

# Concentric Circles and Magnetic Currents: Moral Disarmament at the League of Nations International Institute of Educational Cinematography, 1931-34

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## Introduction

During the 1920s and early 1930s the view that no amount of international arbitration or economic cooperation would prevent the return of war unless people abandoned chauvinistic impulses and embraced cross-national understanding was articulated through what the League of Nations termed moral disarmament. Moral disarmament was concerned with countermanding pernicious feelings inimical to international understanding. In 1932 the Roumanian George Oprescu told the League's International Committee of Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC):

It cannot be denied that very often nations foster a feeling of hatred for other nations ... that misunderstood pride and patriotism are the greatest enemies of mutual understanding between peoples; that the love for one's mother-country stifles the love we owe to mankind to the community of nations. Efforts are being made to remedy this state of affairs by extirpating these pernicious feelings from the hearts of men.<sup>1</sup>

At both the ICIC (established 1922) and the League's Ad Hoc Committee of Moral Disarmament (established 1932)<sup>2</sup> film appeared as a concern for moral disarmament because of its potential to promote cultural misrepresentation and Americanisation. But it was also portrayed as a means to foster the spirit of internationalism even after talking films disrupted earlier notions of silent film as a universal language.<sup>3</sup> The League's International Institute of International Cinematography (IIEC), founded in Rome in 1928 and funded by Mussolini's government, linked educationists, internationalists, humanitarians and the cinema industry around an agenda that saw educational cinematography as a positive mechanism for fostering international friendship in the pursuit of peace. The IIEC worked to facilitate international agreements around the circulation of educational film, conducted empirical studies on children, young people and film, held

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<sup>1</sup> League of Nations Intellectual Cooperation Organisation, "The International Committee on Intellectual Co-Operation and Moral Disarmament. Extract from the Minutes of the Fourteenth Plenary Session of the I.C.I.C. Geneva, July 21, 1932," in *Information Bulletin of the League of Nations Intellectual Co-operation Organisation* 1, no. 4 (1932): 132-38, here 132

<sup>2</sup> The Ad Hoc Committee on Moral Disarmament, established within the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of armaments (1932-34), progressed moral disarmament via nation states and the ICIC additionally through associations. See Elly Hermon, "Le désarmement moral, facteur dans les relations internationales pendant l'entre-deux-guerres," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 39, no. 156 (1989): 23-36. For teachers and moral disarmament see Mona L. Siegel, *The Moral Disarmament of France: Education, Pacifism, and Patriotism, 1914-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Joyce Goodman, "'Shaping the Mentality of Races and Especially of Young People': The League of Nations and the Educational Cinematography Congress, 1934," in *League of Nations: Histories, Legacies and Impact*, ed. Joy Damousi and Patricia O'Brien (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2018), 197-213.

conferences on educational cinematography and disseminated its work via the multilingual journal, *The International Review of Educational Cinematography (IREC)*.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter focuses on articles from two contributors to *IREC*, both of whom sought to foster the international spirit at the heart of moral disarmament. Writing in the context of the IIEC's 1934 conference Evelyn Wrench, the founder of the Overseas League, the English-Speaking Union, and the All Peoples' Association, portrays cinema as a "wonderful instrument of unity" to "unite the coming generation in the bonds of friendship".<sup>5</sup> In his article Wrench includes a concentric circles diagram to illustrate his argument that fostering international understanding and international friendship moves through nationalism to internationalism.<sup>6</sup> The first part of the chapter discusses the spatial-temporal understandings that thread through Wrench's concentric circles diagram, which the chapter argues are grounded in the second law of thermodynamics and resonate with what Bergson terms differences of degree. The second section discusses two papers which film producer, teacher, lecturer, film theorist and activist, feminist and pacifist, Germaine Dulac,<sup>7</sup> delivered at conferences held at the IIEC in 1931 and 1934.<sup>8</sup> When outlining how cinematography fosters international understanding and friendship Dulac argues that the newsreel "puts the most opposed mentalities into communication [and] joins in a magnetic current the most divergent races of the world".<sup>9</sup> She disrupts the geometry of the concentric circles approach by describing the film spectator thrown out of their own circle, which she considers to be a key moment in creating affection and understanding between peoples.<sup>10</sup> The chapter argues that Dulac's account is underpinned by a temporal indeterminacy that resonates with the new physics of subatomic particles and with what Bergson terms differences in kind. The conclusion draws on the thinking of Alfred North Whitehead to suggest that rather than locating these two approaches across an epistemological break, they might be approached as co-existing counterpoints in the spatial-temporal knots of early 1930s moral disarmament.

### **Internationalism, concentric circles and differences of degree: rationalising time and space**

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<sup>4</sup> Christel Taillibert, *L'institut International Du Cinématographe Éducatif. Regards Sur Le Rôle Du Cinema Éducatif Dans La Politique Internationale Du Fascisme Italien* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999); Zoe Druick, "The International Educational Cinematograph Institute, Reactionary Modernism and the Formation of Film Studies," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 16, no. 1 (2007): 80-97; Benjamin G. Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 2016); Andrew Higson, "Cultural Policy and Industrial Practice: Film Europe and the International Film Congresses of the 1920s." in *"Film Europe" and "Film America": Cinema, Commerce and Cultural Exchange, 1920-1939*, ed. Andrew Higson and Richard Maltby (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), 117-31. The IIEC operated until Italy's withdrawal from the League in 1937, see Hilla Wehberg, "Fate of an International Film Institute," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1938): 483-85.

<sup>5</sup> Evelyn Wrench, "Children of the World," *International Review of Educational Cinematography* 6, no. 4 (1934): 272-73.

<sup>6</sup> For languages of international understanding, moral disarmament and the "international mind" see Goodman, Joyce Goodman, "Women and International Intellectual Co-operation," *Paedagogica Historica* 48, no. 3 (2012): 357-68.

<sup>7</sup> Tami Williams, *Germaine Dulac: A Cinema of Sensations* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 187.

<sup>8</sup> Germaine Dulac, Germaine, "The Meaning of Cinema," *International Review of Educational Cinematography* 12, no. 3 (1931): 1089-11099 (delivered at the conference organised at the IIEC by the International Council of Women, see Joyce Goodman, "The Buddhist Institute at Phnom Penh, the International Council of Women and the Rome International Institute for Educational Cinematography: Intersections of Internationalism and Imperialism, 1931-34," *History of Education* 47, no. 3 (2018): 415-31); idem, "The Educational and Social Value of the Newsreel," *International Review of Educational Cinematography* (1934): 545-60.

<sup>9</sup> Dulac, "Educational and Social Value of the Newsreel," 546.

<sup>10</sup> Dulac, "Meaning of Cinema", 1090, 1094

The concentric circles diagram of internationalism that Wrench deploys seeks to illustrate “the way our various loyalties should dovetail into one another”, which Wrench argues is necessary to inculcate internationalism and to “extirpate ... pernicious feelings from the hearts of men”.<sup>11</sup> Wrench’s diagram moves through nationalism to internationalism.<sup>12</sup> The individual is to be a good citizen of their town before they can be a good patriot of their country, and they are to be a good citizen of their country before they can give loyal allegiance to Europe and the World. The same doctrine is true of the young, notes Wrench: “[t]hey should love their countries as well as the greater units of Europe and the World”.<sup>13</sup> For Wrench this is a question of inculcating “the right kind of loyalty”.<sup>14</sup> Resonating with moral disarmament discourse at the League he maintains that “[w]e shall never get lasting peace in the world until we disencumber our minds of wrong thinking”.<sup>15</sup> Youth are to love their family but not hate other families; be proud of their school or university but not hate “other seats of learning”;<sup>16</sup> love their town or districts but not hate neighbouring towns or districts; love their country but not hate neighbouring countries; love their race but not hate other races; love their continent but not hate other continents. Wrench notes that this means “[n]o Europe *versus* America or *versus* Asia theories”.<sup>17</sup> He is also concerned about “relations of the white and coloured races” and with whether “the rising tide of colour” will make a clash between East and West inevitable, which he considers will be key problems for the world during the next 100 years.<sup>18</sup>

Wrench condemns many commercial films for stirring up race-hatred but argues that so long as films are carefully prepared by experts in film-production and by child psychologists the cinema can play a decisive role in preventing “racial war”.<sup>19</sup> He portrays silent and talking films as “wonderful instrument[s] for uniting the coming generation in the bonds of friendship;”<sup>20</sup> and he calls on delegates at the 1934 IIEC conference to draw up a syllabus in which world leaders would “give a talk in simple words to children of other nations on why we should be friends”.<sup>21</sup> He suggests that Mussolini might provide the first talk in French, English and German, followed by “talkies” from other world leaders. He also advocates the establishment of an exchange library of films with titles like “Why European Boys and Girls should be Friends”, “We are all Europeans”, “What other Countries can teach us”, “Why War is stupid” and “Human Nature *does* change”.<sup>22</sup> To foster a sense of civic duty in the young the library is also to contain films on topics like the preservation of wild life, kindness to animals and keeping street and public parks clean.

Wrench adopts a Eurocentric approach and imagines Europe integrating along the lines of the British commonwealth. Wrench was a staunch imperialist who transferred his enthusiasm from the idea of imperial unity to that of eventual world unity. In 1910 he founded the Overseas League for British citizens;

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<sup>11</sup> Wrench, “Children of the World”, 272.

<sup>12</sup> Wrench, “Children of the World”, 272.

<sup>13</sup> Wrench, “Children of the World”, 272.

<sup>14</sup> Wrench, “Children of the World”, 272.

<sup>15</sup> Wrench, “Children of the World”, 272.

<sup>16</sup> Wrench, “Children of the World”, 272.

<sup>17</sup> Wrench, “Children of the World”, 273.

<sup>18</sup> Wrench, “Children of the World”, 273.

<sup>19</sup> Wrench, “Children of the World”, 273.

<sup>20</sup> Wrench, “Children of the World”, 272.

<sup>21</sup> Wrench, “Children of the World”, 273.

<sup>22</sup> Wrench, “Children of the World”, 273.

in 1918 he established the English-Speaking Union to promote friendship and co-operation between the British empire and the United States via exchanges, travelling fellowships, lectures, and social events; and in 1929 he set up the All Peoples' Association, open to all nations, which aimed to promote international amity in general and Anglo-German understanding in particular.<sup>23</sup> In his own youth, Wrench notes, he had been "intensely interested in the welfare of the British empire" and would have loved to have seen films about men like French Canadian Sir Wildrid Laurier, South Africans, Paul Kruger and Cecil Rhodes, New Zealander Richard Seddon and Australian Alfred Deakin.<sup>24</sup> Wrench's model of increasing European integration parallels the cooperation he imagines to characterise the British commonwealth:

We live in an age of integration. On the continent of Europe we have witnessed the growing international unity of Italy and Germany. During the past half century strong forces have been at work unifying the far-flung British commonwealth.<sup>25</sup>

In discussing international integration Wrench deploys an evolutionary unidirectional temporality of "next steps" that moves forward from the heritage of Europe's "splendid past". He comments: "we have got past [the] stage in our evolution" where "in the Middle Ages Perugia had hated and fought with Assisi and England in Scotland". The "next step" for Europeans is to "create a European ethos and set "an example to the rest of the world" by instilling into the minds of children in all "our countries" that in addition to their local loyalty, they are European."<sup>26</sup>

Wrench's concentric circle diagram places the self at the centre of the circles. As Maria Papastephanou argues, in spatial terms, a concentric model with the self at the centre constitutes an individualistic cultural-cognitive model of the enlargement and enrichment of the self and a style of reason thought to invoke a less parochial existence. She describes the concentric circles model as an approach immersed in Western ways of maintaining the coherence of a Western-rooted modern self via a successful negotiation of distance between self and other. She also sees the concentric circles model as a way of affirming identity politics because it raises "one's secure self-image to an exemplary status".<sup>27</sup> It is the self, Papastephanou comments, who is the centre of attention and the primary beneficiary of this intercultural formation because it is the self who entertains feelings of patriotism and cosmopolitanism.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> The Overseas League, founded as the Overseas Club, changed its name in 1918 after amalgamating with the Patriotic League of Britons Overseas. The All People's Association was wound up in 1936 in the face of the rise of Nazism. Alex May, "Wrench, Sir (John) Evelyn Leslie (1882–1966), Promoter of the British Empire and Author," Oxford Dictionary of National Biography <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-37031> [downloaded 18 October 2019].

<sup>24</sup> Wrench, "Children of the World", 273.

<sup>25</sup> Wrench, "Children of the World", 273.

<sup>26</sup> Wrench, "Children of the World", 273.

<sup>27</sup> Maria Papastephanou, *Thinking Differently About Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Eccentricity, and the Globalized World* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2015), kindle locs. 427, 1627-31, 1640-41, 2417-20; quotation at 1627-31; see also idem, "Concentric, Vernacular and Rhizomatic Cosmopolitanisms," in *Cosmopolitanism: Educational, Philosophical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Marianna Papastephanou (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 215-28;

<sup>28</sup> Papastephanou, *Thinking Differently About Cosmopolitanism*, 2417-20. For cosmopolitanism and intellectual cooperation see Joyce Goodman, "Cosmopolitan Women Educators, 1920–1939: Inside/Outside Activism and Abjection," *Paedagogica Historica* 46, no. 1-2 (2010): 69-83.

The unidirectional temporality that underpins Wrench's diagram of international friendship and its move through nationalism to internationalism, is informed by the temporal irreversibility that British astronomer Arthur Eddington called "the arrow of time".<sup>29</sup> This view of temporal irreversibility is grounded in nineteenth century scientific understandings of the laws of thermodynamics, which were elaborated in the realm of physics from the 1840s and impacted on a range of fields, including literature, biology, psychoanalysis and history.<sup>30</sup> The two laws of thermodynamics are concerned with energy. In the first law of thermodynamics, which deals with the transformation of energy (its quantity), the total energy of the system remains constant and is never created or destroyed. The second law of thermodynamics (which refers to energy quality)<sup>31</sup> says nothing about the "flow of time" or about the moment called "now" and its movement into the future;<sup>32</sup> but as Richard Morris outlines, it enables future and past to be distinguished because what is termed entropy constitutes a process in which the amount of energy remains constant but useful energy diminishes due to its dissipation into heat and is rendered unavailable for work.<sup>33</sup> The second law of thermodynamics also illustrates that where no energy is expended the spontaneous flow of heat always takes place in the same direction (from warm to cold).<sup>34</sup> As Michael Ahadef-Jones comments, with the second law of thermodynamics future and past can be distinguished because the measure of entropy enables an observer to distinguish processes on a "before" and "after" basis, which introduced the idea that time has a directionality and shifted conceptions of time from a Newtonian temporal model based on symmetry and reversibility to theories based on irreversibility and unidirectionality.<sup>35</sup> While there is no cause-and-effect relation between theoretical physics and history, as Mary Ann Doane notes, as soon as the theory of energy is injected with a temporal directionality, the ideas of both historical progress and historical decline become possible. In addition, argues Doane, the temporal irreversibility of the second law of thermodynamics manifests itself in the diminishing possibility of differentiation because the logic of the law dictates that as entropy increases, there will be less and less difference, leading to a non-dynamic homogeneity.<sup>36</sup> These differences can be measured quantitatively and mapped in a forward moving notion of time that is irreversible and unidirectional.

Wrench's thermodynamic concentric circles diagram of international friendship is informed by the type of abstracted, divisible and measurable organisation of temporality that Henri Bergson terms differences of degree, and which he construes as "differences of magnitude, quantitative differences of more or less

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<sup>29</sup> Richard Morris, *Time's Arrows: Scientific Attitudes toward Time* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), 121.

<sup>30</sup> Mary Ann Doane, *Mary Ann. The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive*. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 114; Michel Serres, *Hermes, with an Introduction by Josué V Harari and David F Bell* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), Chapter 7.

<sup>31</sup> Entropy represents the amount of energy no longer capable of being transformed into work see Michael Alhadef-Jones, *Time and the Rhythms of Emancipatory Education: Rethinking the Temporal Complexity of Self and Society*. (London: Routledge, 2016), 22.

<sup>32</sup> Morris, *Times Arrows*, 121

<sup>33</sup> Morris, *Times Arrows*, 121, 122; Alhadef-Jones, *Time and Emancipatory Education*, 22.

<sup>34</sup> Morris, *Time's Arrows*, 111 uses the example of when a piece of hot iron is plunged into water the iron is cooled and some water evaporates and no blacksmith ever heated iron by putting it into a water back; and where there is no expenditure of energy, heat will always flow from a warm object to a cool one, but the reverse process is never observed. However, the ability to do useful work is lost - after the hot and cold objects come into equilibrium this would be impossible.

<sup>35</sup> Alhadef-Jones, *Time and Emancipatory Education*, 22.

<sup>36</sup> Doane, *Cinematic Time*, 115, 117.

measurable differences”.<sup>37</sup> As Elizabeth Grosz explains, if quantitative differences are measurable they indicate spatial differences (ie differences between things that can be marked or characterised through measurement).<sup>38</sup> Differences of degree are discrete, discontinuous and homogenous.<sup>39</sup> They are the juxtaposition of points and repeatable units that tend to be addressed as if they are absolute (i.e. existing independently of humankind).<sup>40</sup> These repeatable units measure time spatially as distance in a Cartesian view of (abstract) space also thought to be independent of persons.<sup>41</sup> “[W]hen we speak of time”, writes Bergson, “more often than not we think of homogeneous milieus where the events or facts of consciousness line themselves up, juxtaposing themselves as if in space”.<sup>42</sup> Location in abstract/absolute space/time provides the means to identify the individuality and uniqueness of persons, things and processes.<sup>43</sup> As Dipresh Chakrabarty argues, concepts grounded on notions of abstract/absolute space/time work to demarcate difference and racialize populations by assigning so called primitive societies to slots in evolutionary taxonomies that reinterpreted time as distance in categories of savage, barbaric and civilised.<sup>44</sup> The cultural-cognitive concentric circles model imagines the enrichment and enlargement of the self in similar ways.<sup>45</sup> While the second law of thermodynamics points to an increasing homogenisation based on a diminishing possibility of differentiation, the spatialized linear trajectory of the concentric circles model also supports the potential for “dividing practices”<sup>46</sup> around normative descriptions of the desired pupil based on their ability to move through nationalism to internationalism, which simultaneously constructs a problematic counterpart without those qualities.<sup>47</sup>

In deploying a concentric circles diagram to illustrate the growth of international friendship Wrench builds on the simple, one dimensional common-sense version of time through which public and practical life proceeds. In the spatial-temporal frame underpinning his diagram two things are thought to be contemporary if they inhabit the same segment of time and space, objects are said to co-exist, pre-exist or follow on from each other,<sup>48</sup> space is imagined as separate from place,<sup>48</sup> and time becomes the abstract time

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<sup>37</sup> Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 158.

<sup>38</sup> Grosz, *The Nick of Time*, 159.

<sup>39</sup> Grosz, *The Nick of Time*, 159.

<sup>40</sup> Keith Robinson, ed. Deleuze, Whitehead, Bergson: Rhizomatic Connections. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 224; Sanja Perovic, “Year 1 and Year 61 of the French Revolution: The Revolutionary Calendar and Auguste Comte,” in *Breaking up Time: Negotiating the Borders between Present, Past and Future*, ed. Chris Lorenz and Berber Bevernage, 87-99. Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 87-99, here 87.

<sup>41</sup> David Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom* (New York ; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2009).

<sup>42</sup> Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, Trans. Frank L Pogson. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1921), 90.

<sup>43</sup> Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism*; Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (London: Wiley, 1992).

<sup>44</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>45</sup> Papastephanou, “Concentric, Vernacular and Rhizomatic Cosmopolitanisms”, 217; idem *Thinking Differently*, kindle loc.427;

<sup>46</sup> Thomas S Popkewitz, *Cosmopolitanism and the Age of School Reform: Science, Education, and Making Society by Making the Child* (London: Routledge, 2012), 4.

<sup>47</sup> Julie McLeod, “Educating for ‘World-Mindedness’: Cosmopolitanism, Localism and Schooling the Adolescent Citizen in Interwar Australia,” *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 44, no. 4 (2012): 339-59.

<sup>48</sup> Michael Halewood, A. N. Whitehead and Social Theory: Tracing a Culture of Thought (London: Anthem Press, 2013), 34.

on the calendar or the clock.<sup>49</sup> But this was not the only spatial-temporal approach to fostering international friendship carried in *IREC*. As the following section illustrates, Dulac's theorisation of the contribution of newsreels to international understanding and friendship in her 1931 and 1934 *IREC* articles disrupts the geometry of the concentric circles model of internationalism through a spatial-temporal frame associated with "the world of the infinitely small" that aligns with what Bergson terms differences in kind.

### **Internationalism, newsreels and differences in kind: movement, turbulence and the world of the infinitely small**

Like Wrench, Dulac is critical of aspects of commercial film but views the newsreel as a "great social educator" with the potential for inculcating international friendship.<sup>50</sup> At a point when newsreels were gaining in importance, she turned from directing fiction films to write, direct and produce narrative fiction features, shorts and newsreels.<sup>51</sup> She contributed to the development of non-fiction film through her work as artistic director and director of newsreels at Gaumont-Franco-Films-Aubert, one of France's largest and longest standing production houses, and through France-Actualités, which she established in November 1931 as a French Company of Talking Newsreels and Documentary Films and where she was sole director. This was one of only five or six international newsreel journals, at a time which included the US newsreels Paramount and Fox Movietone and their French counterparts, Pathé Natan and Éclair journal.<sup>52</sup> From 1937 Dulac would also advise the ICIC about the use of newsreels to foster international understanding.<sup>53</sup>

During the 1920s and 1930s Dulac was vice president of the Women's Committee for Moral Disarmament,<sup>54</sup> and her writing on newsreels aligns with League moral disarmament discourse. She portrays newsreels enabling individuals to become familiar with outstanding figures of the "national world" and of the "international chessboard" in ways that are not possible through books, newspapers and manuals.<sup>55</sup> She argues that newsreels penetrate the heart of diplomatic debates, enabling the observer to see something of the "infinitely great" major problems of the day in the alliances and disputes of nations, and that newsreels facilitate the growth of fraternity by providing individuals with opportunities to learn about the manufacture of products in distant corners of the globe.<sup>56</sup> She also writes that ideas circulating via the newsreel enable sorrows to become common, less strange and less abstract, and so help to create bonds and promote understanding. But in Dulac's argument it is not just that newsreels enable the observer to see something of the "infinitely great" major problems of the day. When it comes to international understanding and friendship it is also a question of "little incidents" and the "infinitely small" which she

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<sup>49</sup> António Nóvoa and Tali Yariv-Mashal. "Comparative Research in Education: A Mode of Governance or a Historical Journey? ." *Comparative Education* 39, no. 4 (2003): 423-38, here 431.

<sup>50</sup> Dulac, "Educational and Social Value of the Newsreel," 546.

<sup>51</sup> Williams, T. (2014). *Germaine Dulac: A Cinema of Sensations*. Illinois, University of Illinois Press. Williams, *Germaine Dulac*, p.166

<sup>52</sup> This paragraph draws heavily on Williams, *Germaine Dulac*, 158, 166, 176.

<sup>53</sup> SDN, CICI Annex, no 2 July 203 1937; FGD 990.

<sup>54</sup> Williams, *Germaine Dulac*, 28, 29, 188. The Women's Committee for Moral Disarmament was established in France in 1925.

<sup>55</sup> Dulac, "Educational and Social Value of the Newsreel", 546.

<sup>56</sup> Dulac, "Educational and Social Value of the Newsreel," 546-8.

places on the same plane as the “infinitely great” and which she argues are important factors in breaking down barriers and uniting “classes, races, sentiments, joys and happiness’s”.<sup>57</sup>

...each people was encircled in its particular customs and thought itself the centre of the world. Now that the life of their peoples is made clear in its appealing movement still breathing warmly of its customs and habits, without transposition, we begin to understand that even if it is always foreign to us in its detail, in its great and effective lines it is the same as our own. Thus the Cinema leads us to understand the entire world and to the inevitable conclusion that above all questions of race and country's there is humanity and that in humanity there are things infinitely small and infinitely great.<sup>58</sup>

It is this concern with the “little incidents” of the everyday that Dulac argues differentiates her approach from that of US and French newsreel houses. She writes that the latter focus on sudden and important “blockbuster” grand events, whereas she focuses on the “subtle ... slow-burn” type of event “that evolves as the days go by”.<sup>59</sup> In noting that the “true meaning” of “slow-burn” events becomes clearer only with time<sup>60</sup> Dulac situates her newsreel practice within an indeterminate temporality that resonates with the newly developing physics of subatomic particles that brought an experience of indeterminacy to characterise not only mathematical knowledge of the physical world, but also values, language, and social life.<sup>61</sup>

Dulac’s interest in the world of the “infinitely small” was fostered through scientific and educational film and particularly through the microcinematography of Jean Comandon, whose films she projected during a number of her conference talks from the 1920s and whose microcinematography techniques she interwove within her earlier avant-garde practice. As Paula Amad argues, Comandon traversed the visible and invisible by bringing into visibility “slices of life teeming with vitality”.<sup>62</sup> His techniques of microcinematography and time-lapse in his experimentation in scientific films of plant growth and cell division used the camera to illustrate what had previously been invisible dimensions of nature’s daily life.<sup>63</sup> In similar vein Dulac writes that it is the focus on life-matter that renders the existence of the individual less isolated and encourages them to leave their own “petty circles”.<sup>64</sup> As a consequence, “the least village [comes into] communication with the entire universe, the least individual with all men”.<sup>65</sup> This stress on “life” resonates with Bergson’s notion of *élan vital* - “the vital impetus of force that propels life forward from its beginnings and through all its varieties and forms”<sup>66</sup> - which Bergson construes together with what he terms duration (*durée réelle*) - the lived movement of temporality - and with a notion of intuition as the method of entering into

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<sup>57</sup> Dulac, “Educational and Social Value of the Newsreel,” 546, 548.

<sup>58</sup> Dulac, “Meaning of Cinema”, 1094.

<sup>59</sup> Germaine Dulac, “Cinema at the Service of History: The Role of Newsreels” (1936), cited in Paula Amad, *Counter-Archive: Film, the Everyday, and Albert Kahn's Archives de a Planète* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 164.

<sup>60</sup> Dulac, “Cinema at the Service of History”, 164.

<sup>61</sup> For developments in quantum physics around uncertainty see Suzanne Guerlac, *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), chapter 2.

<sup>62</sup> Amad, *Counter-Archive*, 242.

<sup>63</sup> Amad, *Counter-Archive*, 212.

<sup>64</sup> Dulac, “Meaning of Cinema”, 1107.

<sup>65</sup> Dulac, “Meaning of Cinema”, 1107.

<sup>66</sup> Robinson, *Rhizomatic Connections*, 224.



duration's undivided flow. As Keith Robinson explains, duration is heterogenous, qualitative, continuous and interpenetrating, and the creative dynamism and indivisible movement of "the time of life" ... the mobility of time itself".<sup>67</sup> It is within duration, writes Bergson, that differences of kind are experienced. These are the qualitative temporal differences that are incomparable and unique and constitutive of the particularity of events. They are impossible to measure or to describe in numerical terms but are discernible in and for conscious mental life, comments Elizabeth Grosz.<sup>68</sup>

Amad argues that advances in the manipulation of the speed and scale of the camera's vision expanded the parameters of film's synthesizing capacities as a universal visual language and enabled film to portray not only "global and cultural difference discovered in far and foreign lands" and "the life of their peoples" but also to uncover "that which was near and familiar yet undetectable to the naked eye ... or simply beneath the habitual radar of the human gaze".<sup>69</sup> In her cinematic practice (which she terms extended cinema) Dulac builds on the notion of the camera as a powerful eye able to capture the invisible: "that which our eye cannot see [and which] "exists materially but is outside our range of visual perception".<sup>70</sup> She describes the slow motion camera exploring "the domain of minute things in nature" and showing us visually "dramas and beauties which our too synthetic eye does not perceive".<sup>71</sup> For Dulac, the educative role of the cinema lies in its ability to render perceptible things "whose existence we have always known and never understood".<sup>72</sup>

Siegfried Kracauer refers to inter-war views of the "uplifting" effects of films that were thought to enable those whose sensibilities had been blunted by the predominance of technology and analytical thinking to resume "sensuous and immediate contact with life".<sup>73</sup> In this vein Dulac notes that newsreels reveal the "truth of life" and enable individuals to "see it, live it and not only fancy it".<sup>74</sup> She writes that through the newsreel "humanity is uplifted above its individual characteristics and through a gradual comprehension of life begins to forget and forgo its hates"<sup>75</sup> as wider knowledge of the world is portrayed that frees "the sense of the individual and tune[s] his spirit with the general universality of mankind".<sup>76</sup> Dulac's orientation to "the art of movement and the visual rhythms of life and the imagination",<sup>77</sup> revealed by the powerful eye of the camera, underpins her argument that spontaneity is central to the newsreel film-making process.<sup>78</sup> She comments: What is the newsreel? It's the event of the day, captured in its movement and life, and thus in its truth by the camera and the microphone.<sup>79</sup> For Dulac the camera lens and the microphone deliver the real and invent nothing, as Williams notes. Central to this conception of the newsreel and its capacity for objectivity and its ability to deliver "truth", is the unpredictability of the

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<sup>67</sup> Robinson, *Rhizomatic Connections*, 224.

<sup>68</sup> Grosz, *Nick of Time*, 159.

<sup>69</sup> Amad, *Counter-Archive*, 212.

<sup>70</sup> Dulac, "Meaning of Cinema", 1093.

<sup>71</sup> Dulac, "Meaning of Cinema", 1093.

<sup>72</sup> Dulac, "Meaning of Cinema", 1092.

<sup>73</sup> Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality, with an Introduction by Miriam B Hansen* (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), 170.

<sup>74</sup> Dulac, "Educational and Social Value of the Newsreel," 546.

<sup>75</sup> Dulac, "Educational and Social Value of the Newsreel", 546.

<sup>76</sup> Dulac, "Educational and Social Value of the Newsreel", 546-7.

<sup>77</sup> Germaine Dulac, "La cinégraphie intégrale", in Marcel Lapiere, ed. *Anthologie du cinéma* (Paris: La Nouvelle Edition, 1946), cited in Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 184.

<sup>78</sup> Dulac, "Meaning of Cinema", 1091.

<sup>79</sup> cited in Williams, *Germaine Dulac*, 182.

subject matter itself, which is not to be prepared like a studio scene, or to be overlaid with commentary, as Williams describes.<sup>80</sup>

Dulac's recourse to unpredictability rests in turn, on her belief that it is the registering of movement that makes film an art in itself;<sup>81</sup> and that it is the powerful eye of the camera that registers "the spirit which comes out of movement".<sup>82</sup> But this is not the type of movement associated with the spatial-temporal frames of Wrench's linear trajectory from A to B (through nationalism to internationalism). In Dulac's configuration of international understanding and friendship, as the powerful eye of the camera attacks "minute shades of difference"<sup>83</sup> individuals encounter the turbulence without which Tim Cresswell comments, there can be no movement.<sup>84</sup> Unlike the linear trajectory of Wrench's concentric circles diagram, in Dulac's approach the spectator is thrown out of their circle:

It is Impossible to deny that the Cinema vastly increases our knowledge. At every moment it throws us out of our own environment and out of our own circle, our own knowledge, into worlds of which we were ignorant. It moves about, grasps forms, their rhythm and spirit by attacking those minute shades of difference which conceal instinct. It is a powerful eye added to our own which is much too limited.<sup>85</sup>

As individuals are thrown out of their own environment and out of their own circle and their own knowledge into worlds of which they were ignorant",<sup>86</sup> they encounter friction as they brush up against lives, intelligences, joy and misery that are hitherto unfamiliar:

We range every moment into mysteries and marvels with which we are unacquainted and we brush up against lives, intelligences, joy and misery that we should not have suspected. The cinema shows them to us, uncovers them to our gaze, renders them sensible to us so that they may become familiar. This simply by the power of the lens, mathematically related to the speed at which the film travels.<sup>87</sup>

Turbulence from newsreel's "little incidents" and from "movement still breathing warmly" of custom and habits<sup>88</sup> creates what Michel Serres calls a space of passage. All learning, writes Serres, comes through passage in the third place, where space is sown with sites of exposure and time is deployed. Serres describes this space of passage as a state of phase change "between equilibrium and disequilibrium, between being and nothingness" and a space where sensitivity to possibility or capacity comes from the exposure to "the other" without which Serres argues, there is no learning.<sup>89</sup> Paraphrasing Anna Tsing it is in these "zones of awkward engagement" that new realities are made through friction and exposure and

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<sup>80</sup> Williams, *Germaine Dulac*, 183,187

<sup>81</sup> Dulac, "Meaning of Cinema", 1090

<sup>82</sup> Dulac, "Meaning of Cinema", 1092.

<sup>83</sup> Dulac, "Meaning of Cinema", 1091.

<sup>84</sup> Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World*. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 265; see also the description of turbulence in Serres, *Hermes*, 75.

<sup>85</sup> Dulac, "Meaning of Cinema", 1091.

<sup>86</sup> Dulac, "Meaning of Cinema", 1091.

<sup>87</sup> Dulac, "Meaning of Cinema", 1091.

<sup>88</sup> Dulac, "Meaning of Cinema", 1094.

<sup>89</sup> Michel Serres, *The Troubadour of Knowledge*, trans. Sheila F Glaser and William Paulson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 8-9, 12.

international connections can be made powerful but can also get in the way of the smooth operation of international power.<sup>90</sup>

Mobilities with different configurations of time and space emerge In Dulac's and Wrench's deployment of circles as they account for international understanding and friendship. Dulac's recourse to duration as a heterogenous indeterminate mode of temporality, *passage*, or transience aligns with Bergson's differences in kind and his view that mobilities of duration are accessible only by placing oneself within duration.<sup>91</sup> Wrench's model exemplifies a unidirectional and spatializing temporality associated with thermodynamics that resonates with Bergson's view that spatialisation is inherent to the intellect and aligns with a temporality that he characterises as differences of degree. Both Dulac and Wrench reserve a place for the national in fostering international understanding and friendship. Wrench's diagram moves explicitly through nationalism to internationalism. Despite Dulac's stress on the universality of film and her antipathy to nationalism, her attention to the everyday lives of peoples where "movement still breath[es] warmly" of custom and habits<sup>92</sup> resonates with her view that although "spiritual and social internationalism might appear", films from each country bear the marks of their origin and remain national in particular ways.<sup>93</sup>

In 1933 the poet Paul Valéry argued that the "world of the infinitely small" had challenged the "old idea of unification, of explication of the universe", determinism and causality,<sup>94</sup> which Gaston Bachelard would subsequently frame as an epistemological break.<sup>95</sup> Thinking with Alfred North Whitehead, however, suggests that situating Wrench and Dulac across an epistemological break would constitute what Whitehead terms a bifurcation of nature in which a scientific conception of the world and a subjective experience of the world would be divided.<sup>96</sup> Whitehead's theorisation of the event suggests an alternative reading in which the divergent spatialities-temporalities of Wrench's and Dulac's approaches to fostering international understanding and friendship constitute spatial-temporal counterpoints knotted together in 1930s moral disarmament, to which the conclusion turns.

### **Conclusion: spatialities-temporalities of moral disarmament as event.**

As Didier Debase outlines, Whitehead shares Bergson's view that the central feature of reality is becoming or process, and he also understands the "real" as a fundamental movement or creative force that expresses itself as a process of occasions. Like Bergson, too, Whitehead critiques the spatialisation thought to occur as movement is translated spatially and temporally into points and successions, ignoring the fluency of the world and analysing the world in terms of static categories. But as Debase charts, Whitehead parts

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<sup>90</sup> Anna L Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 6.

<sup>91</sup> Didier Debase, "The Emergence of a Speculative Empiricism: Whitehead Reading Bergson," in *Deleuze, Whitehead, Bergson: Rhizomatic Connections*, ed. Keith Robinson (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 77-88, here 81.

<sup>92</sup> Dulac, "Meaning of Cinema", 1094.

<sup>93</sup> Dulac, "The Meaning of Cinema, 094

<sup>94</sup> Paul Valéry, *Œuvres Complètes. 2 Vols.* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), cited in Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, 16.

<sup>95</sup> Bachelard, *The Scientific Mind*, cited in Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, 17.

<sup>96</sup> Maria Tamboukou, "Challenging the Bifurcation of Nature: Women Workers' Education through Process Philosophy," ISCHE 40, Humboldt University Berlin, 20 August to 1 September 2018, 2018, with thanks to Maria Tamboukou for a written copy of her keynote. Didier Debase, *Nature as Event: The Lure of the Possible* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 7.

company with Bergson over the latter's view that spatialisation is an inherent necessity of the intellect. For Whitehead the mind is the meeting place of what we know and how we know: "the nature apprehended in awareness" and the "nature which is the cause of awareness".<sup>97</sup>

Whitehead argues that all thought and thinking involves abstraction which arises from the process of selection whereby some elements are combined but not all elements of existence.<sup>98</sup> The error, argues Whitehead, lies in the way abstractions are mistaken for concrete realities<sup>99</sup> and treated as though they are concretely real and a "fact",<sup>100</sup> a process that Whitehead terms, the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness".<sup>101</sup> As Michael Halewood summarises, Whitehead does not overlook the work that abstractions do in the world, but he insists that they do not explain as much as they think they do: "for every abstraction neglects the influx of the factors omitted into the factors retained".<sup>102</sup> As Halewood comments, Whitehead considers that there is a fullness to existence that is not captured by abstractions of knowledge. In Wrench's approach, the division of space and time into points and instants and the notion that time is an uninterrupted flow within which things occur,<sup>103</sup> are made possible by the work of abstraction. Similarly, Dulac's recourse to the the infinitely small and the infinitely great exemplifies the work of abstraction, despite the notions of movement and life that she deploys.

As Steven Shaviro argues Whitehead treats entities that are on different scales, levels of reflexivity and complexity in the same manner. He does not separate how we know from what we know and he sees no reason why mental events should be treated any differently than any other sort of events - they are all parts of the same stream of experience. Shaviro comments that for Whitehead, categories are not imposed by the mind. Rather, they are immanent to the "data" - the events or actual occasions - out of which they arise by a process of abstraction.<sup>104</sup> Consistent with this line of thinking, Whitehead's theory of the event situates theoretical, abstract and operative elements on the same plane.<sup>105</sup> Events do not "happen to" things: rather events themselves *are* the only things".<sup>106</sup> Events are fundamental - a happening, an occurrence, an occasion, a phenomenon - and things or substances can be variously viewed as "effects", "products" or temporary "structures" of events.<sup>107</sup> There is no mere time which is filled up with events and happenings. There are simply events and happenings through which we experience and within which we find ourselves.<sup>108</sup> Paraphrasing Debaise, the passage of time is an event, as are the perspectives through which we

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<sup>97</sup> Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920 [1964 edn.], 31; see Debaise, *Nature as Event*, 12.

<sup>98</sup> Michael Halewood, *A. N. Whitehead and Social Theory: Tracing a Culture of Thought* (London: Anthem Press, 2013), 147.

<sup>99</sup> Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (Cambridge University Press, 1925 [1967 edn]), 56, cited in Halewood, *Whitehead and Social Theory*, 51; Debaise, *Nature as Event*, 24

<sup>100</sup> Halewood, *A. N. Whitehead and Social Theory*, 157.

<sup>101</sup> Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature*, 20-21.

<sup>102</sup> Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York: Free Press, 1938 [1968 edn]), 196.

<sup>103</sup> Alfred North Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect*. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1927), 35.

<sup>104</sup> Steve Shaviro, "Deleuze's Encounter with Whitehead,"

<http://www.shaviro.com/Othertexts/DeleuzeWhitehead.pdf>. 9-10, 12, 13.

<sup>105</sup> Debaise, *Nature as Event*, 33.

<sup>106</sup> Shaviro, "Deleuze's Encounter with Whitehead", 7. Italics in the original.

<sup>107</sup> Robinson, *Rhizomatic Connections*, 226.

<sup>108</sup> Halewood, *A.N. Whitehead and Social Theory*, 127.

experience it and the parts of it that we differentiate and spatialise in our perception.<sup>109</sup> As Maria Tamboukou explains, events happen and disappear and then conceptual abstractions are constructed to account for them.<sup>110</sup> Thinking with Whitehead's notion of event suggests that rather than located across an epistemological break, the space-times of Wrench's concentric circles diagram and Dulac's newsreels might be approached as spatial and temporal counterpoints that coexist and are knotted together in the fabric that constituted 1930s moral disarmament.

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<sup>109</sup> Debaise, *Nature as Event*, 30.

<sup>110</sup> Tamboukou, "Challenging the Bifurcation of Nature".