



# Paris in the Dark

Going to  
the Movies  
in the  
City of Light,  
1930–1950

Eric  
Smoodin

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Eric Smoodin

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Map by Michele Tobias. Inside covers: Neon signs at night, Avenue des Champs-  
Élysées, Paris (VIIIth arrondissement), 1936. Photograph by Roger Schall  
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For Caren  
*T'as d'beaux yeux, tu sais . . .*

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I feel as if I've been working on this book for over forty years, now and then, in different places and at various jobs. When I think of the book like that, the results seem a little slim. But there you have it. This short book about Parisian film culture has had quite the *durée*.

With a project this long and this winding, a lot of people have been extremely important to me along the way. I started graduate school at UCLA in 1977, at a time when most of us did our scholarship on national cinemas because that's how film studies was organized then. I took required seminars in Italian neorealism and German expressionism, and I concentrated on American and French cinema in my own research. My dissertation dealt for the most part with American films, but I formulated the idea for it while I was spending one year as a student in Paris, and getting the chance to work with Raymond Bellour, Jacques Aumont, Marc Vernet, Jorge Dana, and others who were doing pioneering work in the field.

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Writing this book about Paris, having the chance to go there as often as I have, I'm very much aware that my parents, Mildred and Solly Smoodin, never had the same kind of opportunity. My mother, a member of her high school French club, never left the country. My father did only once, for three years in the Pacific during World War II. But I've thought of them all the time during this project, partially because of how important movies were to all of us, but mostly because they gave me the chance to have a very different kind of life, and to pursue what I most wanted to do. I wish they were here now.

I met Caren Kaplan in 1986. Since then, she and I have been to Paris together a half dozen times, and I always have to stop and wonder at how lucky I've been to be able to spend my life with the perfect travel companion. She has been my primary source of emotional and intellectual support while I've been writing this book about a city we both love, and she has also been my role model as a scholar and as a writer. Over that first coffee in a café in Washington, DC, thirty-five years ago, Caren and I realized that one of the things we had in common was that we had both been students in the Paris program, just a couple of years apart, and that as a result we knew several of the same people, and our paths had probably nearly crossed any number of times. When I think about it now, I can't help but feel at least a little like Vittorio De Sica in *Madame de . . .* (1953), when he tells Danielle Darrieux about meeting her, "C'est destin" ("It's fate"). For Caren and me, and thankfully without any of the tragic melodrama of *Madame de . . .* or some other Max Ophüls film, the long tracking shot of our life together began with that blind date.

Sofia Smoodin-Kaplan entered the scene about halfway through that shot. It's hard now to remember what life was like before her, and she has turned into a perfect pal for watching movies, or for traveling to Paris. Sofia has been there twice now, and each time she's been a terrific sport while I've dragged

her off to find old cinemas that have been turned into Gap or Monoprix stores, or to look at the ones that still stand, like the spectacular Louxor in the tenth arrondissement. I can't imagine writing this book without her help, but that's the least of it. I'm ready for our next trip together.

Everyone here, in some way or another, has helped me with this book, even if that help came years before I began working on it. I know I've left people out, and I'll think of them later. But let me end with another Max Ophüls movie, one that's about the past and forgetting and trying to remember, *La Ronde* (1950). The film ends with a song, and I'll use the last lyric to conclude these acknowledgments, because the words seems so final when, really, they're anything but. *Je ne vous en dirai pas plus*. There's nothing else I have to tell.

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## INTRODUCTION

# A Walking Tour

1930–1981

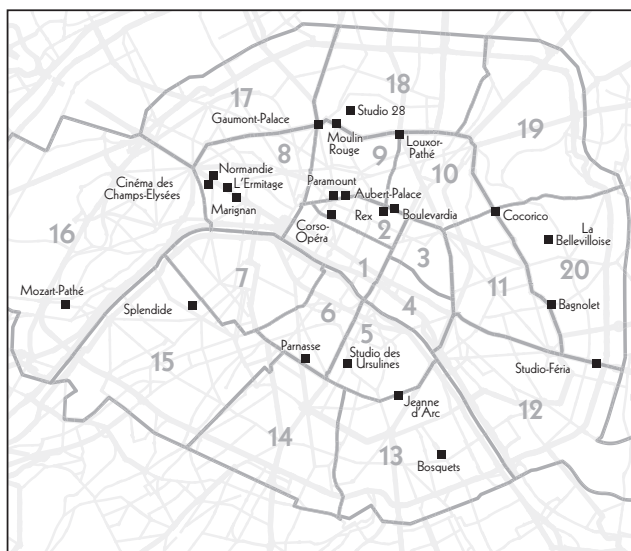
When I was a graduate student in Paris in 1980 and 1981, I walked home from classes and always passed a cinema along the rue du Temple that never changed its bill. Fritz Lang's *Le Tigre du Bengale* (*Der Tiger von Eschnapur*; 1959) showed there for at least an entire year, and by the end of my stay I had come to count on the dependability of that one film at that same cinema week after week. When I saw *Le Tigre du Bengale*, there were probably only six or seven people in the audience, and I still remember the young woman who worked at the ticket booth, always smoking because she had nothing else to do. Practically no one was buying tickets to see the movie.

During that year in Paris, every Wednesday I bought the latest edition of *Pariscope*, which had complete listings of all of the films playing in the city and in the suburbs, a sort of weekly record of how new films and classics came and went and circulated through different neighborhoods. This was the kind of movement I had come to expect from growing up in Los Angeles, where subsequent-run cinemas changed their bills every Wednesday, except when a popular movie might be held over, and where new movies rarely played in first-run houses for more than a few weeks. I never really learned why, in Paris, most cinemas had a regular turnover, while a few never seemed to change. Someone told me that the cinema on rue du Temple and others like it were subsidized by the government, and so didn't have to change films, but that never seemed like a fully satisfying answer. Why did *Le Tigre du Bengale* never leave?

I'm fairly certain that's when I began thinking about this book, and about ways that movies came and went through the city, the relationships of cinemas to the movies they showed, to their neighborhoods, and to their audiences. I only really began working on it about fifteen years ago, after a trip back to

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Map I.1 A map of Paris showing the city's twenty arrondissements, or neighborhoods, and also some of the major cinemas from the period 1930–1950. Map by Michele Tobias.

Paris. While I was there I found an odd and now long-gone shop, Archives de la presse on the rue des Archives in the fourth arrondissement, stacked floor to ceiling with old French magazines. I went to the movie magazine section and looked through dozens of issues of *Pour Vous*, a popular film tabloid from 1928 until the surrender to Germany in 1940. On the last page of each issue there was a complete listing of the cinemas in the city, the movies they were showing, and the times they played.

These listings provided the now vanished cinematic geography of prewar Paris. One could chart how movies moved through neighborhoods, the development (and closure) of cinemas, and the relative importance of movies to different parts of town (typically around eighteen cinemas in the peripheral, working-class twentieth arrondissement and none in the first, which was spatially dominated by the Louvre). With these *Pour Vous* listings and with the more recent availability of other sources, particularly those put online by the Bibliothèque nationale on its Gallica website, I began work on a project examining Parisian film culture from the late 1920s until around 1950: the cinemas and the movies, the ciné-clubs and the preferred stars, the audiences, and also the role of film journalism.

Despite the abundance of possibilities for seeing movies during this period and the mythic status of Paris as a movie capital, we still know very little about



Figure 1.1 *Pour Vous* from October 13, 1933.

going to the movies there from the beginning of the sound era to the first films of the New Wave. Richard Abel has provided a full sense of the film distribution systems and exhibition experiences throughout France during the period just before World War I. Abel as well as Christophe Gauthier have unearthed and examined the history of the ciné-clubs and specialized cinemas that showed avant-garde, documentary, or animated films in Paris and elsewhere in France from the teens until about 1930, and Annie Fee has provided a history of gendered and politicized Parisian audiences in the post–World War I era.<sup>1</sup> From 1894 until the end of World War I, we have Jean-Jacques Meusy’s encyclopedic rendering of all manner of exhibition sites in the city, including descriptions of the streets where they were located, in the aptly titled *Paris-Palaces*, as well as in his two-volume *Écrans français de l’entre-deux-guerres*.<sup>2</sup> But for that period from the late silent era until just after World War II, little attention has been paid to the average moviegoer and to the cinemas along the grand boulevards and in the neighborhoods that specialized in commercial, feature-length films, or to the ciné-clubs and other places for seeing movies.

A look at Parisian filmgoing and film exhibition from the period yields information that is both empirically and historiographically significant. While we have acknowledged the city's importance in film history, we still have not examined many of the basic aspects of the cinema in Paris, such as the number of cinemas and their locations. A close analysis of the ways films were exhibited and then moved through the city makes Paris itself, in the sense of a singular film culture, a problematic area of study. Examining films and filmgoing in Paris requires us to take our local study of the city to the micro level, to the neighborhoods within the city and the suburbs just outside it and the differences and similarities, in terms of film preference or audience, from one to the other. The city's film audience, from the working-class Ménilmontant, to the Jewish center of the Marais, to the bourgeois quarters in the middle and western half of the city, or to the leftwing political majority in the Clichy suburb, becomes a fragmented one, signifying not so much the "general Parisian" as the individual neighborhood itself.

Studying the varied audiences of Paris, the movies they watched, and their neighborhood cinemas also highlights significant changes in the practices of film studies. Increasingly over the last twenty-five years, the field has refined its understanding of the movie audience. I have written about this shift elsewhere, but for a number of reasons the field has moved away from an idea of a spectator mostly determined by the film itself, with one viewer much the same as any other. As Annette Kuhn has written, approaches to film viewing that developed in the 1960s and 1970s were "predominantly about a spectator addressed or constructed by the film text."<sup>3</sup> While these approaches still circulate, the prevailing belief is that issues of film viewing, and relationships between viewer and film, are far more complex and that empirical audiences are much more differentiated than can be accounted for by the notion of the textually produced viewer.

In a 1995 essay, "La Place du spectateur" ("The Place of the Spectator"), Christian-Marc Bosséno established some of the broad contours for studying the historical film viewer and for shifting the emphasis from that which took place on the screen to "the cinema itself" ("à la salle elle-même"). Bosséno posed a series of questions for conducting research on the audience: "Who went to the cinema, and why? How and under what technical and material conditions did they see films?" and later, "When can we date the death of the 'grand public' and the birth of specialized, micro audiences?"<sup>4</sup>

In asking about micro audiences, Bosséno had in mind those spectators who were interested primarily in particular kinds of films, in art films, or documentaries, or feature films. But one of the means for answering Bosséno's question,

and for understanding these empirical audiences, has little to do with the kinds of movies they preferred. Instead, moving away from the “grand public,” film scholars have engaged in regional and local analyses. As a result the city and the town have become central to contemporary film studies, much more so, in fact, than the nation. There might be nothing new about this emphasis on the local, as the 2001 translation and publication, in *Screen*, of Emilie Altenloh’s 1914 dissertation regarding filmgoing in Mannheim, Germany, suggests. More recent scholars, such as Kathryn Fuller-Seeley, Lee Grieveson, Ben Singer, and Gregory Waller, have not only produced historiographies of local film habits, from the 1890s through World War II, but have also differentiated the varied audiences within a town or city.<sup>5</sup> In US-based film studies, scholars have analyzed the perceived tensions between city and town during the period in relation to taste in film and consumption practices, so that we might examine the full range of filmgoing habits and exhibition possibilities in such places as New York, Milwaukee, or Campbellsville, Kentucky, to name three test cases in a recent collection on movie audiences and film culture.<sup>6</sup>

In film studies, Paris has gone largely unexamined. We can, by inference, claim that Paris was both similar to and different from other major urban areas during the period. There were, of course, commercial agreements between nations, so that, as just one example, one of the major cinemas in London during the 1930s, the Finsbury Park, was part of the Gaumont British chain, which itself was a subsidiary of the French film company Gaumont, which owned so many cinemas in Paris and the rest of France. There also were the very determined systems of films opening in select, significant cinemas, typically in the “best” parts of town in London, Berlin, Los Angeles, or Paris, and then fanning out to cinemas in the neighborhoods.<sup>7</sup> Movie stars were understood as global commodities, as I’ll examine in chapter 3, so that audiences in Paris as well as New York and London rushed out to see films with Greta Garbo or Marlene Dietrich. But these similarities only went so far. No other city during the period covered by this book, to my knowledge, had so extensive a system of ciné-clubs as Paris, and as I will point out in chapter 1, the people who wrote about such things understood significant differences in the architecture of cinemas between, for instance, New York and Paris. Those same experts, journalists typically, also felt that for every Maurice Chevalier, a star with an international following, there was also a Georges Milton, a performer of particularly Parisian appeal, whose films would leave American urban audiences as well as many European ones cold.

Purely in the French context, however, we probably have greater knowledge about modes of film exhibition and consumption in much smaller French

locations than we do of the capital. Renaud Chaplain has examined the practices in Lyon, while Pierre and Jeanne Berneau have performed a similar study of Limoges from the beginning of cinema until the end of World War II, and Sylvie Rab has analyzed interwar film practices in Suresnes, the Parisian suburb.<sup>8</sup> But Paris remains a compelling case study because it functioned as a center of both national and international production, as one of the largest sites of film-going in Europe, as a hub of intellectual interest in cinema, and as the location of some of the most important film journalism on the continent.

By making sense of the information about movies in Paris we can also start to reconsider our ideas about national cinema. Since the 1930s and until fairly recently, film studies, at least as practiced in the United States and the United Kingdom, has made the term *national cinema* seem self-evident, with historians showing a clear sense of what French cinema might indicate, or German, or American for that matter. National cinema has meant, unproblematically, the films of a particular country. That is, national cinema has been defined textually as the narrative and visual mechanisms of large bodies of films. These come from filmmakers working in certain countries and languages or from movie companies with an important national presence and corporate headquarters (Gaumont, for instance, in the French context). They might also belong to significant movements primarily identified with a single country, for example French poetic realism in the 1930s or the French New Wave in the 1950s. But as I have argued before, we might also develop an understanding of national cinema based not only at the point of production, through analyses of the films made, but also at the point of reception—the ways in which audiences participated in film culture, the opportunities they had to see films, and the broad discourses about movies from such media as print journalism.<sup>9</sup>

This sort of examination helps us understand the national in both internationalist and fragmented terms. We can study the place of French cinema and French film culture in the rest of Europe as well as the United States and also their reach to France's colonies. But we can examine as well the similarities and differences between Parisian film culture and that of other areas in France—metropolitan, rural, and in between—to develop a more nuanced sense of French cinema.

In the case of Paris alone, by concentrating on the details of reception and exhibition, we acquire a way of reading that city in the manner of Michel de Certeau's "rhetoric of walking," from the ground, in terms of the spatial arrangement of film culture, the location of cinemas, and the movement of films through the city.<sup>10</sup> Studies of urban mobility by art historians and literary

theorists typically have focused on representations of cities made by the artists and authors who walked through them: Walter Benjamin's focused inspection of the arcades of Paris, Édouard Manet's stroll on Georges-Eugène Haussmann's boulevard Malesherbes in the same city in the early 1860s, or Charles Dickens's evocations of London.<sup>11</sup> The important shift in film studies, however, has been to move beyond the study of representations of cities and the options of individuals to explore them, and to analyze the movements through space of the products of culture and of significant numbers of cultural consumers. This movement in the field has led to significant questions about a city and its films: How common was it for a single film to play in more than one cinema in the same neighborhood? What, if any, were the predictable distribution and exhibition patterns across the city? What were the connections between films and the cinemas and neighborhoods in which they played?

We also need to move away from just the local and get a sense of Paris's place within the film culture of the rest of France. In fact, how did movies make their way across the country? It is easy to assume that, at the very least, films opened in Paris and then went on to other cities and then to less urban areas. But what, really, were the patterns involved?

The evidence is hard to come by, particularly for the historian working in the United States. While it can be problematic enough to know much about Paris, it is extraordinarily difficult to find out many of the details of the film cultures of Havre or Marseille or Bordeaux, let alone any of the smaller cities and towns in France. If we take the 1930s, the period covered by so much of this book, as a brief case study, we have some national facts and figures. In 1937, in an example of just some of the numbers that the government acquired, a parliamentary inquest into the status of the French motion picture industry announced that there were four thousand cinemas in France, and that five hundred of them still had not been wired for sound (in fact, compared to Germany or Great Britain, the French film exhibition industry had been very slow to equip its cinemas with the technology required to show sound films).<sup>12</sup> It is very hard, though, to go much beyond that, and we have to get the evidence wherever we can find it.

The daily journalism from Paris in particular and from France more generally can help us here. A few notices from one of the most famous and available newspapers from the period, *Le Figaro*, serve as useful evidence. The paper always ran brief reviews of films and stories about them when they first appeared in the city. On October 25, 1931, for instance, filmgoers learned that the latest Janet Gaynor film from Hollywood, *Papa longues jambes* (*Daddy Long Legs*; 1931), had just opened at the Édouard VII cinema



in the seventh arrondissement, and that Jean Renoir's "audacious" new film, *La Chienne* (1931), was bound to be "greatly discussed as well as at least occasionally condemned."<sup>13</sup>

Films less well known to us also opened that week—Viktor Tourjansky's *Le Chanteur inconnu* (1931), as well as Henri Chomette's *Le Petit Écart* (1931)—and the newspaper marked each of these films "P" for *parlant*, or "talking," to indicate that they took full advantage of the new technology.<sup>14</sup> Photos of the stars of the week often accompanied the brief reviews, in this case one of Gaynor from her film and also the French actress Madeleine Renaud from *Serments* (1931). Advertisements for movies hint at the range of important films in the city, and indeed in any single cinema. On October 31, 1931, readers saw an illustration of an airplane that had crashed nose first to the ground, and learned that Frank Capra's *Dirigible* (1931), dubbed into French, would begin its exclusive run at the Marigny cinema the following Tuesday, replacing Charlie Chaplin's far more intimate—and nontalking—*Les Lumières de la ville* (*City Lights*; 1930).<sup>15</sup> These ads and this information about movies appeared on an entertainment page, with a crossword puzzle, news about concerts, music hall performances, circuses, sporting events, and organization meetings ("Le Club féminin d'aviation" in the October 31, 1931, edition of *Figaro*, next to the advertisement for Capra's film). But *Figaro* provided cinema listings only sparsely, with schedules given for just a few venues for seeing films, because of the paper's mission of providing news and information for all of France.

The same is true for most of the other general-interest French newspapers that covered movies as just one amusement among many, and covered Paris significantly but not solely. As a result, some of the most detailed accounts of the cinema in the city and of the film culture there, at least from the early 1930s, come from *Pour Vous*, the movie tabloid that I came upon by a happenstance I discussed earlier, when I walked into Archives de la presse in Paris's fourth arrondissement. *Pour Vous* was just one of many movie magazines and journals that flourished in Paris and in the rest of France during the 1930s, with even a necessarily short and incomplete selection, yielding such titles as *Ciné Pour Tous*, *Ciné Magazine*, *Mon Ciné*, *Ciné Revue*, *Ciné Miroir*, *Ciné France*, and *Ciné Combat*. Paramount Pictures, the American movie studio, distributed its own journal, *Mon Film*, to advertise the movies that the company made in France—and in French—during the first years of the conversion to sound. As a sign of the importance of much of this film journalism, it was one of France's leading newspaper entrepreneurs, Léon Bailby, the director of the rightwing daily *L'Intransigeant*, who founded *Pour Vous*.<sup>16</sup>



Bailby's film tabloid focused most of its energy on Paris and on the films showing there. At least occasionally—or perhaps in a national issue meant for the rest of the country—*Pour Vous* ran the column “Aux quatre coins de la France . . . ce qui se passe” (“What’s Going On in the Four Corners of France”), announcing regional productions, the comings and goings of movie stars, and the films that had just opened. From the issue of January 22, 1931, readers found out that a comedy hardly known to us now, *Mon coeur incognito* (1930), had premiered in Marseille, at that time the second-largest city in France, and that René Clair's great, early sound film, *Sous les toits de Paris* (1930), had just started playing in Lille, around the tenth-largest city in the country.<sup>17</sup>

*Mon coeur incognito* was actually a German production. The film starred Mady Christians, who was Austrian, and Jean Angelo, a French actor who had had an extensive silent film career and appeared in sound films for just a few years. Two versions seem to have been made, one in French and one in German. At about the same time that the film opened in Marseille, it opened, as well in Paris, the week of January 16, 1931, at the Caméo-Aubert cinema on the boulevard des Italiens in the ninth arrondissement.<sup>18</sup>

This certainly doesn't count as definitive evidence, but it may well indicate that films opened more or less simultaneously in at least a few larger cities. Indeed, when *Pour Vous* announced *Mon coeur incognito* in Marseille, the tabloid also mentioned that G. W. Pabst's 1930 film *Quatre de l'infanterie* (*Westfront 1918*) continued its run there, which would closely match the film's December 1930 opening in Paris. By this time *Quatre de l'infanterie* had also already played in Havre, according to *Pour Vous*, and so it seems likely that Pabst's film had opened throughout France (Havre was only just getting *À l'Ouest rien de nouveau* [*All Quiet on the Western Front*; 1930], which for the last month had been a sensation in Paris).<sup>19</sup>

Other cities, even large ones, had to wait their turn. In western France, audiences in Nantes—typically the fifth- or sixth-largest city in the country—had been hearing about *Mon coeur incognito* for months after it first began showing in Paris. Throughout the late winter and early spring of 1931, there had been weekly radio broadcasts in Nantes of music from the movies, and songs from *Mon coeur incognito* always seemed to be featured, performed by the chanteuse and actress Florelle, who had a part in the film, Bernadette Delpart, and others. But *Mon coeur incognito* didn't come to Nantes until September 1931, when it premiered at the Majestic cinema there.<sup>20</sup>

*Sous les toits de Paris* presents a more difficult case than *Mon coeur incognito*. Clair's film also had links to the German film industry; Tobis Klangfilm,

a German company created to produce sound films, opened a studio outside of Paris, in Epinay, to make French movies and recruited Clair for *Sous les toits de Paris*. The appearance of any Clair film at this time stood out as a major cultural event in Paris, and the press certainly treated the film as something very special when it opened, in April 1930, at the Moulin Rouge cinema on the boulevard de Clichy in the eighteenth arrondissement, and then as the film made its way to other countries in Europe and the United States. The details of its national release in France, however, are difficult to locate.

My best guess is that during the 1930s most French films opened in Paris and Marseille at about the same time. There may also have been different practices for films from different countries. Once again the evidence is difficult to find. As just one example, the Hollywood film *Les Quatre Plumes blanches* (*The Four Feathers*; 1929), with Richard Arlen and Fay Wray, opened in Paris in May 1930 but did not premiere in Marseille until July.<sup>21</sup> In an alternate instance, *Fox folies* (*Fox Movietone Follies of 1929*), which I will write about at greater length in chapter 4, opened in Marseille and Nice at least a few weeks before its contentious premiere in Paris in December 1929.<sup>22</sup>

There is no question that Paris was the most significant city in France for film exhibition. I have yet to find any evidence that a film might play anywhere else for months on end, in the manner of *À l'Ouest rien de nouveau* in the capital. The most typical case might be a film like *J'étais une espionne* (*I Was a Spy*; 1933), a British film with Madeleine Carroll, Herbert Marshall, and Conrad Veidt. *J'étais une espionne* was popular in Paris when it opened at the Élysée-Gaumont cinema in the eighth arrondissement in November 1933, playing there until the end of the year. Then the film moved to the Caméo-Aubert in the ninth, and then, a month later, to the Pagode in the seventh. The film seems to have disappeared for a few weeks after that, and then returned exclusively at the Lutetia in the seventeenth arrondissement in April 1934.<sup>23</sup> The French movie press duly noted this extended run in Paris. *La Revue de l'écran*, which covered cinema in the South of France, ran an advertisement for the film in May 1934, announcing not only the more than four-month success in Paris, but also that the film was being held over in other cities, in Metz and Strasbourg and Brussels.<sup>24</sup> In those places, though, the film was only in its third or fourth week, an indication that viewers there had to wait several months for the film, long after the Paris premiere.

Even if Paris was, occasionally, much like other cities in France in terms of when films might show there, it was also, most of the time, very much the first among equals. Thus we should keep in mind the absolute centrality of Paris to the nation's film culture, but also just how important other

urban locations were to the success or failure of any film, and just how much Marseille, let alone Lyon or Nice or Toulouse or Nantes, meant to the French film industry.

### The Archive of Parisian Film Exhibition

Understanding film exhibition and reception in Paris means reading through a range of primary materials from France and elsewhere. My focus on the period from around 1930 to 1950 reflects my own interests and preferences as well as the availability of materials. But it also is historiographically motivated. In these twenty years, the cinema in France moved from the introduction of sound, to World War II and German control of motion picture production and exhibition, to the postwar rebuilding of a national film industry infrastructure. The first years and the last also saw the adjustment of the American film industry in France, initially to the problems that the new sound technology posed to the internationally dominant Hollywood cinema and then to the opportunities of the years just after the war, when American films reestablished their central position in French film culture.<sup>25</sup>

This is also the period that marks what Colin Crisp has called the “classic French cinema,” which developed with the conversion to sound technology in the late 1920s and lasted for about thirty years, until the broad industrial and stylistic changes heralded by the New Wave most famously, but that were as much bureaucratic as aesthetic.<sup>26</sup> As just one example, during this period, the Centre national de la cinématographie, which guided the French film industry, moved from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to that of Cultural Affairs, under the leadership of André Malraux.<sup>27</sup> While historians have usually applied Crisp’s sense of this classicism to modes of film style, we can also presume that the development of rules governing representation or narrative indicates the possibility of the same precision in other systems connected to the cinema, for instance exhibition.

From the recent work of François Garçon, in fact, we know that, at least during the 1930s, French film exhibition ran on a system of block booking and blind bidding, just as the American cinema did. Garçon provides as an example Marcel Pagnol’s *Marius* (1931). We may think of Pagnol now as something of an independent filmmaker, having moved away from Paris, the cinematic center of France, to make films in Marseille. In fact, for *Marius*, Pagnol signed a coproduction deal with Paramount, the Hollywood company. Pagnol-Paramount then featured *Marius* as the lead film in a block of twenty; to show *Marius*, a film that was bound to be a popular one, cinemas in France also had to agree to show the other nineteen movies.<sup>28</sup> Garçon acknowledges,

however, the baroque complexities of block booking, at least as it was carried out in France. He explains the dense practices of zones and clearances, again as in the American model, that mandated the length of time a film must go in and out of circulation (the “clearances”) and the number of cinemas, and their proximity to each other, where a movie might play at any particular time (the “zones”).<sup>29</sup> In France, then, at least during much of the period covered by this book, we do find an intricate administrative “classicism,” but marked, in the tradition of French cinema, by intermittent yet steady chaos.

While the film journalism from Paris and the rest of France helps us chart these practices, so too does the reporting from the French film industry. The industry typically had an interest in finding out what it could about its audiences and the success of its exhibition practices, and so sources from the movie companies themselves often prove helpful, and in particular the 1948 document *Étude du comportement des spectateurs du Gaumont* (*Study of the Behavior of Spectators at the Gaumont*).<sup>30</sup> That report had been initiated by the Société nouvelle des établissements Gaumont (or SNEG in the dense alphabet soup of French cinema), the fully integrated production and exhibition corporation, in an attempt to find out why viewers went to, or stayed away from, the company’s greatest showcase, the Gaumont-Palace, the largest cinema in Paris and one of the most important. Finally, of course, as erratic as the French film industry may have been during the period—and this instability is taken for granted in all of the histories—the cinema also was highly bureaucratized and linked to the national government, making governmental sources extremely valuable, and in particular two official reports almost twenty years apart: *Où va le cinéma français?* (*Where Is French Cinema Going?*) from 1937, and, from 1954, *L’Étude de marché du cinéma français* (*Study of the French Film Market*).<sup>31</sup> As this book moves chronologically, from about 1930 to the early 1950s, the concerns of these reports will come to seem remarkably similar.

### A Few Notes on Method

This is also a book about a different kind of movement, about film enthusiasts making their way through the city, and movies going from one cinema to another, and about multiple uses of exhibition sites and the varying desires and activities of film audiences. How might this work in actual practice? Let me give a few examples—about cinemas, about a single cinema, and about a film—examples that inform much of the rest of this book.

Let’s consider once again the 1930s. Had you gone to the movies in Paris with any regularity during that period, you would have had a difficult time avoiding the cinemas that belonged to the great exhibition chains. In the early years of

the decade, of the two hundred or so cinemas throughout the city's twenty municipal districts, or *arrondissements*, around three dozen were affiliated with Pathé-Natan: the Marivaux-Pathé, Lutetia-Pathé, Sélect-Pathé, and the Excelsior-Pathé, to name just a few. About twenty-five were part of the Gaumont-Franco-Film-Aubert company: the Aubert-Palace, the Voltaire-Palace-Aubert, the Paradis-Palace-Aubert, and, of course, the Gaumont-Palace in the eighteenth *arrondissement*, the subject of that report mentioned above. These were among the best first-run sites in the city, the *cinémas d'exclusivité*, as well as smaller subsequent-run cinemas in the neighborhoods, the *cinémas des quartiers*.<sup>32</sup>

Chains might have connections with vertically integrated companies that produced and distributed films, with the Gaumont cinemas logically enough, often but not exclusively showing Gaumont films, while Pathé was connected to both Pathé-Natan and Paramount.

While these chains dominated the cinematic landscape of Paris (and, indeed, the rest of France), there were also some smaller affiliated groups of cinemas. At least during the very early 1930s there were two Family chain cinemas in Paris, the Family-Aubervilliers and the Family-Malakoff. A few cinemas were connected to newspapers, and typically specialized in documentaries and newsreels; the two Ciné *Paris-soir* locations, for instance, linked to the evening newspaper *Paris-soir*, or the four-cinema Cinéac chain, attached to yet another of the city's newspapers, *Le Journal*. And then there were a few cinemas with "Studio" in their names that may or may not have been part of a chain: the Studio de l'Étoile and the Studio-Haussmann in the eighth *arrondissement*, or the Studio-Féria in the twelfth, as well as the Studio-Parnasse (which at least for a time during this period specialized in Yiddish films) at 11 rue Jules Chaplain in the sixth. To attend these cinemas as well as those that were unaffiliated with a chain, movie patrons might pay anywhere from four or five francs up to twenty-five for admission (around \$0.20 to \$1.25), depending on the prestige of the cinema, the day, the time of the screening, and the quality of the seat.<sup>33</sup>

It is also worth taking a look at a single cinema that belonged to one of the major chains, moving back and forth through a few decades as we do so. Beginning in the 1930s, had you taken a walk on the boulevard de Rochechouart, not far from Montmartre, you would have had any number of opportunities to go to the movies. The boulevard borders the ninth and eighteenth *arrondissements*, and so you might have stopped in at the Palais-Rochechouart, or the Pathé-Rochechouart a few doors down, or the Roxy. If you wanted a smaller, neighborhood experience, you might have chosen the Clichy cinema just off

the end of the boulevard, which seems to have been one of the numerous independent cinemas in the city. If you were interested in the overall spectacle of the cinema, and in spending a few hours in absolute opulence, you would have walked just a few more yards and gone straight to the Gaumont-Palace, situated just where Rochechouart ran into the place de Clichy and adjacent to the Clichy metro station.

The building's first incarnation was as the Hippodrome de Montmartre, dating from the 1900 World's Fair. Film entrepreneur Léon Gaumont bought the space in 1910 and shortly after that opened it as the Gaumont-Palace. Gaumont remodeled the beaux arts cinema in 1930 and reopened it a year later as an art deco showplace with six thousand seats. There was another renovation in the mid-1950s, and then a decade later the Palace converted to a site for Cinerama and then for 70 mm films.<sup>34</sup>

The reopening of the "new" Gaumont-Palace was a very big story in the French movie world in 1931. *Les Spectacles*, a movie trade tabloid for the north of France and particularly Lille, headlined "A Date in the History of Spectacle: The Reopening of the Gaumont-Palace," and called the new space "the largest and the most modern," and a "success for the entire French film industry."<sup>35</sup> The Palace was a showplace for Gaumont films, of course, but the company went in and out of film production throughout the 1930s because of financial difficulties, and so the cinema showed a range of first-run movies from a number of studios.

That was the Gaumont-Palace through most of the 1930s. With the beginning of World War II, however, things changed, really for all of the cinemas in Paris. As a German invasion and occupation of the capital seemed more and more inevitable, people left the city in droves, and many establishments shut down, including cinemas. By the time of the French surrender to the Germans in June 1940, all of the cinemas had closed. The best information available indicates that the Gaumont-Palace had been among the first to stop showing movies, perhaps because the operating costs for such a gigantic space were difficult to meet during a period of dwindling audiences and other scarcities.

The occupying Nazi force in Paris sought to give the illusion that the city had not skipped a beat since the surrender, and so reopened many of the cinemas there, including the Gaumont-Palace and the much smaller Clichy cinema nearby, perhaps a sign that the Germans hoped to emphasize both the importance of the great movie showplaces and also the more intimate, neighborhood locations. Possibly because it ran smoothly during the war, the Gaumont-Palace made an easy transition through the Liberation and the end of the conflict, showing the usual first-run French movies and also a backlog





Figure 1.2 The Gaumont-Palace cinema, as it looked in the early 1930s.

of American films that had been banned during the Occupation. For the new year in 1947, for instance, the Gaumont showed the MGM musical comedy *Bal des sirènes* (*Bathing Beauty*), from 1944, with Esther Williams and Red Skelton.<sup>36</sup>

I lose track of the Gaumont after this, with listings and other information difficult to come by. Although the Gaumont was torn down in 1972 (a Castorama shopping arcade and Mercure hotel now take up the space), at least by the late 1950s the site had lost none of its status as a Paris icon. In François Truffaut's *Les quatre cents coups* (1959), it's a very big night when Antoine Doinel, his mother, and stepfather go to the Gaumont to see *Paris nous appartient*, although I'm not at all sure that the film ever played there. This was probably just an in-joke between Truffaut and his friend Jacques Rivette, whose film wouldn't even open until 1961. Antoine's stepfather is decidedly grouchy about going to the cinema at all, especially the Gaumont. He frowns when he hears what's playing there, and claims, anyway, that there are too many arsonists at cinemas, and at the Gaumont-Palace in particular.

What if we change our emphasis slightly, from cinemas to a single film as well as to the *cinéphiles* in the city? For a book about moving through Paris, there seems no better example here than Walter Benjamin, a movie enthusiast





Figure 1.3 The Castorama shopping arcade that now occupies the site of the Gaumont-Palace. Photograph by author.

and also, of course, the theorist of the *flâneur*, of idly but purposefully strolling through an urban space. In fact, after Benjamin saw *L'Impossible Monsieur Bébé* (*Bringing Up Baby*; 1938) in Paris in the summer of 1938, he was moved to write to his good friend Gretel Adorno, Theodor's wife. "I recently saw Katharine Hepburn for the first time," Benjamin told her. "She's magnificent and reminds me so much of you. Has no one ever told you that?"<sup>37</sup> Benjamin had enjoyed the film and also Hepburn's performance immensely. But where, exactly, was he when he was struck by this resemblance between the star of Howard Hawks's great comedy and his very close friend? And how long had he waited to see the film?

Benjamin dated his letter July 20, about four months after the March opening of *Bébé* at the Miracles–Lord Byron cinema at 122 avenue des Champs-Élysées in the eighth arrondissement. The Lord Byron was not one of the very grand cinemas on the Champs-Élysées, but it was nevertheless a prestigious venue, and it was one of the cinémas d'exclusivité in the most fashionable parts of the city that specialized in foreign films shown in their original languages and subtitled in French. In the case of the Lord Byron, and in fact many of the other cinemas nearby, those films typically were from Hollywood. When *Bébé*

opened at the Miracles, for instance, *Marie Walewska* (*Conquest*; 1937) with Greta Garbo showed at Le Paris in the eighth arrondissement just a few blocks away, while the Warner Bros. musical *Monsieur Dodd part pour Hollywood* (*Mr. Dodd Takes the Air*; 1937) was at the Helder in the ninth, and *La Rue sans issue* (*Dead End*; 1937) played at the Ciné-Opéra in the second.<sup>38</sup> There also were dubbed films showing in Paris. When audiences watched Cary Grant in *Bébé* during the film's opening in March, they could have seen the actor in another of his comedies from the period, *Le Couple invisible* (*Topper*; 1937), at the subsequent-run Mirage cinema on avenue de Clichy, although they would have heard a French actor speaking Grant's lines.<sup>39</sup>

Based on the available press coverage, it seems to have been a fairly big deal in Paris when *L'Impossible Monsieur Bébé* opened, and the movie had a healthy first run at the Lord Byron, showing for a little over two months until the end of May.<sup>40</sup> But that was hardly extraordinary. *Bébé* replaced another Cary Grant film at the Lord Byron, *Cette sacrée vérité* (*The Awful Truth*; 1937), which had played there for three months (before that, *Ange* [*Angel*; 1937], with Marlene Dietrich, had lasted only about one month, perhaps indicating that Dietrich's star was fading a bit in Paris at the time). Given the dates of *Bébé*'s run at the Lord Byron, it seems doubtful that Benjamin saw it there and then waited six weeks or more to write his letter to Adorno. The film disappeared for a short time after it left the Lord Byron, and then returned, once again with subtitles, to another cinema on the Champs-Élysées, the Ermitage. For a movie to go from one prominent cinema to another with not much time in between was common in Paris at the time, although the venues were not usually so close to one another.

Benjamin almost certainly saw *Bébé* at this second location, with the movie playing there from the end of June until July 20, the date on the letter. On July 21, *Bébé* left the Ermitage, to be replaced by Bob Hope and W. C. Fields in *The Big Broadcast of 1938* (1938). Hawks's film wasn't absent from Parisian screens for long, though, as it had reopened at the Courcelles cinema in the seventeenth arrondissement by the end of the month, and played there for a few weeks. This appearance at the Courcelles would mark the last chance for anyone in Paris, Benjamin included, to see and hear Hepburn and Grant in the film, because *Bébé* went straight from the Courcelles to the Mozart cinema in the sixteenth arrondissement at the end of August, but this time in a dubbed version.

It's difficult to tell whether other cinemas in Paris were showing *Bébé* as well by this time, because most of the available sources are somewhat sketchy. As I mentioned earlier, newspapers like *Le Figaro*, *Le Petit Parisien*, and *Le Matin*

never listed all of the cinemas in the city, and even the Communist newspaper of record in Paris, *L'Humanité*, concentrated only on the “better” venues. If *Bébé* appeared in any other neighborhoods, however, it almost certainly would have been in the same French-language version showing at the Mozart, with this trajectory from exclusively in English at a single cinema to a dubbed format that played throughout the city establishing the pattern for the period. In addition, the film now played on double bills, first at the Courcelles, with the 1937 Barbara Stanwyck film *Déjeuner pour deux* (*Breakfast for Two*), and then at the Mozart with a film I have been unable to identify.

We can place these exhibition sites in Paris against those in the rest of France, to get a fuller sense of the importance of the capital and its relations to other locations. In the case of *Bébé*, during this period the film moved through the nation and also its colonies, as Hawks's film seems to have arrived in North Africa in the early summer of 1939. I haven't found any evidence of *Bébé* playing in Algiers, but it showed in a nearby suburb, Hussein Dey, in June of that year, on a double bill with *Révolte à Dublin* (*The Plough and the Stars*), the 1936 Barbara Stanwyck/John Ford film, at the Cinéma-Royal.<sup>41</sup> In fact the film reached the Algerian market even before it had played in many parts of France. *Bébé* didn't show in Nantes, for instance, in western France, until the week of June 13, 1940, at the Apollo cinema. *Gunga Din*, a Cary Grant film from 1939, was playing at the Palace that week, just a few days before the surrender to Germany, making these almost certainly among the last American films to play in Nantes until the end of the war.<sup>42</sup>

With some necessary detours along the way, examples like these make up the story of this book. Indeed, in the same manner that we might follow developments at the Gaumont-Palace or the place of *L'Impossible Monsieur Bébé* throughout Paris and the rest of France, this book will move through space and time, going from the late silent and early sound era, to the Popular Front and just after, then to World War II and the Occupation, and then to the postwar period, concentrating on Paris but extending to other parts of France, Europe, France's colonies, and occasionally the United States. Chapters will examine exhibition broadly as well as particular cinemas, individual movies, favored performers, and also and unavoidably the violence that was at least a small part of the city's film culture from the 1930s through World War II. Some of the great stars of French as well as international cinema—Maurice Chevalier, Marlene Dietrich, Jean Gabin, Michèle Morgan, and Danielle Darrieux—will come in and out of this narrative, as will those mostly unknown to us today, like the German actress Brigitte Horney who had a brief celebrity in Paris during the Occupation. German control of Parisian—and

French—cinema has a central role here, helping us make sense of some of the occurrences at Parisian cinemas in the decade before the war and those that took place just after, while also complicating our notion of what we mean by national cinema in the first place, as well as the cinema of a particular urban location. Of course, this project is mindful of alternative viewing sites, of the ciné-clubs of Paris and also of the ways that the activities in these specialized locations as well as at traditional ones interacted with other aspects of the Parisian cultural scene. On a small note about method, I have kept all film titles in French, except in those cases when sources use the original titles of foreign—typically American—movies.

So let's begin. Let's start our walk through Paris.

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A WALKING TOUR

## NOTES

### Introduction: A Walking Tour

- 1 Richard Abel, *The Ciné Goes to Town: French Cinema 1896–1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 9–58; Abel, *French Cinema: The First Wave, 1915–1929* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 251–60; Christophe Gauthier, *La Passion du cinéma: Cinéphiles, ciné-clubs et salles spécialisées à Paris de 1920 à 1929* (Paris: Association Française de Recherche sur l'Histoire du Cinéma, 1999); Annie Fee, *Male Cinephiles and Female Movie-Fans: A Counter-History of French Cinephilia, 1918–1925* (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2014).
- 2 Jean-Jacques Meusy, *Paris-Palaces, ou, le temps des cinémas (1894–1918)* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1995); Meusy, *Écrans français de l'entre-deux-guerres, volumes I et II: Les Années sonores et parlantes* (Paris: Association Française de Recherche sur l'Histoire du Cinéma, 2017).
- 3 For an examination of the shift in film studies from an emphasis on texts to an interest in audiences, see my introduction, “The History of Film History,” in *Looking Past the Screen: Case Studies in American Film History and Method*, ed. Jon Lewis and Eric Smoodin (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 1–33. See also Kathy Fuller-Seeley, “Introduction: Spectatorship in Popular Film and Television,” *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 29, no. 3 (2001): 98–99. Annette Kuhn writes of the spectator “constructed by the film text” in *Dreaming of Fred and Ginger: Cinema and Cultural Memory* (New York: NYU Press, 2002), 3–4.
- 4 Christian-Marc Bosséno, “La place du spectateur,” *Vingtième siècle: Revue d'histoire* 46 (April–June 1995): 143–54. See page 143 for the shift from the “screen” to the “cinema” and page 144 for the list of questions.
- 5 Emilie Altenloh, “A Sociology of the Cinema: The Audience (1914),” trans. Kathleen Cross, *Screen* 42, no. 3 (2001): 249–93; Kathryn Fuller-Seeley, ed., *Hollywood in the Neighborhood: Historical Case Studies of Local Moviegoing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Lee Grieveson, *Policing Chicago: Movies and Censorship in Early-Twentieth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Ben Singer, “Manhattan Nickelodeons: New Data on Audiences and Exhibitors,” *Cinema Journal* 34, no. 2 (2001): 5–35; Gregory Waller, *Main Street Amusements: Movies and Commercial Entertainment in a Southern City, 1896–1930* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995).

- 6 The three case studies come from Melvyn Stokes and Richard Maltby, eds., *American Movie Audiences: From the Turn of the Century to the Early Sound Era* (London: BFI, 1999). See Judith Thissen, "Jewish Immigrant Audiences in New York City, 1905–14," 15–28; Leslie Midkiff DeBauche, "Reminiscences of the Past, Conditions of the Present: At the Movies in Milwaukee in 1918," 129–39; and Gregory Waller, "Hillbilly Music and Will Rogers: Small-Town Picture Shows in the 1930s," 164–79.
- 7 For details about the Finsbury Park as well as Greta Garbo's popularity in London and the system for films to play in cinemas there, see John Sedgwick and Clara Pafort-Overdun, "Understanding Audience Behavior through Statistical Evidence: London and Amsterdam in the Mid-1930s," in *Audiences: Defining and Researching Screen Entertainment Reception*, ed. Ian Christie (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 96–110, in particular pages 96 and 99.
- 8 Renaud Chaplain, "Les Exploitants des salles de cinéma lyonnaise: Des origines à la seconde guerre mondiale," *Vingtième Siècle: Revue d'histoire* 79 (July–September 2003): 19–35; Pierre Berneau and Jeanne Berneau, *Le Spectacle cinématographique à Limoges de 1896 à 1945: Cinquante ans de culture populaire* (Paris: Association Française de Recherche sur l'Histoire du Cinéma, 1992); see also Jean A. Gili's preface to the volume (7–13), which cites studies of such places as Marseille, Toulon, and Nice; Sylvia Rab, "Le Cinéma dans l'entre-deux-guerres; une politique culturelle municipale impossible? L'exemple de Suresnes," *Le Mouvement social* 184 (July–September 1998): 75–98.
- 9 For a discussion of new approaches to national cinema, see my essay "American Madness," in *America First: Naming the Nation in US Film*, ed. Mandy Merck (London: Routledge, 2007), 65–82. For a full rethinking of national cinema, and particularly in terms of internationalizing our notion of the term, see Andrew Higson, *Waving the Flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Ruth Vasey, *The World according to Hollywood, 1918–1939* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997).
- 10 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). See in particular chapter 7, "Walking in the City," 91–110, and page 100 for the "rhetoric of walking."
- 11 Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Theodore Reff, "Manet and the Paris of Haussmann and Baudelaire," in *Visions of the Modern City: Essays in History, Art, and Literature*, ed. William Sharpe and Leonard Wallock (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 135–67; Deborah Epstein Nord, "The City as Theater: From Georgian to Early Victorian London," *Victorian Studies* 31, no. 2 (1988): 159–88.
- 12 Jean-Michel Renaitour, ed., *Où va le cinéma français?* (Paris: Éditions Baudinière, 1937), 99. For information about sound technology in various European exhibition industries, see "Le Nombre des cinémas en Europe et la proportion des salles sonorisées," *Livre d'or du cinéma français*, January 1931. Germany at the time had converted 27 percent of its just over five thousand



cinemas to sound, while Great Britain had converted 65 percent of 4,200. In France, which had the same number of cinemas as the UK, the conversion rate was just 14 percent.

- 13 "Les Présentations," *Le Figaro*, October 25, 1931, 8.
- 14 Charles O'Brien, in *Cinema's Conversion to Sound: Technology and Film Style in France and the U.S.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), discusses the "sound" categories of films in France at this time. Besides the *film parlant*, there was also the *film sonore*, that is, the film that "had been shot silent and then supplemented with a separately recorded soundtrack." See pages 68–69.
- 15 *Le Figaro*, October 31, 1931, 9. The advertisement referred to Capra's film as the "grand film Américain parlant français."
- 16 For a discussion of film journalism in France between the late teens and early 1930s, see Colin Crisp, *The Classic French Cinema, 1930–1960* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 216–22. Crisp discusses the founding of *Pour Vous*, and Bailly's interest in cinema, on page 220. Abel, *French Cinema*, 245–50, also examines film journalism from about the same period.
- 17 *Pour Vous*, January 22, 1931, 15.
- 18 *La Semaine à Paris*, January 16, 1931, 52.
- 19 *Pour Vous*, January 22, 1931, 15. For news of *À l'Ouest rien de nouveau*, see, for instance, Morienval, "Toutes les horreurs de la guerre dans *Quatre de l'infanterie*," *La Semaine à Paris*, December 19, 1930, 60–61.
- 20 For news of the radio show in Nantes featuring music from *Mon coeur incognito*, see, for example, issues of *L'Ouest-Éclair*, from February 24, 1931, 10; March 10, 1931, 14; and March 14, 1931, 9. For the film's play dates in Nantes, see *L'Ouest-Éclair*, September 8, 1931, 5.
- 21 For *Les Quatre Plumes blanches* in Paris, see *La Semaine à Paris*, May 9, 1930, 76. For the film in Marseille, see "Aux quatre coins de la France," *Pour Vous*, July 17, 1930, 15.
- 22 Henri Hugault, "Au Moulin-Rouge: Le public manifeste contre la projection d'un film sonore américain," *Le Figaro*, December 9, 1929, 3.
- 23 For the movement of *J'étais une espionne* through Paris, see *La Semaine à Paris*, November 17, 1933, 33; December 15, 1933, 43; January 5, 1934, 39; January 28, 1934, 36; February 16, 1934, 37; and April 10, 1934, 38.
- 24 *La Revue de l'écran*, May 11, 1934, 7.
- 25 François Garçon, in his book *La Distribution cinématographique en France 1907–1957* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2006), discusses the dominance, by 1950, of Hollywood through the example of the Paramount studio, which that year distributed at least one hundred films in France. See page 194.
- 26 Crisp uses the term in the title of his book, *The Classic French Cinema*. See also the conclusion, "The Classic French Cinema and the New Wave," 415–22.
- 27 Frédéric Hervé, "Encombrante censure: La place de la Commission de contrôle des films dans l'organigramme de la politique du cinéma (1959–1969)," in *Le Cinéma: Une affaire d'état 1945–1970*, ed. Dimitri Vezyroglou (Paris: Comité d'histoire du ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, 2014), 123–32.
- 28 Garçon, *La Distribution cinématographique*, 124–25.



- 29 Garçon, *La Distribution cinématographique*, 105.
- 30 SNEG, *Étude du comportement des spectateurs du Gaumont* (Paris: Société nouvelle des établissements Gaumont, 1948).
- 31 Renaitour, *Où va le cinéma français?*; Claude Degand, *Étude de marché du cinéma français* (Paris: Centre national de la cinématographie, 1954).
- 32 For a more extensive discussion of cinema chains in Paris, see Garçon, *La Distribution cinématographique*, 98–104.
- 33 Admission prices are very difficult to determine from the available sources. See, for example, *La Semaine à Paris*, March 31, 1931, and the listing and advertisement for the Rex cinema on pages 39 and 41.
- 34 For historical information about the Gaumont-Palace, see Wikipédia en français, s.v. “Gaumont-Palace,” accessed September 24, 2016, <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaumont-Palace>; and also Xavier Delamare, “Gaumont Palace,” *Cinema Treasures*, accessed September 24, 2016, <http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/6787>.
- 35 “L’Équipement et l’outillage; Une date dans les annals du spectacle; La réouverture du Gaumont-Palace,” *Les Spectacles*, July 24, 1931, 4.
- 36 “Supplément du #81,” *L’écran français*, January 15–21, 1947, 4.
- 37 Lorenz Jäger, *Adorno: A Political Biography* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 62.
- 38 *Le Petit Parisien*, March 27, 1938, 7.
- 39 *Paris-Soir*, March 17, 1938, 13.
- 40 As just one example among many, the daily newspaper *Le Petit Parisien* gave *L’Impossible Monsieur Bébé* a featured review. See André Le Bret, “Cinéma,” March 21, 1938, 8.
- 41 “Autour d’Alger,” *L’Echo d’Alger*, June 20, 1939, 4.
- 42 “Aujourd’hui,” *L’Ouest-Éclair*, June 13, 1940, 3.

### Chapter 1: The Cinemas and the Films

- 1 “Voici les films qui passent à Paris,” *Pour Vous*, October 12, 1933, 15.
- 2 For a discussion of the development of the Champs-Élysées in the 1920s as a location for shopping and going to the movies, see Meusy, *Écrans français*, vol 2: 120.
- 3 In 1931 the population of the eighteenth arrondissement was around 290,000, while the first arrondissement had only 42,000 inhabitants. The fifth, sixth, and ninth had 118,000, 100,000, and 103,000, respectively. See Wendell Cox Consultancy, “Paris Arrondissements: Post 1860 Population and Population Density,” *Demographia*, last modified March 24, 2001, <http://www.demographia.com/db-paris-arr1999.htm>.
- 4 For a discussion of the development of multiple film programs in France, see Crisp, *Classic French Cinema*, 15–17. Just as in the United States, these programs were not uncontroversial. Many film distributors and producers argued against them and also argued against film screenings that began after midnight. There were various injunctions passed in France against double bills and early morning screenings in the 1930s, but none was ever implemented.