging as a major national filmmaker after over a decade of experimental and commercial filmmaking. Feyder had repeatedly criticised the French government's failure to support the speculative and unruly French film industry during the 1920s and 1930s, and would continue to do so during the *drôle de guerre* in a column entitled "Le billet de Jacques Feyder" ("Jacques Feyder's column"), which was published in a popular weekly film magazine, *Pour Vous*. These thoughts were relatively balanced and were shared by many, especially during the turbulent years that followed the transition to sound.⁶⁷ From 1936 to 1938, however, Feyder's promotion of alternative national industries (particularly America and Germany) and his criticism of the industry to which he owed part of his success stood in stark contrast with Renoir's commitment to the growth of an indigenous, internationally competitive French cinema. By then, Renoir had directed his first unabashedly committed work, *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* (*The Crime of Mr Lange*, 1936), was accepted as the Front populaire's favourite director despite having no official political affiliation and was becoming an increasingly familiar presence in left-wing newspapers, in which he illustrated his vision of France as both a site of refined filmmaking resources and a crucial source of artistic inspiration.⁶⁸ In May 1936, having recently completed *Les Bas-fonds* (*The Lower Depths*, 1936) Renoir wrote an article arguing that the lighting, sound and cameras available at Albatros were of the highest quality, and held that due to the efficiency and skill of technical crews and personnel working in France, films of the same calibre as those being produced in Germany could be directed in France in half the time. Underscoring Feyder's own betrayal of his adoptive homeland as well as his historically precarious status as an outsider, Renoir reminded readers that Albatros had produced some of Feyder's most successful films to date and, viewing French filmmakers' responsibility from a decidedly patriotic and moral perspective, added:

by filming abroad, producers risk annihilating the results that have been patiently acquired. Teams reduced to unemployment will be discouraged and will lose their professional training; considering themselves betrayed, they will lose interest in their trade. I am calling out in alarm: by filming abroad, we betray both France and the cinema. We are on the eve of developing Europe's greatest cinema in France. [...] We cannot afford to jeopardise this great opportunity.⁶⁹

Feyder was far less optimistic, and justifiably so, since the French film industry was "in deficit, anarchic and profoundly divided":⁷⁰ Gaumont

and Pathé-Nathan already contending with major cash-flow issues and both companies would respectively declare bankruptcy in 1934 and 1936. Writing in 1937 after completing *Knight Without Armour* at Korda's newly renovated Denham studios, Feyder stated, "we are now finding ourselves in a long period of stagnation [...]: cinema is no longer advancing. [...] It is difficult to see how French cinema can progress so long as we retain our current methods of production."⁷¹ In the same article, he indirectly contested Renoir's views, writing that although the French film industry had undergone a renaissance during the two previous years, Hollywood's artistic advances were surpassing its technical ones and "America's superiority remains indisputable."⁷² Feyder also claimed in December the same year that he had received another invitation to return to Hollywood.⁷³ Feyder reinforced his affiliation with the German film industry by shooting *Les Gens du voyage* in Tobis's Munich studios and the Bavaria-Film studios in Geiseltal, and the film was included by Germany as an entry for the Venice Film Festival in 1938.⁷⁴ In February the same year, Renoir encouraged directors to join forces with producers, distributors and exhibitors by supporting an indigenous film industry and openly called for Feyder (then in Munich) as well as Duvivier (then in Hollywood) and Clair (then in England) to return to France. "Have they found what they were looking for?" Renoir asked, "I doubt it. Let them return to us if they can. French cinema needs them."⁷⁵ Whether or not Feyder was an implicit target of Renoir's criticism prior to this article is difficult to determine, but what is clear is that émigré directors such as Feyder were coming under assault by one of France's most prolific directors.

Feyder evidently remained unconvinced of Renoir's views. In an article published one month after Renoir's appeal to Feyder to return home, the increasingly dislocated Feyder praised German firms for providing substantial resources, creative liberty and the opportunity to collaborate as a team. However, in a statement that doubtless ranks as his most mercenary and derisive, and which would sit uncomfortably with the post-war culture of *épuration*, he argued that German firms constituted a necessary alternative to France's Jewish producers who, according to Feyder, were perilously dominating the French film industry and corrupting the production of intrinsically French cinema:

So why try to direct a film with a yid [*métèque*] producer in France which would, in fact, be *less French* than those that I could direct abroad? These yids [*métèques*] who have provisionally colonised a major proportion of the French industry have a certain way of thinking, a lack of culture, appetites that turn our own artistic sense and creative impetus upside down. They *aim* to IMPOSE their own ideas, ideas that we do not and cannot share. They see differently to us and they cannot represent French taste. Never, not even for millions, will I make a film in France for any of

them if French cinema continues to be placed under domestic supervision and servitude by this group of so-called French producers whose names end with -itch or -er ... Well, there is no need for me to provide you with any particular names. You know them all.⁷⁶

Rosay depoliticises Feyder's activities in Munich by stating that Feyder shot both versions of *Les Gens du voyage* in Munich in exchange for having shot both versions of *La Kermesse héroïque* in Paris, but his visceral criticism indicates why he was drawn to Tobis (a German-Dutch company with studios in both Munich and Épinay-sur-Seine) for each of these films as well as for *Pension Mimosas*. Unsurprisingly, his scathing statement was met by both detractors and supporters. Benjamin Fainsilber, a regular contributor to film periodicals (particularly *Cinémonde*) during the 1930s, criticised Feyder weeks later for creating "a portrait that could well have been painted by Mr Goebbels himself and which, at the moment when our industry has become the greatest in Europe, seems to have the goal of discrediting it."⁷⁷ Fainsilber further criticised Feyder for refusing to produce films in France that could garner international revenue for the depleted industry and for forgetting his own reliance on Jewish producer Alexander Kamenka, head of production at Albatros, where Feyder had directed *Gribiche*, *Carmen* (1926) and *Les Nouveaux messieurs* during the silent era.

Ironically, Feyder himself could have found his career compromised by his own Belgian nationality had he not become a naturalised French citizen in 1928, an astute move on his part that prevented his career from being drastically compromised by a protectionist economic incentive offered to indigenous films which were deemed "French" on the basis of the director's nationality.⁷⁸ Fainsilber was quick to recognise the irony of Feyder's remarks:

Such is your desire? Then direct your films in a liberated setting for producers whose names end with "horst" or "berg" since you are repulsed by the prospect of working in servitude with people whose names end with "itch" [...] or "er" like ... well, now that I think of it, like Feyder!⁷⁹

Feyder's comments provoked an even more prolific and scathing reaction from Henri Jeanson, who served as screenwriter for three of the other great directors of the decade: Renoir (*La Marseillaise*, 1938), Carné (*Hôtel du nord*) and Duvivier (*Pépé le Moko*, 1937). Two days after the publication of Fainsilber's article, Jeanson dubbed Feyder a "cinénaziste" and claimed that Feyder had made a propaganda film for Germany's pavilion at the 1937 Exposition Universelle;⁸⁰ he reiterated these claims twelve days later and reported that Feyder had supervised the editing of a number of Goebbels' propaganda films.⁸¹ Jeanson's claim has not been verified elsewhere but Feyder's close involvement in the German film industry during the 1920s and 1930s left him open to such accusations. For example, his *Thérèse Raquin* was

regarded as a major moment for Franco-German cooperation upon its release.⁸² The tension between Jeanson and Feyder was aggravated by recent controversy surrounding *La Kermesse héroïque*. Prior to the publication of Feyder's incendiary comments, Jeanson had argued that *Kermesse* was Nazi-inspired (Jeanson was not alone: one reviewer, writing in 1936, suggested the film could provide Germany with effective propaganda against Belgium⁸³). Feyder, in response, sued Jeanson for 100,000 francs; according to Rosay, Feyder lost his case on grounds that "Nazi" was not an insult.⁸⁴ Lending additional credence to Jeanson's accusations, Feyder earned the ignominious support of vitriolic fascist film critic François Vinneuil (pseudonym of Lucien Rebatet), whose wartime collaboration would later warrant him a death sentence (ultimately commuted to forced labour) in 1946. Responding to Jeanson in 1938, Vinneuil criticised financiers and businessmen of Jewish origin who, in his view, resented Feyder's success and claimed Feyder's views were unbiased reflections on an indigenous cultural and industrial issue:

It is not enough to say that the designation of "Hitlerian" [...] features prominently among the piles of garbage dumped by Jeanson on one of our greatest artists. It is unacceptable that we can no longer emphasise, objectively and with equanimity, as M. Feyder is after doing, the flagrant Judaisation of the French film industry without being assaulted [*criblé*] by the Jews' serfs.⁸⁵

Feyder's own criticism of France aligned with nazi ideology and indigenous far-right discourses that flourished in France during the 1930s. At a time when "[c]overing one's tracks and saying the right thing, which often meant not saying very much, was part of the complex return to the ordinary circumstances of film production,"⁸⁶ his aggressive criticism and the support it received were symptomatic of a significantly more widespread cultural attitude that had infected the French body politic, and lent an additional aspect to Feyder's reputation before and after the war. Furthermore, this particular bone of contention was aggravated by the fourth key factor in Feyder's decline: the devastating diagnostic value of his pre-war films.

"We Welcome our Visitors": *La Kermesse héroïque* and Multidirectional Memory

The final issue affecting Feyder's reception in the post-war climate was Feyder's own most famous films of the interwar period which reminded viewers of a Republic best left behind. This association arguably stemmed in part from Feyder's aforementioned history of working in both Munich and Épinay-sur-Seine with Tobis, which supplemented film production within France during the Occupation in collaboration with Ufa by displacing French firms following the establishment of Continental Films in the northern zone.⁸⁷ A more specific and less frequently discussed reason is to

be found in the challenging interrogations of French national identity across his many critical and commercial successes of the 1920s and 1930s. Feyder was not considered a politically engaged filmmaker during his own lifetime (nor is he currently considered as such) and claimed that the controversy generated by *Les Nouveaux messieurs* “unexpectedly opened my eyes to the *social significance of cinema*” without suggesting that this experience ever inspired any future political engagement on his part.⁸⁸ However, a number of his films profoundly questioned major structures of power that informed French national identity, particularly the motto of *Travail, Famille, Patrie*, which had replaced *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* as France’s triad of core values during the Occupation. *L’Atlantide* suggested that the French Foreign Legion was unable to adequately comprehend or contend with its own sexual desires; *Les Nouveaux Messieurs* mocked the idleness of the ageing all-male Assemblée nationale; *Le Grand Jeu* recounts the obsessive attempts of an exiled *légionnaire* based in Morocco to efface a woman’s distinctive characteristics and to mould her in the image of his one-time lover, whom he has been forced to leave behind in Paris. Although commonly viewed as negligent of colonial realities by scholars,⁸⁹ the film could be more accurately interpreted as an interrogation of French colonial rule through its portrayal of a protagonist described by Burch and Sellier as “the firebrand whose fate has been sealed by his typically male illusions” (Figure 3).⁹⁰ Feyder’s next film, *Pension Mimosas*, was one of the few films of the decade to address maternal quasi-incestuous desire, and attacks patriarchal figures as empty centres of the French family who are conspicuously absent from domestic spaces where they are essential to the preservation of symbolic order (Figure 4).⁹¹

But the most notorious and pervasive of these memories was unquestionably *La Kermesse héroïque*, which won Feyder the award for Best Director at the Fourth Venice Film Festival as well as the Grand Prix du Cinéma Français. The film focuses on the people of Boom, a small town in Spanish-occupied Flanders in 1616. When the townspeople learn that a Spanish duke and his army are approaching, the mayor – supported by the town’s all-male council – pretends to be dead in order to avoid receiving the Spanish troops, his resourceful wife, Cornelia, prepares hospitality and entertainment for the troops. Most notoriously, the women of Boom change a banner at the town’s entrance from “Flanders and Freedom” (“Flandre et Liberté”) to “We Welcome our Visitors” (“Bienvenue à nos hôtes”), and offer the invaders a symbolically charged key to the village (Figure 5). Whereas the film was received ecstatically in many quarters as an artistically accomplished homage to Flanders and the Dutch paintings implicitly evoked by Feyder’s *mise en scène*,⁹² it was heavily criticised by certain Catholic Flemish citizens during January–March 1936, and certain

Figure 3. In *Le Grand Jeu* (Feyder, 1934), Pierre (Pierre Richard-Willm) poses Irma (Marie Bell) increasingly fraught questions in his bid to determine whether she is, in fact, a woman from his past.

members of the Nationalist Vlaamsch Nasionaal Verbond (the Flemish National Union) viewed the film as a humiliating statement on the absence of Belgium's national conscience.⁹³ The film's release had led to aggressive reactions across Belgium and the Netherlands: in Anvers, spectators released rats and destroyed seats, resulting in thirty-eight arrests; another twenty-seven arrests were made in Amsterdam; police reinforcements were issued in Brussels; the film was banned in Bruges; and people demonstrated in Gand. "Whistling, applause, booing, cheering, and fist-fighting!" recollected Feyder, "Politics had gotten involved!"⁹⁴

La Kermesse héroïque was particularly contentious in the post-war era due to its interwoven discourses of colonialism and collaboration, which acquired renewed resonance after the Occupation. As Sadoul suggests, although the film corresponds with certain brands of pacificism circa 1925, "one can argue that, after 1940, *La Kermesse héroïque* had treated a nation's oppression like a pipe-dream, ridiculed the possibility of resistance against the invader, and promoted an idyll where the defeated population save their happiness by providing bed and board for its conquerors."⁹⁵ Considering how memories of one event evoke and intersect with those of another, Michael Rothberg considers memory as essentially

Figure 4. Gaston Noblet (Henri Alerme) inspects his collar in a mirror held by his wife, Louise (Rosay). Over the course of *Pension Mimosas* (Feyder, 1935), he will remain oblivious to Louise's own increasingly youthful appearance and growing romantic desire for their adopted son.

Figure 5. Cornelia (Rosay) offers Spanish forces a key to her village in *La Kermesse héroïque* (Feyder, 1935).

multidirectional and therefore “subject to ongoing negotiating, cross-referencing, and borrowing.”⁹⁶ Rothberg’s analysis is particularly pertinent where the post-war reception of *Kermesse* is concerned because he argues that the emphasis on silence and repression after the war operated as a particularly fertile site for the transmission of competing individual and collective memories.⁹⁷ Such an intersection of memories had already been cautiously evoked on the evening of the film’s Berlin premiere by the French ambassador, who reportedly feared that the film would be interpreted by the public as a reference to France’s occupation of the Ruhr valley after the First World War.⁹⁸ The comparison was all too pertinent. On 11 January 1923, in view of Germany’s default of wood and coal reparations deliveries after the Armistice, some 70,000 to 100,000 Franco-Belgian forces had forcibly entered the Ruhr to ensure the repayment of all reparations due to the Allies.⁹⁹ This move risked precipitating the disintegration of the Triple Entente by exploiting a clause in the Treaty of Versailles, which permitted “economic and financial prohibitions and reprisals and in general such other measures as the respective governments may determine to be necessary in the circumstances.”¹⁰⁰ Following the establishment of the German government on 27 September the same year, the German state’s disintegration appeared to be underway with France in control of the Rhine and the Ruhr, justifying Britain’s growing concern for France’s emergent hegemony.¹⁰¹ France’s annexationist threat continued until Prime Minister Raymond Poincaré, who had dismissed opportunities to negotiate during October–November (much to the chagrin of the British and Americans), relented in order to preserve his own political independence.¹⁰²

Memories of France’s own *wacht am Rhein*, viewed in its time by one historian’s ironising eye as “a reversed Alsace-Lorraine arrangement,”¹⁰³ did not sit comfortably with myths of *la France résistante*, which were propagated after the Liberation when, as Bergstrom notes, “what was really wanted was a return to the past and an image of France untarnished by all that Vichy stood for”:¹⁰⁴ by the close of the Second World War, France had its own history as an occupier who, in Gearóid Barry’s analysis, had “moved the goalposts” after the First World War,¹⁰⁵ and also of lending active assistance to the German Implementation of the Final Solution during *les années noires*. By then, *La Kermesse héroïque* provided a provocative textual space in which to reflect on Europe’s history and France’s own place within it: Feyder’s fictionalised village of Boom had become, to evoke Pierre Nora’s term, an all too memorable *lieu de mémoire* in which recollections of the German Occupation and the French Occupation of the Ruhr valley were imbricated. The film’s own devastatingly prescient vision rendered the film anathema in the post-war period when, as Alan Williams

notes, pre-war cinema was still commonly believed to have contributed to France's disastrous defeat and was therefore widely rejected.¹⁰⁶

Feyder's own intentions underlying *La Kermesse héroïque* are difficult to ascertain. In his autobiography, he ironically maintains that he chose the story, which Spaak had written at Feyder's own request some ten years earlier, because he wanted to avoid the experience of censorship and political furore that had followed the production of *Les Nouveaux messieurs*. The film would merely be "a very relaxing subject in which nobody could possibly infer the slightest allusion to the present; a historical story in costumes, distanced from current affairs."¹⁰⁷ The extent to which Feyder was aware of the metamorphosis undergone by his films, the French industry and France itself, as well as his position in relation to all three prior to his series of abortive post-war projects also remains open to question. Interestingly, describing an exchange with Feyder and Rosay after an exclusive screening of *Les Enfants du paradis* (*Children of Paradise*, 1945) in Paris, Carné suggests that Feyder, who had praised his four-time apprentice's films of the 1930s, was one of many who considered Carné's decision to remain in France a tacit acceptance of the German presence: "They granted me a rather cool reception. Feyder said 'it's not bad' in a way that froze me [...]. Perhaps they held it against me when I remained in France to continue practicing the trade that is mine, through thick and thin."¹⁰⁸ Whether Feyder's comments in his autobiography and his exchange with Carné point to his own lack of awareness of his own problematic position within France or to an imaginary attempt to scapegoat directors who had remained in France during the Occupation may continue to be debated. The impact of his films and xenophobic declamation of France's film industry on the trajectory of his career and reputation, on the other hand, cannot be ignored.

Conclusion: Feyder's Future in French Cinema

Although Feyder was eager to work in France after the close of the Second World War and was evidently capable of imbuing projects with the sociological concerns and visual aesthetic that had informed his most famous films of the 1930s, opportunities to channel the potential evidenced by *Macadam* toward projects of his own devising clearly eluded him for a variety of reasons. Feyder's own failing health is partly to blame, but the seeds of his effacement from French film history are embedded in his own films and newspaper articles whose ideological underpinnings germinated over the course of the Occupation and the post-war period. The unsettling clairvoyance of his fictional worlds, which provided acutely critical and – in the case of *La Kermesse héroïque* – prescient visions of French society,

confronted audiences with the hypocrisy underlying the myth of *la France résistante* and testified to the fallibility of France's core ideological structures years before the Occupation. Therefore, although his reputation was left open to assault by *Cahiers du Cinéma*, it is important to note that his status as a key player in French cinema was already problematic during the years that followed the Liberation. Little over a decade after Didelot's assessment of Feyder in 1933, it was clear that if Feyder could still be described as having represented "the very essence of French cinema," it was through his provocative interrogation of the myths and fissures that structured French national identity throughout the *entre-deux-guerres*.

Notes

1. Bergstrom, "Émigrés or exiles?" pp. 86–103; Nevin, "After Hollywood," pp. 198–216.
2. Bazin, "Quinze ans de cinéma français," p. 24. On Feyder and Clair, see Abel, *French Cinema*, p. 284.
3. Didelot, "Avec Jacques Feyder," p. 67.
4. Rohmer cited in Narboni, "Le temps de la critique," p. 29.
5. See Lachenay, "Abel Gance," p. 45. Note that Truffaut occasionally employed Lachenay as a pseudonym.
6. Turk, *Child of Paradise*; Driskell, *Marcel Carné*; Bonnefille, *Julien Duvivier*; McCann, *Julien Duvivier*.
7. Christiansen, "Feyder's *Le Grand Jeu*," pp. 3–17; Gili and Marie, 1895, special issue: "Jacques Feyder"; Nevin, "Elle t'aime trop et moi, pas assez," pp. 198–216.
8. Abel, *French Cinema*, pp. 126, 129.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
10. See Anon., "Mr. Thalberg Returns from Europe," p. 112.
11. Crisp, *The Classic French Cinema*, p. 5; Crisp, *Genre, Myth, and Convention*, pp. 316–19.
12. See Crisp, *Genre, Myth, and Convention*, p. 269.
13. Rosay, *La Traversée*, p. 230.
14. Billard, *L'Âge classique du cinéma français*, pp. 330–31.
15. Bach, *Jacques Feyder*, p. 145.
16. Rosay, *La Traversée*, p. 244.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 246–51.
18. Bachy, *Jacques Feyder*, p. 145; Rosay, *La Traversée*, pp. 247–50.
19. Rosay, *La Traversée*, pp. 252–54.
20. Bachy, *Jacques Feyder*, p. 146.
21. Rosay, *La Traversée*, p. 254.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 262.
23. Ehrlich, *Cinema of Paradox*, p. 23.
24. Feyder and Rosay, *Le Cinéma*, pp. 138–39.
25. See Feyder, "Fanfares."
26. Bachy, *Jacques Feyder*, p. 149; Warren, Tixier and Aventin, "Filmographie commentée," pp. 248–49.
27. Rosay, *La Traversée*, p. 289.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 293.

29. Bachy, *Jacques Feyder*, p. 150; Warren, Tixier and Avenir, "Filmographie commentée," p. 249.
30. Bachy, *Jacques Feyder*, p. 150.
31. Ford, *Jacques Feyder*, pp. 84–5.
32. Anon., "Jacques Feyder débute au théâtre."
33. Bachy, *Jacques Feyder*, pp. 146, 151.
34. Feyder cited in Bachy, *Jacques Feyder*, p. 151.
35. Rosay, *La Traversée*, pp. 293–94.
36. Page, "Les méthodes de travail du metteur en scène," p. 64.
37. Information provided by Warren, Tixier and Avenir, "Filmographie commentée," p. 249.
38. Quoted in M. G., "La rentrée de Jacques Feyder."
39. Jeener, "Jacques Feyder pense à une adaptation de Pouchkine." Also noted in Bachy, *Jacques Feyder*, 155.
40. See correspondence in Box 50, Folder 15. Fonds Jacques Feyder/Françoise Rosay.
41. Information provided by: Bachy, *Jacques Feyder*, p. 155; Ford, *Jacques Feyder*, pp. 87–8; Warren, Tixier and Avenir, p. 250. Note that Maurice Tourneur would later direct *L'Impasse des Deux-Anges*. The film, released in 1948, was produced by Eugène Tucherer, featured sets by d'Eaubonne and starred Meurisse and Simone Signoret; all four contributed in the same respective capacities to *Macadam*.
42. Quoted in Jeener, "Jacques Feyder pense à une adaptation de Pouchkine."
43. Rosay, *La Traversée*, pp. 298–99.
44. Crisp, *French Cinema: A Critical Filmography*, p. 79.
45. Rosay, *La Traversée*, p. 301.
46. Feyder cited in Ford, *Jacques Feyder*, p. 127.
47. Bachy, *Jacques Feyder*, p. 156.
48. Carné, *Ma vie à belles dents*, pp. 52–3; Rosay, "Françoise Rosay raconte Jacques Feyder," p. 16; Vanel, "Jacques Feyder, maître à jouer," p. 54.
49. Rosay, *La Traversée*, p. 295.
50. Bazin, "Le plus 'après-guerre' des metteurs en scène français," p. 1085.
51. Page, "Les méthodes de travail du metteur en scène," p. 64.
52. Burch and Sellier, *The Battle of the Sexes in French Cinema*, pp. 237–304.
53. Bachy, *Jacques Feyder*, p. 154; Crisp, *French Cinema: A Critical Filmography*, p. 134; Sadoul, "La mort de Jacques Feyder."
54. Crisp, *French Cinema: A Critical Filmography*, p. 79.
55. Ehrlich, *Cinema of Paradox*, p. 173. Official proceedings against collaborators were not instituted until summer of 1945.
56. Régent, "Le cinéma français en pleine crise."
57. Crisp, *French Cinema: A Critical Filmography*, p. 79.
58. Ehrlich, *Cinema of Paradox*, p. 189.
59. Anon., "Le retour de l'un des nôtres."
60. Suchenski, "Turn Again, Tourneur," p. 97.
61. Billard, *L'Âge classique du cinéma français*, p. 455.
62. Bergstrom, "Émigrés or exiles?" p. 97.
63. Ibid., p. 92.
64. Bergstrom. "Jean Renoir and the Allied War Effort," p. 47.
65. Bergstrom, "Émigrés or exiles?" p. 95.
66. Release dates provided by McCann, *Julien Duvivier*, p. 135.

67. "Le billet de Jacques Feyder" featured intermittently from issue 572 of *Pour Vous* (1 November 1939) to issue 587 (14 February 1940). For a brief survey of Feyder's views of the French film industry during the 1920s and 1930s, see Nevin, "After Hollywood," p. 114.
68. See Renoir, "La production française veut vivre," pp. 128–32.
69. Ibid., p. 131.
70. Vincendeau, "France – Terre d'accueil," p. 140.
71. Feyder cited in Clair, Feyder and L'Herbier, "Où en est le cinéma?" p. 3.
72. Ibid., "Où en est le cinéma?" p. 3.
73. As reported in Anon. "Promenades internationales."
74. For, Jacques Feyder, p. 69; Billard, *L'Âge classique du cinéma français*, p. 329. Feyder agreed to film both versions of *Les Gens du voyage* in Munich because Tobis had allowed him to direct both versions of *La Kermesse héroïque* at their Épinay-sur-Seine studios (see Rosay, *La Traversée*, pp. 218–19).
75. Renoir, "Parlant français," p. 210.
76. Feyder cited in Derain, "Jacques Feyder dit pourquoi il tourne à l'étranger." Feyder's xenophobic concern echoed that of many: an inquiry lead by the Cinémathèque française on 26 May 1934 compared the significant number of film professionals working in France with the high number of French-born technicians who were out of work (see Sojcher, "'Belgitude' et européenité," p. 37). See also the recollections of Marcel L'Herbier, who laments the industry's renunciation of its "pure nationality" in the late 1930s (consult L'Herbier, *La Tête qui tourne*, pp. 244–45).
77. Fainsilber, "Si le coeur vous en dit, monsieur Feyder."
78. Carl Vincent, writing in 1938, argued that this was Feyder's strategy (Vincent cited in Sojcher, "'Belgitude' et européenité," p. 36). Sojcher is sceptical of the view expressed by Vincent, who would later become editor-in-chief of a collaboration-era revue, *Cinéma*. However, it remains a distinct possibility, given Feyder's desire to secure opportunities to direct films in France whilst still in Hollywood during the transition to sound (see Nevin, "After Hollywood," pp. 111–40).
79. Fainsilber, "Si le coeur vous en dit, monsieur Feyder."
80. Jeanson "M. Feyder, cinénaziste," pp. 194–97; Jeanson, "Quand Feyder fait le Jacques," pp. 192–94.
81. Jeanson "M. Feyder, cinénaziste," pp. 196–97. Feyder recalls in his autobiography that "a small weekly newspaper even endeavoured to demonstrate that this was a Nazi-inspired film" (see Feyder and Rosay, *Le Cinéma*, p. 42). However, he does not mention Jeanson's name or elaborate further on the matter. Rosay mentions Jeanson explicitly in her version of the case but notes that he and Feyder became friends in subsequent years (see Rosay, *La Traversée*, p. 210).
82. See Thompson, "National or international film?" pp. 291–95.
83. See Mihaïl, "*La Kermesse héroïque*, un hommage à la Flandre?" p. 72.
84. Rosay, *La Traversée*, p. 210.
85. Cited in Jeanson, "M. Feyder, cinénaziste," p. 195. For Vinneuil's criticism of businessmen and financiers, see Vinneuil, "Screen of the Week," p. 196.
86. Phillips, "People 1920–50," p. 69.
87. See Sadoul, *Le Cinéma français*, p. 88.
88. Feyder and Rosay, *Le Cinéma*, p. 27 (italics in original).
89. Boulanger, *Le Cinéma Colonial*, p. 135; Sherzer, "Introduction," p. 4; Brahimi, "Le cinéma colonial revisité," pp. 17–18.

90. Burch and Sellier, *The Battle of the Sexes*, p. 59. For a close analysis of gender representation in *Le Grand Jeu*, see Nevin, "(Re)visions of the *Outre-mer*."
91. Nevin, "Elle t'aime trop, et moi, pas assez," pp. 198–216.
92. Lang, "La Kermesse héroïque," 6; Vinneuil, "Screen of the Week," pp. 195–200.
93. Mihaïl, "La Kermesse héroïque," p. 65.
94. Feyder and Rosay, *Le Cinéma*, pp. 42–3.
95. Sadoul, *Le Cinéma français*, p. 75.
96. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p. 93.
97. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 21–2.
98. Feyder and Rosay, *Le Cinéma*, p. 42.
99. See Barry, "Marc Sangnier and 'the other Germany,'" p. 32.
100. Rogers, "What Else Could France Have Done?" p. 39.
101. Guinn, "On Throwing Ballast in Foreign Policy," p. 432; Bennett, "Britain's Relations with France after Versailles," p. 56.
102. Barry, "Marc Sangnier and 'the other Germany,'" p. 41.
103. Rogers, "What Else Could France Have Done?" p. 38.
104. Bergstrom, "Émigrés or exiles?" p. 101.
105. Barry, "Marc Sangnier and 'the other Germany,'" p. 27.
106. Williams, *Republic of Images*, p. 294.
107. Feyder and Rosay, *Le Cinéma*, p. 40.
108. Carné, *Ma vie à belles dents*, pp. 194–95.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France (ASMCF) and the Society for French Studies (SFS), both of which generously sponsored my research on Feyder at the Cinémathèque française and the Bibliothèque nationale de France. I presented portions of this article at conferences organised by the Irish Association for French Studies and the SFS, and I would like to express my gratitude for valuable feedback offered by Colin Davis, Catherine Emerson, Keith Reader and Douglas Smith.

ORCID

Barry Nevin <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4078-1556>

Works cited

- Abel, Richard. *French Cinema: The First Wave, 1915–1929*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1984.
- Anon. "Jacques Feyder débute au théâtre: Il est meilleur au cinéma." *Paris-matin*. 16 October, 1945. Page number unavailable. Accessed in "Recueil factice d'articles de presse sur Jacques Feyder, vol. 3: 1944–1958" (ref.: 8-RK-403[3]), Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- Anon. "Le retour de l'un des nôtres: Une fraternelle entente pour fêter Jacques Feyder autour d'un amical banquet que présidait M. Louis Aubert." *Comoedia*. 6 March, 1933. Accessed in "Recueil factice d'articles de presse sur Jacques Feyder, vol. 2: 1928–1938" (ref.: 8-RK-403[2]), Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- Anon. "Mr. Thalberg Returns from Europe," *New York Times*. May 13, 1928. 112.

- Anon. "Promenades internationales: En bavardant avec Jacques Feyder." *Ciné France* (17 December, 1937). Page number unavailable. Accessed in "Recueil factice d'articles de presse sur Jacques Feyder, vol. 2: 1928–1938" (ref.: 8-RK-403[2]), Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- Bachy, Victor. *Jacques Feyder: artisan du cinéma, 1885–1948*. Louvain: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1968.
- Barry, Gearóid. "Marc Sangnier and 'The Other Germany': The Freiburg International Democratic Peace Congress and the Ruhr Invasion, 1923." *European History Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2011): 25–49.
- Bazin, André. "Le plus 'après-guerre' des metteurs en scène français." In *Écrits complets*, edited by Hervé Joubert-Laurencin, 1085–1086. Paris: Macula, 2018.
- Bazin, André. "Quinze ans de cinéma français." In *Le cinéma français de la Libération à la Nouvelle Vague*, edited by Jean Narboni, 23–41. Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, 1998.
- Bennett, G. H. "Britain's Relations with France after Versailles: The Problem of Tangier, 1919–23." *European History Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1994): 53–84.
- Bergstrom, Janet. "Émigrés or exiles? The French directors' Return from Hollywood." In *Hollywood and Europe: Economics, Culture, National Identity, 1945–1995*, edited by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Stephen Ricci, 86–103. London: BFI, 1998.
- Bergstrom, Janet. "Jean Renoir and the Allied War Effort: Saluting France in Two Languages." *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 26, no. 1 (2006): 45–56.
- Billard, Pierre. *L'Âge classique du cinéma français. Du cinéma parlant à la Nouvelle Vague*. Paris: Flammarion, 1995.
- Bonnefille, Éric. *Julien Duvivier, mal aimant du cinéma français (1896–1940)*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003.
- Boulanger, Pierre. *Le Cinéma Colonial de "L'Atlantide" à "Lawrence d'Arabie"*. Paris: Seghers, 1975.
- Brahimi, Denise. "Le cinéma colonial revisité." *Cinémaction* 111 (2004): 12–23.
- Burch, Noël, and Geneviève Sellier. *The Battle of the Sexes in French Cinema, 1930–1956*, trans. Peter Graham. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Carné, Marcel. *Ma vie à belles dents: Mémoires*. Paris: L'Archipel, 1996.
- Christiansen, Peter. "Feyder's *Le Grand Jeu* and the Idea of Poetic Realism." *Film Criticism* 12, no. 2 (1987): 3–17.
- Clair, René, Jacques Feyder, and Marcel L'Herbier. "Où en est le cinéma? Nos metteurs en scène nous répondent ..." *Pour Vous* 447 (1937): 3.
- Crisp, Colin. *French Cinema – A Critical Filmography: Volume 2, 1940–1958*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015.
- Crisp, Colin. *Genre, Myth, and Convention in the French Cinema, 1929–1939*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.
- Crisp, Colin. *The Classic French Cinema, 1930–1960*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Derain, Lucie. "Jacques Feyder dit pourquoi il tourne à l'étranger." *Ciné-France* 32. 11 March 1938. Page number unavailable. Accessed in "Recueil factice d'articles de presse sur Jacques Feyder, vol. 2: 1928–1938" (ref.: 8-RK-403[2]), Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- Didelot, Roger-Francis. "Avec Jacques Feyder." *La Rampe* 67. 1 May 1933. Accessed in "Recueil factice d'articles de presse sur Jacques Feyder, vol. 1: biographie, carrière, oeuvre" (ref.: 8-RK-403[1]), Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- Driskell, Jonathan. *Marcel Carné*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012.

- Ehrlich, Evelyn. *Cinema of Paradox: French Filmmaking under the German Occupation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Fainsilber, Benjamin. "Si le coeur vous en dit, monsieur Feyder." *Messidor*. 8 April 1938. Page number unavailable. Accessed in "Recueil factice d'articles de presse sur Jacques Feyder, vol. 2: 1928–1938" (ref.: 8-RK-403[2]), Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- Feyder, Jacques, and Françoise Rosay. *Le Cinéma, notre métier*. Geneva: Skira, 1944.
- Feyder, Jacques. "Fanfares." Box 43, Folder 13. Fonds Jacques Feyder/Françoise Rosay, Cinémathèque française, Paris.
- Ford, Charles. *Jacques Feyder*. Paris: Seghers, 1973.
- G., M. "La rentrée de Jacques Feyder." *Opéra*. 3 July 1946. Full name of author unavailable. Page number unavailable. Accessed in "Recueil factice d'articles de presse sur Jacques Feyder, vol. 3: 1944–1958" (ref.: 8-RK-403[3]), Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- Gili, Jean A., and Michel Marie (eds). "Jacques Feyder." Special issue of 1895: *revue de l'association française de recherche sur l'histoire du cinéma*. Paris: AFRHC, 1998.
- Guinn, Paul. "On Throwing Ballast in Foreign Policy: Poincaré, the Entente and the Ruhr Occupation." *European History Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (1988): 427–437.
- Jeanson, Henri. "M. Feyder, cinénaziste, a trouvé un défenseur." In *Jeanson sur Jeanson*, edited by René Château, 194–197. Paris: René Château, 2000.
- Jeanson, Henri. "Quand Feyder fait le Jacques et devient cinénaziste." In *Jeanson sur Jeanson*, edited by René Château, 192–94. Paris: René Château, 2000.
- Jeener, J.-B. "Jacques Feyder pense à une adaptation de Pouchkine." *Figaro*. 11 February 1947. Page number unavailable. Accessed in "Recueil factice d'articles de presse sur Jacques Feyder, vol. 3: 1944–1958" (ref.: 8-RK-403[3]), Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- L'Herbier, Marcel. *La Tête qui tourne*. Paris: Belfond, 1979.
- Lachenay, Robert. "Abel Gance, désordre et génie." *Cahiers du Cinéma* 47 (1955): 45.
- Lang, André. "La Kermesse héroïque." *Pour Vous* 368 (1935): 6.
- McCann, Ben. *Julien Duvivier*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017.
- Mihaïl, Benoît. "La Kermesse héroïque, un hommage à la Flandre? La polémique autour du film de Jacques Feyder en Belgique (janvier–mars 1936)." *Bijdragen tot de Eigentijdse Geschiedenis* 10 (2002): 43–77.
- Narboni, Jean. "Le temps de la critique: Entretien avec Éric Rohmer." In Éric Rohmer, *Le Goût de la beauté*, edited by Jean Narboni, 11–37. Paris: Petite bibliothèque des Cahiers du cinéma, 2004.
- Nevin, Barry. "(Re)visions of the *Outre-mer*: looking at the male gaze in Jacques Feyder's *Le Grand Jeu* (1934)." *Studies in French Cinema* (forthcoming).
- Nevin, Barry. "'Elle t'aime trop, et moi, pas assez': Jacques Feyder's Melodramatic *Mise en Scène* of Female Desire in *Pension Mimosas* (1935)." *French Studies* 73, no. 2 (2019): 198–216.
- Nevin, Barry. "After Hollywood and its Ever-blue Skies, How Beautiful Paris Looks!: Jacques Feyder Between France and America, 1928–1934." *Film History* 30, no. 2 (2018): 111–140.
- Page, Louis. "Les méthodes de travail du metteur en scène." In *Jacques Feyder, ou le cinéma concret*, 59–64. Brussels: Comité national Jacques Feyder, 1949.
- Phillips, Alistair. "People 1920–50: Migration and Exile in the Classical Period." In *The French Cinema Book*, edited by Michael Temple and Michael Witt, 61–72. London: BFI Palgrave, 2018.
- Régent, Roger. "Le cinéma français en pleine crise: Jacques Feyder donne L'Alarme." *XXe siècle*. 10 January 1946. Page number unavailable. Accessed in "Recueil factice d'articles

- de presse sur Jacques Feyder, vol. 3: 1944–1958” (ref.: 8-RK-403[3]), Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- Renoir, Jean. “La production française veut vivre, il ne faut pas l’assassiner!” In *Écrits, 1926–1971*, edited by Claude Gauteur, 128–132. Paris: Ramsay, 2006.
- Renoir, Jean. “Parlant français.” In *Écrits, 1926–1971*, edited by Claude Gauteur, 208–210. Paris: Ramsay, 2006.
- Rogers, John Jacob. “What Else Could France Have Done?” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 114, no. 1 (1924): 36–43.
- Rosay, Françoise. “Françoise Rosay raconte Jacques Feyder.” *Cahiers de la Cinémathèque* 40 (1984): 5–17.
- Rosay, Françoise. *La Traversée d’une vie*. Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1974.
- Rothberg, Michael. *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Sadoul, Georges. “La mort de Jacques Feyder: Le maître du réalisme français.” *Lettres françaises*. 3 June 1948. Page number not available. Accessed in “Recueil factice d’articles de presse sur Jacques Feyder, vol. 1: biographie, carrière, oeuvre” (ref.: 8-RK-403[1]), Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- Sadoul, Georges. *Le Cinéma français: 1890–1962*. Paris: Flammarion, 1962.
- Sherzer, Dina. “Introduction.” In *Cinema, Colonialism, Postcolonialism: Perspectives from the French and Francophone Worlds*, edited by Dina Sherzer, 1–19. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996.
- Sojcher, Frédéric. “‘Belgitude’ et européenité dans l’oeuvre de Jacques Feyder.” In 1895: *revue de l’association française de recherche sur l’histoire du cinéma*. Special issue: “Jacques Feyder,” edited by Jean A. Gili and Michel Marie (1998): 33–44.
- Suchenski, Richard. “‘Turn Again, Tourneur’: Maurice Tourneur between France and Hollywood.” *Studies in French Cinema* 11, no. 2 (2011): 87–100.
- Thompson, Kristin. “National or international film? The European debate during the 1920s,” *Film History* 8, no. 3 (1996): 291–295.
- Turk, Edward Baron. *Marcel Carné: Child of Paradise*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Vanel, Charles. “Jacques Feyder, maître à jouer.” In *Jacques Feyder, ou le cinéma concret*, 53–54. Brussels: Comité national Jacques Feyder, 1949.
- Vincendeau, Ginette. “France – Terre d’accueil. L’industrie cinématographique française des années 30 face aux étrangers.” In *Tendres Ennemis. Cent ans de cinéma entre la France et L’Allemagne*, edited by Heike Hurst and Heiner Gassen, 139–145. Paris: L’Harmattan, 1991.
- Vinneuil, François. “Screen of the Week: *La Kermesse héroïque*.” In *French Film Theory and Criticism: A History/Anthology, 1907–1939*, vol. 1, edited by Richard Abel, 195–200. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Warren, Michel, Nicolas Tixier and Catherine Aventin, “Filmographie commentée.” In 1895: *revue de l’association française de recherche sur l’histoire du cinéma*. Special issue: “Jacques Feyder,” edited by Jean A. Gili and Michel Marie (1998): 189–250.
- Williams, Alan. *Republic of Images: A History of French Filmmaking*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Filmography

- Atlantis*. Dir. Jacques Feyder. Thalman & Cie, 1921.
- Back Streets of Paris*. Dir. Marcel Blistène. B.U.P. Française, 1946.

- Carmen*. Dir. Jacques Feyder. Albatros, 1926.
- Carnival in Flanders*. Dir. Jacques Feyder. Tobis, 1935.
- Children of Paradise*. Dir. Marcel Carné, Société Nouvelle Pathé Cinéma, 1945.
- Crainquebille*. Dir. Jacques Feyder. Les Films Tradieux et Legrand, 1922.
- The Crime of Mr Lange*. Dir. Jean Renoir. Obéron, 1936.
- Dilemma of Two Angels*. Dir. Maurice Tourneur. B.U.P. Française, 1948.
- The Full Tarot*. Dir. Jacques Feyder. Tobis, 1934.
- Gribiche*. Dir. Jacques Feyder. Albatros, 1926.
- The Halfway House*. Dir. Basil Dearden. Ealing, 1944.
- Hôtel du nord*. Dir. Marcel Carné. Impérial, 1938.
- If the Emperor Only Knew That*. Dir. Jacques Feyder. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1930.
- The Imposter*. Dir. Julien Duvivier. Universal, 1944
- Johnny Frenchman*. Dir. Charles Frend. Ealing, 1945.
- The Kiss*. Dir. Jacques Feyder. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1929.
- Knight Without Armour*. Dir. Jacques Feyder. London Films, 1937.
- The Law of the North*. Dir. Jacques Feyder. Filmos, 1939.
- Life Dances On*. Dir. Julien Duvivier. Sigma, 1937
- The Lighthouse Keepers*. Dir. Jean Grémillon. Films du Grand Guignol, 1929.
- The Lower Depths*. Dir. Jean Renoir. Albatros, 1936.
- Man About Town*. Dir. René Clair. Pathé Consortium Cinéma, 1947.
- La Marseillaise*. Dir. Jean Renoir. SEDIF, 1938.
- Maturareise*. Dir. Sigfrid Steiner. Gloriafilm, 1943.
- The New Gentlemen*. Dir. Jacques Feyder. Albatros, 1929.
- Panic*. Dir. Julien Duvivier. Filmsonor, 1946
- Pension Mimosas*. Dir. Jacques Feyder. Tobis, 1935.
- People Who Travel*. Dir. Jacques Feyder. Tobis, 1938.
- Pépé le Moko*. Dir. Julien Duvivier. Paris Film, 1937.
- Portrait of a Woman*. Dir. Jacques Feyder. Louis Guyot D.F.G., 1942.
- Salute to France*. Dir. Jean Renoir and Garson Kanin. American Office of War Information, 1944.
- Thérèse Raquin*. Dir. Jacques Feyder. D.E.F.U., 1928.
- This Land is Mine*. Dir. Jean Renoir. RKO Radio Pictures, 1943.
- Whirlpool*. Dir. Edmond T. Gréville, H. O. Films, 1935.