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# Gustave Caillebotte and Visual Representation : Perspective, Photography and Movement

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines spatial composition in Caillebotte's painting and, through it, his ways of producing visual experience for the viewer. The four chapters evaluate the artist's methods of composition through the use of perspective, photography, light and colour and depiction of the figures. This project will explore the development of his pictorial space organisation through the study of his realist works of the 1870s and the understanding of his convergence with Impressionism at the end of the decade and early 1880s.

The first two chapters explore Caillebotte's approach to spatial organization in his predominantly urban based works of the 1870s, examining the interaction these pictures establish with the viewer through their manipulation of space. It looks at how Caillebotte composed his paintings through the tradition of perspective and also his engagement with photography and photographic effects. The uses of photography in Caillebotte's work is the particular focus attempts of the second chapter where I weigh up the evidence of Caillebotte's use of photographic devices and look at the relationship of his painting to his brother's photography.

The second chapter of the dissertation explores Caillebotte's evolution towards a more Impressionistic style of composition and the artistic dialogue with Monet that drew his work closer to impressionist painting. This sees the transition of Caillebotte's representation of picture-space from the more structured and ordered compositions of the early 1870s, to a freer and looser style of painting focused more on atmosphere and light. Caillebotte's depictions of the countryside bear close comparison with Monet in terms of their motifs, palette and technique. Like Monet, Caillebotte begins to translate and organise what he sees through colours, light and movement. However, Caillebotte preserved a sense of spatial structure in most of his paintings that differentiates his work from his Impressionist colleagues. The chapter also goes on to explore whether the change of motif in his work in the 1880s from city to countryside subjects influences his methods of composition?

I argue that while Caillebotte and Monet share some similarities, they differ in their approaches towards Impressionism. Caillebotte puts more emphasis on the representation of figures as a way of conveying sensations through the figure's gaze while Monet prefers to focus on pure landscape, where the only gaze is that of the solitary artist as spectator.

The final chapter returns to the question of the figure and the way in which Caillebotte manipulates the attention of the viewer through the directional gaze of the figure in the picture. Here, drawing on the work of Fried and Prendergast among others I look at how Caillebotte creates complex visual effects of spectating in his work and explore some of the ways in which Caillebotte's painting contains proto-cinematic devices.

## INTRODUCTION

Despite being one of the most regular contributors to the Impressionist exhibition and his influence as a patron of the impressionist artists, Caillebotte has been for a long time marginalized from Impressionism. In part, this has been due to the way the history of Impressionism has been written. The focus of Impressionism around Monet and a small group of artists closely associated with his painting has led to a too narrow focus on what constituted impressionist painting and the debates within that movement, as well as the marginalization of painters whose work differed from Monet's despite their close working relationship with Impressionism. In Caillebotte's case, the matter is complicated by the fact that his most famous and innovative works have been regarded as coming from what many have considered his 'pre-Impressionist' work of the early 1870s. His early works shared much in common with contemporary developments in realism as opposed to his paintings from the early 1880s which moved closer to Monet's style. The lack of a perfect fit of Caillebotte within the history of Impressionism led to his works being quickly forgotten until the 1970s when changing approaches to art history led to a significant revision of the history of the movement that both broadened the range of artists it encompassed and redefined the terms in which their work was understood, expanding our understanding of their choice of motifs, the theories their work rested on and how their work related to social and artistic debates of the time.

Yet, revisionist histories of Impressionism still struggle to define Caillebotte's place within that movement. The differences of his work from his impressionist colleagues is most immediately registered in his choice of motif and employment of perspective, a compositional technique Caillebotte continued to use despite its abandonment by Impressionist artists. My dissertation initially explores how the artist's organization of space creates visual experience and sensations through this technique that are integral to the way he envisages his motifs. In these early works, the artist aims, I argue, to convey complex experiences of the city in a way that viewers can interpret it and participate in it. I go on to compare his treatment of spatial composition in relation to motifs outside the city that show him organizing his spatial composition and the viewer's experience in different, often opposed, ways. In exploring these motifs, the dissertation addresses the artist's different ways of conveying visual experiences in a range of issues that bear on questions of his use of perspective, his relationship to Impressionism, his engagement with and uses of photography and his concerns with visual

sensation and movement. My purpose is to demonstrate how the artist interacts with the viewer through this spatial organization and visual sensations.

In the recent scholarships on Caillebotte, issues of space, perspective and photography have become central to understanding his work. The work of Kirk Varnedoe, Peter Galassi, Anne Distel and more recently Karin Sagner have all identified the relationship between photography and the artist's realist qualities as key features of this. The artist incorporated in his works techniques such as the cropping of the image, viewpoints, perspective and atmospheric effects that were associated with photography and the culture's appetite for experiences that belonged to certain currents of realism. My dissertation explores these issues and the complicated relationship between the compositional qualities of Caillebotte's work that scholars have associated with the artist's interest in photography and his engagement with effects of movement that, I argue, in some cases anticipated early cinematography. In respect of this, I will argue that the experiments with the decomposition of movement employed by Eadweard Muybridge's works are relevant to understanding certain effects in Caillebotte's work.

Caillebotte witnessed the transformation of Paris that took place during the Haussmannian period. His early works responded to the modernity of this environment, a subject matter which most Impressionists started abandoning in the mid-1870s in favour of pure landscapes in countryside settings. Caillebotte's urban paintings evoke the social, economic and physical changes that occurred in the modernization of Paris. The question arises as to why Caillebotte combined traditional classic methods and impressionist techniques in his representations of the modernization of Paris. One of the main aims of this dissertation is to understand Caillebotte's evolution from a realist style to a more Impressionistic approach.

A further question the dissertation explores is the greater convergence of Caillebotte's work with an Impressionistic style in the late 1870s and 1880s. What was it that led him in this direction and what were the implications for his conventionalization of his paintings? Was he trying to convey a new visual experience that privileges the sensations of the painting over the organization of the composition? While it may not be possible to fully answer these questions, this dissertation aims to improve our understanding of the artist's contribution to the Impressionist movement. Initially, this dissertation explores the influence of earlier artists on Caillebotte, modern advances in photography, the physical environment in which he was

living and his social background. All these elements allow us to understand some of the reasons of the artist's change of artistic style.

In the first chapter looking at space and perspective, I examine Caillebotte's tendency towards Realism and his use of perspective. This chapter attempts to understand Caillebotte's approach to spatial composition and how this involves interaction with the viewer's visual experience. By studying his methods of composition and techniques of perspective, one can identify whether the artist was influenced by Renaissance Old Masters such as Piero Della Francesca or Uccello. Caillebotte's conception of space strongly shares affinity with Renaissance masterpieces. However, his use of perspective remains unconventional. After discussing the artist's construction of space in comparison to Renaissance art, I explore Caillebotte's representation of urban working class life, one of the main motifs of Realism. Caillebotte shares some techniques with Realism such as viewpoints and motifs he uses, especially in his early work. It is therefore worth determining the extent that he uses realist attributes in his works and if so identifying what these realist attributes are. Caillebotte uses an unconventional approach to space and perspective that might distance him from Realism.

The second chapter focuses on the photographic qualities that are present in his works and how they contribute to create visual sensations. Throughout this chapter I will evaluate the relationship between photography and Impressionism. Impressionism produces an organic sensation while photography produces a more mechanical visual experience. Many Impressionists perceived their work as being based on a 'personalized optic', contrasting their painting with the mechanized vision of photography or the 'optical neutrality' of naturalism. Caillebotte's early paintings show strong influences of contemporary photography while his later works in countryside settings place more emphasis on the unique unreproducible aspects of his motifs, which illustrates the idea of 'personalized optic.' These motifs are suggested, rather than imitated, through the use of heightened, expressive colour and brushwork. Caillebotte's photographic qualities offer one way of seeing the world, in other words, one experience. Yet, I argue that Caillebotte was concerned not to lose pictorial design and structure in his painting, common criticisms of the work of Monet and other Impressionists. Hence my argument is that Caillebotte evolved towards Impressionism while maintaining a sense of spatial order.

My third chapter explores the artistic dialogue in his work of the late 1870s with Monet. The artist's methods of composition and way of structuring space differ from the



Impressionists looser and freer technique, which entailed unlearning of conventional rules and artistic formulae of academic composition.

The fourth chapter will examine the artist's use of the gaze as a way of providing the spectator with a new visual experience. By emphasizing the gaze of the figures, Caillebotte allows the viewer to witness the scene through his own eyes. This chapter will study the notion of the window and the experience of *flâneurism*.<sup>1</sup> The gaze of the *flâneur* is important as it indicates the different viewpoints of the picture. Caillebotte's inclusion of a *flâneur* is very important as it provides a conduit for the viewer who is exploring the scene through the perception of the figure. In this respect, the importance of the motif of the window as a frame of the painting in his work *Jeune Homme à la Fenêtre* (1876), I argue, is a key aspect of his composition. This painting is crucial as it contains most of the themes I will be looking at, such as perspective and the perception of the artist. One of the issues under discussion here will be to what extent are the thoughts and feelings of figures presented in Caillebotte's works readable or unintelligible.

The four chapters evaluate the artist's ways of producing visual experience and his evolution towards a more Impressionistic looser style. This dissertation will take into account the artist's background and environment in order to provide an understanding of his choice of motifs and technique. Comments and criticism on Caillebotte during the Impressionist exhibitions will also allow discussion on how these factors were registered in the reception of his works. Thus, the main question that I address here is: how can we account for Caillebotte's approach to spatial composition? In what sense is the artist translating his experience of the modern city through his works? How can one explain Caillebotte's evolution from a realist approach to a more Impressionistic style? How does Caillebotte's use of perspective and study of space contribute to create impressions of movement? To what extent is the gaze of the *flâneur* providing information or guiding the viewer towards a particular viewpoint?

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<sup>1</sup> *Flâneurism* comes from *flâneur*, also known as *Rückenfigur* meaning a person often seen from behind, sometimes placed at a window

## CHAPTER I

### SPACE AND PERSPECTIVE

The first section of this chapter explores Caillebotte's conception of space. As I will argue, Caillebotte's art initially involved an attempt to encompass space as a whole that he would later abandon in his painting. Until the late Nineteenth Century, the tradition of perspective still mostly influenced the conventions of representation of space. These conventions of representing space were taught through the academy and critics. Artists and viewers generally accepted that a painting should follow with a rational receding space structured along the lines of the principles established through perspective. However, this conception of space was to be increasingly challenged by both ideas about how the eye sees and styles of painting that relativised and rejected this notion of picture space. The Renaissance tradition originates from Filippo Brunelleschi, one of the inventors of a method of perspective known as *the linear perspective* in 1413. Caillebotte's early works showed him fully conversant with the principles of perspective. In his early works we see him organizing his pictures in relation to such principles, but Caillebotte went further by showing more than the eye can see. Were Renaissance artists seeking, as Caillebotte did in his paintings, to incorporate more elements than it is possible to see in a human field of view? Understanding the legacy of the Renaissance tradition of perspectival composition and how these principles were naturalized in the 19<sup>th</sup> century academic art is essential in order to articulate Caillebotte's vision of space. Caillebotte was not just following the principles of perspective but was going further by animating it. Kirk Varnedoe states that Caillebotte only went to Italy once in 1872 and it is questionable whether he could have seen some of the works that his paintings most resemble, particularly those by Uccello and Piero della Francesca. Nevertheless, he may have seen prints and copies, and would have seen illustrations of perspective in artists training manuals.<sup>2</sup> His works show a strong correspondence with some Renaissance artists in the organization of space.

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<sup>2</sup> Certainly, the Louvre offered many examples of representative perspectivaly organized pictures. J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *Gustave Caillebotte, A Retrospective Exhibition*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston- October 22 to January 2, The Brooklyn Museum- February 12 to 24, 1976 – 1977, p 24

This first chapter will identify how the artist uses space as one way of creating visual experiences. Therefore, was Caillebotte's aim to challenge the perception of the viewer? While it is true that the artist's choice of space and angle offers a different experience to the viewer than that of contemporaneous paintings, did he also intend to experiment with a new approach to art? This chapter will especially focus on the artist's ways of organizing his urban space during the 1870s. In his street paintings, the artist privileged the structure of space and the sensation that it creates on the viewer's perception of reality. The modernity of the new city became a primary motif in Impressionist painting, especially between the 1870s and 1880s. In what sense did the artist's manipulation of space allow him to interact with the viewer? In his attempt to represent his own perception of space, was the artist aiming at challenging the established rules of perspective?

Caillebotte mainly focused on one-point perspective as one may see in *The Pont de l'Europe* and two-points perspectives as it is the case in *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* (fig.1). This emphasizes even more the impression of distance created by the perspective.<sup>3</sup> *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* is held at the Art Institute of Chicago and *Pont de l'Europe* (fig.2) at the Musée du Petit Palais, Geneva. The artist presented his two works at the occasion of the Third Impressionist Exhibition in 1877.<sup>4</sup> The street depicted in *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* is rue de Turin. This street in the foreground of the picture originates from the place de l'Europe and continues on the background at the intersection of the rue de Moscow situated on the left.<sup>5</sup> *Pont de l'Europe* shows a modern vision of Paris that is emphasized by the metallic structure of the bridge. Rue de Vienne is visible on the left side of the picture. In the background, one can see the architectures of the rue de Saint-Petersburg today known as Leningrad. The modernity of the Europe district is reinforced by the X patterns of the bridge metallic structure which show a glimpse of the rue de Londres on the right. Down below are the railway developments of the Gare Saint-Lazare.<sup>6</sup> What makes Caillebotte's depiction of space unordinary and almost imaginative are the exaggerated and stretched perspectives. Indeed, it looks as if the artist attempted to extend and lengthen space. It is the elasticity of Caillebotte's

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<sup>3</sup> Lois Fichner-Rathus, *Foundation of Art and design: an enhanced media edition*, Wadsworth cengage learning, Boston, 2012, p 158

<sup>4</sup> Anne Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte; An Urban Impressionist*, The Art Institute of Chicago, 18 February-28 May 1995, p102-116

<sup>5</sup> Marie Berhaut, *Caillebotte, sa vie et son oeuvre, Catalogue Raisonne des Peintures et Pastels*, La Bibliotheque des Arts, Paris, Fondation Wildenstein, Paris, 1878, p 98

<sup>6</sup> Marie Berhaut, *op.cit.*, p 93

perspective that one needs to explore in relation to Renaissance perspective. One has the impression that one of the aims of the painter was to engage the viewer with the painting through illusionistic effects of perspective.

Analogies have been drawn between Caillebotte's works and paintings by Uccello and Piero Della Francesca. However, one needs to compare their field of views. In Caillebotte's paintings, there is a strong emphasis on wide angle-view which produces anamorphoses. It is true that perspectives in Piero della Francesca and Uccello are deeply intensified and give an effect of depth and length. Varnedoe points out a close similarity between Caillebotte and Uccello's exaggerated perspectives. In Gustave and Piero della Francesca's works, the illusion created by perspective is accentuated by the organization in squares and pavements. Correspondingly, there is a very strong resemblance in the organization of space between the two paintings. In *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*, Caillebotte divided the painting into three sections, exactly as Piero Della Francesca did in *The Flagellation*.<sup>7</sup> In Gustave's *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* (fig.3), the lamppost marks a separation between the couple and the figures on the left while the horizon line creates a third section. In his study "Caillebotte's Method", Peter Galassi shows that the lamppost and the horizon are split into two proportions on either sides of the lamppost and a golden section from which the painting was constructed.<sup>8</sup> The two rectangles are split into another golden rectangle. Furthermore, the distribution of the figures is based on a sense of proportion and order. As J. Kirk Varnedoe writes it, there is a contrast between the three imminent figures which emphasize the effect of proximity and the smaller ones on the right accentuate the impression of distance. What is surprising is that the lack of transition between proximity and distance seems to split the composition into two scenes exactly as Piero Della Francesca did in his work (fig.4 and fig.5). As we will explore widely in the second chapter on photography, Gustave used a wide angle perspective which create a sense of illusion that is almost anamorphic. Varnedoe states that the appropriate distance of the eye viewpoint is proportional to the width of the rectangle window of the painting.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, if more is included within the window as one can see in Caillebotte's *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*, the perspective and the proportions will have to alter accordingly. Correspondingly to Piero della Francesca's work, Caillebotte set his figures extremely close to the eye of the viewer. However, his vanishing point is much farther than

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<sup>7</sup> Piero Della Francesca, *Flagellation of Christ*, [Oil and Tempera on Panel], 58.4 cm x 81.5 cm, Galleria delle Marche, Urbino, 1455-1460

<sup>8</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *Gustave Caillebotte, A Retrospective Exhibition*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston-October 22 to January 2, The Brooklyn Museum- February 12 to 24, 1976 – 1977, p 200

<sup>9</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p 61

Piero della Francesca's painting. Although, the figures look disproportionately tall comparing to the architecture on the right, the optical structure of the space is mathematically correct. Indeed, the aim of this section is to identify, despite the strong resemblance with Caillebotte, whether Piero della Francesca also included more elements than what the eye can perceive within the painting's field of vision. Piero della Francesca may have used a narrower field of view. In the background, the field of view seems to be wider in Caillebotte and in Piero della Francesca narrower. According to Stephen L. White, it is possible for an artist to produce optical distortion even if he is respecting the rules of perspective.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, even though Gustave is creating distortions by setting a wide angle view, his perspectives remain "geometrically objective" as Varnedoe mentions it.<sup>11</sup> In *Prospettiva Pingendi*, Piero della Francesca explains that distortions appear when the artist is using a wide-angle view:

Per levare via l'erore ad alchuni, che non sono molti periti in questa scienza, quail dicono che molte volte nel devidere loro il piano degradato a bracci, li vene magiore lo scurto che non fa quello che non e scurto; et questo adiviene per non intendere la distantia che vole essere da l'occhio al termine dove se pongoni le cose, ne quanto l'occhio puo in se ampliare con li suoi raggi; sic he stanno in dubitatione la prospective non essere vera scientia giudicando il falso per ingnoranza.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, although there are strong similarities between Gustave Caillebotte's organization of space and Piero della Francesca, Caillebotte seems to have brought a sense of modernity by creating a wider field of view. As argued earlier, the artist explored further the principles of perspective established by the Old Masters. His modernity comes from his choice of unusual viewpoints and his approach towards perspective. By trying to incorporate more elements than it is possible within the field of view, Caillebotte is producing a new visual experience. His perspective not only conveys the three-dimensional effects found in Renaissance paintings but also the sensations of speed and recession into space. There are two different

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<sup>10</sup> Stephen L. White, *Naturalism in Question*, Mario de Caro and David Marcarthur, 2004, p 211

<sup>11</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p 60

<sup>12</sup> Piero Della Francesca, *De Prospettiva Pingendi*, G. C. Sansoni, Editore, Firenze, 1974, p 97

"To remove the error made by some who are not very experienced in this science [*scienza*], who say that often when they divide the degraded surface into units [*braccilulnas*], the foreshortened one [*lo scurto*], comes out longer than the one that has not been foreshortened; and this happens by not understanding the distance there should be from the eye to the limit where the things are put [i.e. the picture plane], nor how wide the eye can spread the angle of its rays; so they [the inexperienced] suspect perspective is not a true science, judging falsely because of ignorance. Translation by Judith Veronica Field, Piero, *Piero della Fancesca: A mathematician's art*, J.V. Field, China, 2005

types of perspectives; one that is faithful to what the eye perceives and one that relies on mathematical order. Caillebotte used a slightly curved perspective that follows the natural perception of the human eye. By employing a curved perspective, he actually reflects his own perception of reality and not the geometrical truth. Piero della Francesca's perspective, on the other hand, creates a straight mathematical line that produces an effect of order. Similarly, the effect of perspective and geometrical order in the *Ideal City* attributed to Luciano Laurana and Fra Canevale produces a visual experience which leads the viewer to contribute to the painting.<sup>13</sup> What makes Caillebotte's painting modern is also the way he chose to display his figures within space, the cutting of the image and the viewpoints. Caillebotte does not simply employ perspective as a technique but more particularly as a way of conveying a particular visual experience or sensation. His street paintings mostly reflect the dynamism of the city and the sense of identity that prevails in the City of Light.

Although, the effect of perspective connects the viewer with the painting, a psychological distance between the figure and the viewer predominates in Caillebotte's *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*. The artist combined both Dutch and Renaissance influences by creating a distance between the viewer and the figures while inviting him to travel in the paintings.<sup>14</sup> There is a sense of projecting the viewer out in Dutch paintings while Renaissance art is projecting the spectator in the scene. Caillebotte is playing with both aspects by drawing the viewer in the painting but at the same time keeping him distant from the figures. As Varnedoe states, Caillebotte shares many similarities with Northern European traditions. Comparatively to artists such as Albrecht Durer, Caillebotte is drawn into the notion of an idealized and dominant space. His approach to space not only connects him to the Italian tradition but also to Dutch paintings. Both the idea of space as mathematic and aesthetic experience attracted Caillebotte. Similarly, his use of perspective actually combines the mathematical spatial order of Renaissance with the Northern tradition of conveying the experience of space.<sup>15</sup> Instead of focusing on geometrical order, Caillebotte preferred to bring out his experience of the city. The organization of Paris already produces a natural mathematical experience. The idea of the logically organized city is modern and yet ancient as it originates from the Renaissance, hence an allusion between Paris and the *Città Ideale* from the Renaissance. There is a strong relation between perspective and the rebuilding of the city that needs to be explored in this

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<sup>13</sup> Hubert Damisch, *The Origin of Perspective*, The MIT Press Cambridge Massachusetts, London, England, 1995, p 173

<sup>14</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p 25

<sup>15</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p 25

chapter. In order to provide more space, the Baron Haussmann decided to re-build the architectural organization of Paris between the period of 1853 and 1870. Being born in 1848, Caillebotte witnessed this change which influenced him while developing his artistic talent. The aim of this reconstruction was also to assure security by allowing more space for police surveillance in the city. As Maxime Camp wrote in *Paris, ses organes, ses fonctions, et sa vie dans la moitié du XIX e siècle*:

Il (Paris) est enregistré, catalogué, numéroté, surveillé, éclairé, nettoyé, dirigé, soigné, admonesté, arrêté, jugé, emprisonné, enterré, il n'a qu'à se laisser faire.<sup>16</sup>

The organized squared map of Paris embodies the idea of a more ordered world. According to Christopher Prendergast, space in Paris has become both a “physical and social space.”<sup>17</sup> It also proves that Caillebotte’s depiction of long perspectives has clearly been influenced by the squared and linear districts of Paris. Caillebotte, living near the quartier de l’Opéra, worked on a series of painting that offer a view of the architectural changes. In his painting *Un Balcon*, Caillebotte depicts a view of the Opéra Garnier that reflects the architectural renovation of Paris. The Opera was officially opened in 1875, almost five years before Caillebotte accomplished his series of urban paintings.<sup>18</sup> Views of the reconstruction of Paris are not only present in Caillebotte’s works but also among other Impressionists like Claude Monet who painted *Boulevard des Capucines* in 1873 just before the Opera was finished. The rebuilding of Paris had therefore a strong impact on art and especially French Impressionists. Accordingly, the street of the city of light became an attractive topic for many painters. The reconstruction of Paris not only changed the way we perceive the city but also our vision of art. The rectilinear and geometrical arrangement of the street really seemed to emphasize this new sense of order and clarity that Haussmann was seeking to create (fig.6 and fig.7). Behind this apparent linearity was hiding a more chaotic government and corruptions.<sup>19</sup> In *Le Cygne*, Baudelaire referred to Paris as a “bric à brac confus” despite the renovation carried out by Haussmann.<sup>20</sup> The large axes and streets of regency London and America encouraged the emperor Napoleon III to revolutionize the organization of Paris (fig.8 and fig.9). The new

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<sup>16</sup> Maxime du Camp, *Paris, ses organes, ses fonctions et sa vie, dans la seconde moitié du XIXe Siècle*, Tome Premier, Paris, Librairie de L. Hachette et Cie, 1869

<sup>17</sup> Christopher Prendergast, *Paris and the Nineteenth Century*, Blackwell, Oxford uk and Cambridge USA, 1992, p 3

<sup>18</sup> Van Zanten, *Building Paris*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p 10

<sup>19</sup> Christopher Prendergast, *op.cit.*, p 11

<sup>20</sup> Christopher Prendergast’s quotation from Baudelaire, *op.cit.*, p 11

rectilinear architecture of Paris was reminiscent of the geometrical proportions of the Italian *Città Ideale* and the search for an ideal place. The Ideal City is a utopia based on the idea of an organized, clean, ordered, spacious city that would reflect a perfect government and prosperous economy. As this suggests, spatial organization also had political ends. The rational organization of space also involved new forms of social control, which included new ways of controlling and invigilating the city. Panoramic views were also employed for political ends. It could therefore be a way of invigilating the city. The notion of the ideal city re-emerges again with the desire to encompass the whole space and time in one angle. In “conversation sur l’architecture”, Michel Chevalier, known as the Saint Simonian, imagined the architecture of a modern fictional temple:

Un temple pile de Volta, un temple bâti d’aimants colossaux, un temple de mélodie et d’harmonie, un temple a travers le mécanisme duquel d’énorme lentilles jetteraient a des instants donnees des flots de chaleur et de lumière et le feu par le gaz; la vie de la terre manifeste dans sa face de mystère par le magnétisme et l’électricité... La vie solaire manifestée par la chaleur et la lumière. La vie des hommes manifestée par la musique, par tous les arts, par la profusion des peintures, des sculptures, par des panoramas et les dioramas qui réuniraient en un point tout l’espace et tout le temps!<sup>21</sup>

In this conversation, Michel Chevalier evoked the spatial and social ideology of the future architecture and urban organization. His view and description of the temple is similar to the idea of the *Città Ideale* during the Italian Renaissance. Indeed, space and time are equally united into one point when looking at the panoramas of the *Città Ideale*. Leon Alberti elaborated the rules that lead to the construction of the *Città Ideale* in his works *On Painting* and *On Building*. Fra Carnevale’s and Luciano Laurana’s representation of the *Ideal City* strongly embodies the Greek and Roman principles of perspective and architecture described by Alberti:

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<sup>21</sup> Peter Van Wesemael, *Architecture of Instruction and Delight. A Socio-historical analysis of World Exhibitions as a didactic phenomenon (1798 -1851 – 1970)*, Rotterdam 2001, Notes p 747



Some bridges even have a roof, like that of Hadrian in Rome, the most splendid of all brides – a memorable work, by heaven: even the sight of what I might call its carcass would fill me with admiration.<sup>22</sup>

This drawing by Alberti significantly reminds one of the bridges and the arcades of the *Ideal City* by Fra Carnevale and Luciano Laurana. Baron Haussmann was not the first one to plan the reconstruction of Paris in order to create an ideal city and the concept of Paris as a new Rome was not just a metaphor. Leon Alberti comparatively envisaged the rebuilding and re-organization of Rome. Like the baron Haussmann, Alberti attempted to fulfill the idea of Nicolas V to reconstruct the Borgo Leonino. The principle of the ideal city brings us back to the Antiquity. The ideal city was first used as a myth for the project of the Babel Tower and after in Plato's Republic to represent the ideology of the State. Alberti adopted Plato's vision by arguing that the perfect place should be the one that reflects the most the ideal. As he wrote in his work *De re aedificatoria*:

When Plato asked where that magnificent city which he had dreamed up could be found, he replied, 'That does not concern us; we are more interested in what type of city should be considered best. Above all others you should prefer that city which most resembles this ideal.'<sup>23</sup>

Alberti's argument shows that the ideal city is to be found in a place that mirrors the best perfection. However, this city needs to be constructed according to the principles of the ideal by taking into account economy, spaciousness, health, safety, fertility, natural beauty, pleasure and protection from the enemies. Although the scenery of the place may be beautiful, one needs to determine whether its environment meets the advantages quoted by Alberti.

Finally, every precaution must be taken to ensure that there is no mountain, rock, lake, marsh, river, spring, or whatever, that might protect or serve the enemy or in any way prejudice the town and its inhabitants. So much for the position of a town and its surrounding district.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Vasari's description of Alberti's drawing, Robert Tavernor, *On Alberti and the Art of Building*, New Haven; Yale University Press, 1998, p 19

<sup>23</sup> Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, Joseph Rykwert, Robert Tavernor and Neil Leachm 1988, p 96

<sup>24</sup> Leon Battista Alberti, *op.cit.*, p 100

According to Alberti, one should study the position of the city in relation to the natural elements such as the sea and the mountains that surround it. As he explains: “a city on a plain should not be too close to the seashore, nor one in the mountains too far away.”<sup>25</sup> The idea to find the perfect city is first to determine the ideal place and then build the city in accordance to how it would benefit its inhabitants and economic situation. Indeed, it is intriguing to observe that the reconstruction of Paris seem to completely respect Alberti’s principles. What Alberti indicated in his work *On the Art of Building in Ten Books* totally corresponds to the baron Haussmann’s wishes to build “light, space and order.”<sup>26</sup> The panorama, it is true, provided a system of security against the enemies. However, it was also an aesthetic way of appreciating the sight of the horizon.

By cleaning up the city, Haussmann was seeking for the *Città Ideale* with strong geometrical perspective and squared streets. The long axes of Haussmann architecture strongly resemble the Urbino perspectives. What Haussmann attempted to convey by elaborating the mapping of Paris was the idea of an ideal city where order, science and perfection reign. One of the aims of Haussmann was to modernize the city by restoring the system of evacuation in Paris and creating more efficient means of communication. However, as Christopher Prendergast points out, this quicker correspondence from one part of the city to another makes the city “less controllable” in terms of organization.<sup>27</sup> Haussmann’s plan for the reconstruction and modernization of Paris also announces a new period of technologies with the arrival of railways and telegraphs, first available at the Paris Bourse in 1852, which could facilitate transportation.<sup>28</sup> Aerial views of Paris give us an insight of the symmetry and the rectilinear organization of Paris that is comparable to the *città ideale*. Nadar recorded the spatial construction of Paris from his balloon, which he entitled “Le Géant.” The photographs clearly reflect the long axes and diagonals of the newly constructed boulevards and its system of circulation, which included the invisible aspects of the city and the renovation of the sewers that Nadar also documented. In his essay “Le dessus et le dessous de Paris”, Nadar describes the sewers, especially the impressive distance of their lengths:

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<sup>25</sup> Leon Battista Alberti, *op.cit.*, p 97

<sup>26</sup> Van Zanten, *Building Paris*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p 217

<sup>27</sup> Van Zanten, *op.cit.*, p 10

<sup>28</sup> Shelley Rice, *Parisian Views*, The MIT Press, 1999, p 48

Vous êtes Madame, dans les égouts de Paris. A la lueur des lanternes et au jour vague qui tombe, à distance réglées, par les regards démasqués au dehors tout exprès pour nous, nous distinguons une galerie sans fin.<sup>29</sup>

As Rice Shelley remarks, this new busy environment also signals the death of the old city.<sup>30</sup> The new boulevards of the constructed city were to be the motifs that preoccupied Caillebotte in his early works, the artist recording the *atmosphere* of the New Paris in his painting *Street of Paris; Rainy Day*. De Vigny and Balzac's writings about Paris as the centre of the world truly confirm the idea of Paris as the ideal city.

Vers le but inconnu sans cesse elle s'avance, on la nomme Paris, le pivot de la France. (Alfred de Vigny; Oeuvres complètes I)<sup>31</sup>

Alfred de Vigny's description of Paris almost presents it as an imaginary place or more exactly a utopia. The centrality and modernity of Paris strongly alludes to the concept of the Italian *Citta Ideale*. Indeed, later in his poem, Alfred de Vigny writes:

Paris l'axe immortel, l'axe du monde. (Alfred de Vigny)<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, in his essay "Paris en 1831", Balzac described Paris as "*la capital du monde*."<sup>33</sup> He also wrote later that Paris is "*sans égal dans l'univers*" by referring to its cultural discoveries in terms of art and science.<sup>34</sup> In his work "Description du Phalanstère", Victor Considerant, in order to criticize the predominance and the power that Paris is taking in the world, called it "*la capitale des capitales*."<sup>35</sup> Similarly, Edmond Texier used metaphorical depictions of Paris in his work *Tableau de Paris* by calling it "*l'œil de l'intelligence, le cerveau du monde, l'abrégé de l'univers, le commentaire de l'homme, l'humanité faite ville*."<sup>36</sup> By employing all these metaphors, Edmond Texier reinforces the ideology of the city.

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<sup>29</sup> A. Lacroix, Verboeckhoven et Cie éditeurs, A Bruxelles, à Leipzig, à Livourne, *Paris Guide, par les principaux écrivains et artistes de la France, 2<sup>e</sup> Partie, La vie de Paris*, Librairie Internationale, 15 Boulevard Montmartre, 1867, p 1575

<sup>30</sup> Shelley Rice, *Parisian Views*, The MIT Press, 1999, p 177

<sup>31</sup> Alfred De Vigny, *Oeuvres Complètes I*, Paris, H. Delloye, V. Lecou, Libraire Editeurs, 5 Rue de Filles Saint-Thomas, Place de la Bourse, 1837, p 364

<sup>32</sup> Alfred De Vigny, *op.cit.*, p 365

<sup>33</sup> Honore de Balzac, *A Paris!*, Le Regard Litteraire, Edition Complexe, 1993, p 37

<sup>34</sup> Honore de Balzac, *op.cit.*, p 35

<sup>35</sup> Victor Considerant, *Description du Phalanstère et considération sociale sur l'architecture*, Librairie Phalanstérienne, 1848, p 46

<sup>36</sup> Edmond Texier, *Tableau de Paris, Tome Premier*, Paris, Paulin et le Chevalier, 1852

The renovation during the Second Empire not only altered the vision and the mapping of Paris but also the psychological perception of the city. The motif of the modern city was a key motif in the works of many contemporary artists, including Monet who chose to focus on fragments of the Parisian streets. Monet's two versions of *Le Boulevard des Capucines* from 1873 present a fragmented view of the city. What the artist is trying to show is the busy dynamic life of the Parisian streets and the sense of modernity that prevails in the city. It is important to set the notion of fragment and panoramas. Caillebotte approaches space that both evoke the idea of the fragment but whose space is panoramic and thus more in conformity with renaissance conceptions of pictorial space. Caillebotte's use of fragmented space allows the viewer to experience the stroller's perception of the city. It is as though his aim is to combine different ways of seeing by providing the viewer with the experience of fragmented views of the urban space. One of the best examples to illustrate this is the comparison between Caillebotte's *Le Boulevard des Italiens* (1880) by contrast to *La Caserne de la Pépinière* (c. 1877-1878) and *La Place Saint-Augustin* (1877-1878).<sup>37</sup> The artist's *Le Boulevard des Italiens* (fig.10) presents a bird-like view of the city while *La Caserne de la Pépinière* (fig.11) and *La Place Saint-Augustin* (fig.12) are only limited to a fragmented view of the street that is based on the perception of the pedestrian. Therefore, the artist's attempt is to recreate this perception of fragmented space. In his works, the artist is playing between the notion of fragmented view and panoramic point of view. Caillebotte's paintings mark a contrast between the idea of the fragmented scene exemplified by Impressionism and the panoramic vision of space present in Renaissance art.

Impressionists such as Monet or Degas concentrated on a specific fragment of the space whereas Caillebotte chose to represent space as a whole. As Richard Thompson explains in *Framing France*, the aim of Impressionism, in contrast to the academic conventions of representation derived from Renaissance, is to convey the experience of a fragment of visual experience or *sensation* often foregrounding that through the cropping of the image.<sup>38</sup> For instance, Monet's *Boulevard des Capucines* (fig.13) reflects a segment of the new Paris Boulevard, which focuses on the motion of the crowd. Monet used the technique of fragmentation comparable to that found in fashionable Japanese prints in vogue in Paris in the 1880s in order to convey the atmosphere of modern city life. The choice of elevated viewpoint provides the eye with a double perspective created by the continuation of

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<sup>37</sup> Karin Sagner, *An Impressionist and Photography*, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Hirmer, 2013, p 25

<sup>38</sup> Richard Thompson: *The Representation of Landscape in France 1870-1914*, Manchester University Press, 1998, p 65

Hausmanian building and the line of trees. Although, there is a strong similarity between Monet's *Boulevard des Capucines* and Caillebotte's *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*, the two paintings differ in their vision of the city life. Indeed, Caillebotte's representation of the urban scene mostly focuses on the visual experience produced by perspective. Instead of depicting extreme fragments of nature, Caillebotte is trying to incorporate as many elements as possible in the scene by widening the field of view. Some of Caillebotte's scenes such as *Vue prise à travers un balcon* (1880) really seem to focus on a particular fragment of the street but still offers a long distance view on the city life. Even in his late landscape paintings, panoramic views often still prevail. For example, in his painting *La Seine a la Pointe d'Epinay* (1888), Caillebotte provided a spacious panoramic view that summarizes all the elements taken from Impressionist landscapes.<sup>39</sup>

The Haussmannian rebuilding of Paris certainly affected Caillebotte's visual and spiritual relationship with the city. By witnessing the beginning of modern world, Caillebotte's interests shifted towards the spatial and social aspects of Paris. Indeed, his early paintings are snapshots of every day modern life. Works such as *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* or *Pont de l'Europe* clearly emphasize the spatial order of the city as well as the urban architecture. The painter here encompasses a three-dimensional view of the urban city. The field of view of his paintings includes more than the human eye can naturally see. *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* and *Pont de l'Europe* not only give the eye an insight of the Parisian view but also what is on either side of this view. It is true, by comparing Gustave's painting *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* and Varnedoe's photograph of the same scene, that the painting offers more elements on either side than the photograph does.<sup>40</sup> Hence, Gustave expressed a desire to travel in the painting by attempting to show a 180 degree panorama of the city. This suggests the influence of the panorama and panoramic photography on Caillebotte. Views from Paris became one of the first subjects of French panoramic photographs. It was then followed by views from London, Rome, Naples and Amsterdam.<sup>41</sup> Panoramic photography has a psychological dimension, hence the optical effects produced by Caillebotte's urban paintings. The aim of panoramic photography is to give the possibility to the viewer to dominate and acquire a full knowledge of the city. Giving the power of "sight-seeing" is exactly what Caillebotte did in

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<sup>39</sup> John House, *Landscapes of France: Impressionism and its rivals*, Hayward Gallery, London, 18 May-28 August 1995, p 284

<sup>40</sup> Varnedoe took two different photographs representing the view from rue de Turin looking toward the rue de Moscow. One of them is taken with normal lenses of 55 mm showing a long narrow angle view of the scene. The second one, taken with 24mm lenses show a short wide angle view of the scene more faithful to the view represented in Caillebotte's *Street of Paris; Rainy Day*, J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p 21

<sup>41</sup> Christopher Prendergast, *op.cit.*, p 46

his paintings. One of the assets of the panorama is its universality and its accessibility to everyone. As Edouard Detaille stated in his notebooks: “le panorama est un peu comme le théâtre, il faut faire gros et lisible pour tous.”<sup>42</sup>

By depicting a panoramic view of the *Ideal City*, Fra Carnevale and Luciano Laurana gave the possibility to the viewer to witness and dominate the city but also invite him, as Prendergast expresses it, to “sight-see” the scene as if it was a spectacle.<sup>43</sup> The use of panorama started being more widespread among painters and especially photographers in the mid-Nineteenth Century. In some cases, painters used panoramic photographs already mounted on long and slightly curved canvases and started painting on the model. After Daguerre’s developed his invention of the diorama in 1822, panoramic photographs started becoming more and more popular. Panoramic photography offered the viewer a mobile view of the scene. Panoramas were initially used by architects such as the architect of l’Opéra Garnier, Charles Garnier who conceived a work in 1880 entitled *Panorama Francais*.<sup>44</sup> Some painters, such as Edward Detaille, started emulating effects of these panoramas, as it is evident in his *The Battle of Champigny* in 1882. Alfred Stevens and Henry Gervex completed one of the works that was exhibited at the occasion of the Exposition Universelle in 1889 entitled “Panorama du Siècle.” This panorama represents more than 650 figures on a composition that is 120 meters wide and 20 meters high.<sup>45</sup> These style of paintings clearly influenced photographers to use panoramic field of view. One of the first panoramic photographs was taken by A.O Champagne *The Colonnade of The Louvre, from the Rue de Rivoli* which depicts the center of Paris. Champagne’s picture depicts the full view of the Parisian streets from the east of the Louvre on the left to the Rue de Rivoli on the right. The idea of traveling and mobility is something that attracted most photographers. In 1864, the photographer Auguste Gueuin captured the view of central Paris, showing the architectural squared organization and the roofs from Tour Saint Jacques. As stated, earlier, bird’s eye view fascinated Caillebotte who depicted in many of his paintings plunging views on the roofs of Paris. It is almost certain that photographers have been influenced by painters’ use of the panoramic view. Degas, as one can notice in his ballet series, was clearly fascinated by the idea of suggesting through the compositional arrangement, a synthesis of space that approximates to a 380 degree angle rather than simply a frontal presentation corresponding to

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<sup>42</sup> Christopher Prendergast quoted from Edouard Detaille, *op.cit.*, p 47

<sup>43</sup> Christopher Prendergast, *op.cit.*, p 47

<sup>44</sup> Richard Kendall and Jill Devonyar, *Degas and the Ballet, Picturing Movement*, London, Royal Academy of Arts, 2011, p 102

<sup>45</sup> Richard Kendall and Jill Devonyar, *op.cit.*, p 102

a single position in space.<sup>46</sup> Panoramas engage the viewer's participation by following with the eye the spatial composition of the painting. The depiction of space in Degas' ballet paintings approximate the use of depth and perspective conveyed in the photograph taken by A.O. Champagne. As we may distinguish, the angle from which *The Colonnade of the Louvre, from the Rue de Rivoli* (1889) (fig.14) is set produces two diagonals on either side of the pictures. Correspondingly, Degas, in his ballet collection, created one or two diagonals that lead to the background of the picture. For instance, in *Danseuses au foyer* (c.1879), the wall on the left follows a diagonal that separates space into two surfaces. The photographer and the painter strongly emphasized the wide and clear foreground of the picture. The use of diagonals reinforces the impression of depth and three-dimensionality. Both Champagne and Degas may have studied the system of the cameras that allowed such panoramic views. These cameras could encompass a wider angle view than it is possible with normal lenses. The device became more elaborated from 1840 with different options of lenses. One of them called Pantascopic camera, which appeared 1862, was broadly employed by artists such as Adolphe Braun for the representation of landscape and city sight. Some of them are supposedly owned by Degas. These images could have been a reference point for the artist.<sup>47</sup>

Although an atmosphere of hostility existed between Caillebotte and Degas, there were surprisingly close affinities in their compositions, especially in their representation of indoor scenes. Caillebotte's *Raboteurs de Parquets* (1875) (fig.15) significantly mirrors Degas' ballet series. Both painters used the same approach to space such as the effects of depth and viewpoints. However, while Degas was mostly producing fragments of space, Caillebotte uses a broader viewpoint. Although Degas's depiction of space appears wide, the artist only focuses on a fragment of the scene. Caillebotte's aim is to incorporate more than the eye can perceive within space, whereas Degas shows a full views of a fragment of the scene. Through their depiction of space, the two artists are reproducing the action of the human eye to continuously gaze at the scene from one side to another. The aim they had in common was to change the viewer's perception of the world. Indeed, in his notebook, Degas wrote: "Set up platforms all around the room, to get used to drawing things from above and below."<sup>48</sup> Degas was therefore trying to challenge the viewer's response to spatial organization. Both Caillebotte and Degas's approaches to spatial organization is modern and innovative

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<sup>46</sup>Richard Kendall and Jill Devonyar, *op.cit.*, p 122.

<sup>47</sup> Richard Kendall and Jill Devonyar, *op.cit.*, p 105

<sup>48</sup> Theodore Reff quoted from Degas's notebook, Theodore Reff, *The Artist's Mind*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harper and Row, Publishers, 1976, p 245

especially in their methods of cropping. They both approximate in their techniques the work of the photographer and even cinematographer. As Varnedoe argues, Degas and Caillebotte were conscious of the modernity brought by pre-cinematic decomposition of movement that started in the 1860s. These pre-cinematic effects were most vividly present in the photographs of Eadweard Muybridge in the 1880s which Degas quickly assimilated into his art, but these are effects also to be found in Caillebotte, as I explore in the next chapter.<sup>49</sup>

Caillebotte painted a first version of *Raboteurs de Parquets* in 1875 before working on a variant one year later in 1876. The main version of *Raboteurs de Parquets* is held at the Musée d'Orsay. As Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark states it, Caillebotte presented this painting at the occasion of the Salon Exhibition in 1875.<sup>50</sup> In *Raboteurs de Parquets* dated from 1875, Caillebotte was playing with the viewer's perception of space. The painting was accomplished from Caillebotte's studio situated at 77 Rue de Miromesnil. The jury of the 1875 Salon rejected his painting on the grounds of a lack of aesthetic subjectivity and for remaining too close to reality. The critic Louis Ernault synthesizes the reason why the Salon refused his work:

Les *Raboteurs* de M. Caillebotte ne sont certes pas mal peints et les effets de perspective ont été étudiés par un œil qui voit juste. Je regrette seulement que l'artiste n'ait pas mieux choisi ses types, ou que, du moment où il acceptait ce que la réalité lui offrait, il ne se voit pas attribué le droit, contre lequel je puis assurer que personne n'eut protesté, de les interpréter plus largement.<sup>51</sup>

The theme of the working class was deeply researched by Realists. Indeed, the combination of urban scenes with images of working class was one of the most represented motifs of Realism.<sup>52</sup> As Anne Distel argues by referring to a quotation from Marius Chaumelin, Caillebotte's choice of motif locates him in the Realist movement. Marius Chaumelin wrote the following:

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<sup>49</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p85

<sup>50</sup> Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark, *Gustave Caillebotte*, Hatje Cantz, 2008, p 50

<sup>51</sup> Marie Berhaut, *Caillebotte, sa vie et son oeuvre, Catalogue Raisonné des Peintures et Pastels*, La Bibliothèque des Arts, Paris, Fondation Wildenstein, Paris, 1878, p 253.

Translation: The *Raboteurs de Parquets* are certainly not badly painted, and the perspective effects have been well-studied by an eye that sees accurately. I regret only that the artist did not choose his types more carefully, or that, from the moment he had accepted what reality offered him, he did not claim for himself the right, which I can assume no one would have denied him, to interpret them more freely. Charles S. Moffet, *The New Painting, Impressionism 1874-1886*, San Francisco: Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 19 April – 6 July 1986, p 167

<sup>52</sup> Marie Berhaut, *op.cit.*, p 50



“In his *Raboteurs de Parquets*, Caillebotte declares himself to be a Realist as crude and intelligent, in his own way, as Courbet, as violent and precise again in his own way as Manet.”<sup>53</sup>

It is interesting to research whether Caillebotte was actually influenced by Courbet or Manet's works. However, there is no clear evidence of the artist's study of their works. Before the transformation of Paris, Realism was especially focused on manual work of the peasant. The image of city workers reflects the transition towards a new motif that explores modernity. The obscure tonality that prevails in *Raboteurs de Parquet* also shows attributes belonging to Realism. As I will explain in this section, the technique of perspective employed by Caillebotte is unusual and unconventional (fig.16). In this painting, hardly any brushwork or contour are visible which distances him from Impressionism. It is important to note the contrast from Realism to a more Impressionist style during the evolution of Caillebotte's works. In his later works, Caillebotte started abandoning the Realist tradition in favour of Impressionism. As argued by Michael Fried, one of Caillebotte's aims in choosing a Realist motif was maybe his attempt to bring more materialism to Impressionism.<sup>54</sup> According to Michael Fried, Jules-Antoine Castagnary's comment at the occasion of the First Impressionist Exhibition of 1874 clearly illustrates Caillebotte's Realistic approach. Jules-Antoine Castagnary argued about Impressionism:

Ils sont *Impressionnistes* en ce sens qu'ils rendent non le paysage, mais la sensation produite par le paysage. Le mot même est passé dans leur langue; ce n'est pas *paysage*, c'est *impression* que s'appelle au catalogue le *Soleil levant* de M. Monet. Par ce côté, ils sortent de la réalité et entrent en plein idéalisme.<sup>55</sup>

Caillebotte may therefore have been aware of this comment and tried to avoid any idealization. Caillebotte's style may also be explained by his attempt to reconcile Impressionism with realism especially in the depiction of the body. Another reason may be the artist's taste for the absorptive motif as we will discuss in the fourth chapter. The artist

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<sup>53</sup> Anne Distel, *op.cit.*, p 37

<sup>54</sup> Fried, Michael. *Gustave Caillebotte and the Fashioning of Identity in Impressionist Paris*. New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Norma Broude, Rutgers University Press, 28 February 2002, p 82

<sup>55</sup> From Jules-Antoine Castagnary, “*Exposition du boulevard des capucines*,” *Le siècle*, 29 Avril 1874. Michael Fried, *Gustave Caillebotte and the Fashioning of Identity in Impressionist Paris*, Rutgers University Press, 28 February 2002, p 110

thought it was important to use a realistic approach in order to emphasize the attitude of the figure and the different expressions of the body.<sup>56</sup> Apart from these reasons just mentioned above, it is especially the Parisian environment which influenced Caillebotte and other Impressionists to turn towards urban and contemporary motifs. Caillebotte's *Raboteurs de Parquets* belongs to the realist motifs of contemporary life such as urban proletariat. Other Impressionist works such as Monet's *Les déchargeurs de charbon* (1875) and Degas's *Repasseuses* (c.1884-1886) equally suggest realist themes around contemporary urban life.<sup>57</sup> *Il faut être de son temps*, first articulated by Daumier and re-employed by Manet was a proverb which advocated the importance of living in the contemporary world. Contemporary themes firstly included the working life of peasants and then urban industrialism. Although such themes were employed among some Impressionists, more emphasis was put on subjective perception as expressed in Zola's words "nature viewed through a temperament."<sup>58</sup>

Caillebotte's study of realism can be seen as being faithful to the traditions of craftsmanship. However, it also brings a sense of modernity to his work that is difficult for the academic artists of his time to understand. J.K. Huysmans might have been the one who influenced Impressionist artists such as Caillebotte and Monet to depict modern working life. While Degas and Joris-Karl Huysmans depicted female figures workers, usually prostitutes, washer or sewers, Caillebotte was one of the first Impressionists to represent male working figures.<sup>59</sup> In the Impressionist Exhibition of 1880, J.K. Huysmans wrote that manual working life is a theme that still needs to be explored by artists:

Tout le travail de l'homme tâchant dans les manufactures, dans les fabriques; toute cette fièvre modern que présente l'activité de l'industrie, toute la magnificence des machine, cela est encore à peindre.<sup>60</sup>

In his text, J.K. Huysmans encouraged artists to represent themes that have not been considered before such as working life. Huysmans referred to the artist Adolph von Menzel as introducing for the first time the industrial life in his paintings. Huysmans expected from art a renewal and a more daring representation of society. According to Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark, it is likely the writings of Huysmans had an influence on Caillebotte's representation of the

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<sup>56</sup> Michael Fried, *Gustave Caillebotte and the Fashioning of Identity in Impressionist Paris*, Rutgers University Press, 28 February 2002, p 83

<sup>57</sup> Linda Nochlin, *Realism*, Penguin Books, New York, 1971, p 157

<sup>58</sup> Linda Nochlin, *op.cit.*, p 235

<sup>59</sup> Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark, *Gustave Caillebotte, op.cit.*, p 50

<sup>60</sup> J. K. Huysmans, *L'art Moderne*, Deuxième Edition, Paris, Librairie Plon, Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1908, p 138

working life.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, *Raboteurs de Parquet* and *Peintres en bâtiments* (1877) clearly seem to evoke the industrial activity described by J.K. Huysmans. At the Impressionist exhibition, the critics described house-painters as “painters of the city” which is exactly how Caillebotte identified himself.<sup>62</sup> The term of house-painters actually corresponds to the critics’ perception of modern painters. Indeed, as Anthea Callen points out, the term Impressionism encompasses working techniques and materials that are initially the same as what the *Peintres en bâtiments* employed. Jean Renoir wrote:

Colours in tubes, being easy to carry, allowed us to work completely from nature. Without paint in tubes there would have been no Cézanne, no Monet, no Sisley or Pissarro, nothing of what journalists were later to call Impressionism.<sup>63</sup>

Anthea Callen draws a comparison between the simplicity of the colours in painting tubes and the working method used by Impressionists consisting in painting in *plein air*. The use of the paint directly applied on the canvas conveys a sense of artlessness and authenticity. Caillebotte’s aim was to give an image of himself as an artist worker. Indeed, George Rivière illustrates this comparison by designating Caillebotte as “a worker, a bold seeker.” Stéphane Mallarmé equally described Impressionist artists as contemporary workers.<sup>64</sup>

In this painting, Caillebotte is using a plunging perspective which has been judged unusual by critics such as Paul Mantz who qualified it as “bizarre” and “a bit mad.”<sup>65</sup> In “L’Exposition des peintres impressionnistes” taken from *Le Temps*, Paul Mantz wrote:

La perspective était un peu folle, car, au lieu de travailler sur un plan horizontal, les malheureux manœuvraient sur un parquet incliné et menaçaient de glisser sur le spectateur inoffensif. Mais les figures étaient bien dans la lumière, le pinceau s’annonçait énergique, et, dans sa grossièreté apparente, la peinture avait des finesses.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark, *Gustave Caillebotte*, Hatje Cantz, 2008, p 50

<sup>62</sup> Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark, *op.cit.*, p 51

<sup>63</sup> Anthea Callen quoted from Jean Renoir, Anthea Callen, *The Art of Impressionism: Painting technique and the Making of Modernity*, Italy, Yale University Press, 2009, p 104

<sup>64</sup> Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark quoted from Georges Rivière, Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark, *Gustave Caillebotte*, p 51

<sup>65</sup> Anne Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte; An Urban Impressionist*, The Art Institute of Chicago, 1995, p 38

<sup>66</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe quoted from Paul Mantz’s article in “L’Exposition des peintres impressionnistes” in *Le Temps*, 22 Avril 1877, J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p 191

Although Gustave's approach to perspective is accurate, the slightly inclined floor is disturbing to the viewer. Indeed, what is real is often uncertain to the eye of the spectator. However, it is this unusual perspective that reflects Caillebotte's signature. In "*Exposition des Impressionnistes*" taken from *Le Soir*, Bertall noted:

M. Caillebotte, si remarquable par son profond mépris de la perspective, saurait très bien, s'il le voulait, faire de la perspective comme le premier venu. Mais son originalité y perdrait. Il ne fera pas cette faute. Dans son *Déjeuner*, ses *Grateurs de Parquet* et son *Jeune Pianiste*, l'intention est évidente, il sait bien que c'est ainsi qu'il fera son nom, et alors il pourra montrer qu'il a un certain talent, témoin le petit racleur de parquet, assis au fond de son tableau N°27.<sup>67</sup>

The originality of Caillebotte's perspective is also what shapes his personality as an artist. Caillebotte was trying to remain as objective to reality as possible by privileging mathematical truth to aesthetic conventions. The use of perspective creates an effect of movement which gives the impression that the floor-scrapers are sliding down towards the spectator. As Anne Distel explained, the spatial construction of *Peintres en bâtiments* is comparable to Degas's painting *Le Bureau de coton à La Nouvelle-Orléans* (1873). Correspondingly to Caillebotte's work, the plunging perspective reinforces the effects of depth.

Although, Caillebotte attempted to give more naturalness to the objects depicted, they were not put randomly in the picture. Everything has been built according to a clear and distinct order, even the position of the figures and their tools. Indeed, the bottle of wine, the hammer and other tools have been placed on the orthogonal lines in order to captivate the eye of the viewer and therefore distracting him from the vanishing point. Caillebotte also used a *contre-jour* effect which makes the orthogonal lines leading to the vanishing point trickier to identify. The lines of the floorboard continue beyond the top right wall depicted in the painting and meet into a converging point. The line in the middle creates a symmetry that separates space into two equal scenes. The symmetry of the painting is emphasized by the hands of the figures which mirror each other.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, the tool that the figure is holding with both of his hand has been studied to emphasize the symmetry along with the hands of the

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<sup>67</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe quoted from Bertall's article in "L'Exposition des Impressionnistes, Rue Lepeletier" taken from *Le Soir*, April 1876, J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p 187

<sup>68</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p 84

figures. This symmetry shows that every element has been thoughtfully displayed in the painting. If we measure the frame of the painting, we can see that the line A on the top right hand of the painting mirrors the line B on the bottom left hand corner of the picture. Equally, the longer line C reflects the line D (fig.16). The naturalness and almost chaotic subject of the painting merges with the construction in order and rationality of the composition. Indeed, the artist is giving the illusion of randomness in the way the objects are displayed. However, a sense of rationality and geometry prevails as one can see in most of his works.

As Anne Distel wrote, the plunging perspective of the painting clearly reminds one of the photographic and cinematic traditions. Caillebotte had knowledge of the possibilities offered by the photographic device while he was creating *Raboteurs de Parquet*. Caillebotte's approach to space is both modern and traditional. By looking closely at *The Raboteurs de Parquet (esquisse 1875)* (fig.17), one can see the presence of a linear mark at the bottom right hand corner of the canvas that may confirm his interest in photography.<sup>69</sup> According to Varnedoe, Caillebotte certainly produced this line with his brush in an attempt to crop the frame of the composition in order to allow a closer proximity between the workers and the viewer. This technique is typically photographic and may suggest the artist's interest in the camera. The *Raboteurs de Parquet* drawings could indicate Gustave's possible use of photography. Weisberg argued that one of his study drawings could have reflected his use of the camera. However, there was not enough evidence to confirm this hypothesis.<sup>70</sup>

The window in the Sketch for *Raboteurs de Parquet* is wider than in the final version. Indeed, Caillebotte rearranged the structure of the walls in his final painting as well as the centrality of the figures. The position of the figures is actually slightly different from the painting and gives a different perception of space. Instead of focusing on the figure in the middle, the two scrapers on the sides seem to be absorbed by their task. In the final version, Caillebotte worked on the effects of gaze between the workers to draw the viewer's attention to the middle figure's action of scrapping. As Berhaut mentions it, Caillebotte painted *Raboteurs de Parquet* in the private hotel of his parents during the work carried out to renovate the building at 77<sup>th</sup> rue de Mirosmenil.<sup>71</sup> As one may see in his drawings, the posture of the figures is very similar to the Musée d'Orsay composition and Caillebotte made very little alteration. As Varnedoe explains, Caillebotte was trying to captivate the instantaneity of

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<sup>69</sup> Anne Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte; An Urban Impressionist*, The Art Institute of Chicago, 1995, p 38

<sup>70</sup> Anne Distel, *op.cit.*, p 40

<sup>71</sup> Marie Berhaut, *Caillebotte, sa vie et son oeuvre, Catalogue Raisonne des Peintures et Pastels, op.cit.*, p 86

the action of scraping as if the three figures were actually one. In reality, the three figures could also be cinematic shots of the same worker but depicted from different positions at various moments.<sup>72</sup> Varnedoe's photographs show that Caillebotte's painting could be split into three successive moments of the same figure (fig.18). The *rauloir* (scraping tool) is taken from three different plans: in a close-up, between the hands of the figures in action and then at a different moment in the hands of the same figure. These three pictures are very faithful to the way Caillebotte illustrates the scraping tool in his two *Raboteurs de Parquet* paintings dated from 1875 and 1876. Indeed, in the Musée d'Orsay version dated from 1875, the scraping tool is depicted between the hands of the laboring figure. Furthermore, in the 1876 variant picture of the *Raboteurs de Parquet*, one can see the scraping tool on the floor and then in the hands of the apprentice. The element of the scraping tool is very intriguing as it strangely resembles the sharpness of a knife. One may also notice a sense of chaos produced by the scraping tool and the bottle of wine. These two elements, especially the knife, which is here a scraping tool, are traditionally used in still-life paintings to create a visual interest. The space used for still-life paintings was relatively small and simple which could make the composition look flat. Therefore, to bring some contrast and life to the painting, still-life artists incorporated long and narrow elements such as a knife, a stick or a pipe (fig.19). As Varnedoe demonstrated it, the idea of repetition and multiplicity is present in most of Caillebotte's works.

Caillebotte's technique seems to anticipate modern cinematic effects such as superimposing the actions of the same figure to illustrate different moments in the same scene. Indeed, modern cinematic sequences use this kind of technique called "multiple exposure" when the same character is present at different time in one single scene. This technique consists in superimposing multiple shots of the same character in a same space. In 1876, Caillebotte worked on a variation of *Raboteurs de Parquet* which was displayed at the 1876 Impressionist exhibition. At the Second Impressionist exhibition of 1876, Caillebotte presented the variant of *Raboteurs de Parquet* in addition to the work held at the Musée d'Orsay. Comparing it with the Musée d'Orsay painting, the lines of the wood surface are more obvious and also show little cracks between each of them<sup>73</sup>. Furthermore, his range of colour is wider and provides a brighter lightning, which is brought by more proximate

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<sup>72</sup> See photographs taken by J. Kirk Varnedoe showing the idea of movement: left: *rauloir* and file, middle: working with the *rauloir*, right: sharpening the blade of the *rauloir* (as written in Varnedoe's book) J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p 84

<sup>73</sup> Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p 84

window. This variant shows another angle view of the picture that actually reflects the artist's perception of space.

One should take into account that the two scenes of *Raboteurs de Parquets* actually take place in two different rooms of the residence hotel of Caillebotte's parents at the 77<sup>th</sup> rue de Mirosmenil. However, leave aside the change of decoration; there is a surprising correspondence between the two paintings in terms of spatial construction. Caillebotte depicted *Raboteurs de Parquet* from different angles. Each of his versions of *Raboteurs de Parquet* offers a new perception of the workers who are portrayed from the front in the 1875 version and then in profile in the *Raboteurs de Parquet (variant)* 1876 (fig.20). The same applies to Degas who depicted the dancers from various angles and showed a different view of the space. What Caillebotte is aiming at through his choice of viewpoint is to create a synthesis of space. This study of space from different angles is almost cinematographic as the painter is moving from one direction to another as if he was filming. One should therefore look at Degas and Caillebotte's drawings for their paintings as they show a study of the figure's position from different angles. Caillebotte's drawings of *Raboteurs de Parquet* include positions from the side, "in profile, kneeling facing left", "seated in profile facing left", "seated man from the front", "kneeling in Three-Quarter rear view, facing left", "seated man viewed from the front." Caillebotte also studied movement by drawing sketches of the hands of a "kneeling man from the front." In *Study of a kneeling Floor-Scraper; Bare-Chested, Viewed from the Front*, Caillebotte clearly emphasized the idea of movement. Caillebotte's method can be compared to the cinematic decomposition of movement used in the 1880s by Eadweard Muybridge.<sup>74</sup> The photographer started producing most of his decomposition of movement studies between 1872 and 1885. Muybridge firstly used 12 cameras set up at different time interval to capture the legs of a horse in gallop. In his lecture *The Attitude of Animals in Motion*, published in the Journal of the Franklin Institute in April 1883, Muybridge describes the development of his photographic device:

In the studio are arranged 24 photographic cameras; at a distance of 12 inches from the centre of each lens an electro-exposor is securely fixed in front of each camera. Threads 12 inches apart are stretched across the track at a suitable height to strike the breast of the animal experimented

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<sup>74</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p 84

with, one end of the thread being fastened to the background, the other to the spring, which is drawn almost to the point of contact.<sup>75</sup>

Caillebotte's approach to the spatial composition of *The Raboteurs de Parquets* creates a sensation of movement which reinforced by the body language of the figures. Caillebotte's ways of displaying the figures in the scene and arranging space is comparable to what will later be known as the work of a *metteur-en-scene*. The two versions of *The Raboteurs de Parquets* anticipate on the technique of cinematic plans and shots as the artist is almost filming from one angle to another. This technique became later known by cinematography as "shot reverse shot." Cineastes employ the "shot reverse shot" to convey an impression of continuity from one plan to another. "Shot reverse shot" is mostly used in sequences featuring dialogues in order to show one character looking at another character and then this character looking back at the first one. Like a filmmaker, Caillebotte is standing from one angle of the scene in his 1876 painting that could be actually the point of view of figure on the left of the 1875 work. Conversely, the point of view from which the man is scraping the floor in the 1876 painting is similar to the angle from which the painter is standing in the 1875 version. If we juxtapose the two paintings, one can see the interaction between the figure circled in green and the one circled in blue. Even though we don't see the figure looking at the opposite painting, it is interesting to compare Caillebotte's change of plan to the modern "shot reverse shot" technique used later by cinematography. Indeed, it almost looks as if the figure of the 1875 painting is holding a conversation with the 1876 painting man (fig.21).

There is a sense of continuity that prevails in Caillebotte's works as if each scene was related to another. Each scene seems to lead to another painting as if the painter wanted to match them like a puzzle. One obvious example is the relationship between *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* and *Peintres en bâtiment*. Indeed, the house painter working on the ladder is also present in the background of the *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* scene. Caillebotte's *Peintres en bâtiment* seems to be a close-up of *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* scene. Furthermore, one can recognize the man looking at the house-painter in one of Caillebotte's drawings for *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* scene entitled *Study of a Man under an Umbrella in Profile and Facing Left, with the Silhouette of Another Man under an Umbrella in the*

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<sup>75</sup> Eadweard Muybridge, *Muybridge on the Attitudes of Animals*, The Science News-Letter, Vol.16, No. 441 (Sept. 21, 1929), Society for Science and Public, Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3905401>, Accessed: 14-08-2014, p 184



*Right Background* (fig.22).<sup>76</sup> Although Caillebotte did not incorporate the *Man under an Umbrella in Profile* as shown in his study, his drawing shows that he was creating and planning for the two paintings at the same time. Indeed, the two compositions *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* and *Peintres en bâtiment* (fig.23) are dated from the same year in 1877.<sup>77</sup> The interrelation between his *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* and *Peintres en bâtiment* drawings also proves that the artist was thinking of the two paintings as a whole project. Correspondingly, in Gustave's *Study for Peintres en bâtiment* (fig.24), one can distinguish a woman with an umbrella drawn from the composition *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*.<sup>78</sup> In the Oil on canvas painting, although we can recognize the same woman, she is not holding the umbrella (fig.25 a. and b.). However, this woman re-emerges with the umbrella in the background of *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*. The woman with the umbrella is indeed also studied in many of Gustave's drawing for *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*. These studies include the following drawings: *Two Studies of a Woman under an Umbrella; one for the Back, the Other in Profile Facing Left* (fig.26), *Study of a Woman with a small Umbrella, Seen from the Back* (fig.27) on gray-blue paper, *Study of a Woman with a Large Umbrella, Seen from the Back* (fig.28) on cream paper. The relationship between the two paintings reflects Caillebotte's purpose to convey a sense of homogeneity that illustrates the Haussmannian architecture.<sup>79</sup> The mixed relation that co-exists among the studies for *Peintres en bâtiment* and *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* shows that Caillebotte was hesitating to make a choice to delimitate the theme of each painting.<sup>80</sup> The sense of interrelation is also present in Caillebotte's *Pont de l'Europe* and *Peintres en bâtiment*. The converging perspective of the frame of the shop window and the apartments mirrors the geometrical pattern created by the iron trellises of the bridge. The two compositions surprisingly mirroring one another especially in the way the figures and the architecture are displayed in the picture. Georges Rivière praises the quality of the perspective in *Pont de l'Europe* and *Peintres en bâtiment*:

In the "Pont de l'Europe" there are great qualities and a pleasant disposition of the subject on the canvas. The figures are drawn in a very intelligent and very amusing way." Regarding The House-Painters, he

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<sup>76</sup> Anne Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte; An Urban Impressionist, op.cit.*, p 120, Gustave Caillebotte, Graphite and Conte crayon on buff laid paper, 46.3 x 29.7 cm, inscription lower right: ne figure pas dans le tableau, Private Collection, 1877

<sup>77</sup> Anne Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte; An Urban Impressionist, op.cit.*, p 120

<sup>78</sup> Gustave Caillebotte, *Study for House-Painters*, Graphite, dimensions unknown, Private Collection, 1877

<sup>79</sup> Anne Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte; An Urban Impressionist, op.cit.*, p 120

<sup>80</sup> Anne Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte; An Urban Impressionist, op.cit.*, p 120

adds, “Let us cite another picture of small size, the house-painters, and another (“Portrait in a garden”), the latter very accurate in tones and with a perspective that is bizarre, though true.”<sup>81</sup>

As stated earlier in the chapter, some figures are present in the three paintings. The redistribution of elements and figures creates an effect of infinite and timelessness within space. The multiplication of figures also conveys a sense of conformity that is reinforced by the order of social classes. As Varnedoe explains it, each figure suggests a single viewpoint in the painting. This multiple perception of space is also present in the works of Seurat and Degas. Indeed, there is a sense of repetition that is prevailing in Seurat’s painting *Un Dimanche après-midi sur l’île de La Grande Jatte* (1884-1886). The upright position, the symbol of the dress, the umbrella and the top hat clearly emphasize this idea of uniformity and spatial order. *La Grande Jatte* is very similar to Caillebotte’s *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* in the way it portrays the modernity of the urban life. As in *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*, the figures are geometrically distributed in the painting.

Caillebotte displayed the three paintings *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*, *Peintres en bâtiment* and *Pont de L’Europe* (fig. 29) at the occasion of the third Impressionist exhibition in 1877 as if they were related to one another. All these scenes are located in the same area Caillebotte was living, that is to say in the 77<sup>th</sup> rue de Miromesnil situated in proximity of Pont de l’Europe. Indeed, the scene of *Raboteurs de Parquets* was actually situated in the private hotel of Caillebotte’s parents at the 77<sup>th</sup> rue de Miromesnil.<sup>82</sup> This site provided Caillebotte with a convenient view for his paintings.<sup>83</sup> Although there is no evidence, Berhaut suggests that *The House-Painters* could have possibly taken place in one of the long streets that depart from the Street of Europe.<sup>84</sup>

Similarly to the two versions *Raboteurs de Parquets*, Caillebotte represented two plans of *The Pont de l’Europe* dated from 1876/77 showing different viewpoints. Again, these two paintings *The Pont de l’Europe* and *The Pont de l’Europe (Variant)* express a sense of continuity that is typical to cinematography. Caillebotte worked on a series of study drawings that shows the smooth shift from one painting to another. In his *Pont de l’Europe (Study)*,

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<sup>81</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe quoted from Georges Riviere’s writing in “L’Exposition des Impressionnistes”, *L’Impressionniste*, 14 Avril 1877, J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p 190

<sup>82</sup> Marie Berhaut, *Caillebotte, sa vie et son oeuvre, Catalogue Raisonne des Peintures et Pastels*, *op.cit.*, p 86

<sup>83</sup> Anne Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte; An Urban Impressionist*, *op.cit.*, p 102

<sup>84</sup> Marie Berhaut, *Caillebotte, sa vie et son oeuvre, Catalogue Raisonne des Peintures et Pastels*, La Bibliotheque des Arts, Paris, Fondation Wildenstein, Paris, 1878, p 95

Caillebotte chose to focus on the architectural X patterns of the bridge. The study of the bridge allowed Gustave to elaborate the perspective of the final composition. Indeed, the repetition in X conveys an effect of depth. Furthermore, the technique of cropping that Caillebotte is employing also brings a sense of modernity which corresponds to the architecture of the bridge.<sup>85</sup> In the study drawings, Caillebotte worked on the angle from which he could emphasize the best the perspective in X of the bridge. These drawings reflect Caillebotte's attempt to study the bridge from far and proximate points of view. If we juxtapose Gustave's study drawings and sketches with his two main paintings of *Pont de l'Europe*, we obtain zooming effects. In *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* and *Pont de l'Europe*, Caillebotte employed an effect of perspective that contributes to the idea of speed and movement. The X patterns of the bridge actually accentuate the sense of movement created by perspective. As Anne Distel suggests it, the length of the perspective as well as the multiplication of patterns mirrors the motion of the train just underneath the bridge.<sup>86</sup> Similarly to *The Raboteurs de Parquets*, every element incorporated in the scene purposely contributes to the spatial arrangement planned by Caillebotte. The composition was mainly founded on the illusion of speed produced by the perspective and the study of depth that is emphasized by the X patterns of the bridge. Additionally, some other elements such as the dog subtly contribute to the effect of movement conveyed in the composition. Although the dog was certainly not added subsequently towards the end of the painting, his position on the shadow line of the rail suggests his participation to spatial organization of the painting. Indeed, the linear place that the dog is occupying in the painting leads Varnedoe to compare him to a 'spatial arrow.'<sup>87</sup> The body of the dog actually follows the converging perspective in which the shadow line is included. It is also important to note that the dog was not represented in the earlier *Sketch for the Pont de l'Europe* which means that the dog could possibly have been included by the painter as an afterthought. The running dog accentuates the illusion of movement created by the converging perspectives. The iron trellises of the *Pont de l'Europe* actually mirrors the ladder depicted in the *House-Painters* (fig.30). As one can notice in *The House-Painters*, Caillebotte painted a second ladder that is mirroring the one on which the worker is standing as if the motif has been duplicated. The geometrical shape of the ladder is repeated horizontally on the right side of the painting where the house-painter is standing. Indeed, the vertical lines of the shop windows appear smaller and smaller. As Anne Distel

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<sup>85</sup> Anne Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte; An Urban Impressionist, op.cit.*, p 105

<sup>86</sup> Anne Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte; An Urban Impressionist, op.cit.*, p 102

<sup>87</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p 74

notes it, the repetition proportional diminishing lines creates a pyramidal effect that mimics the perpendicular ladder.<sup>88</sup> Caillebotte plays on the repetition of patterns and figures that contributes to the idea of movement. The perspective created by the converging frame of the shop windowed is extended by the line of the architectural design of the apartments. Indeed, the converging lines created by the iron of the bridge, the shadow and the pavement constitute the founding structure of the composition (fig.31). The painter also seems to have progressively shifted from one angle to another as if he was holding a camera. These study drawings also give him the opportunity to evaluate the positioning of the figure in the composition (fig.32, fig.33 and fig.34). As Jean Chardeau explained in *Les Dessins de Caillebotte*, the aim of Caillebotte was to represent a view that cannot be encompassed in one glance.<sup>89</sup> Accordingly, the drawings allow him to seize the view that is the most interesting for the eye. By looking at Caillebotte's study, one can see how Caillebotte slowly and subtly turned towards the left of the painting in order to achieve a second corresponding version and find the perfect angle. It is interesting to note that Caillebotte's sequences of drawings perfectly exemplify the movement of the eye to shift from one angle to another. From Caillebotte's initial painting *The Pont de l'Europe* to his final variant dated from around 1876/77, one can see that the bridge became more and more the centre of interest. In the final version of *The Pont de l'Europe*, Gustave's organization of space conveys the effect of a frame within a frame. Indeed, the viewer is looking at the whole composition and the figures seem to be looking at the background beyond the iron girders of the bridge. The iron girders offer an unlimited view on the space depicted beyond.<sup>90</sup> The X patterns of the bridge actually seem to draw the figures into that modern world in the background. The X shape creates a sense of openness towards a rather empty space which is emphasized by the abstract tones of blue. This impression of inviting space is comparable to Gustave's series of views from the window, especially *Jeune Homme a la fenêtre* (1875). The use of frame within the frame is also present in this painting. However, both the viewer and the figure seen from the back are absorbed by the clear view on the outside world which is emphasized by the openness of the window. As Richard Thomson argues, Caillebotte was perfectly aware of the viewer's gaze when he was working on these paintings. Caillebotte not only depicted the city life but also how the viewer perceives it; this is particularly evident in the painting *Vue prise a travers un*

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<sup>88</sup> Anne Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte; An Urban Impressionist, op.cit.*, p 52

<sup>89</sup> Jean Chardeau, préface de Kirk Varnedoe, *Les dessins de Caillebotte*, Hermé, Paris, mai 1989, p 12

<sup>90</sup> Anne Distel, *op.cit.*, p 109

*balcon* (1880) in which the viewer is positioned at the same place as the artist<sup>91</sup>. The psychological dimension of the gaze was especially employed by Degas in his collection of ballet paintings. Indeed, the artist allows the viewer to explore the scene through his own eyes. This organization of space is indeed very similar to the arrangement of *Pont de l'Europe (Variant)* as the artist is drawing the gaze of the viewer towards two destinations (fig.35). Accordingly, the viewer has the choice to focus on the figure or the converging view of the exterior space.

This chapter demonstrated how space and perspective contribute to produce visual experiences. Although the artist used a rather traditional approach, he aimed at challenging the perception of the viewer through the sensation of movement, three-dimensional effects and cutting of the image. Caillebotte's effects of change, speed and rational space correspond to the experience of modernity of the new Paris. One of the main arguments of the first section is the way the artist encompasses space as a whole by using panoramic views. Caillebotte used two different approaches to space, one which is panoramic and one which shows fragmented views. As explained in the first section, panoramic views were mostly present in Renaissance works while fragmented views are associated with Impressionism. Monet for instance, was one of the Impressionists who depicted fragmented views of space also employed by Japanese artists. In Caillebotte's works, there seems to be a balance between panoramic views and the fragmented space. Despite the similarities that exist between Renaissance art and Caillebotte's construction of space, the artist did not have access to the resources of the Great Masters. Caillebotte's unconventional perspective distinguishes itself from the principles of perspective established during the Renaissance. Unlike the Old Masters who use a more traditional and geometrical approach to perspective, Caillebotte studies space as a way of communicating with the viewer. Indeed, the artist's aim is not to construct a perspective that is mathematically correct but to interact with the viewer through visual effects. Through illusionistic effects of movement and viewpoints, the artist stimulates the psychological dimension of the viewer. The artist is also playing with the contrast between order and disorder in most of his pictures. As this chapter demonstrated in the study of the *Raboteurs de Parquets*, nothing in the picture is displayed randomly. Caillebotte creates an illusion of chaos while his organization of space is very well ordered.

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<sup>91</sup> Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark, Dorothee Hansen, Gry Hedin, *op.cit.*, p 35

The association of sharp elements and random materials, especially in *Raboteur*, with the sense of order that is prevailing in Caillebotte's space is very reminiscent of still-life compositions. Still-life painters traditionally incorporated sharp elements such as a knife or other tools that would bring an effect of life to the composition. Caillebotte's organization of space was so thoughtfully envisaged that each element seems to have a signification in the scene and bring a sense of naturalness to the scene. The distribution of elements and figures within space and the repetition of motifs which are very present in Caillebotte's urban scenes contribute to the visual experience of the viewer. One may notice the presence of some corresponding elements in many paintings. For instance, figures and objects such as umbrellas are repeated in different paintings which contribute to the effect of continuity between each scene. As discussed in this chapter, there is an interrelation between groups of scenes such as *The Pont de l'Europe*, *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*, *Peintres en bâtiment* and *the Raboteurs de Parquets*. This interrelation provides the viewer with the experience of the city.

This chapter also argued how the organization of the city could have influenced the artist. Indeed, Paris already provided a naturally ordered space that is comparable to the idea of the Italian Renaissance *Città Ideale*. As I will explain throughout the project, the environment of the artist is important as it might be one of the elements which determined their style. Caillebotte certainly started painting in a more Realistic manner because of the criticism voiced towards Impressionism. By choosing a more Realistic technique, the artist could avoid any idealization for which an Impressionist style might have been reproached. The precision of the movement expressed through the body was also necessary for the artist to convey visual experiences. Indeed, the motif of the working class and urban life was very much employed by the Realists. The artist's use of perspective stimulates the visual experiences of the viewer through the sensation of speed and movement. The artist's fascination with movement will also be studied in the second and third chapter on photography and Impressionism. Even though there is no real evidence of Caillebotte's affinity with Muybridge, Caillebotte's approach to fragmented and repeated movement is comparable to his works.

## CHAPTER II

### CAILLEBOTTE AND PHOTOGRAPHY

The relationship between Impressionism and photography has become a significant feature of recent scholarship on Impressionism, where preoccupation with light, capturing the ephemeral and the objectification of the image, what T.J. Clark has called the ‘optical neutrality’ of Impressionism, have all been at the forefront of contemporary debates.<sup>92</sup> This chapter examines the uses Caillebotte made of photography and its influence on his work. It sets this out within the context of the debates about art and photography in relation to Impressionist painting. In his representations of the views of Paris, Caillebotte attempted to unveil the reconstruction of the city and the expansion of the axial roads. The artist used photography as a source material that facilitated his concerns with objectivity in his early works and naturalism. But as this chapter will explore, Caillebotte’s intention was not simply to copy reality but reveal his own perception of reality. Like a photographer, he was able to translate what he saw, but he still remains a painter in his ways of expressing his impression of the truth. There are many features of Caillebotte’s paintings that show he was strongly influenced by photography in all stages of his career and may well have worked closely with his brother Martial in photographic imagery that is closely related to his paintings. I want to come back to this point later in the chapter, but first it is necessary to examine the relationship of Caillebotte’s paintings to photographic representation and the debates about the relationship of painting and photography during the period Caillebotte was working. In chapter one I had examined Caillebotte’s use of perspective in his compositions, emphasizing how techniques of pictorial organization ultimately derived from Renaissance art had been employed by Caillebotte to organize perception in his paintings and how this set him apart from many of Impressionist colleagues. I had also suggested that as Caillebotte’s works moved closer to Impressionist colleagues in the later 1870s he began to loosen, though not abandon, the pictorial structure evident in his earlier works. While Caillebotte’s primary reference point for perspectival organization would have undoubtedly come from paintings, prints and artist’s instructional manuals, photography’s monocular presentation of imagery would also have been an influence on him. Here, it is important to note that Caillebotte’s teacher Leon Bonnat not only familiarized Caillebotte with the rules of academic painting but also to photographic

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<sup>92</sup> T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life*, Princeton University Press, Princeton New Jersey, 1984, p 17

techniques.<sup>93</sup> Bonnat encouraged his students to add personal touch in their academic paintings.

As Peter Galassi has argued, photography reproduced many of the features of compositional organization of a single point perspectival organization. But as Galassi goes on to state, optical effects present in photographic representation in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, also showed many differences, particularly in terms of synthesis and distortion of space and scale. These effects are often present in Caillebotte's paintings. Distortion of spatial organization appears in many of Caillebotte's urban paintings, in which one may recognize a looming proximity and a deep background that creates an unusual effect of illusion. Caillebotte was often criticized for such disproportionate perspectives. The artist seemed to rely on the mode of visibility associated with the camera instead of natural perception. This faithfulness to the geometry of the machine actually compromises the viewer's response to the painting. If one looks at two of his paintings, *Rue de Paris; Temps de Pluie* and *Pont de l'Europe*, one may observe the exaggerated contrast between the foreground and the background. The abstracted mathematical objectivity rendered by Caillebotte's spatial structure was described by perspective academicians as 'horrifying anamorphoses' or 'monstrous deformation.'<sup>94</sup> As Varnedoe explains, the appropriate distance is proportional to the size of the rectangle window of the painting. According to his calculation, the proximity of the viewpoint is 'five times' closer than the reality and the field of vision is nearly four times wider than what scholars considered as correct.<sup>95</sup> To obtain such a narrow field of vision, one has to employ long lens length, for wider field of vision a short wide angle-lens is suitable.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, it is likely that the artist used a shorter wide angle lens to create such an effect. Varnedoe attempted to recreate the visual experience produced by Caillebotte's use of space by using equivalent lenses, reconstituting the views of his paintings by taking two pictures of the same perspective and angles but with different lenses. He then juxtaposed photographs taken with short wide-angle lenses next to the longer narrow-angled ones. The long narrow-angle lenses reflect the viewpoint that an academician would have considered relevant, while the short wide-angle lenses produce the same optical effect that one experiences in front of Caillebotte's paintings. In the photograph 'View from the corner window at 77, rue de

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<sup>93</sup> Karin Sagner, *An Impressionist and Photography, Gustave Caillebotte*, (Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Hirmer), p 21

<sup>94</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe and Suzanne Boorsch, *Gustave Caillebotte: A Retrospective Exhibition*, (The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1976), p 61

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> As argued by Peter Galassi, Caillebotte may have employed a *camera lucida* or a *camera obscura*, J. Kirk T. Varnedoe and Suzanne Boorsch, *op.cit.*, p 210



Miromesnil' taken with the long narrow angled lenses (55mm), the distance between the foreground and the background seems shortened and more condensed (fig.1).<sup>97</sup> Unlike the second wide-angled photo (28mm lens) (fig.2) which is meant to recreate Caillebotte's viewpoint, these narrow-angled lenses produce a two-dimensional effect by reducing the impression of depth (fig.3).<sup>98</sup> The 28mm lens offers more space as it emphasizes the elements of the foreground and allows a more pronounced perspective. The longer and narrower the lens is, the shorter is the distance between the foreground and the background. The comparison between short wide-lens photographs and 55 mm long narrow-lens pictures is even more evident in Varnedoe's study of *Pont de l'Europe* (fig.4) and *Rue de Paris; Temps de Pluie*.<sup>99</sup> In the two pictures showing the 'view up rue de Vienne toward the Place de l'Europe', there is a strong discrepancy between the 55 mm. lens photograph (fig.5 and Fig.8) and the 24 mm. lens one (fig.6 and fig.9). The 55mm lens picture reflects what the human eye would be able to perceive, while the 24mm lens photo mostly relies on geometry. Similarly, in *Rue de Paris; Temps de Pluie* (fig.7), the proportion between the figures and the new Haussmannian buildings clearly contrasts from one picture to another. Indeed, the human eye can only perceive what is within its field of vision. As Charles Blanc wrote:

Non, la vérité mathématique n'est pas de même nature que la vérité pittoresque. Aussi bien, il arrive à tout moment que la géométrie dit une chose et que notre âme en dit une autre. Etrange et bienfaisante illusion, qui témoigne à la fois de notre petitesse et de notre grandeur ! Il n'est sans doute que l'œil de Dieu qui puisse voir l'univers en géométral ; l'homme dans son infirmité n'en saisit partout que des raccourcis.<sup>100</sup>

Indeed, the eye is not used to perceiving perspective in the geometric way Caillebotte depicts it in his paintings.

It is important to understand that the artist, unlike the photographers of his time, purposely chose to include these effects in his works. Although similar spatial deformation

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<sup>97</sup> Photo by J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *View from the corner window at 77, rue de Miromesnil*, 55 mm. lens

Photo by J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *View from the corner window at 77, rue de Miromesnil*, 28 mm. lens

<sup>98</sup> Gustave Caillebotte. (1875), *Jeune Homme à la Fenêtre*, (*Young Man at his Window*), [Oil on canvas], 117 x 82 cm, Private Collection.

<sup>99</sup> Photo by J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *View up the rue de Vienne toward the Place de l'Europe*, 55mm. lens

Photo by J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *View up the rue de Vienne, looking towards the Place de l'Europe*, 24mm. lens

Photo by J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *View from the rue de Turin, looking toward the rue de Moscou*, 55 mm lens

Photo by J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *View from the rue de Turin, looking toward the rue de Moscou*, 24 mm. lens

<sup>100</sup> Charles Blanc, *Grammaire des Arts du dessin : architecture, sculpture, peinture*, J. Renouard, Paris, 1867, p 545- 546

appeared in more modern photographs taken in the 1860s and 1870s, Nineteenth-Century photographers generally avoided these unconventional effects. In that respect, the modernity expressed in Caillebotte's paintings makes of him a pioneer, especially in his advanced conception of space. None of the effects in Caillebotte's paintings were added randomly. The artist meticulously selected every detail and the carefully conceived perspectival structure.<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, as Varnedoe argues, it is likely that he may have been interested in the *camera obscura* and the *camera lucida*. Caillebotte may have used these devices as a basis for his compositions and then worked from it independently adjusting the pictures accordingly. At the occasion of the Impressionist Exhibition Paul Sebillot noted:

Ce tableau (Street of Paris; Rainy Day) malgré d'incontestables qualités etonne et n'emeut pas; cela donne l'air de ce que sera la photographie quand on aura trouve le moyen de reproduire les couleurs avec leur intensites et leur finesse.<sup>102</sup>

To develop this argument, it would be worth exploring Caillebotte's preparatory drawings for the *Pont de l'Europe* (1876) and the materials he used in order to complete them.<sup>103</sup> These drawings allow us to understand the different steps that Caillebotte followed in order to achieve this kind of elaborate architectural construction that prevails in his paintings. The curator of photography Peter Galassi describes in his essay "Caillebotte's methods" the evolution of the artist's preparatory drawings. Caillebotte certainly started by sketching a small architectural structure without employing a straight-edge. Then, he would have drawn again the same motif but this time by using a straight-edge that would have allowed him to construct it in perspective. Afterwards, the artist would have possibly elaborated his drawing by incorporating architectural elements and figures completed in oil paint. The painter would then have applied oil paint in all the spaces of the initial drawing in order to give an overall impression of the structure of the work. Finally, he would have reviewed the completed version of the work and done some slight changes in the position of the way figures are displayed and the coherence of the composition.

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<sup>101</sup> . Kirk T. Varnedoe and Suzanne Boorsch, *Gustave Caillebotte: A Retrospective Exhibition*, *op.cit.*, p 67

<sup>102</sup> Quotation from Paul Sebillot, *Exposition des Impressionistes, Le Bien Public*, 7 Avril 1877. Marie Berhaut, *Caillebotte, sa vie et son oeuvre, Catalogue Raisonne des Peintures et Pastels*, La Bibliotheque des Arts, Paris, Fondation Wildenstein, Paris, 1878, p 254

<sup>103</sup> Gustave Caillebotte, *Le Pont de l'Europe (The Europe Bridge)*, [Oil on Canvas], 131 x 181 cm, Musée du Petit Palais, Geneva, 1876

As Peter Galassi explains, there are six paintings which may prove that Caillebotte employed a photographic medium or the *camera lucida*.<sup>104</sup> The source of photographic medium is found in their respective drawings accomplished on a tracing paper. Indeed, three of the drawings are identical to the size of Martial Caillebotte's photographic formats. According to Distel, *Study of a Man under an Umbrella Facing Right* seems to come from a smaller version as the tracing lines are emphasized. This study drawing was likely to have come from a photographic plate.<sup>105</sup> Caillebotte's study drawing for *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* includes a sketch for *Canotiers* (1877) (fig.10). The presence of *Canotier* in the study drawing for *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* proves that the artist has been working on the two drawings in 1877. As Distel suggests, the study of the two drawings also reflects the contrast between the city and the countryside. According to Distel, the combination of the two drawings evokes Caillebotte's nostalgia for the countryside. In one of Caillebotte's letter to Pissarro during the summer of 1879, one may read:

Je suis toujours très heureux de vous voir mais je ne puis vous dire si d'ici peu je ne serai pas a la campagne. Voici plusieurs fois que je descends pour partir et des que j'arrive au bas de l'escalier la pluie recommence. Ce temps est profondément ignoble.<sup>106</sup> Lettre 22

The incorporation of *Study for Canotiers* in the squared drawing for *Study of a Man under an Umbrella Facing Right* provides an interesting insight into the artist's technique of composition. Although there is little evidence that Caillebotte used photographic devices, the size and the support of these three drawing show a possible interest of the artist in photography. The squared study drawing for *Les Canotiers* (fig.10) clearly suggests that the artist depicted it from a photograph. Peter Galassi accurately measured the proportions of Gustave's drawing and Martial's photographs. Gustave's drawing measures 8 x 11.5cm, while the size most of Martial's works is 9 x 11 cm. This comparison shows a strong proximity between the drawings and the photographic medium. The lines of the drawing allowed the artist to construct his work from a solid frame. Another drawing which corresponds to the standard photographic portrait dimension is Caillebotte's representation of *Paul Hugot* (fig.11

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<sup>104</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p 192

<sup>105</sup> Anne Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte, Urban Impressionist*, The Art Institute of Chicago, 18 February-28 May 1995, p 118

<sup>106</sup> Marie Berhaut, *op.cit.*, p 245

Translated from Anne Distel: 'I'm always very happy to see you but I cannot say for sure that I won't be in the country shortly. Several times now I've come down to leave and the moment I reach the bottom of the stairs the rain began again. This weather is really vile.' Anne Distel, *op.cit.*, p 122

and 12). The size of the actual painting is 204 x 92cm. However, the proportion of the study drawing lines is 14 x 7.2 cm, which is the same size as a cabinet photograph.<sup>107</sup>Caillebotte's studies for *Les Canotiers*, *Paul Hugot* and another drawing for *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* have been reproduced on a broader squared paper.

In their own time, although most Impressionists fail to acknowledge the correspondence between the photography and art, analogies could be drawn between Gustave Caillebotte's techniques and the photographic device. The resemblances with photography are particularly evident in the structure and the effects that Caillebotte chose to employ in his compositions. Despite the ambivalence shown by many Impressionists to the links drawn between their work and photography, Caillebotte seemed to be deeply oriented towards photography; Impressionists rejected this, instead drawing a contrast between the mechanical and the human eye. Considering the accuracy and the architectural construction of Caillebotte's works, it may be tempting to assert that Caillebotte resorted to the use of photography as a model for his paintings. Caillebotte's paintings demonstrate very distinctive photographic qualities such as the effect of depth, light, distance, the framing of the motif, the angle shots and the cutting of the picture. In exploring these qualities of the visual image he may have been encouraged by the modern life motifs he had been treating. To understand Caillebotte's relationship to photography, one needs to study how it influenced other artists. Despite the passionate debates that photography triggered among artists and critics, how useful was the medium to painters and Impressionists?

During the 1850s, the process of reconstructing Paris had gathered pace under the organization of Baron Haussmann. The city that eventually emerged from the process in the 1870s became a central motif of early Impressionism, which favoured modern life and modern landscape subjects, but it also spawned the production of photographic visual imagery. The reconstruction of Paris into a new city offered the artist a spectacular view in perspective of the capital. The views of this city already attracted the attention of photographers such as Charles Marville and Nadar in the 1850s and 60s. This architectural organization of the city established by the baron Georges Haussmann influenced Caillebotte in his approach to representing the city.<sup>108</sup> To create more space in the streets of Paris, the Seine prefect Baron Haussmann decided with the Napoléon III's agreement to rebuild the

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<sup>107</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *op.cit.*, p 192

<sup>108</sup> Karin Sagner, *An Impressionist and Photography, Gustave Caillebotte*, (Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Hirmer), p 21

architecture of the city and reorganize the main axes, places and avenues.<sup>109</sup> The new design of the urban structure of the new city encouraged many artists, including those associated with Impressionism to represent Parisian motifs. Caillebotte shares some similarities with Monet – such as the illusion of movement. What brings Caillebotte especially close to photography is his framing of the motif. The motif refers to the elements that the artist chooses to incorporate within his composition. It also contributes to the union and the artistic value of the main subjects of the work. Edmund About defined this term in 1868 as a group of natural elements which form a landscape:

Forets, rochers, rivages, vallons, troupeaux, palais, ruines, chaumières,  
costumes, types, étaient les matériaux dont on composait un paysage.<sup>110</sup>

He also adds that ‘when by chance one encountered a combination of beautiful things well grouped in nature, one said: ‘that’s a picturesque site’, that is to say a site worthy of being painted, comparable to those that true artists represent.’<sup>111</sup>

As the art critic Georges Lafenestre argued, nature provides the painter with a structure in which elements are displayed in harmony:

Elements borrowed from living nature are grouped together and enhance  
and strengthen each other, so as to throw the individual sentiment of the  
artist into relief.<sup>112</sup>

The frame encompasses this combination of natural elements that create a landscape painting. From 1850, landscape painters started bringing more focus on single themes or atmospheric sensations rather than a motif.<sup>113</sup> The notion of the motif appears in Caillebotte’s choice to represent elements drawn from the urban landscape or the countryside for the Yerres collection. By incorporating the mist of the rain in one of his painting *Rue de Paris; Temps de Pluie*, Caillebotte successfully united the elements of the motif with climate effects. Susan Sontag argues that the particularity and the originality of a photograph lay in what the artist

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<sup>109</sup> Caroline Mathieu, *Paris, au temps des Impressionnistes*, Skira Flammarion, exhibition « Paris au temps des Impressionnistes » from the 12th April to 30th July 2011, p 18

<sup>110</sup> ‘Forests, rocks, shorelines, valleys, flocks, palaces, ruins, cottages, costumes, types, these were the materials from which one composed a landscape.’ Richard Thompson wrote a quotation from Edward About’s work ‘Le Salon de 1868’, Richard Thompson, *Framing France, The representation of landscape in France, 1870-1914*, Edited by Richard Thompson, 1998, p 23

<sup>111</sup> Richard Thompson, *op.cit.*, p 22

<sup>112</sup> Richard Thompson wrote a quotation from Georges Lafenestre taken from ‘Le Salon de 1872’. Richard Thompson, *op.cit.*, p 22

<sup>113</sup> Richard Thompson, *op.cit.*, p 22

chooses to incorporate or exclude from the frame of the picture. She takes as an example the method of cropping: “photographs found that as they more narrowly cropped reality, magnificent form appeared.”<sup>114</sup> This argument clearly underlines Caillebotte’s technique as the artist used cropping in his paintings. One of the photographic approaches that Caillebotte employed was the method of cropping. Indeed, the painter attempted to sharpen the frame by cutting the edges of the picture like a photograph. This technique was also a faithful way of translating his experience of the scene as a viewer.<sup>115</sup> Through his use of photographic effects, Caillebotte was perhaps seeking to capture the metamorphosis of Paris. One could draw a link between Caillebotte’s instantaneous depiction of Paris streets and stereoscopic photographs which allowed a perception in three-dimension by using two symmetrical flat pictures. This technique conveys an impression of movement and animation.

The resemblance between photography and Caillebotte’s painting was sometimes picked up on in the criticism of his works at the impressionist exhibitions. Though one of the artists most committed to the series of Impressionist shows, withdrawing only from one after falling out with Degas over the latter’s wish to call the 5<sup>th</sup> exhibition a ‘realist salon’, critics often noted the difference between the style and subjects of Caillebotte’s early work and those of his Impressionist colleagues. Caillebotte’s faithfulness to a naturalist technique drew analogies with the realism of photography and was perhaps what the writer and critic Emile Zola criticized Caillebotte for. On the occasion of the “Second Impressionist Exhibition” of 1876, Zola criticized Caillebotte’s *Raboteurs* and *Jeune homme à la fenêtre*.<sup>116</sup>

Caillebotte a exposé *Les Raboteurs de Parquet* et *Un Jeune Homme à sa Fenêtre*, d’un relief étonnant. Seulement c’est une peinture claire comme du verre, bourgeoisie, à force d’exactitude. La photographie de la réalité, lorsqu’elle n’est pas rehaussée par l’empreinte originale du talent artistique, est une chose pitoyable.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, (Penguin Books, London, 1977), p 90

<sup>115</sup> Stephane Guegan, Laurance Madeline, Gilles Genty, *L’ABCdaire de Caillebotte*, (Flammarion, Paris 1994) p 21

<sup>116</sup> Gustave Caillebotte, *Les Raboteurs de Parquet (The Floor-Scrapers)*, [Oil on Canvas], 102 x 146 .5 cm, Musée du Louvres, Galerie du Jeu de Paume, 1875

Gustave Caillebotte, *Homme nu-tête vu de dos à la fenêtre (Bare-Headed Man Seen from Behind at the Window)*, [Oil on Canvas], 117.3 x 82.8 cm, Private Collection Paris, 1875

<sup>117</sup> Emile Zola, *Écrits sur l’Art*, tel Gallimard, Paris, 1991, p 353

Caillebotte exhibited the *Floor-Scrapers* and *A Young Man at His Window*, which are of an extraordinary three-dimensionality. However, it is anti-artistic painting, painting as neat as glass,

Considering that Zola was one of the leading figures in naturalism, this criticism seems to contradict his own convictions. If we read closely his statement, Zola seems to appreciate the ‘extraordinary three-dimensionality’ of the painting. What he thought was lacking in the work was the imprint and personality of the artist. Zola seemed to consider Caillebotte as an artist who was still learning and developing his experience as an artist. His later comments allow us to understand the origin of his criticism. During the Impressionist Exhibition which took place in 1877, the writer explained:

Enfin, je nommerai M. Caillebotte, un jeune peintre du plus beau courage et qui ne recule pas devant les sujets modernes grandeur nature. Sa Rue de Paris par un temps de pluie montre des passants, surtout un monsieur et une dame au premier plan qui sont d’une belle vérité. Lorsque son talent se sera un peu assoupli encore, M. Caillebotte sera certainement un des plus hardis du groupe.<sup>118</sup>

This argument shows that Zola actually perceived Caillebotte as an emerging artist. However, it remains unclear whether Zola approved or not the use of photography. At the exhibition that took place in 1877, Zola complimented Gustave’s *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* for being truthful, just one year later after having criticized his work for being a “photography of reality.” According to him, photography is a device which allows the viewer to discover a new perception of reality. As he explained it: “You cannot claim you have really seen something until you have photographed it.”<sup>119</sup> What Zola means through this argument is that realist art needs some photographic quality in order to represent the world in an objective fashion. Nevertheless, for the naturalist writer, photography should only constitute a base for the realist painters. The capacity of the artist to use a photograph and create a story from it is exactly what Zola admires in Balzac’s works:

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bourgeois painting, because of the exactitude of the copying. Photography of reality which is not stamped with the original seal of the painter’s talent, that’s a pitiful thing.

Emile Zola, Lettres de Paris « Deux Exposition d’Art en Mai », *Le Messager de l’Europe*, Juin 1876, *A Retrospective Exhibition*, (The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1976), translated by J.Kirk T.Varnedoe and Suzanne Boorsch, *Gustave Caillebotte: A Retrospective Exhibition*, (The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1976), p 210

<sup>118</sup> Emile Zola, *Ecrits sur l’Art*, tel Gallimard, Paris, 1991, p 359

<sup>119</sup> MarjaWarehime, *Writing the Limits of Representation: Balzac, Zola, and Tournier on Art and Photography*, University of Wisconsin Press, Source: SubStance, Vol. 18, No. 1, Issue 58 (1989), p 52, [Online], Available from JSTORE, accessed: 26/03/2013

“Balzac ne s’en tient pas seulement en photographe aux faits recueillis par lui puisqu’il intervient d’une façon indirecte pour placer son personnage dans des conditions dont il reste maître.”<sup>120</sup>

Nevertheless, photography is not just a document of reality as it can also reveal a beauty that appears unseen to the eye. As Marja Warehime explained, a photograph can be sometimes more profound than a naturalist work.<sup>121</sup> In his work *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*, one may easily distinguish how the artist chose to display his figures. The lamppost seems to divide the painting into two enigmatic stories.<sup>122</sup> The clothing of the figures on the left with the umbrella allows the viewer to think that they may be workers. The couple in the foreground has their gaze drawn to the right; however, the painter has chosen to keep the narrative or anecdotal content of the painting mysterious by excluding what the couple is looking at. This lack of intelligibility in his painting adds to its intrigue. Although the ‘blankness’ of Caillebotte seems to worry Zola, the writer showed no little admiration for the objectiveness and the truth of Manet.

Le talent de Manet est fait de simplicité et de justesse. Sans doute devant la nature incroyable de certain de ses confrères, il se sera décidé à interroger la réalité, seul à seule ; il aura refusé toute la science acquise, toute l’expérience ancienne, il aura voulu prendre l’art au commencement, c’est-à-dire à l’observation exacte des objets.<sup>123</sup>

It is the ‘authenticity’ that Zola appreciates in Manet’s paintings. However, Zola’s views on Caillebotte and Zola seem contradictory as Caillebotte’s paintings also reflect many comparable qualities. It is important to elucidate this discrepancy of value between Zola’s views about Caillebotte and Manet as the two artists shared similar qualities of ‘sincerity’ in their representations. The following comments by Zola on Manet’s paintings may explain the artistic quality that Zola is looking for in a painting: “Etudiez les oppositions de leurs corps sur le parquet et sur les murs. Puis, regardez les toiles de M. Manet: vous verrez que là est la vérité et la puissance.”<sup>124</sup> Zola not only appreciated what he calls the truth of the painting but also the expression that it conveys. Although Caillebotte seemed to have incorporated these

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<sup>120</sup> MarjaWarehime, *op.cit.*, p 52

<sup>121</sup> MarjaWarehime, *op.cit.*, p 52

<sup>122</sup> Julia Sagraves, *Gustave Caillebotte; Urban Impressionist*, (The Art Institute of Chicago, 18 February- 28 May 1995), p 117

<sup>123</sup> Emile Zola, *Ecrits sur l’Art, op.cit.*, p 116

<sup>124</sup> Emile Zola, *Ecrits sur l’Art, op.cit.*, p 118



qualities into *Raboteurs de Parquet*, Zola appears to be searching for more intensity, especially in the gaze of the figures.<sup>125</sup> According to Zola, the ability to enter into the inner thoughts of the figures is seemingly missing in Caillebotte's paintings. What makes the difference between an accomplished and an amateur artist according to Zola is the capacity to add a personal signature in a painting. The accomplished artist that Zola perceives in Manet goes beyond the "copy of nature."<sup>126</sup> However, the writer does not completely discredit Caillebotte as he wrote about him:

M. Caillebotte est un artiste très consciencieux, qui a le courage des grands efforts et qui cherche avec la résolution la plus virile.<sup>127</sup>

Critics such as Zola and Baudelaire reproached photography for its perfect rendering of reality, its lack of poetry or reserved temperament of the artist. While some painters saw affinities between the art of painting and the effect of photography, the relation of photography to the arts remained an issue of contention. For some, the objectivity and mechanical nature of the reproductive medium of photography suggested its role as a scientific instrument, rather than as a means of personal artistic expression. Moreover, to align photography to scientific representation was not necessarily to preclude some relationship to the artistic process. François Arago and Delaroche, for instance, both described photography as something that could contribute to science, the arts and archeology.<sup>128</sup> Baudelaire, one of the photography's sternest critics, would only admit a limited role for photographic representation, describing photography as: "la servante des sciences et des arts, mais la très humble servante."<sup>129</sup> Baudelaire firmly argued that photography should be used as a support for art and not the contrary. It was clear that Baudelaire disdained photography and regarded it as an anti-artistic device. What he actually feared was the possibility that photography replaced painting. For the romantic Baudelaire, the arts depended on the pre-eminent faculty of the imagination and the subjective expression of the inner psychology of the artist. These

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<sup>125</sup> Gustave Caillebotte, (1875), *Raboteurs de Parquets*, [Oil on Canvas], 102 x 146 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris

<sup>126</sup> "Zola n'apprécie guère ce qu'il appelle les "copistes appliqués de la nature" (from Jean-Pierre Leduc-Adine.) Emile Zola, *Ecrits sur l'Art*, *op.cit.*, p 492

<sup>127</sup> Emile Zola, *Ecrits sur l'Art*, *op.cit.*, p 422. "Finally, Monsieur Caillebotte is a very conscientious artist, whose facture is a little dry, but who has the courage for large efforts and who researches with the most virile resolution." Translated by J. Kirk T. Varnedoe and Suzanne Boorsch, T.Varnedoe and Suzanne Boorsch, *Gustave Caillebotte: A Retrospective Exhibition*, p 218

<sup>128</sup> Serge Lemoine, Jean-Pierre de Mondenard, *Dans l'Intimité des Frères Caillebottes, Peintre et Photographe*, (Musée Jacquemart-André, Institut de France, 25 Mars au 11 Juillet 2011), p 29

<sup>129</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Ecrits sur L'Art*, (Les Classiques de Poche, 1999), p 364, Translation by Alan Trachtenberg: "Photography must, therefore, return to its true duty, which is that of handmaid of the arts and sciences, but their humble handmaid." Alan Trachtenberg, *Classic Essays on Photography*, (Leete's Island Books, 1980), p 83

were qualities that the poet precluded from photography. As he argues in his *Écrit sur l'art*, imagination is essential to the existence of art. It is the key to infinite truth. Indeed, a painting has no limitation regarding the range of colours that the painter may use and its atmosphere. For Baudelaire photography embodied the antithesis of dream exemplified by poetry. The modernity of photography seems to influence the artist to represent what he sees instead of what he actually dreams: “le peintre devient de plus en plus enclin à peindre non pas de ce qu’il rêve, mais ce qu’il voit.”<sup>130</sup> The camera was first perceived as a mechanical way of representing reality that distinguished the artist from the work. Indeed, the device could facilitate the process of representation that the painter was meant to depict by recording the reality. Therefore, there was a risk - according to Baudelaire - that photography could become a new form of art; and one severely lacking in imagination and emotion.<sup>131</sup> The invention of photography far from converging on painting, served to define painting in its proper sphere of competence; it served to clarify how the subjective, performative role of the artist differed from the instrumentality of the mechanical production of the photograph. Caillebotte’s interest in using photography signals his break with the way Baudelaire conceived of art, in favour of a more obscure and naturalistic presentation of his motifs, the very qualities Baudelaire disdained in photography.

Caillebotte may have used photography as a way of translating visual experiences with an objective realism. The camera possibly allowed him to reproduce a single point perspective as in *Pont de l’Europe*.<sup>132</sup> Particularly in his early works, Caillebotte combined qualities that both belong to notions of realism and photography.

More productive lines of affiliation between photography and painting tended to focus on the relation of each to the growing preoccupation in France with naturalistic representation and with landscape in particular. For several commentators, the most immediate affinity between photography and art lay in their shared imitation of nature. Yet, even here the relationship was by no means straightforward. The photographic precision that appears among realist painters was rejected by critics such as Paul Huet. He disapproved the artist’s ambition ‘to reproduce nature exactly’ as ‘they lack a sense of what is genuinely natural.’<sup>133</sup> According to him, the use of the Daguerreotype might deform the artist’s perception of nature. For Huet it

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<sup>130</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Écrits sur l’Art*, *op.cit.*, p 365

<sup>131</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Écrits sur l’Art*, *op.cit.*, p 83

<sup>132</sup> Renzo Dubbini, *Geography of the Gaze: Urban and Rural Vision in Early Modern Europe*, The University of Chicago Press, 2002, p 201

<sup>133</sup> Aaron Scharf wrote a quotation from Paul Huet. Aaron Scharf, *Art and Photography*, (Penguin Books, Middlesex, England, 1974), p 147

was enough that the beauty of nature was appreciated with the eyes. Like Baudelaire, Huet insisted that photography should be ‘used for reference where a detail is concerned’ and not as a model to imitate.<sup>134</sup> What actually makes a painting ‘true’ and ‘authentic’ are the signature and the gesture of the painter on his canvas. Huet also added that there should not be barriers between the artist and the art medium. He describes the relationship between the artist and the canvas as unique: ‘there is something in an artist’s work which no instrument can give.’<sup>135</sup> Although, photography is more advanced than painting in its technique of capturing reality, the range of impressions and effects is wider in painting. Indeed, the actual evolution of the painting process that exists between the artist and the canvas seems to be missing in photography. For instance, one of the aspects of Impressionism is the sense of touch and tactility which is lacking in photography. Indeed, while photography is a record of the truth, painting still remains an interpretation of sensations and impressions in relation to reality. Huet explains that photography is slowly replacing the manual relationship between the artist and the painting.<sup>136</sup> Zola clearly summarizes Huet’s argument by writing: ‘If temperament had not existed, all paintings would have of necessity to be simple photographs.’<sup>137</sup> It is therefore, the emotions of the artist which constitute the painting. Indeed, what actually define Impressionist paintings are the sensations rendered and experienced by the painter. The personality of the artist is important as it gives life to the painting. The French novelist Champfleury wrote: “La reproduction de la nature par l’homme ne sera jamais *une reproduction* ni une *imitation*, ce sera surtout une *interprétation*.”<sup>138</sup> Champfleury was here dismissing Delecluze’s warning that the realist artist might become merely ‘an instrument.’ Champfleury put forward the hypothesis that if ten painters and ten photographers had to represent the same object, the photographs would all be identical while the paintings would vary according to the artist. Indeed, the way the photograph recorded reality may actually differs from the painter’s attempt to represent truth.<sup>139</sup> One might think that such theories about the photographic image as mechanical were set in opposition to painting and served to

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> Aaron Scharf wrote a quotation from Paul Huet. Aaron Scharf, *Art and Photography, op.cit.*, p 147

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> Aaron Scharf wrote a quotation from Emile Zola. Aaron Scharf, *Art and Photography, op.cit.*, p 148

<sup>138</sup> However, as Jean-Pierre de Mondenard demonstrates it, this speculation could be argued as the photographs could also change according to the light, the angle and the scale. Jean-Pierre de Mondenard wrote a quotation from Chamfleury, Serge Lemoine, Jean-Pierre de Mondenard, *Dans l’Intimité des Frères Caillebotte, Peintre et Photographe, op.cit.*, p 30

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

redefine the subjectivity of painting. However, what Champfleury was trying to demonstrate is that it is impossible for an artist to become a machine.<sup>140</sup>

Unlike the painter, the photographer is more reliant on the device. However, earlier photographs taken by Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre between 1838 and 1839 show that photography can present some of the kinds of features associated with Impressionist paintings. For instance, in Daguerre's picture *Boulevard du Temple*, one can hardly distinguish a black silhouetted figure polishing his shoes on the "box of the boot black" on the pavement. As Daguerre explained in a letter addressed to his brother on March 7, 1839, although the gentleman's boots and legs were well defined", he was "without body or head, because these were in motion."<sup>141</sup> These Impressionistic effects were due to the process of impression of the picture which could last between 20 – 30 minutes and therefore could not record any transformation on time. As Shelley Rice explains, the main attribute of a photograph is to turn an ephemeral moment into a recorded object. It was beyond the possibilities of early photography to represent colours and subtle details such as the effects of movements. Instead of producing precise snapshots of reality at the right moment, the camera could only seize some blurred elusive actions. This produced strange effects such as "horses with two heads, legs without the bodies, bodies without legs; men with multiple limbs and featureless faces, figures frozen in immobility with their exact likeness rising from them like preternatural wraiths."<sup>142</sup>

Despite photographers' determination to preserve traces of speed and action in the picture, the camera could only record motionless objects.<sup>143</sup> Therefore, their attempts to reflect movement produce uncanny, almost unearthly forms. This showed that even the most advanced machine or invention cannot equal the truth of nature. Nevertheless, through these surreal effects, the camera also translates details that are imperceptible to the eye by recording a whole range of optical movement. The human eye is incapable of evaluating the accurate speed of pedestrians, which is something that the photographic device is able to record. Interestingly, the camera renders blurred forms and effects that are comparable to Impressionism, especially in Corot's representation of the countryside and Monet's depiction of the city. If we juxtapose Monet's painting *Boulevard des Capucines* (fig.13) next to Adolphe Braun's *Le Pont des Arts* (fig.14) we may notice the surprising likeness between

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<sup>140</sup> Aaron Scharf, *Art and Photography*, (Penguin Books, Middlesex, England, 1974), p 137

<sup>141</sup> Shele Rice wrote a quotation from Daguerre, Shele Rice, *Parisian Views*, *op.cit.*, p 6

<sup>142</sup> Aaron Scharf, *Art and Photography*, *op.cit.*, p 170

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

their representations of the figures.<sup>144</sup> In both works, the figures appear like fuzzy little shapes. The idea of indefinable fleeting representation of form and animation is one of the most common features of Impressionism. Although the depiction of the figures completely lacks of definition, we can easily guess what are their intentions and their gestures. Despising the methods of photography, Ernest Chesneau compared Monet's figures to 'the ant-like swarming of the crowd on the pavement.'<sup>145</sup> Similarly, in his satirical review of the first independent exhibition of the Impressionists, the painter and critic Louis Leroy Charivari described the blurry shape of Monet's figures as 'tongue-licking' or *lichettes noires*.<sup>146</sup> This satirical review consists in a dialogue between him and Joseph Vincent:

Unfortunately, I was imprudent enough to leave him too long in front of the Boulevard des Capucines, by the same painter. 'Ah-ha!' he sneered in Mephistophelian manner. 'Is that brilliant enough, now! There's impression, or I don't know what it means. Only, be so good as to tell me what those innumerable black tongue-lickings in the lower part of the picture represent?'<sup>147</sup>

Louis Leroy and Joseph Vincent based their expectation of a painting quality on the precision and the faithfulness to truth. In the dialogue, Joseph Vincent ironically asked: 'Do I look like that when I walk along the boulevard des Capucines.'<sup>148</sup> Despite their shared preoccupation with light and capturing the ephemeral effect, most artists associated with Impressionism preferred to deny any use they made of photography for fear it might discredit their reputations. Delacroix was among the few artists to assertively declare his use of the camera: 'how I regret such an admirable invention has arrived so late.'<sup>149</sup> According to Delacroix, photography also redefined painting and the notion of imitation. He perceived the camera as a technique that contributed to precision. However, Delacroix knew to what extent he could use photography. Indeed, the artist finds it necessary to sometimes detach himself from the camera in order to focus on what is essential. Photography may actually reflect what the

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<sup>144</sup> Monet. (1873). *Boulevard des Capucines*. [Oil on Canvas], (80.33 x 60.33 cm), The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

Adolphe Baun, *The Pont des Arts*. Detail from panoramic photograph of Paris. Collection Société française de Photographie, Paris, 1867

<sup>145</sup> Aaron Scharf wrote a quote from Ernest Chesneau, Aaron Scharf, *Art and Photography*, *op.cit.*, p 170

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p 172

<sup>147</sup> Linda Nochlin, *Impressionism 1874- 1904*, Edited by H. W. Janson, date: unknown, p 12

<sup>148</sup> Joseph Vincent to Louis Leroy, Aaron Scharf, *Art and Photography*, *op.cit.*, p 172

<sup>149</sup> Hubert Damish and Richard Miller, (Winter, 1980), *Reading Delacroix's Journal*, The MIT Press, [Online], Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/778450>, October, Vol. 15 pp. 16-39, Accessed: 07/03/2013, p 31

artist's mind is unconsciously suppressing. Delacroix was drawn into the objectivity of photography and its authenticity. While a painting displays what an artist chooses to include in a painting, the lens unveils everything, even details that the photographer prefers to exclude.<sup>150</sup>

The American Impressionist Theodore Robinson justified the use of photography for a 'realist', arguing that 'painting direct from nature is difficult, as things do not remain the same.'<sup>151</sup> Furthermore, the camera could allow the artist to record the composition of the landscape. Robinson also added: 'a photo would have saved me time as I would have made fewer changes.'<sup>152</sup> Indeed, photography certainly helped the painter in his representation of the picture. However, as Robinson explained, 'I must beware of the photo, get what I can out of it and then go on.'<sup>153</sup> Like Robinson, it is likely that some Impressionists may have used photography as a model at the start of their work then continued painting without it. Despite Robinson's following assertion 'then go on', the artist may still have been reliant on the photographic device.<sup>154</sup> His paintings actually show characteristics like the effects of dark and light shade and blurred movement that are very similar to photography. The artist also used emulsions and unusual tonal effects that were typical in the nineteenth-century photographs. As one can also perceive in Caillebotte's paintings, Robinson's photographic effects are clearly accentuated. There is a close analogy between the two painters, especially concerning their techniques of Impressionism and photography. Robinson's paintings seem to disclose the material and realistic features of Impressionism. Before using Impressionist brushwork, Robinson wanted to ensure that the construction of his painting was precise and proportionate. Therefore, he judged it important to convey a photographic representation of nature faithful to reality. By bringing photographic qualities, he may have felt necessary to translate a certain form of truth in his paintings. As Aaron Scharf defines it, Robinson and Caillebotte seem to have combined the subjective with the objective.<sup>155</sup> It is interesting to note that although Caillebotte began with a very objective approach to reality in his early paintings, he employed a more subjective technique that privileges human sensations in his later works around 1880. Photography constituted an important aspect of Caillebotte in his early works. However, from

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<sup>150</sup> Hubert Damish and Richard Miller, *op.cit.*, p33

<sup>151</sup> Aaron Scharf wrote a quotation from the painter Theodore Robinson, Aaron Scharf, *Art and Photography*, (Penguin Books, Middlesex, England, 1974), p 167

<sup>152</sup> Aaron Scharf, *op.cit.*, p 167

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p 169

1880, the artist started detaching himself from the mechanical aspect of photography and opened a path towards the expressions of a more subjective vision of reality.

It is important to note that Caillebotte not only collected paintings but also photographs.<sup>156</sup> Although his photographic collection has not been entirely conserved, the photographs taken by his brother Martial Caillebotte have been and make an interesting comparison point with the paintings of his brother. Caillebotte's brother Martial was a photographer and he shared the same passions as the painter such as boating, music and philatelic collection.<sup>157</sup> Gustave and Martial were interested by the same motifs such as the architecture of Paris, the country and modernity. The way Gustave chose to capture the scene also shows strong resemblance with the photographs taken by his brother. It has often been assumed that Caillebotte may have been influenced by the photographs of his brother which show similar motifs and compositional attributes. However, recent dating of his paintings indicates that Caillebotte accomplished most of his works around the period of 1875 before Martial started taking photographs in 1891. Actually, it was Caillebotte who first painted subjects that Martial decided to photograph approximately ten years later. The influence therefore seems to have been the other way around, with many photographs by Martial recreating similar motifs to those of his brother, presumably quite self-consciously. It is surprisingly easier to think that the painter started his work from a photographic model rather than the contrary. Therefore, it was certainly Martial who used Caillebotte's painting as model for his photography. Later on in this study I will explore these resemblances between the photographs and the paintings the Caillebotte brothers produced in more detail, but here it is enough to note that the easy transcription from painting to photograph achieved in the transference of motifs from painter to photographer suggests the affinity between 'photographic effect' and pictorial means in Caillebotte's early paintings.

The painter may have provided the photographer with a structure that would have defined his photographs such as the angles, the viewpoints and effects of light.<sup>158</sup> In reality, Martial was fascinated by atmospheric effects such as the snow, the rain or the mist. Therefore, Gustave's paintings like *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* and *Vue de toits, effet de*

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<sup>156</sup> Karin Sagner found this information in Siu Challons-Lipton's work *The Scandinavian Pupils of the Atelier Bonnat, 1867-1894*, (Lewiston, New York, 2001), Karin Sagner, *An Impressionist and Photography, Gustave Caillebotte*, op.cit., p 17

<sup>157</sup> Anne de Mondenard, *Dans l'Intimité des Frères Caillebotte, Peintre et Photographe*, (Musée Jacquemart-André, Institut de France, 25 March – 11 July 2011), p 29

<sup>158</sup> Serge Lemoine, Jean-Pierre de Mondenard, *Dans l'Intimité des Frères Caillebotte, Peintre et Photographe*, op.cit., p 31

*neige*, also known as *toit sous la neige, Paris* (1878) (fig.15) may have influenced him and offered him the opportunity to study these aesthetic effects. There is a noticeable proximity between Gustave's paintings and Martial's photographs: *L'entrée du Bd Malherbes. Effet de Neige* (fig.16); *Le Torcadero* (fig.17) *et la Tour Eiffel* (fig.18). What Gustave and Martial intended to convey through painting and photography was modernity, more or less, in the way Baudelaire had detailed it in his seminal essay the "Peintre de la Vie Moderne" that is as shifting experience of flux, change and contingency. Both Martial and Gustave are captivated by the idea of movement and speed, like the acceleration of a train or an automobile. Both were also keenly interested in modern sports such as cycling.<sup>159</sup> As Julien Faure-Conorton wrote: "Ce que Gustave a peint, Martial l'a photographié."<sup>160</sup> Indeed, Gustave's paintings seemed to have given shape to the photographs of his brother. However, as Julien Faure-Conorton explains it, the influence of Gustave on Martial is not irrefutable. Although, Martial had access to his brother's paintings, he may also have been inspired by the same motifs if one takes into account their similar passions. As Julien Faure-Conorton explains, Martial completed two series of photographs which may possibly have originated from Gustave's paintings. This resemblance is particularly recognizable in the indoor scenes photographs that seem to perfectly correspond with Gustave's paintings. Martial used artificial light to convey the atmosphere of the quotidian life that Caillebotte represented in his paintings. The two brothers' similar choices of motifs allow us to make a comparison between the series of painting by Gustave and photographs by Martial.

Although Gustave's upper class position is hardly reflected in Martial's pictures, there is one photograph which enigmatically seems to mirror one of Gustave's drawing. Martial's photograph *Gustave Caillebotte et Bergère sur la place du Carroussel* (fig.20) is responding to his brother's study drawing for *Le Pont de l'Europe, L'homme au Chapeau Haut de Forme* (fig.19) which focuses on the role of the flâneur.<sup>161</sup> The relationship between photography and painting in Caillebotte's works especially lies in the idea of the *flâneur* often depicted in novels by Balzac and Baudelaire. The flâneur is a French term used to designate individuals

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<sup>159</sup> Serge Lemoine, Jean-Pierre de Mondenard, Julien Faure-Conorton, *Dans l'Intimité des Frères Caillebotte, Peintre et Photographe, op.cit.*, p 42

<sup>160</sup> Quotation by Julien Faure-Conorton, Serge Lemoine, Jean-Pierre de Mondenard, *op.cit.*, p 43

<sup>161</sup> Martial Caillebotte, *Gustave Caillebotte et Bergère sur la Place du Carroussel, cote 8-1, Février 1892*, Tirage argentique, 15 x 11 cm, Collection particulière  
Gustave Caillebotte, Study for *Le Pont de l'Europe, L'Homme au Chapeau Haut de Forme*, [Oil on Canvas], 54.5 x 38 cm. Private Collection. Houston. 1876



wandering aimlessly in the streets of the city.<sup>162</sup> He usually appears in the Impressionist paintings and novels dressed with a black waistcoat and a hat.

This photograph is quite fascinating as Martial usually portrays his brother in his most ordinary appearance. In this picture, Gustave not only wears the same attire as the figure depicted in *L'Homme au Chapeau de Forme* but also adopts the same position. Like the figure, Gustave in the photograph is wearing a top hat and is slightly looking down towards his right. Gustave's dog Bergère is symbolical as his presence creates a link between the painter and the photographer. Indeed, as we may notice, the figure in company of the woman in the final work of *Pont de L'Europe* is also looking at the dog in front of him. The only difference lies in the direction of the figure's gaze which is on his left while Gustave was actually looking slightly down his right. However, in the preparatory drawing, the man is looking at the same direction as Gustave. Further studies show that Gustave actually used a tracing paper to transfer the image of the drawing to the right side of the man looking down in the painting.<sup>163</sup> Some slight changes between the final painting *Pont de l'Europe* and the study drawing *L'Homme au Chapeau Haut de Forme* can also be perceived and have been proven by a research on graphic software (fig.21). The drawing impressively seems to mirror the man on the painting. The only and almost insignificant difference that can be noted between the man in the drawing and in the painting is in the proportion of the shoulders, the torso and the head. In the painting, the figure's shoulders look wider, his torso is more upright and the head is in profile.<sup>164</sup> However, the movement of the figure of the drawing is more natural than in the painting in which the man's head is slightly turned in profile towards his left. Gustave certainly intended to portray the figure as its initial drawing. Indeed, the Infra-red reflectography shows a *pentimento* of the figure's face that exactly reflects the face of the original drawing (fig.22). It means that Caillebotte's initial thought was actually to depict the figure as it is represented in the drawing before making some slight adjustment. Furthermore, Sagner suggests that the man depicted in the painting could actually be the painter himself.<sup>165</sup> Taking Martial's picture into account, it is fascinating to see that the three projects discussed here surprisingly mirror each other. This surprising relation also suggests that Gustave and

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<sup>162</sup> Shelley Rice, *Parisian views*, (The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1997), p 67

<sup>163</sup> Karin Sagner, *An Impressionist and Photography, Gustave Caillebotte, op.cit.*, p 94

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Karin Sagner, *op.cit.*, p 94

Martial may have collaborated in making photographs. It almost seems as if the man in Gustave's drawing had taken life through Martial's picture.<sup>166</sup>

One of the most pertinent themes they have in common is the representation of portraits and family life. If we observe closely the photographs taken by Martial in his apartment, we may notice how they reflect the paintings executed earlier by Gustave. Both Martial and Gustave depict their figures during their most absorbing activity, which may be reading, sowing or playing piano. For instance, Martial's photograph showing *Marie Caillebotte, chez elle* (fig.24) clearly demonstrates that Gustave's brother made some thorough researches on the painter's earlier works.<sup>167</sup> The reading figures especially appear in Gustave's following paintings: *Interieur; femme lisant* and *Interieur; femme a la fenetre* (fig.23).<sup>168</sup> Whether it is in Martial's photograph or Gustave paintings, the figures do not seem aware of the presence of the photographer and the painter. It almost gives an impression of seeing without being seen, something very typical in Caillebotte's views from the balcony as we will explore later. Furthermore, the attitude of the figures or models seems natural which reinforces the truth of their works. Indeed, their gesture and expression are very spontaneous and authentic compared to early portrait photographs. In early photography, most sitters appear rigid and frozen. Marcelin Desboutin criticized portrait photography for dwelling on more on the position than the naturalness of the models:

Un monsieur que vous ne connaissez pas s'empare de vous comme une proie, vous fait assoir, vous palpe, vous manie à son grè, vous faisant pencher la tête, plier un bras, étendre l'autre, rentrer vos jambes, sous prétexte d'éviter les raccourcis. On étend derrière vous une enseigne de cabaret représentant un jardin riche, on vous accoude sur une table portant un pot de fleurs fanées, on vous met dans la main un roman de Paul de

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<sup>166</sup> In September 1994, this photograph was presented as the cover of the catalogue of an exhibition on the behalf of Gustave Caillebotte that took place in the Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais in Paris. Julien Faure-Conorton, *Dans l'Intimité des Frères Caillebotte, Peintre et Photographe, op.cit.*, p 35

<sup>167</sup> Martial Caillebotte, *Marie Caillebotte chez elle, 9, rue Scribe*, Tirage argentique S.d., 11 x 16 cm, Collection particuliere

<sup>168</sup> Gustave Caillebotte, *Interieur femme lisant*, Huile sur toile, 65 x 81 cm, Collection particuliere, 1880  
Gustave Caillebotte, *Interieur, femme a la fenetre*, Huile sur toile, 116 x 89 cm, Collection particuliere, 1880

Kock pour vous donner un air sérieux, l'on vous visse le tampon derrière la tête, l'on vous prie de ne plus bouger.<sup>169</sup>

Thus, Impressionist artists such as Degas and Caillebotte brought some modernity in the representation of the sitter which clearly contrasts with the conventional method that Marcellin describes. Impressionism marks a kind of transition from a vision of the sitter as an object to an individual. The Daguerreotype camera could not allow any movement from the sitter. Models were daguerreotyped against a dark or even sometimes light background and they had to remain still for around thirty seconds. Although the sitter had to contribute to the work of the photograph, maintaining a genuine appearance was important too.<sup>170</sup> Unlike, conventional portrait photographers, Martial chose to represent his models in the same natural approach as Impressionists favoured in their pastime live. This also confirms that it was the painter who influenced the photographer and not the contrary.

The difference of expression is pertinent when one juxtaposes a picture by Martial next to a Daguerreotype, for instance, Martial's *Maurice Minoret chez Martial Caillebotte* (fig.25) and John Werge's *John Frederick Goddard, British Photographer* (fig.26).<sup>171</sup> In the latter's photograph, one can see that the sitter is concentrating on maintaining the same glance and expression throughout the daguerreotype process. His position has already been planned and arranged by the photographer compared to the portrait of Maurice Minoret by Martial Caillebotte casually playing chess. One can also distinguish a subtle indication on the mirror of the support that holds the head of the poser known as head clamp while the photograph is being taken.<sup>172</sup> Unlike, Martial's model Maurice Minoret who is slightly leaning forward as if the photographer was not in the room, John Frederick Goddard's posture clearly shows that he is being photographed. Similarly, a comparison can be made between family portraits in early

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<sup>169</sup> "A bas la photographie." Marcellin Desboutin, *Journal amusant*, no. 36 (6 September 1856): 1-5. Quoted by Margaret Fitzgerald Farr in her thesis *Impressionism portraiture: a study in context and meaning*, University of North Carolina, 1992, p 41

Also quoted in *La Photographie en France*, by Andre Rouille, *Texte et Contreverse, Une Anthologie*, 1816-1871, p 255

<sup>170</sup> Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography*, The Museum of Modern Art, 1982, p 32

<sup>171</sup> Martial Caillebotte, *Maurice Minoret chez Martial*, 9, rue Scribe, Tirage argentique, Sd., 12 X 16,5 cm, Collection particuliere

John Werge. *John Frederick Goddard, British Photographer*. ca. 1850. Albumen print by Werge from a copy negative of his own daguerreotype. Collection Beaumont Newhall, Santa Fe.

<sup>172</sup> Head clamps or head rests, posing stand were devices to support the model's head while the photograph was being taken, Martin W. Sandler, *Photography, an illustrated history*, New York Oxford University Press, 2002, p 25

Daguerreotype works and Martial's photographs. For instance, the photographer Antoine Claudet thoughtfully chose to how to display each member of the family in a very logical manner. Although the figures are slightly more expressive than in individual portraits, they are still purposely posing for the camera and trying to keep the same posture. The grouping of the family almost appears as a composition for a painting.

If we study a similar photograph showing a family grouping in Martial's works such as *Marie Caillebotte, Georges, Amelie, Marie et Camille Minoret* (fig.27), we may notice that the interaction between the figures is more natural. Even though Martial's medium was more modern and developed, he managed to fully grasp the atmosphere of the family meeting.<sup>173</sup> The figures seem unaware of the camera and that is exactly the effect that Martial wanted to obtain. Martial's purpose was indeed to capture and immortalize family moments.

As stated earlier, Martial Caillebotte's photographs show more similarity with Impressionism than photography. The closer we study his portraits of family life the more affinity Martial shows with Impressionists, especially Gustave. His photographs are often reflections on Gustave's paintings. Beside similarity between their depictions of indoor scenes, Gustave and Martial also share an affinity for the views on the balcony and the structures in perspective. Some of his pictures seem almost like a close-up or a reconstitution of Gustave's scenes. The photograph re-uses figures and elements that are drawn from Gustave's paintings.

One interesting example is the comparison between *Les Peintres en batiment* (fig.28) by Gustave and *La descente d'un reverbere (Pont de la Concorde)* (fig.29), by Martial.<sup>174</sup> Although they came from a well-off background, working class life is one of the themes that Gustave and Martial share most in common. Martial studied and employed similar methods of composition as Gustave did for his paintings. The tonality of colors Gustave used is focused around grey, blue and green hues.<sup>175</sup> They contribute to the melancholic atmosphere also reflected in Martial's photograph *La Descente d'un Réverbère*. The sensitivity of Martial's photographic device was not advanced enough to record colour pigments in detail. It was not until 1907 that the first system of colour photography known as the Autochrome process was

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<sup>173</sup> Martial's device consisted in a simple roll film camera. The print was developed on a silver paper coated with citrate. Julien Faure-Conorton, *Dans l'Intimite des Freres Caillebottes, Peintre et Photographe*, Musee Jacquemart-Andre, 25 March – 11 July 2011, p 41

<sup>174</sup> Gustave Caillebotte, *Les Peintres en Batiment*, [Oil on Canves], 87 x 116 cm, Collection particuliere, 1877  
Martial Caillebotte, *La Descente d'un Reverbere (Pont de la Concorde)*, cote 1-8, Decembre 1891, Tirage argentique, 14.5 x 10.5cm, Collection particuliere

Martial Caillebotte, *Ouvriers travaillant aux reparations sur l'arc de triomphe*, cote 5-5, Fevrier 1892, Tirage argentique, 15.5 x 11 cm, Collection particuliere

<sup>175</sup> Julien Faure-Conorton, *Dans l'Intimite des Freres Caillebottes, Peintre et Photographe*, op.cit., p 66

developed by the Lumière brothers.<sup>176</sup> The different shades of black and white tonalities contributed to the atmosphere Martial wanted to create. In their works *Les Peintres en Batiment* and *La Descente d'un Réverbère*, Gustave and Martial convey the social contrast that prevailed in the streets of Paris. The construction of Gustave's painting reflects the true modernity of the city life. This modernity is emphasized by the use of perspective, the framing of the motif and the choice of angle. The similarity between Gustave and Martial's incorporation of the ladder actually suggests that Martial has been studying in details Gustave's composition. The ladder underlines the rectilinear organization of space that occurred during the Haussmannian reconstruction of Paris architecture.<sup>177</sup> It also produces an effect of lines and shadow that is also present in Gustave's works. The ladder reappears in Martial's *Ouvriers travaillant aux réparations sur l'arc de triomphes* (fig.30). In this work, the working class and the modernization of the city are embodied by the shapes of the linear ladders and the edifice of the building in construction. The combination of line, perspective, shadow and light strongly reminds the viewer of the changing of the city. All these effects present in Gustave and Martial's works influence the viewer's perception of the capital. Indeed, through his photograph *La Descente d'un Réverbère*, Martial provides the viewer with a different perception of the *Place de la Concorde* which should be at the centre of the picture. The view of the workers and the ladders are on the foreground of the picture or at least in the middle while the *Place de la Concorde* is in the background. Similarly, in the picture *Ouvrier travaillant aux reparations sur l'arc de triomphe*, the monument is hidden by all the materials of construction such as ladders and the scaffolding. The emphasis that is made on the building materials almost seems to suggest that they are the main subject of the picture instead of the monument in construction. Martial and Gustave also differ from traditional artists by giving more importance to details that are judged insignificant. The notion of perception is primordial in the comparison of Martial and Gustave's works as there are different angles of vision. Indeed, the scene depicted or photographed can be viewed from various points and positions. For example, in *Les Peintres en Batiment*, one could either look from the eyes of the painter, or at the direction where the perspective is leading, but also from the figure's point of view standing behind the ladder, or from one of the passenger crossing the road in the middle of the street or from the man at the distance coming towards the workers. This sense of the picture animated by multiple points is comparable to Degas'

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<sup>176</sup> Alma Davenport, *The History of Photography*, Alma Davenport, 1991, p 25

<sup>177</sup> Julien Faure-Conorton, *Dans l'Intimité des Frères Caillebotte, Peintre et Photographe*, op.cit., p 76

pictures of the time which also show an affinity between the modernity of photography and the use of multiple perspectives.

Martial's views from the balcony seem to confirm Gustave's influence on his photographs. Although he painted them more than ten years earlier, the same theme appears in Gustave's series of paintings from the balcony.<sup>178</sup> The clearest resemblance occurs between Gustave's painting *L'Homme au Balcon* (fig.31) and Martial's photograph *Moi au balcon* (fig.32).<sup>179</sup> The model that Gustave chose to depict in *Homme au Balcon* is one of his friends Maurice Brault. The view shows the linearity from the boulevard Haussmann until the Saint-Augustin place. However, the viewer's attention is rather drawn by the man absorbed by the Parisian active scenery than by the view itself. Martial chose to photograph himself full length on his balcony offering a view of the Opera Garnier in the background. Martial looks mesmerized by the scene in the same way as the man depicted in Gustave's *Homme au Balcon*. Furthermore, the man and Martial adopt identical positions with their arms on the balcony slightly looking forward. Martial also took photographs of his own family on the balcony with their head in profile. Pictures from the balcony include his wife and Gustave's cousin Marie in *Marie au balcon* (fig.33) and his daughter Geneviève in *Geneviève Caillebotte en Chinoise sur un balcon* (fig.34).<sup>180</sup> In the 1890s, Martial followed Gustave's footsteps by photographing and exploring the characteristic streets of Paris. Some of his pictures such as *Vue prise du balcon de l'avenue de l'Opera* (fig.36) show that he has been influenced by Gustave's choice of angles and sites. *Vue prise du balcon de l'avenue de l'Opera* interestingly reflects the technique of low-angle shot found in Gustave's work *Boulevard des Italiens* (fig.35) which also looks onto the Opera.<sup>181</sup> The two works offer a view on the street animated by the movement of the vehicles and the figures walking. Marie Berhaut suggests that Gustave's *Boulevard des Italiens* may have been painted from Jules Froyer's balcony.<sup>182</sup> Martial may have taken the picture from his balcony around midday as

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<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* p 68

<sup>179</sup> Gustave Caillebotte, *L'Homme au Balcon*, Oil on painting, 116 x 90 cm, Collection particuliere, 1880  
Martial Caillebotte, *Moi au Balcon, cote 1-2, Decembre 1891*, Tirage argentique, 15.5 x 10.5 cm, Collection particuliere

<sup>180</sup> Martial Caillebotte, *Marie au Balcon, cote 1-1, Decembre 1891*, Tirage argentique, 15.5 x 10.5 cm, Collection particuliere

Martial Caillebotte, *Geneviève Caillebotte en Chinoise sur un balcon*, Tirage argentique, 8.5 x 6.3 cm, Collection particuliere

<sup>181</sup> Gustave Caillebotte, *Boulevard des Italiens*, (huile sur toile), 54 x 65 cm, Collection particuliere, 1880  
Martial Caillebotte, *Vue prise du balcon de l'avenue de l'Opera (paveurs), cote 15-2*, Tirage photographique réalisé à partir d'un négatif au gélatinobromure d'argent, 11.5 X 15.5 cm, Collection particuliere

<sup>182</sup> Julien Faure-Conorton, *Dans l'Intimite des Freres Caillebottes, Peintre et Photographe, op.cit.*, p 70

the apartment he was living in was in the quartier de l'Opera.<sup>183</sup> The reflection of short shadows on the road seems to indicate the moment of the day in which the picture was taken which is likely to be noon. Although the two works are set during the day, Gustave's painting appears cloudier and the choice of colours reflects an autumnal weather.<sup>184</sup>

One can find some very strong similarities between Gustave Caillebotte's work *Un Refuge. Boulevard Haussmann* and Martial's two pictures *Rue Auber et rue Scribe 1892-1895* and *Rond-Point* (fig.38), *vue du balcon du 9, rue Scribe* (fig.39).<sup>185</sup> In Gustave's work *Un Refuge* the verticality of the low-angle shot view shows a flat view of the picture. Gustave used in this painting a very modern and unconventional viewpoint that very few painters ventured to explore. This almost vertical view from above emphasizes the effects of light and the tonality which animates the painting.<sup>186</sup> The same effect of exaggerated perpendicularity and depth is also apparent in his *Boulevard vu d'en haut*.<sup>187</sup> In this painting, Caillebotte explores various effects of low-angle shots. Similar viewpoints can be found in Nadar's aerial pictures even though they are not as vertical as Caillebotte's paintings. Furthermore, Nadar's photographs were taken from a balloon and therefore the view was much higher. Attracted by the idea of flying and fascinated by the sky, Nadar decided to make a balloon named *Le Géant*. This balloon not only allowed him to fulfil his desire of flying but was also used for the first time to communicate via air mail.<sup>188</sup> Caillebotte's perpendicular viewpoints remained exceptional among painters as well as photographers. It was only in 1913 that a photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn took such a comparable view of New York. Martial Caillebotte attempted to select the same viewpoints as his brother in *Un Refuge*. In order to achieve effects of height and depth in this picture, he meticulously studied Gustave's framing. Martial took his pictures with a hand-held camera which allowed him to slightly incline the camera angle. In this photographs Martial incorporated elements from different scenes painted by Gustave. In *Rue Scribe* (fig.41), there is a spatial arrangement similar to Gustave's painting

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<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p 60

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> Gustave Caillebotte, *Un Refuge, boulevard Haussmann*, [Oil on painting], 81 x 101 cm, Collection particuliere

Martial Caillebotte, *Rue Auber et rue Scribe 1892-1895*, Tirage photographique realise a partir d'un negative au gelatinobromure d'argent 11.5 x 15.5 cm, Collection particuliere

Martial Caillebotte, *Rond-point, vue du balcon du 9, rue Scribe*, Tirage photographique, 11 x 15.5 cm, Collection particuliere

<sup>186</sup> Julien Faure-Conorton, *Dans l'Intimite des Freres Caillebottes, Peintre et Photographe, op.cit.*, p 156

<sup>187</sup> Gustave Caillebotte, *Le Boulevard vu d'en haut*, [Oil on Painting], 65 x 54 cm, Collection particuliere, around 1880

<sup>188</sup> Shelley Rice, *Parisian views*, (The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1997), p 172

*La Pépinière* (fig.40).<sup>189</sup> Indeed, both scenes seem to emphasize the architecture and the authenticity of the Haussmannian buildings of Paris. Furthermore, there is also the presence of carriages that one can also perceive in Martial's work. Another distinctive element of Paris that Martial included in his picture is the lamppost. In Gustave's painting *Rue de Paris; Temps de Pluie*, the lamppost separates the painting in two parts.<sup>190</sup> Its central position in the framing of the painting and its inclusion is one of the factors that make the painting modern. The lampposts were also a reference to Paris as the City of Light and the invention of gas lighting.<sup>191</sup> In Martial's work *Rue Scribe*, the lamppost also seems to emphasize the framing and the cutting of the image. Its position in Gustave and Martial's work is not random. In this photograph, Martial chose an angle that would allow him to adjust the emplacement of the lamppost as well as the arrangement of the street.

The building that Martial photographed represents his own apartment from which he also took pictures from his balcony. In 1887, after his marriage, Martial left his apartment where he was living until 1879 (31, boulevard Haussmann) and moved to 9, Rue de Scribe, the new apartment present in the photograph. As in *Rue de Paris; Temps de Pluie* and *La Pépinière*, the notion of movement and animation is accentuated, which also reflects the environment of the modern city. This modernity is not only translated by Caillebotte's ways of representing the urbanism of the mid nineteenth century but also by reference to new means of transport. One of the new key technological innovations that appeared during this period was the railroad which brought with it new experiences and perceptions aligned to movement and speed. The construction of bridges to facilitate railway tunnel became part of the urban landscape as featured in Caillebotte's *Pont de l'Europe*. Some of Martial's photographs on the theme of the railroads and modernity again seem to evoke Gustave's paintings. Martial was fascinated by the railroad and became a shareholder for many rail companies.<sup>192</sup> Martial was influenced by his brother's fascination with the rebuilding of Paris and the emergence of technology to also treat such motifs. However, it is worth remembering that they grew up in the same environment. Furthermore, photography commonly treated motifs such as railroads, train and bridges but many of their works show strong affinities,

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<sup>189</sup> Martial Caillebotte, *Rue Scribe, number 9, cote 7-10, Février 1892*, Tirage argentique, 15.5 x 11 cm, Collection particulière

Gustave Caillebotte, *La Caserne de la Pepiniere*, [Oil on Painting], 54 x 65cm, Collection particulière, around 1877-1878

<sup>190</sup> Gustave Caillebotte, *Rue de Paris ; Temps de Pluie*, Oil on painting, 212 x 276cm, Chicago, the Art Institute, 1877

<sup>191</sup> Shelley Rice, *Parisian views*, (The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1997), p 11

<sup>192</sup> Julien Faure-Conorton, *Dans l'Intimité des Frères Caillebotte, Peintre et Photographe, op.cit.*, p 180



Martial's *Femme et petite fille regardant passer un train* and *Villeneuve St Georges vu du Pont* closely resembles to his brother's painting *Paysage à la voie de chemin de fer* (fig.42) and *Le Pont de l'Europe* (fig.43).<sup>193</sup> In *Femme et petite fille regardant passer un train* and *Paysage a la voie de chemin de fer* (fig.44), the train is at the centre and conveys an impression of motion. The diagonal created by the railroad separates the picture into two scenes. In *Paysage à La Voie de Chemin de Fer*, the railroad similarly divides the field into two sections. Gustave reinforced this notion of frame and geometry by adding a guardrail in the foreground of the composition. The geometrical shape of the railroad reflects the modernity that is associated to the invention of the train.<sup>194</sup> This painting is presumably a reference to the Manet's picture *Le Chemin de Fer* (fig.45) (1873). The presence of the woman and the little girl signifies the curiosity and fascination that the modernity of the train generates.<sup>195</sup> The separation marked by the diagonal of the railroad also evokes the contrast between the countryside and the modern world. The metallic construction of the bridges strongly reminds of the modernity and the new architecture of Paris with the emergence of the Viaduc de Garabit in 1884 and the Eiffel Tower build between 1887 and 1889 by Gustave Eiffel.<sup>196</sup> Martial photograph *Villeneuve St Georges vu du pont* (fig.46) clearly alludes to Gustave's painting *Pont de l'Europe*. The architecture of the bridge is emphasized by the lattice patterns of the metallic bars. Gustave's use of perspective certainly determined Martial's choice of angle to obtain a similar perspective. The combination of a metallic construction, lines and perspective really conveys the sense of newness that is evolving in architecture. Indeed, Gustave depicted perspective as if the scene was viewed from a camera lens. This perspective contributes to create an optical illusion by accentuating the distance between the background and the foreground. The close affinity between the Caillebotte brother's images, may well suggest that we might speculate that Martial's works involved the collaboration of his brother. It may be that Gustave, though interested in photography, lacked

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<sup>193</sup> Martial Caillebotte, *Femme et petite fille regardant passer un train*, Tirage argentique, 22 x 17 cm, Collection particulière

Martial Caillebotte, *Villeneuve St Georges vu de pont, cote 15-12*, Tirage argentique, 11.5 x 15.5cm, Collection particulière

Gustave Caillebotte, *Paysage a voie de chemin de fer*, [Oil on Painting], 81 x 116 cm, Collection particulière, 1872-1873

Gustave Caillebotte, *Pont de L'Europe*, Sketch, [Oil on Painting], 54 x 73 cm, Collection Particulière, 1878

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p 168

<sup>195</sup> Julien Faure-Conorton, *Dans l'Intimité des Frères Caillebotte, Peintre et Photographe, op.cit.*, p 178

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p 181

the technical means of his brother and thus the two brothers may have worked together in conceptualizing the photographs Martial made.<sup>197</sup>

Analogies between painting and photography played a key role in the debates about the relationship of one to another, as while some painters dabbled in photography, few were competent photographers. As the writer Peter Henry Emerson stated, it is important to bear in mind that not every artist could completely master the photographic device. As he wrote: ‘though many painters and sculptors talk glibly of ‘going in for photography,’ you will find that very few of them can ever make a picture by photography; they lack the science, technical knowledge, and above all the practice.’<sup>198</sup> Indeed, although one may be inclined to assume that some painters resorted to photography, it is possible that they actually lacked the technical knowledge needed to make photographs.

As this chapter demonstrated, there are corresponding attributes between Caillebotte’s works and photography such as the effects of light, the objectification of the image and the framing of the motif. The way the artist captures the city shows strong proximity with photograph. The organization of the city led to the artist using techniques that may derive from photography. The artist recorded the environment that surrounded him. Indeed, the rebuilding of Paris had a strong influence on his artistic methods of composition and contributes to his tendency towards modernity. Caillebotte grew up being fascinated by the metamorphosis of Paris which of course, his family has been involved in. The architectural construction of the Haussmannian buildings had a considerable effect on Caillebotte’s style, notably his use of three-dimensional effects. The date of their works indicates that Martial took the photographs of the same scenes Caillebotte painted ten years earlier and suggests Gustave’s paintings certainly influenced Martial’s photographs and that he may have worked with his brother in envisaging the photographs his brother produced. This chapter also reminds us of the importance of photography in the redefinition of painting but also the complex relation between painters and the new visual medium of photography. Although artists often differentiated their way of seeing from the mechanical eye of the camera, photography, like modern paintings challenges the viewer’s perception of reality. Some unintentional photographic effects produced similar pictorial attributes as found in Impressionism.

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<sup>197</sup> Julien Faure-Conorton, *Dans l’Intimité des Frères Caillebotte, Peintre et Photographe, op.cit.*, p 35

<sup>198</sup> Alan Trachtenberg, *Classic Essays on Photography, op.cit.*, p 101

## CHAPTER 3

### TOWARDS IMPRESSIONISM: STUDY OF LIGHT, COLOURS AND ATMOSPHERIC EFFECTS

One of the main purposes of this dissertation is to understand why Caillebotte choose a more Impressionistic path in the 1880s. It is important to study the evolution of his style in comparison to other Impressionists and identify whether the environment influenced him. In this chapter I want to examine Caillebotte's evolution towards a more Impressionistic style and the visual experiences he was aiming at conveying to the viewer. Although spatial order predominates in Caillebotte's urban works, his approach to light and tonalities of colour in his countryside paintings reveal an attitude closer to Impressionism. This chapter marks the transition between the realism that prevails in Caillebotte's urban space and his later tendency towards Impressionism. Around the period of 1880, the artist starts painting in a more Impressionist manner which includes a greater emphasis on effects of light, tone and atmosphere. The two previous chapters identified how Caillebotte attempted to convey visual experiences through perspective and photography. This chapter is a continuation into Caillebotte's ways of rendering visual experiences by exploring his Impressionist qualities. As Michael Fried mentions in his essay *Caillebotte's Impressionism*, it is difficult to associate Caillebotte with any particular generation of artists. Indeed, Caillebotte was born in 1848, almost eight year later than most of the Impressionist predecessors such as Monet and eleven years before the Neo-impressionist movement.<sup>199</sup> The peculiarity of Caillebotte's works resides in his tendency to combine elements from the Italian Renaissance art such as perspective and spatial organization with the effects of light and tonalities that belong to Impressionism. Therefore, one of the aims of this chapter is to elaborate on why Caillebotte began to drift away from Renaissance compositional principles.

In *La Revue Politique et Littéraire*, Charles Bigot wrote:

Is it true that Caillebotte is an "Impressionist"? Yes, if one looks at his Pont de l'Europe, and his Portraits a la Campagne; no if one looks at the other paintings he sent.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Michael Fried, *Caillebotte's Impressionism*, Representations, No. 66 (Spring, 1999), p 2

<sup>200</sup> Charles Bigot, *La Revue Politique et Littéraire*, 28 April 1877

It is true that Impressionist peculiarities can be found in *Pont de l'Europe* and *Portraits à la Campagne*. However, the sensorial and visual experiences attributed to Impressionism are also if not even more present in his other works. Indeed, many of his Yerres paintings resemble Monet's textural method. In his works, Caillebotte knows how to stimulate the viewer's sensory perceptions by playing with the light, the tonalities and the texture. Caillebotte began to change his compositional method by loosening up the structure of space. These effects give him the opportunity to convey "Impressions" and atmospheric effects. Conveying the sensations found in nature is the essence of Impressionism. Zola described Impressionism as "a more exact search for the causes and effects of light which have as much influence upon the form of an object as upon its colour." He also adds: "it is the study of light in its thousands of decompositions and recompositions."<sup>201</sup> Caillebotte's Impressionist brushwork is even more obvious in his depictions of Argenteuil dated from around 1880. By expressing the visual sensations of nature, Caillebotte contributes to an effect of movement that is close to cinematography. Furthermore, as the second chapter discussed it, there was a strong relationship between photography and Impressionism. Indeed, artists like Delacroix, Ingres, Corot and Degas clearly asserted their choice to use the photographic device. Although it remains unclear whether Caillebotte employed the camera, it would be useful to research any interests the artist had for the idea of motion. This chapter will show how Impressionist effects such as light, tonalities and atmospheric sensations can produce a sense of movement. The importance of the suggestion of movement, contingency and change in Impressionism, and the subsequent influence it was to have in orienting modern visual imagery, both in still and moving images, has long been acknowledged. Impressionism was to prove influential in determining the motifs and preoccupations not just of other artists but also of pioneering filmmakers in the 1890s as evident in the Lumière brothers' early short films. In 1995, during an interview with Régis Debray, Godard stated:

Les Lumière étaient des petits industriels qui voulaient gagner de l'argent, mais qui étaient des cousins des Impressionnistes.<sup>202</sup>

By bringing their easels in « plein air », the Impressionists offered a sense of modernity and life to visual arts.<sup>203</sup> Landscape painting in "plein air" started developing with Monet, Renoir

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<sup>201</sup> M. Douglas Kimball, *Emile Zola and French Impressionism*, The Bulletin of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Jun., 1969), p 52

<sup>202</sup> Quoted in Vincent Pomarède, *Impressionnisme et Naissance du Cinématographe*, Lyon, Fage Edition, 2005, p 166

<sup>203</sup> Vincent Pomarède, *Impressionnisme et Naissance du Cinématographe*, op.cit., p 171

and Pissarro by focusing on the tonalities of colours and light. Caillebotte uses light and colours to suggest movement. Indeed, by painting outside, the Impressionists aimed at captivating the landscape in motion.

The effect of temporality and the study of the light reflection is what connect Caillebotte to Monet. One can draw some analogies between Caillebotte's studies of the sunset in Yerres and Monet's series of Cathedrals or Haystacks. The play of colours contributes to render a visual experience that connects the viewer to the sensations of the paintings. The first section of this chapter will explore the artist's tendency towards Impressionism through the use of atmospheric effects, light and colours. The second articulates the continuities and discontinuities between Caillebotte and Monet in relation to other Impressionist artists. Indeed, in some of Caillebotte's work, one may note the presence of the wind, the rain or the snow. The third argument of this chapter focuses on the artist's new method of composition and how it contributes to create unusual visual experiences. Did Caillebotte evolve towards Impressionism in order to convey a different visual experience that is more connected to the senses of the viewer through tactility, light, colour and movement? To what extent do painters need to organize their sensations towards an intelligible sense? How similar or dissimilar is Caillebotte's definition of Impressionism in relation to Monet? Why is the artist evolving towards a style that belongs to Impressionism? In what sense does Caillebotte anticipate the motion sequence photography elaborated by Edward Muybridge? Thus how is movement conveyed in Caillebotte's works?

It was during the period in which he was working on motifs in Argenteuil, Yerres and Gennevillier that Caillebotte's style began to move closer to Impressionism. These landscapes offered him the opportunity to work on the effects of colours, light, tactility and reflection. In his two paintings of *La Rue Halévy vue du sixième étage* (1878), the artist already shows some Impressionistic qualities by bringing up a broader range of colour as well as atmospheric effects comparable to Monet.<sup>204</sup> Other paintings demonstrating Impressionistic qualities include *La Caserne de la Pépinière* (1877-1878) and *La Place Saint-Augustin* dated from 1878. In these paintings, Caillebotte focuses more on the atmospheric effects by bringing various tonalities of light. Caillebotte's number of paintings also increased as the artist focused more on the research of sensation than the details of the composition. The artist started loosening his technique and using a less polished structure. Two other corresponding

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<sup>204</sup> Kirk T. Varnedoe, *Gustave Caillebotte, A Retrospective Exhibition*, op.cit., p 52

paintings clearly show the Caillebotte's desire to use a more Impressionistic method even where he was tackling subjects that by the 1880s Impressionist artists had largely abandoned. The artist's works *Jeune Homme a sa Fenetre* (fig.1) (1875) and *Homme au Balcon, boulevard Haussmann* (fig.2) (1880) seem to demonstrate how Caillebotte shifted from a polished and ordered space to a freer approach to composition.<sup>205</sup> Indeed, the colours employed in the painting dated from 1880 are brighter and more varied. Furthermore, the contour is more suggested and less delineated. Although, the motif of the two paintings is the same, they are depicted differently. In his later work *Homme au Balcon, Boulevard Haussmann*, Caillebotte seems to have insisted more on nature and landscape rather than the urban space. The painting dated from 1880 illustrates the artist's ambition to focus on landscape along with the study of colours and light. Unlike the first painting, the colours are superimposed into little Impressionist dashes. Here, Caillebotte shows a view of the same landscape but from a new visual experience that is more Impressionistic. In line with this, his art began to adopt a more questioning attitude to the rules of compositional perspective and conventional pictorial design and challenge the viewer's perception of reality by stimulating his senses, aligning his work closer to the way impressionists sought to unlearn the academic principles by adopting a freer, more improvised technique, which resulted in loosening the structure of pictorial space. Caillebotte began to make his style less rigid and more Impressionistic towards the period of 1880. Correspondingly his palette broadened during this period reflecting a closer engagement with the tonal range of his impressionist colleagues.

The invention of synthetically produced red hues became more widespread in the 1870s. Furthermore, the mixture of blue and magenta produced a new pigment known as purple. The invention of alternative hues of blue and green offered less expensive opportunities to Impressionist artists such as Monet to broaden their palette. Indeed, Monet's series of *The Water Lilies* shows an extensive range of hues including tonalities of blue, green and purple. By combining alternative hues of green, blue and magenta, Monet successfully unveiled the vibrations of nature.<sup>206</sup> Monet had constructed his art around the effects of nuances and tonalities. Monet's use of nuances and contrasts evoked a sense of movement which contributed to guide the gaze of the viewer. These tonalities of colour around blue, purple and green re-appear in Caillebotte's countryside works. As one may notice in

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<sup>205</sup> Marie Berhaut, *Caillebotte, sa vie et son œuvre, Catalogue Raisonné des Peintures et Pastels*, La Bibliothèque des Arts, Paris, Fondation Wildenstein, Paris, 1878, p 34

<sup>206</sup> Schaefer Iris, Caroline von Saint-George, Katja Lewerentz, *Painting light: The Hidden Techniques of the Impressionists*, Skira editore, Milano, 2008, p 154

Caillebotte's *Périssoires* (1877) (fig.3), bright colours such as gold yellow, blue green and violet are predominating. This work is interesting in terms of chromatic tonalities and light reflection. Caillebotte's use of light intrigued Paul Sebillot who wrote: "Caillebotte seems haunted by the violet and blue light in which paintings are bathed a little too much."<sup>207</sup> Caillebotte's *Périssoire* (1877) and other Yerres paintings are comparable to Monet's approach to the effect of light and colour in the *Effet d'Automne à Argenteuil* (1873). The purpose of this section is to find out to what extent Caillebotte is adopting an Impressionistic style. It is important to understand how the artist's works fit into Impressionistic techniques. As Duranty explains in the *New Painting of 1876*, the intention of the artist differs from the public's conception of landscape representation.

Le public... veut le fini avant tout. L'artiste, charmé par des délicatesses ou des éclats de coloration, du caractère d'un geste, d'un groupement, s'inquiète beaucoup de ce fini, de cette correction, les seules qualités de ceux qui ne sont point artistes.<sup>208</sup>

As Duranty argues, there is a misunderstanding between the artist and the public regarding Impressionist techniques. Unlike the public who is seeking for a polished and finished work, the artist is interested in depicting sensations through colours and impressions. Richard Shiff, in his essay "defining Impressionism and Impression", identifies the term Impressionism by taking into account the social group of the artist, his choice of theme and motif, his technique and his intention. As he argues, by participating and contributing to Impressionist social groups, many artists such as Degas became labelled as Impressionists even though his artistic technique did not meet the criteria of Impressionism according to some critics. Similarly, Cézanne's approach to painting and landscape slightly differs from Impressionism. Regarding the artist choice of theme and motif, critics insisted on the presence of seascapes, landscapes, city streets and everyday life including Parisian Café as being essential to Impressionism. These criteria provide a broad definition of Impressionism that would allow many artists depicting seascapes, landscape, city streets and Parisian Café to adhere to the group. However, the use of bright colours remains one of the main qualities of Impressionism. According to Richard Shiff, the use of bright colours was also predominant in works of late Nineteenth-Century artists. Critics like Charles Bigot and Henry Houssaye tend to associate

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<sup>207</sup> Paul Sebillot, *La Plume*, 15 May 1879, Charles S. Moffet, *The New Painting, Impressionism 1874-1886*, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 19 April – 6 July 1986, p 272

<sup>208</sup> Richard Tomson, *Framing France, The representation of landscape in France, 1870-1914*, Manchester University Press, 1998, p 29

Impressionist bright colours to the decreased choices of chiaroscuro effects. However, this argument would marginalize artists such as Degas from the Impressionist movement. As Richard Shiff mentions it, Jules Castagnary, Théodore Duret and Georges Rivière showed more focus on the techniques of Impressionists than on their goal. For Duret and Georges Rivière, the use of bright colour allows the Impressionists to render a clearer and a more personal perception of nature.<sup>209</sup> Thus, bright colour is a way to unveil the sensations and experiences of nature. As Richard Shiff mentions, the word imprint is one of the synonym of Impression. In other words, the aim of Impressionism is to leave an impression or an imprint on a surface. According to Richard Shiff, the imprint of Impressionism lies in the originality and style of the artist. Emile Deschanel perfectly illustrates the meaning of style in relation to painting by writing: “Style is... the mark of the writer, the impression of his natural disposition in his writing.”<sup>210</sup> The use of bright colours and natural landscape appear in Caillebotte’s later paintings. By changing his style, colours and choice of motif, the artist is providing to the viewer a new visual experience. By organizing his spatial composition in a more Impressionistic manner, the artist could more easily convey sensations and communicate with the viewer. The question arises here as to what extent Caillebotte’s change of style was influenced simply by artistic issues and to what extent by the changing motifs he chose? Was his movement away from the ultra modern motifs of Paris the reason for his abandonment of the more rectilinear space found in his earlier work? Caillebotte said little in his letters about this evolution in his painting, but one of his letters addressed to Monet reveals the artist’s decision to direct his style towards Impressionism.

In a letter written in Trouville in July 1884 on the subject of Flaubert, he wrote:

Perhaps” wrote Caillebotte, “it will be found later on that what he lacked – he said it himself – was not being an Olympian. All his art lacks calm, and when one has read that I believe that one clear conception comes out – he wished to show that all the world was foolish, that all sciences, all religions etc... amounted to nothing. And what an emptiness remains after that. It is absolutely discouraging.” He added, “I imagine that the very great artists attach you even more to life. Look at Delacroix’s work beside that of Flaubert. He had just as much reason as him to

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<sup>209</sup> Richard Shiff, *Defining Impressionism and Impression, Cézanne and the End of Impressionism, A Study of the Theory, Technique, and Critical Evaluation of Modern Art*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1984, p 183

<sup>210</sup> Richard Shiff, *op.cit.*, p184



complain about the stupidity of his contemporaries but there is no hint of this in his work. His art is above all that; it is an Olympian... Take Degas, he is not an Olympian. This will prove a terrible loss to him.<sup>211</sup>

Indeed, his paintings became more orientated towards the effects of weather and the sensations produced by nature. This letter could be one of the elements illustrating Caillebotte's change of style. From 1880, Caillebotte started depicting views of Argenteuil and shifted his interest towards more Impressionistic landscapes. Furthermore, in 1882, the artist presented at least seventy paintings to the Seventh Impressionist Exhibition before withdrawing himself from the exhibition the following year. This letter clearly indicates a desire from the artist to move towards a more Impressionistic and freer style. Another indication that could explain the artist's decision to use a more Impressionistic approach may be his argument with Degas in 1880 about the Impressionist Exhibition. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of January 1881, Caillebotte disapproved of Degas's intention to invite Realist painters entering their Impressionist exhibition. Degas wanted to replace Monet and Renoir's withdrawal from the Sixth Impressionist Exhibition by realist artists such as Raffaëlli. Caillebotte manifested his anger in a letter addressed to Pissarro:

Degas a apporte la désorganisation parmi nous. Il est très malheureux pour lui qu'il ait le caractère si mal fait.<sup>212</sup>

Caillebotte added:

Demandez à tous ceux qui l'on connu, à vous-même tout le premier. Non cet homme est aigri. Il n'occupe pas la grande place qu'il devrait occuper par son talent et quoiqu'il ne l'avouera jamais il en veut à la terre entière. Il prétend qu'il a voulu avoir Raffaëlli et les autres parce que Monet et Renoir avaient lâché et qu'il fallait bien avoir quelqu'un. Mais il y a trois ans qu'il tourmente Raffaëlli pour venir avec nous, bien avant la défection de Monet, Renoir et même Sisley. Il prétend qu'il faut nous tenir et pouvoir compter les uns sur les autres et qui nous a-t-il amène? En 1876, Lepic et Legros et Mme de Rambure. Mais il n'a pas fulmine contre la

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<sup>211</sup> Daniel Wildenstein, *Gustave Caillebotte*, Wildenstein & Co Ltd, London, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 16<sup>th</sup> July, 1966, p 18

<sup>212</sup> Caillebotte to Pissarro, 24 January 1881. Charles S. Moffet, *The New Painting, Impressionism 1874-1886*, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 19 April – 6 July 1986, p 245

défection de Lepic et Legros et cependant Lepic par exemple n'avait aucun talent. Il lui a pardonné sans doute, Sisley, Monet et Renoir ayant du talent il ne leur pardonnera jamais. En 1878: Zandomenighi, Bracquemont, Mme Bracquemond. En 1879: Raffaëlli, Vidal (est-ce qu'il lui amène Vidal?). J'en passe, quelle phalange de lutteurs résolus pour la grande cause du réalisme!!!<sup>213</sup>

This letter corresponds to the period in which Caillebotte changed his technique towards a more Impressionistic style. Caillebotte's shift from Realism to Impressionism is certainly due to this argument with Degas about the Impressionist Exhibition. In 1880, Caillebotte moved away from Realism maybe as a way of supporting the Impressionist tradition, not to mention his withdrawal from the Sixth Impressionist Exhibition.

To understand better the artistic dialogue between Caillebotte and Monet it is important to examine the debates within Impressionism about compositional design and the increasing adoption within Impressionism of a sketch like technique. In the 1880s as Caillebotte's art began to draw closer to Monet we can see him attempting to come to terms with Monet's painting both through his choice of motifs, techniques and artistic priorities. Monet and Caillebotte manifested strong interest in the study of atmospheric effects in their paintings. Indeed, it's actually the intensity and the wavelength of the light which determines the perceived colour of an object. As Emile Zola explained:

It is the light which sketches as much as its colors, it is the light which places each thing in its place, which is the very life of the painted scene.<sup>214</sup>

Zola's point is clearly illustrated by Monet's studies of light on the Haystack and the Rouen Cathedral. Indeed, Caillebotte and Monet used the light to unveil the natural colours of nature. The connection between Monet and Caillebotte is also reflected in their attraction for the blue shades of colours. Monet's attraction for the colour effects started developing in 1866, when he began to study the reflection of light. As John House explains it, Monet predominantly used a blue tonality in his paintings in order to create subtle atmospheric nuances and contrasts. Monet employed blue tonality to emphasize the shadows produced by the foliage of the trees, an effect Caillebotte began around the 1880s to emulate. For Monet, the blue hue

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<sup>213</sup> Caillebotte to Pissarro, 24 January 1881. Charles S. Moffet, *op.cit.*, p 245

<sup>214</sup> M. Douglas Kimball, *Emile Zola and the French Impressionism*, The Bulletin of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association, Vol. 23, No. 2, (Jun., 1969), p 52

was indicating the atmospheric distance situated in background of *Peupliers près d'Argenteuil* (1875) (fig.5). Monet also used this colour to evoke an atmospheric effect like the impression of smoke in his *Gare Saint-Lazare* work. The blue colour equally allowed Monet to suggest the presence of a sunny dim light inside an apartment as one may notice in *Un coin d'Appartement*. (fig.6).<sup>215</sup> Monet used blue tonality to either suggest effect of light or shadow. This recurrent use of the blue underlines the Impressionists' inclination to depict their own perception of reality which Monet and Caillebotte see in blue as Alfred de Lostalot stated it in *Les Beaux Arts Illustres*. Indeed, as Alfred de Lostalot explains in *Les Beaux Arts Illustres*, Caillebotte seems drawn into the tonalities of blue:

What is regrettable is that he has an unfortunate tendency to see everything in blue. This passion shows itself crudely in all the paintings he shows, and particularly *Scene de Canotage*. One must certainly have a fair amount of good will to appreciate the qualities of the painter through the blue veil that covers all his canvases.<sup>216</sup>

Caillebotte's emphasis on the brightness of light and technique of brushwork really unveils his Impressionistic qualities. Another painting that clearly illustrates Caillebotte's relationship with Impressionism is *Marine*, which is now also known as *Régates à Villers* (fig.7). The artist used a broad palette of blue, green, purple and pink tonalities which seems to evoke the atmosphere of the seascape. Correspondingly to *La Plaine de Gennevillier* (1888) (fig.8), Caillebotte privileged the sensations of nature conveyed by the effect of colours and light rather than the content of the painting. As Alexandre Hepp expresses it in *Le Voltaire*:

His seascapes, still soaked, as it were, with the good smell of the sea, possess infinite subtleties.<sup>217</sup>

Again, this painting shows lots of similarities with Monet in the approach to colour and light. It is interesting to observe how Caillebotte and Monet created a contrast between the pink-orange hues of colour and the green-blue tonalities. Although the blue shades are prevailing, Caillebotte and Monet sometimes added little dashes of pink, orange and yellow tonalities to

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<sup>215</sup> John House, *Monet, Nature into Art*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1986, p 115

<sup>216</sup> Alfred de Lostalot, *Les Beaux Arts Illustres*, 1879, *Ibid*.

<sup>217</sup> Alexandre Hepp, *Le Voltaire*, 3 March 1882, Paul Sebillot, *La Plume*, 15 May 1879, Charles S. Moffet, *The New Painting, Impressionism 1874-1886*, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 19 April – 6 July 1986, p 397

render the natural effect of sunlight. The contrast between green-blue and orange hues is especially obvious in Monet's *Cap Martin (1884)* (fig.9). Caillebotte also played with the contrasts of colours by using warm and cold chromatic tonalities. The warm brown colour of the boat in *Partie de bateau*, also known as *Canotier en chapeau haut de forme (1877-1878)* (fig.10) stands out from the blue-gray and dark green tonality of the landscape. Again, here Caillebotte managed to harmonize human presence and nature. The method of cropping Caillebotte is employing reminds us of Manet's *En Bateau (1874)*. However, Caillebotte shows even more proximity with the figure than Manet. This disparity between bright and dark colours also appears in most of Caillebotte's depiction of Yerres such as *Canotiers (1877)*, *Baigneurs (1878)* and *Périssoire (1878)*. In these four paintings, the principal colours are composed of blue-green, pink and yellow pigments, which is similar to the palette Monet is using. Caillebotte included *Baigneurs* and *Périssoire* as part of his trio of "decorative panel" exhibited in 1879 with another painting *Pêche à la ligne (1878)* (fig.11). In these paintings showing the riverbank, Caillebotte shows a convincing interest in the study of light and its effect on nature.

Unlike previous artistic movements, such as Realism, the Impressionists are not seeking to reproduce a landscape but instead, they are trying to convey the sensory experiences produced by this landscape. At the occasion of the First Impressionist Exhibition in 1874, the naturalist Jules Antoine Castagnary wrote about Pissarro, Monet, Sisley, Renoir, Degas, and Morisot:

They are impressionists in the sense that they render not the landscape, but the sensation produced by the landscape.<sup>218</sup>

Monet, in his work, primarily sought to convey emotions and sensations. The Impressionist painter used colours in order to convey the sensation produced by nature:

When you go out to paint, try to forget what objects you have before you, a tree, a house, a field or whatever. Merely think here is a little square of blue, here an oblong of pink, here is a streak of yellow, and paint it just as it looks to you, the exact colour and shape, until it gives your own naïve impression of the scene before you.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Richard Shiff, *The End of Impressionism, The New Painting, op.cit.*, p 61

<sup>219</sup> David Bomford, Jo Kirby, John Leighton and Ashok Roy, *Art in the Making of Impressionism*, National Gallery London, 1990, p 84

As Monet argues, Impressionism objectifies what the eye perceives. Therefore, the aim of their use of colours is to render an atmosphere rather than to imitate reality. The use of hues allows Impressionists to reflect the vibrations of nature. Monet was especially interested in conveying sensations of tactility. In order to create this impression of tactility, Monet superimposed layers of paint. Monet actually translated the visual into a series of brushwork that suggests the impression of three-dimensionality. Jules Laforgue, French poet, perfectly exemplifies Monet's thoughts in his 1883 writing at a small exhibition held in Berlin. As he explained:

The Impressionist sees and renders nature as it is – that is, wholly in the vibration of colours. No drawing, light, modeling, perspective, or chiaroscuro, none of those childish classifications: all these are in reality converted into the vibration of colour and must be obtained on the canvas solely by the vibration of colour.<sup>220</sup>

While the convergence between Monet and Caillebotte's art in the 1880s points to the intense artistic dialogue that the latter established with Monet's painting in this period, there were nevertheless important distinctions in their choice of motif and approach to nature. While Monet uniquely chose to focus on landscape, Caillebotte attempted to reconcile nature with the human presence of figures, which is emphasized by leisure life.<sup>221</sup> The only figure present in Monet's later works is the artist. As Charles Harrison argues, Monet and Caillebotte's conception of Impressionism is different. In Monet, there is focus on the surface while in Caillebotte it is the experience conveyed by the scene which prevails.<sup>222</sup> In his later landscape paintings, Caillebotte is moving towards a less polished technique by privileging sensations and effects over the actual content of the picture. Indeed, his paintings show more spontaneity in his use of light and colour effects. However, the artist still maintained a sense of spatial organization. Although Caillebotte is employing a looser technique, the sense of structure is always present through the framing of the motif and the use of viewpoints.

Caillebotte used motifs that are similar to Monet's paintings such as gardens, flowers but also the bathers and the waterscape. This proximity with Monet was highlighted by their

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<sup>220</sup> David Bomford, Jo Kirby, John Leighton and Ashok Roy quoted from Jules Laforgue, *Ibid.*

<sup>221</sup> Anne Brigitte Fonsmark, *Gustave Caillebotte*, Hatje Cantz, 2008, p 32

<sup>222</sup> Charles Harrison, *Modernity and Modernism, French Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1994, p 169

correspondences. Monet and Caillebotte were both attracted by the suburbs of Paris such as Argenteuil or the plains of the Gennevilliers.

What links Monet to Caillebotte the most is the authenticity of their works in relation to nature. While Monet used a softer range of palette, Caillebotte intensified the natural bright colours of nature. Indeed, both artists used tonalities and brushstrokes that suggest the atmosphere, the weather and light of the landscape. His work *Champs Jaune et rose (Yellow Field)* (fig.12) offers a wide range of chromatic tonalities from bright yellow to cloudy blue. Although there is more emphasis on the bright colours and effects of light than in the urban scenes, the order and geometry of the field reminds us of the organization of the city life paintings. Although Caillebotte is slightly moving towards an Impressionistic approach he still preserves a sense of structure. The artist employed brighter colours and a looser technique without completely abandoning his geometrical style entirely. Again this combination of mathematical order and yet expressive palette draws the viewer into the painting as if he was invited to witness the scene. The pigment of a colour actually mirrors and receives the light of a specific wavelength. For instance, the union of blue and green light produces a yellow hue. Young adds that the human is very receptive to the wavelength of a light. The human eye contains three receptive nerves that are sensitive to red, blue and green. The perception of such colours varies from one individual to another, hence the aim of an artist to play with nuances of hues. Chevreul found out that there were 1440 colours reflecting mixtures of primary colours. The latter established a very accurate colour wheel that shows colour correspondences and presents seventy-four hues as well as twenty shades of tonalities.<sup>223</sup> As we can observe, Caillebotte employed a variety of gold pigment from yellow, orange to ochre. The bare inhabited space incontestably contrasts with his urban works showing a busy life. Only perspective and colours predominate in the painting in order to create a visual experience. This work was preceded by a study known as *Landscape – Study in Yellow and Rose, also known as Yellow, and Pink Field, and Fields on the Gennevilliers Plain* (fig.13). Unlike the painting, this study expresses a more reduced range of colour composed of yellow-green and brown hues. As Anne Distel argues, this painting shows strong similarities with Monet's method of working, especially in the studies of colours.<sup>224</sup> Indeed, there is an analogy between Caillebotte's work and Monet's *Coquelicots (1881)* as well as *Champs de Tulipes en Hollande (1886)* (fig.15). In his painting *Champs Jaune*, Caillebotte employs a technique that

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<sup>223</sup> David Bomford, Jo Kirby, John Leighton and Ashok Roy, *Art in the Making of Impressionism*, National Gallery London, 1990, p 77

<sup>224</sup> Anne Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte, An Urban Impressionist*, The Art Institute of Chicago, 1995, p 179

was also used by Impressionists consisting in superimposing little dabs of hues on the canvas in order to convey sensation. Caillebotte's brushwork here particularly resembles Monet and Seurat's method of working.

The resemblance with Monet's brushwork is also reflected through Caillebotte's depiction of *Le Pont d'Argenteuil* (1883) (fig.16). The bridge was often used by Impressionist to exemplify modernity. As Richard Thompson explains, Monet and Caillebotte chose the theme of the suburbs of Paris as it provided them with broad sceneries as well as being close to the railway. Argenteuil presents an interesting combination of modernity by way of its proximity to the railway and yet authenticity to the representation of wild fields. Similarly, this union between the man-made nautical activities and nature is also present in the Caillebotte's Yerres collection as we will explore later in this chapter. Caillebotte offers an upstream view of the bridge. The pattern of the bridge's arches evokes the sense of repetition present in many of his paintings. Caillebotte's *Pont d'Argenteuil* reminds us of Monet's depiction of *The Roadway Bridge, Argenteuil* (fig.17) (1874). The date from which Monet painted *The Roadway Bridge* suggests that Caillebotte has possibly been influenced by the painting. However, Caillebotte represented the scene from a close-up viewpoint, presumably to distinguish himself from Monet and explore new compositional methods. This painting contrasts with the clear and linear surface of his urban works. Indeed, in his urban works, Caillebotte mostly focused on the architectural structure of the composition and the sense of perspective. In his landscape paintings, the artist privileged textural and colours effects. The *Pont d'Argenteuil* strongly emphasizes the evolution of the artist towards a more Impressionistic style. Caillebotte's Impressionistic approach to colour is equally present in his Yerres paintings, notably *Partie de bateau* also known as *Canotier en chapeau haut de forme*. Caillebotte used the same brushstroke as in *The Argenteuil Bridge*. Indeed, the artist chose to apply little dashes of tonalities to evoke the visual sensations of the river. In *The Argenteuil Bridge*, Caillebotte explored different tonalities of blue that bring the river into life. This section will focus on how Caillebotte renders sensation through light and colours. Monet and Caillebotte chose how to portray nature by taking into account the frame of the motif, the angle, the viewpoint and the position of light. Emile Zola describes their composition as "nature seen through a temperament."<sup>225</sup> Indeed, Monet and Caillebotte's aim was to represent nature in all its "temperaments" as quoted by Zola, that is to say the moments of the days, the seasons, the light and the humidity. To obtain these natural effects, Monet and Caillebotte painted *en plein*

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<sup>225</sup> Harold Bloom, *Emile Zola*, Chelsea House Publisher, 2004, p 53

*air* in spite of occasional windy and wet weather. Caillebotte spent his time working on the sceneries of his Yerres property which offer a wide range of colours, light and texture.<sup>226</sup> The reflection of light on a single motif is something that Monet used a lot in his series of paintings. Indeed, by working in *plein air*, Monet successfully conveyed the atmosphere created by light. In his series of the *Haystack* and *Rouen Cathedral*, Monet demonstrated how light can change the colour of the motif. As Iris Schaefer explains it, the natural elements such as air and water are colourless. Therefore, it's the wavelength of the light which gives a certain colour to the natural elements. To work on his motif of the *Haystacks*, Monet painted in the fields of Giverny next to his home. By depicting the same motif at different moment of the day, Monet challenged the perception of the viewer by offering him a new approach to colour. Indeed, as a result of an experiment, Sir Isaac Newton proved that colours are created by light.<sup>227</sup> The English scientist demonstrated that the refraction of a white light through a prism was producing the seven colours of the rainbow. These colours are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.<sup>228</sup> Shortly after Newton's death, Thomas Young suggested that the retina of the human eye was especially responsive to the three spectral colours red, green and violet. The light is firstly received by the retina as a colour sensation before being translated by the brain into a perceptive colour. As Young explained, the colour of an object is determined by the absorption of all the colours except the colour of the object. For instance, if the object is red, the light absorbs all the colours except the red. However, although light is colourless, its components may modify the colour of an object. As Iris Schaefer argues, the red light of the sunset will be different to the midday one or the morning.<sup>229</sup> The gradual shifting of natural colours throughout the day remains therefore one of the principal studies by the Impressionists.

What Monet attempted to achieve in his haystacks series was a study of the different absorptions of light by the element as the day unfolds. Caillebotte equally showed some interests in the influence of light on a motif. However, Iris Schaefer raises the following issue whether the Impressionists' colourful description of nature was not too far from reality. In his notebooks, Leonardo da Vinci argued that adjacent colours may influence each other. The colour of an object will absorb the tonality of the colour next to it. Leonardo da Vinci wrote:

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<sup>226</sup> Anne Brigitte Fonsmark, *op.cit.*, p 34

<sup>227</sup> Schaefer Iris, *op.cit.*, p 28

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*



Every object that has no colour in itself is tinged either entirely or in part by the colour set opposite to it. This may be shown for every object which serves as a mirror is tinged with the colour of the thing that is reflected in it.<sup>230</sup>

Johann Wolfgang Goethe suggests that colour is above all dependent on one's perception and subjectivity. Therefore, the way the Impressionists depict colour is a response from their subjective perception. Monet started to work on his series of Grain Stack in late summer 1890. The stack of grain is situated next to the field of Monet's house at Giverny, which allowed him to record the same motif at different times of the day and seasons. The series is composed of twenty-five pieces of work representing the atmospheric changes and effects on the Haystack. Initially, Monet's aim was to create a sense of harmony and union that would make this series stand out from his previous paintings. Monet described his first approach towards the Grain Stack in a letter dated from the 7th October addressed to Gustave Geoffroy:

I'm working away at a series of different effects (of stacks), but at this time of year, the sun sets so quickly that I can't keep up with it... I'm becoming so slow in my work that it makes me despair, but the further I go, the better I see that it takes a great deal of work to succeed in rendering what I want to render: "instantaneity", above all the envelope, the same light diffused over everything, and I am more than ever disgusted at things that come easily, at the first attempt.<sup>231</sup>

This letter is a turning point in Monet's approach to painting the grain stacks. What Monet was trying to convey was the atmospheric sensation expressed by the effect of light on the motif. Monet does not use any contour in his pictures, instead, he suggests the silhouetted elements of nature through his technique of brushwork and light effect.<sup>232</sup> Gustave Geoffroy describes Monet's depiction of the Haystack as "a synthetic summary of the meteors and the elements."<sup>233</sup> According to Geoffroy, Monet successfully represented the spherical horizon of the Earth during its rotation around the sun. Indeed, Geoffroy also argues that Monet "evoked

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<sup>230</sup> Leonardo da Vinci, *Leonardo da Vinci's Notebooks*, Oxford World's Classics, 2008, p 131

<sup>231</sup> John House, *Monet, Nature into Art*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1986, p 198

<sup>232</sup> John House, *op.cit.*, p 102

<sup>233</sup> Richard R. Brettell quoted from Gustave Geoffroy, *Monet's Haystack reconsidered*, The Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Autumn, 1984), p 14

without cessation, in each of his canvas, the curve of the horizon, the roundness of the globe, the course of the Earth through the space.”<sup>234</sup> As Geoffroy is trying to explain, Monet’s Haystack series is an attempt to encompass the Earth in its entirety. Monet’s depiction of the Haystack at different moment of the day illustrates Iris Schaefer’s argument that the light influences the colour of an object. As we may observe in *Meule, Soleil Couchant (1891)* (fig.18), the grain stack absorbs the warm light of the sunset. On the other hand in *Les Meules, effet de gelée (1889)* (fig.19), the grain stack receives the clear opaque light of the frosty atmosphere. As John House argues, the atmospheric changes in the sky produce a sense of liveliness and movement that reinforces the possible impact of Impressionism on cinematography. Indeed, through his evolving series, Monet is recording the different moods of nature throughout the day as if he was filming the scene continuously. One may find a similar approach in Caillebotte’s effects of Sunset at Yerres. Caillebotte chose to focus on the impact of the light on the natural colours of the sky and the field. In his series of Grain Stack, there is a sense of duality which is prevailing, more especially in terms of light rather than seasons. Monet started most of his paintings of the Grain stack in winter 1890.<sup>235</sup> Indeed, out of fifteen paintings, only five of them represent a season other than winter as it is the case in *Meule, fin d’été, effet du matin. 1891*. The horizon of the Earth described by Geoffroy in Monet’s *Haystacks* also appears in Caillebotte’s effects of Sunset. Indeed, Caillebotte’s depiction of the line of horizon as well as the position of the sun in the landscape emphasizes Geoffroy’s metaphorical description of the Earth. Although there is no presence of living being, the atmospheric change in the sky brings a sense of movement that contributes to the pro-cinematographic qualities present in most of Caillebotte’s paintings (fig.20, fig.21, fig.22, fig.23, fig.24, fig.25.)As in the case of his Impressionist colleagues, Caillebotte’s series of *Sunset* pictures translate the sensory experience of the world around us into a surface.

By working on the atmospheric effects of light, Caillebotte actually exemplified the essence of the word Impressionism. Most of Caillebotte and Monet’s work are indeed based on sensory experience that are suggested through brushworks. As David Hume argues in his *Essay on Human Understanding* of 1742, the term ‘Impressionism’ evokes a sense of life and movement that is materialized by the dynamic effects of brushworks and nuances. As he explains:

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<sup>234</sup> Richard R. Brettell quoted from Gustave Geoffroy, Richard R. Brettell, *op.cit.*, p 14

<sup>235</sup> Richard R. Brettell, *op.cit.*, p 12

By the term impression, I mean all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, or see, or feel, or love or hate, or desire, or will... Impressions are distinguished from ideas, which are less lively perceptions of which we are conscious, when we reflect on any of those sensations or movements above mentioned.<sup>236</sup>

Impressionism is a true relationship between the eye and the sensory experiences expressed through the painting. Impressionists translate their experience of reality to the viewer by stimulating their perceptions.

As Richard Shiff remarks, Impressionism is also the sign or the mark of the artist on the canvas. Therefore, it also has a physical aspect on the surface. The aim of Impressionism is to simplify their composition in order to express a more authentic vision of reality. Maurice Denis defines this idea of sincerity in Cezanne's work by employing the term primitivism. Indeed, Cezanne uses a "naïve" approach in his representation of landscapes and nature by conveying his own perception of reality. According to Denis, Cezanne's paintings show a lack of tonality, nuances, and spatial depth which make his work appear flat. However, as Denis argues, it is also this primitivism that creates naturalness in Cezanne's works.<sup>237</sup> What Cezanne attempted to convey is the atmospheric sensation or what he defines as "the envelope." The atmospheric effect is essential to communicating visual sensations as it is spontaneous. This atmospheric impression entails the elimination of any conventional technique or illusions such as the *chiaroscuro* or the perspective. As Denis indicates it, Cezanne's lack of spatial dimension actually allows the atmospheric effects to resonate through his paintings. According to Maurice Denis "every Primitive sees nature as the savage does; he appreciates the common qualities of things more than their beauty... He prefers reality to the appearance of reality [and] makes the image of things conform to the idea he has of them..."<sup>238</sup> Indeed, as he explains the Primitives convey their own visual knowledge of the world. The metaphorical notion of *enveloppe* is clearly present in Monet's series of *The Rouen Cathedral*. The *enveloppe* that Monet describes encompasses the temperature, the air, the light and the moisture.<sup>239</sup> The lack of contour that Denis mentions is replaced by a surrounding veil

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<sup>236</sup> Charles S. Moffet, *op.cit.*, p 51

<sup>237</sup> Richard Shiff, *Cezanne and the End of Impressionism, A Study of the Theory, Technique, and Critical Evaluation of Modern Art*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1984, p 172

<sup>238</sup> Richard Shiff quoted from Maurice Denis, Richard Shiff, *op.cit.*, p 171

<sup>239</sup> Joachim Pissarro, *Monet's Cathedral, Rouen 1892 – 1894*, Pavilion Books Limited, 1990, p 21

of light. As Michel Melot suggests it, there is a sense of unity that merges the elements of reality into the atmospheric *effects*. Michel Melot refers to Pissarro's *Haystack* by writing:

It's the shadow cast by the haystacks under the setting sun that cannot be distinguished from the object that casts it. In this way the Impressionist draughtsman lays as principle that the shadow and reality are one and the same in their representation. It goes the same with reflection and reality – potential object and real object.<sup>240</sup>

As Melot expresses it, the atmospheric effects and the elements depicted constitute a whole. In order to obtain this homogeneity, Pissarro was using a technique called *manière grise* which consisted in rubbing sand papers made of emery stones on a zinc plate to create an effect of gray tonalities.<sup>241</sup> Monet initially came to Rouen for a family business regarding the death of his half-sister Marie in 1891. After having arranged the family business, Monet decided to rent a room at the Hôtel d'Angleterre located near the Cathedral from where he started to find his motif. The artist moved closer to the Cathedral when he moved to his new apartment on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 1892 as he expresses in his letter:

I am nevertheless a bit happier today. I was able to install myself in an empty apartment facing the Cathedral, but it is a tough job that I am undertaking here.<sup>242</sup>

This facing view of the Cathedral allowed Monet to record the temporality of his motif. After leaving Rouen between the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 25<sup>th</sup> February, Monet found his former room already occupied and had to move to the South-west location of the same building. It is therefore interesting to also point out how the change of viewpoint influenced the perception of the motif. As Pissarro mentions, Monet depicted the Cathedral from three different viewpoints: The first one from M. Jean Louvet, "*La grande Fabrique*", 31 Place de la Cathédrale, the second one from M. Fernand Lévy "*Boutique de lingerie et modes*, 23 Place de la Cathédrale, the third from M. Edward Mauquit, "*Le magasin des nouveautés.*", 81 Rue du Grand Pont (now number 47).<sup>243</sup> As Pissarro argues, the chronological evolution of the Cathedral series can be classified into different periods and viewpoints starting from the two first paintings at

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<sup>240</sup> Joachim Pissarro, *Monet's Cathedral, Rouen 1892 – 1894*, Pavilion Books Limited, 1990, p 10

<sup>241</sup> Joachim Pissarro, *Monet's Cathedral, Rouen 1892 – 1894*, *Ibid.*

<sup>242</sup> Joachim Pissarro quoted from Monet, Joachim Pissarro, *op.cit.*, p 15

<sup>243</sup> Joachim Pissarro, *op.cit.*, p 16

the Louvet House on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> February 1892 to the Mauquit's shop in 1893 from which Monet worked on the morning effects. As Monet explains in his letter to Alice, the mood of the weather strongly affected the plan and the schedule of his work: "I do hope not to have many changes of weather."<sup>244</sup> In another letter addressed to Alice on the 8<sup>th</sup> March from Rouen, Monet wrote: "I am still keeping well and I see clearly through what I am doing: it will probably be all right if the sun lasts, but I am rather afraid as I have just seen the moon surrounded with a huge circle which foretells nothing good."<sup>245</sup> Indeed, the bad weather was making Monet's work and study more difficult. As he reported to Alice on March the 18<sup>th</sup>, Monet started his work at 8 am and finished around 6:30pm, which Pissarro described as a steady 10 hours commitment.

What renders Monet's series interesting is the way the imprint of the weather is reflected in the walls of the Cathedral. Monet is challenging the viewer's vision of reality by offering him what his eyes don't usually perceive. According to the artist, the *enveloppe* or what is invisible is essential to the composition of the motif. Monet's use of the *enveloppe* conveys an effect of instantaneity that indicates the position of the light every hour on the wall of the Cathedral. The *enveloppe* brings light to the stones of the Cathedral. Monet was working on the evolution of light throughout the day and how it was absorbed by the stones of the Cathedral. In his painting *Rouen Cathedral (1894)*, the rose tonalities of the Cathedral emerge from the blue sky. The façade of the Cathedral also reflects the atmospheric weather, such as warm, cool, humid or dry. In *Rouen Cathedral and the Cour d'Albane, Early Morning*, the early morning light seems to be directed on the tower. The stones of the tower are receiving the sunlight of the cool morning. It is interesting to note how the light and atmospheric weather are being recorded on the stones of the Cathedral. Indeed, the nuances reflected on the wall of the Cathedral allow the viewer to imagine which moment of the day the Rouen Cathedral has been depicted. In the *Early Morning* work, the emanating light coming from the height of the tower as well as its pink and yellow tonalities on the stones of the Cathedral indicates the early morning atmosphere.<sup>246</sup> The presence of an atmospheric *enveloppe* in the Rouen Cathedral series actually conveys the various sensations expressed by the weather. As Monet explains in his letters, he sometimes had to work in the cold and wet weather. This impression is rendered through the use of blue tonalities which reinforce the absorption of the humidity by the texture of the façade. The *enveloppe* was a way for Monet to translate the

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<sup>244</sup> Joachim Pissarro quoted from Monet, Joachim Pissarro, *op.cit.*, p17

<sup>245</sup> Joachim Pissarro quoted from Monet, Joachim Pissarro, *op.cit.*, p 17

<sup>246</sup> Joel Isaacson, *Observation and Reflection, Claude Monet*, Paidon Oxford, 1978, p 223

visual experience into effects of brushworks and colour gradation. Monet's aim was to express his visual experience and 'fix' his 'sensations' through his choice of colours and light. As he expressed it in 1912, "I know only that I do what I think best in order to express what I experience (ce que j'éprouve) in front of nature."<sup>247</sup> According to Monet, the landscape is in constant change. Indeed, Monet wrote: 'For me a landscape hardly exists at all as a landscape, because its appearance is constantly changing; but it lives by virtue of its surroundings, the air and the light which vary continually.'<sup>248</sup> Like Monet, Caillebotte showed similar interests in the representation of the shift of weather and climate. Many of his paintings suggest an attempt to depict the instantaneous moment as one may see in *Vue de toits [effet de neige]*, also known as *Toits sous la neige, Paris, 1878*. In this painting, Caillebotte was seeking to convey the impressions and sensations of a winter day. The grey tonalities of the sky indicate the mood of the weather as well as the modernized environment of the urban space.<sup>249</sup> The atmosphere of the sky is highlighted by tonalities of pink. This work is comparable to Monet's *Wheatstacks, Snow Effect, Morning, 1891*. As in Caillebotte's work, the snow and the sky are depicted in harmony. One can clearly see the change of atmosphere in the two paintings *La Rue Halévy, vue d'un balcon* (fig.26), 1878 and *Rue Halévy, vue d'un sixième étage*, also known as *La Rue Halévy, vue du sixième étage* (fig.27), 1878. The colours employed by Caillebotte seem warmer in the first version than the second one. *Rue Halévy, La Rue Halévy, vue du sixième étage* are clearly similar to Monet's approach to the change of weather and sun light. In *La Rue Halévy, vue d'un balcon*, Caillebotte changed the angle of the viewpoint towards the right from a different window. The shift of colour from orange tonalities to a lighter palette also suggests a sense of atmospheric movement. These two paintings clearly reflect Caillebotte's interest in the weather effects. In this painting, Caillebotte mainly used blue and violet tonalities. The blue brush strokes mirror the clear nuances of the sky. The blue and violet palette actually reflects Caillebotte's tendency to Impressionism. Indeed, Edmond Duranty wrote: "As for Monsieur Caillebotte, he could well be a victim of violet and blue rays."<sup>250</sup>

Similarly in *Paris sous Neige* (1886) and *Paysage Urbain sous la Neige* (1888), Caillebotte accommodated his choice of palette to the climate. Indeed, the artist used a soft palette to

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<sup>247</sup> John House, *op.cit.*, p 133

<sup>248</sup> Quotation from Claude Monet taken from The J. Paul Getty Museum, Timothy Potts, Director, J. Paul Getty Museum, *Wheatstacks, Snow Effect, Morning*, Los Angeles, [www.getty.edu](http://www.getty.edu)

<sup>249</sup> Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Gustave Caillebotte, *Rooftops in the Snow (snow effect)*, [www.muse-orsay.fr](http://www.muse-orsay.fr)

<sup>250</sup> Anne Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte, An Urban Impressionist, op.cit.*, p 156

evoke the breezy weather reflected in the trees.<sup>251</sup> Like Monet, Caillebotte balanced the effect of light according to the moment of the day and weather he wanted to convey. This technique is later known in cinema as the filter. Colour lens filter are used in cinematography in order to recreate the atmospheric effects of the scene. Warmer colour lens filters emulate the effects of a brighter climate while colder ones reflect darkens the objects of the scene and renders a cloudier atmosphere.<sup>252</sup>

This third section identifies the artist's ways of bring life to the paintings. One may notice an uncontestable relationship between Monet and Caillebotte in their representation of the invisible or the *enveloppe*. The atmospheric *enveloppe* is particularly apparent in Caillebotte's choice of palette in *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*. In order to reflect the diffuse light on the pavement, Caillebotte used pale colours such as lead white. The painting is mainly constituted of yellow and blue tonalities that evoke the opaque atmosphere.<sup>253</sup> Caillebotte dissolved pigments of browns and blue into a more opaque and thicker paint. Caillebotte closely studied the sensory experience conveyed by the wet pavement. Like Monet, Caillebotte chose to focus on the momentary and the instantaneous by researching Impressions that go beyond the representation of the motif.<sup>254</sup> Indeed, Caillebotte, like Monet, shows a strong interest in the sensations rendered by texture. Caillebotte used a similar approach to Monet by reflecting the atmospheric weather on a surface as one can notice in his *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* painting. Many critics noticed the absence of rain in Caillebotte's painting and the irrationality of the umbrellas without a hint of raindrop. The first critic mentioning the inexistence of the rain falling appeared in *L'Événement* on the 6 April 1877:

Again, this is very well drawn... only Caillebotte has neglected to provide any rain.<sup>255</sup>

The presence of the umbrellas when the rain is not falling creates a disturbing atmosphere to the eye of the spectator. In *L'Impressionniste*, Georges Rivière commented on the 14 April 1877 that "one critic has written that in *Temps de Pluie* everything exists except the rain

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<sup>251</sup> Jean-Jacques Lévêque, *Gustave Caillebotte, L'Oublié de L'Impressionnisme, 1848-1894*, ACR Edition, 1994, p 136-137

<sup>252</sup> Blain Brown, *Cinematography, Theory and Practice*, Taylor and Francis, 2012, p 262

<sup>253</sup> Antea Callen, *Techniques of the Impressionists*, Orbis Publishing, 1982, p 95

<sup>254</sup> Karin, Sagner, *Gustave Caillebotte, An Impressionist and Photography*, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Hirmer, 2013, p 121

<sup>255</sup> *L'Événement*, 6 Avril 1877 taken from Charles S. Moffet, *The New Painting, Impressionism 1874-1886*, *ibid.* p 208

which you do not see fall.” However, Georges Rivière also noted the talent and the authenticity of Caillebotte by arguing that “Caillebotte, however, has some great qualities, and definitely does not indulge in what blind critics have called a ‘debauchery of colors.’”<sup>256</sup> He also added: “People have been unwilling to see in Caillebotte that noble, sincere, and very realistic drawing style that is the chief of his talents.”<sup>257</sup> Another critic who noted Caillebotte’s less evident rain but attempted to justify it was Leon Mancino. The latter argued that Caillebotte’s depiction of *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* was representative of real city life. As he wrote:

What did fall is not the rain; it is something like flour or powdered sugar that was sprinkled all over the pavement, umbrellas, everything, with equal and regular perfection. It is painted in a normal way, and is not without distinction. It is as big as life, as is demanded of a subject of such compelling interest.<sup>258</sup>

According to Leon Mancino, the rain is invisible as it stopped falling and all that remains is the impression conveyed by the after rain atmosphere. Indeed, as Thomas Grimm expresses it, instead of seeking to represent the rain, Caillebotte’s aim was to share his perception of the rain. According to Thomas Grimm, the rain Caillebotte attempted to depict looked more like snow to his eyes. As he commented in his article *Petit Journal* on the 7 April 1877:

The catalogue describes it as rain, but my personal impression is that it is snow. The open umbrellas give off white reflections; nevertheless, there is not a single flake on people’s clothing, and the very oddly laid-out paving stones are smooth. The artist’s impression must have been that the rain looked like snow.<sup>259</sup>

Indeed, it is worth understanding the artist’s initial intentions and perception of reality. As Thomas Grimm speculates, the artist’s atmospheric perception might be different to one attributed to the viewer. The invisibility of the rain leaves a sense of mystery regarding the actual weather that was depicted. This ambiguity is a way to stimulate the perception of the viewer by making him participate in the creation of the composition. In order to convey this

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<sup>256</sup> Georges Rivière, *L’Impressionniste*, 14 Avril 1877, quoted from Charles S. Moffet, *op.cit.*, p 209

<sup>257</sup> Charles S. Moffet, *Ibid.*

<sup>258</sup> Leon Mancino, quoted from Charles S. Moffet, *Ibid.*

<sup>259</sup> Thomas Grimm, *Le Petit Journal*, 7 Avril 1877, *Ibid.*



enigmatic atmosphere, Caillebotte worked on the study of light and contrast. In *Study of Paving Stone* (fig.28), Caillebotte clearly attempted to reflect the effect of wetness on the pavements by studying the texture of the stones. Through the wetness of the pavement, Caillebotte invites the spectator to feel the environment depicted in the scene. These effects of wetness combined with the absence of the rain contribute to trigger a visual response from the viewer. Some photographers such as Jan Lauchmann or Wols were also bringing sensory experiences by focusing on the atmospheric texture of a surface. Jan Lauchman's representation of the pavement is very similar to Caillebotte's study in the way light is projected on the surface. The wet pavement also features the atmosphere of Paris after a rainy day. Indeed, the pavement reflects a simplified allusion to the City of Light. This close-up view of the pavement emphasizes Caillebotte's sense of modernity. Caillebotte's approach to linearity is slightly suggested underneath the tonalities of gray layer of paint that reinforces the texture of the surface. The artist's depiction of the pavement shows a more Impressionistic technique of brushwork and tonalities. Caillebotte's choice to study the reflection of the atmosphere on the pavement emphasizes even more his relationship with Monet. In his series of the Rouen Cathedral, the surface changes according to the weather and the moment of the day.<sup>260</sup> For instance, in *La Cathédrale de Rouen, Evening*, the warmth of the sun during the day is recorded on the stones of the Cathedral through tonalities of yellow and orange.<sup>261</sup> The depiction of Caillebotte's wet pavement suggests a momentary impression that underlines the pro-cinematic effect that is prevailing in the artist's work. One critic commented on the meticulousness of Caillebotte's depiction of the pavement in "Les Impressionnistes", *Le Radical*:

"Chaque pave se détache avec une précision inouïe. On peut les compter, les mesurer, les étudier en géologue, en chimiste, en géomètre et en paveur. Du coup le défaut, le vice plutôt de l'Impressionniste nous saute aux yeux."<sup>262</sup>

This study of the pavements, again, reinforces the modernity of the artist who chose to focus on ordinary elements. Indeed, the talent of Caillebotte lies in his capacity to turn the banal into the principal theme of the scene. By working on the pavement, Caillebotte sought to stimulate the sensory perception of the spectator through the use of texture, light and

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<sup>260</sup> Joachim Pissarro, *Monet's Cathedral, Rouen 1892 – 1894*, p 72

<sup>261</sup> Joachim Pissarro, *op.cit.*, p 56

<sup>262</sup> Lepelletier, E. « Les Impressionnistes », *Le Radical*, 8 Avril 1877, taken from Kirk T. Varnedoe, *Gustave Caillebotte, A Retrospective Exhibition, op.cit.*, p210

tonalities. The viewer can almost feel the polished and wet surface of the stones which is emphasized by the projection of light on the space. As we can see in the drawing for *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*, Caillebotte studied with precision the position of the pavement in order to suggest the presence of vanishing points (fig.29 and fig.30). The arrangement of the paving stones conveys a sense of order and tidiness. Caillebotte's study of the pavement intensifies the speed of the perspective. Indeed, the perspective created by the paving stones contributes to the effect of movement and the impression of being absorbed into the space.<sup>263</sup>

Water and reflection constitute an important element of the atmospheric effects as it allows the painter to emphasize the glow of the sunlight or wetness of the rain. In order to suggest the presence of the rain in *L'Yerre, effet de pluie* (fig.31), Caillebotte worked on the impact of the weather on the water. Although Anne Distel mentions the lack of any dampening rain, the undulations on the surface of the river produce a sense of movement that may evoke the presence of rain.<sup>264</sup> The ripples on the river surface create an illusion of rhythm that allows the spectator to imagine the resonance of the rain on the water. Indeed, the moving ripples as well as the sense of perspective produced by the wood in the foreground with the trees draw the attention of the viewer into the scene as if he was standing next to the painter. Anne Distel also noted the contrast between the diagonal wood of the riverbank and the vertical trees on the other side which captivate the eye of the viewer on the effects of movement. As Kirk Varnedoe argues, the scene is constructed into three sections: the diagonal wood of the riverbank in the foreground, the river and the trees on the opposite side. This fragmentation offers an even more fascinating view on the undulation of the river.<sup>265</sup>

As Anne Distel argues, the invisibility of the rain leads the viewer to question the title of the work *L'Yerres, effet de pluie*. She refers to Kirk Varnedoe by explaining that bubbles and insects could produce a comparable effect on the river even if it is not raining.<sup>266</sup> The movement of the water as a response to natural or man-made elements is reflected in Caillebotte's *Périssoire* through the contact of the oars on the river. The peaceful and linear movement of the water mirrors the steady action of the rowers. Moreover, the dynamism of rowing is reflected in many of Caillebotte's paintings. Indeed, the movement of rowing that appears in *Canotier* reminds us of *Raboteur de Parquet*. Like a cinematograph, Caillebotte

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<sup>263</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *Gustave Caillebotte, A Retrospective Exhibition*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston-October 22 to January 2, The Brooklyn Museum-February 12 to April 21, 1976-1977, p 111

<sup>264</sup> Anne Distel, *op.cit.*, p 60

<sup>265</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *Gustave Caillebotte, A Retrospective Exhibition, op.cit.*, p 82

<sup>266</sup> Anne Distel, *op.cit.*, p 80

captures the moment in movement which brings a sense of modernity in his works. Caillebotte's fascination for movement and repetition brings him closer to the works of Eadweard Muybridge. Some of Caillebotte's paintings anticipate and reflect Muybridge studies of movement. For instance, one can see a strong allusion between Caillebotte's painting *Canotier au chapeau haut de forme* (1877) and Muybridge's work *Athlete, Rowing* (1887).<sup>267</sup> Both Caillebotte and Muybridge manifested a curiosity for the study of sport in movement. Indeed, in his Yerres paintings between 1877 and 1890, Caillebotte focused on swimmers, canoeist, oarsman and Yachtsmen. The study of movement became one of the subjects of preoccupation of Degas and other Impressionists. Degas already started painting horses in motion from 1860s. He also tried to depict the dynamic "hustle and bustle of passer-by" mentioned in Edmond Duranty's writings.<sup>268</sup> From 1870, Degas started focusing on the dynamism and continuous movement of ballet dancers. He regularly attended as a visitor the ballet classes at the studio of the Paris Opera House. Degas' fascination with movement shows that there was already a strong interest in the process of animation arising from the Impressionist culture.<sup>269</sup> The aim of Degas was to record the different phases of movement of the dancers performing their routines. The artist developed a passion for the science of physiognomy researching into works by Johann Caspar Lavater and Charles Darwin's *Expression of the Emotions in Man and the Animals*. Degas deepened his knowledge through a science magazine introduced *La Nature* created in 1873 by Victor Masson.<sup>270</sup> In 1878, he discovered in this magazine two articles firstly dedicated to a widely-known French scientist Etienne-Jules Marey and to the English photographer Eadweard Muybridge written by the editor Gaston Tissandier. The article showed a summary on Muybridge illustrated by a series of photographs featuring horses and their riders. In 1870, he started elaborating a technique known as "instantaneous photography." This project consisted in using the technique of shutter speeds and displaying several cameras next to the animal in movement. The photographer started producing most of his decomposition of movement studies between 1872 and 1885. Muybridge firstly used 12 cameras set up at different time interval to capture the legs of a horse in gallop. What Muybridge sought to capture was the full motion of the horses in gallop in order to find whether the legs of the horse are leaving the floor between each

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<sup>267</sup> Karin, Sagner, *Gustave Caillebotte, An Impressionist and Photography*, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Hirmer, 2013, p 214

<sup>268</sup> Charles S. Moffet, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, National Gallery of Art, US, The Museums, 1986, p 45

<sup>269</sup> Richard Kendall and Jill Devonyar, *Degas and the Ballet, Picturing movement*, Roal Academy of Arts, London, 17 September – 11 December 2011, p 148

<sup>270</sup> Richard Kendall and Jill Devonyar, *op. cit.*, p 149

gallop. This accomplishment led him to work on studies of humans and other animals in motion which appeared in an eleven-volume publication entitled “Animal Locomotion” from 1887. Degas may possibly have been one of the first artists to discover Muybridge’s works. Muybridge’s first book *The Attitudes of Animals in Motion* published in 1881 contains photographs and studies of movement of athletes exercising. Another scientist and chronophotographer familiar with the study of movement is Marey who published *La Machine Animale: locomotion terrestre et aérienne*. The latter also showed a strong interest in ballet and dance. He claimed that “science and art meet for the search of truth.” This relationship between science and art is deeply present in Degas and Caillebotte who reconcile artistic values to visual science based on optical theory. Marey’s encounter with Muybridge in Paris in the Autumn 1881 clearly reflected the harmony between science and art stated in Marey’s words. Recording athletes in movement is an interest that Marey and Muybridge shared in common. From a contemporary’s point of view, Muybridge became “one of the topics of Parisian conversation.” However, very little evidence remains on his influence of the city of light and the Impressionist society. In 1879, Muybridge attempted to develop a device known as the zoopraxiscope, a projector which recomposes short sequences of movement. He used this device in order to study the flight of the birds in movement. On his return to America, Muybridge elaborated a system called the multi-photographic sequence involving between twelve and thirty-six pictures displayed next to each other which would capture an instantaneous movement of a few seconds.<sup>271</sup> By using this device, Muybridge actually tried to go beyond that what the eye could perceive.

This desire of providing unlimited visual experience is equally something shared by Caillebotte and Degas. As a sculptor and painter, Degas aimed at conveying movement ‘in its exact truth.’ In their attempts to record movement, Degas, Caillebotte and Muybridge create an interaction with the viewer by stimulating their visual responses. Their aim is therefore to provide the viewer with visual experiences that are new to what he is used to perceiving when looking at paintings or photographs. During a conversation with the journalist Francois Thiebault Sisson, Degas mentioned that “Marey had not yet invented the device which made it possible to decompose movements - imperceptible to the human eye – of a bird in flight, of a galloping or trotting horse.”<sup>272</sup> Degas also referred to Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier arguing that the artist attempted to study horses but only contented himself to produce sketches. Degas

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<sup>271</sup> Richard Kendall and Jill Devonyar, *op. cit.*, p 156

<sup>272</sup> Richard Kendall and Jill Devonyar, *op. cit.*, p 162

thinks it is important to depict the animal in three-dimensionS in order to render the sense of life. Indeed, as this chapter argues, Degas, Caillebotte and Monet were seeking to render sensations of life and movement by using colours, light, visual angles and three-dimensional effects. Degas added to Thiebault Sisson that he could “draw a dancing figure; with a little skill” he “should be able to create an illusion for a short time. But however painstakingly” he might “study” his “adaptation,” he “will achieve nothing more than an insubstantial silhouette, lacking all notion of mass and volume and devoid of precision.”<sup>273</sup> The increasing search for movement that was prevailing during the Impressionistic period certainly had an influence on Caillebotte who became absorbed by modern advances. Although it is Muybridge who first influenced Marey to use photography, the latter showed a strong interest in sculpture and three-dimensionality which brings him closer to Degas. Marey argued that his studies of the flying birds in “relief” would be of benefit “to the Arts as they would be to science.”<sup>274</sup> The study of horses in movement is one of the most chosen themes of Degas, Muybridge and Marey. By focusing on the horse, the three artists are able to identify the position of the legs at different seconds of interval. Further his conversation with Thiebault Sisson, Degas added that sculpture led him to render a “feeling of life” to the figures represented in his sketches.<sup>275</sup> In his ballet series of sculpture, Degas studied the exact movement of the dancers during their exercise routine and which muscles were involved. The artist produced three bronze sculptures originating from wax models showing the evolution of the dancer’s movements. One of the bronze series focuses on the exact motion of the Grand Arabesque. The artist shows the different phases of progression into the arabesque. Each broze sculpture represents a transition from one movement to another. The study of the three Arabesques in movement is something that Degas and Muybridge have in common. Indeed, positions of the Arabesque are equally represented in Muybridge’s series of photography entitled “First Ballet Action” from *Animal Locomotion*. Similarly, Marey’s chronographs on figures in motion appeared in *La Nature* and *Scientific American*. Correspondences can easily be drawn between Degas’ sculptures and Marey’s series of photographs in movement such as *Man Walking and Swinging Arm* (c. 1890.) The two works show a sense of dynamism and rythm. Sculpture also became one of Marey’s interests. In 1886, Marey took high-speed photographs from three different axes of gulls and pigeons. He then attempted to recreate these pictures in three-dimensions by materializing them first in plaster then in bronze with

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<sup>273</sup> Richard Kendall and Jill Devonyar, *op. cit.*, p 162

<sup>274</sup> Richard Kendall and Jill Devonyar, *op. cit.*, p 167

<sup>275</sup> Richard Kendall and Jill Devonyar, *op. cit.*, p 169

the collaboration of Georges Demeny. Marey developed an innovative system of zoetrope which consists in showing the progressive movements of the birds by making the three-dimensional sculpture turn around the centre. Marey's friend Paul Richer went further in the experiment of depicting figures in movement by developing a system known as *phénakistiscope*. He designed *The Runner* on a bronze mould which renders an illusion of movement by making it spin in the *Phénakistiscope*. Richer especially aimed at recording dynamic movement in his work *French Boxing, Direct Kick*. Although his work shows strong similarities with Degas' *Dancer Fourth Position Front on the Left Leg*, Richer's went beyond the artist's work by recording a split-second movement. However, there is no evidence that Degas was aware of his inventions.<sup>276</sup>

The search for movement became a prevalent theme among artist and the development of cinematography later. The aim of this section is to understand and clarify why Caillebotte and other artists started to focus on movement instead of space at a certain moment. Why is there more interest brought on movement at certain points of history and not others? The modernity of the city with the construction of bridges, railways and the apparition and train provided the viewer with a new visual experience. Although this experience, at first, is violent individuals started to adapt to their environment. Therefore, by adapting himself to his environment, the viewer becomes in need of sensory experiences such as movement and other sensations caused by modernity. The viewer's adaptation to his environment is reflected through his desire of new experiences. This shows how the adaptation modernity and urbanization clearly triggered an attraction to, and search for, movement. The modernity of the city also allows us to understand the context in which cinematography started evolving. According to Georg Simmel, Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin, modernity also corresponds to a *neurological* experience.<sup>277</sup> These theorists attempt to provide a new definition of modernity so far understood as a socioeconomic, demographic and technological transformation. Modernity is also about conveying a new sensory stimulation through these transformations. Indeed, the individual is immersed in an environment of speed, noises and entertainment that constantly stimulates his visual and perceptive sensations. In his essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life" from 1903, Simmel wrote that modernity provoked an

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<sup>276</sup> Richard Kendall and Jill Devonyar, *op. cit.*, p 183

<sup>277</sup> Nancy Bentley, *Frantic Panorama: American Literature and Mass Culture, 1870 – 1920*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009, p 247

“intensification of nervous stimulation.”<sup>278</sup> Modernity not only had an influence on the economic, technological and social perspectives but also on the people’s physiological and psychological predisposition. The rebuilding of the city of Light engendered a frantic atmosphere in which noises, tumult, crowds and adverts are prevailing.

The rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impression: These are psychological conditions which the metropolis creates. With each crossing of the street, with the tempo and multiplicity of economic, occupational and social life, the city sets up a deep contrast with small town and rural life with reference to the sensory foundation of psychic life.<sup>279</sup> (Simmuel Kracauer 1903.)

Modernity induces a nervous stimulation as well as a psychological and physiological reaction. Ben Singer uses the example of the trolley as provoking fear and violence.<sup>280</sup> However, the fear of the trolley between 1903 and 1904 started to decrease being replaced by a new danger which was the automobile. Michael Davis used the term hyperstimulus to describe the sensations produced by modernity. Although modernity may first appear unusual and violent to society, their perception started to accommodate to this change. Therefore, people begin to search for the experience of movement by creating entertainments such as spectacles and early cinema. Ben Singer’s research proves that people adapt to their environment. The sensational atmosphere of the city determines society’s desire for external stimuli and amusement. The more stimulated their nervous system, the more sensations people need to research. As Walter Benjamin argues, the desire of cinema comes from a desire of change and transformation. The critic wrote:

“The acceptance of shocks is facilitated by training in coping with stimuli.” “The film is the art form that is in keeping with the increased threat to his life which modern man has to face. Man’s need to expose himself to shock effects is his adjustment to the dangers threatening him.” (Walter Benjamin.)<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwarz, *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1995, p 73

<sup>279</sup> Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwarz, *op.cit.*, p 73

<sup>280</sup> Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwarz, *op.cit.*, p 83

<sup>281</sup> Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwarz, *op.cit.*, p 94

Living in a society in which speed and sensationalism prevail is actually what made people constantly seek for more and more challenging experiences that can be found in spectacles and cinema. The experience of the Parisian life led individuals to be more and more attracted by distractions and sensations. As Vanessa Schwartz explains, cinema originates from a desire from the public to experience reality. Cinema arrives at the right period and the right culture when there is a strong demand of entertainment.<sup>282</sup> Spectacles and amusements became increasingly popular. People attempted to seek realism in exhibitions and museums such as the Paris Morgue in which dead corpses are displayed, the Musée Grévin which features wax figures and panoramas which render the illusion of movement. There is a sense of *voyeurism* which starts to develop within the Parisian culture. Therefore, Caillebotte as any other Impressionists of his period witnessed this transformation and increased search for movement.

Caillebotte adopted techniques reminiscent of early cinematography such as the high angle shot. The artist never had the opportunity to witness film as he died in 1894, one year before the cinema started developing in 1895.<sup>283</sup> Many critics compared the effects employed by the Lumière brothers to the techniques that belong to Impressionism. Claude Beylie clearly argues that Impressionism is the predecessor of cinema. According to him, Louis Lumière's art is a continuity of Impressionism:

Son art procède de la tradition Impressionniste. De Cézanne à Renoir, il a appris à peindre “sur le motif”, à ne pas trop s'éloigner du sujet, à choisir le point de vue d'où l'on embrasse l'essentiel d'une action.<sup>284</sup>

Many years before Claude Beylie's suggestion, Georges Sadoul mentioned that Louis Lumière's adaptation of Impressionistic effects could only be unconscious. Being rejected by the academicians of the Salon, Impressionism could not have directly influenced Louis and Auguste Lumière. However, the first cineastes must certainly have been aware of the previous movements that prevailed over the course of the history of art. Therefore, they could not be indifferent to the tradition of Impressionism. Capturing the instantaneous moment is something that unites the cinematographer and the Impressionist. Georges Sadoul expressed

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<sup>282</sup> Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwarz, *op.cit.*, p 297

<sup>283</sup> Jean-Pierre, Dufreigne, *Gustave le Cinéaste*, publié le 22 Septembre 1994, L'Express

<sup>284</sup> Vincent Pomarède quoted from Claude Beylie, Vincent Pomarède, *Impressionnisme et Naissance du Cinématographe*, *op.cit.*, p 175



this idea by claiming: ‘C’est la vie même, c’est le mouvement pris sur le vif.’<sup>285</sup> Indeed, both cinema and Impressionism are aiming at representing life. Similarly to Impressionism, cinema was very interested in reflecting the vibrations and sensations of nature. Cinematography, like Impressionism entails a study of the space, the framing of the motif, the theme and the composition. The idea of representing the movement was one of the main objectives sought by the Impressionists. The French cineaste Georges Méliès manifested a strong passion regarding painting. The grand-daughter of Georges Méliès, Madeleine Malthête-Méliès wrote about the cineast’s fascination for drawing and sculpture:

Le dessin? Pour Georges, c’est déjà une façon de manier les images, de recréer le spectacle de la vie, ce spectacle don’t il saura plus tard, si joliment conter les péripéties. Le dessin ne parvient d’ailleurs pas à satisfaire son besoin artistique. La sculpture qui traduit si fidèlement les formes et les mouvements de la matière, fait partie de son univers esthétique.<sup>286</sup>

Like Impressionists, Georges Méliès decided to record themes of everyday life such as the sea, the street and family life. Similarly to Méliès, Caillebotte worked on the representation of street life, family activities and the water. Méliès was mainly studying the first special effects, something that Impressionist started anticipating with the use of light, colours, viewpoints and framing. These special effects included the techniques of crossfade, the double exposure, the close-up, the slow motion, the speeded-up motion, freeze-frame etc...<sup>287</sup> Although he was not aware of the cinematic effects that started developing later, some of Caillebotte’s techniques reminds us of cinematography. For instance, the artist’s manipulation of figures in *Raboteurs de Parquet* could be compared to the multiple-exposure employed by the cineaste. The same goes with the accelerating effect present in *Pont de l’Europe* that became the technique of speeded-up motion in cinematography.

The naturalist and expressionist August Strindberg raised the question if one could paint movement: ‘Peut-on peindre un mouvement?’<sup>288</sup> Painting movement is what Caillebotte did by evoking the impression of speed through perspective in *Pont de l’Europe* or what Monet attempted to achieve by picturing the arrival of the train at the Gare Saint-Lazare in his work

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<sup>285</sup> Dufreigne Jean-Pierre quoted from Georges Sadoul, Dufreigne Jean-Pierre, *op.cit.*, p 177

<sup>286</sup> Dufreigne Jean-Pierre quoted from Madeleine Malthête-Méliès, Dufreigne Jean-Pierre, *op.cit.*, p 180

<sup>287</sup> Pauline D.L Méliès, *Georges Méliès, Site Officiel, Sa Vie*, [Online], Available from : <http://www.melies.eu/bio.html>

<sup>288</sup> Dufreigne Jean-Pierre quoted from August Strindberg, Dufreigne Jean-Pierre, *op.cit.*, p 178

*La Gare Saint-Lazare*. Monet needed authorization in order to work in the Gare Saint-Lazare. Critics like Duranty and Zola promoted the representation of modern life which was successfully reflected in Monet's work *La Gare Saint-Lazare*. Like Monet, the cineastes attempted to convey the "impression." Indeed, the effect of speed and close-up produced in *L'Arrivée du train en gare de la Ciotat* aroused scared reactions from the spectators. During an interview with Louis Lumière on the 6 January 1948, Georges Sadoul claimed: "L'arrivée du train en gare a été un des gros succès du Grand Café. Et quand la locomotive arrivait sur l'écran, les spectateurs effrayés reculaient sur leurs chaises. Ils avaient peur d'être écrasés..."<sup>289</sup> One may indeed compare Monet's *La Gare Saint-Lazare* as an anticipatory work of the film *L'Arrivée du train en gare de la Ciotat* (fig.32 and fig.33).

There is a remarkable correspondence between Caillebotte's Legacy affair in 1894 and the first film projections by Lumiere in 1895-1896. Caillebotte's legacy included many of Monet's paintings such as *La Gare Saint-Lazare* from 1877, which was first brought to Luxembourg before being moved to the Louvre in 1829 and then to the Musée d'Orsay.<sup>290</sup> The motif of the train really seems to exemplify the relationship between Impressionism and cinema. The train also embodies modernity, which is something Impressionism sought to express in their works. Monet's painting *La Gare Saint Lazare* as well as Caillebotte's depiction of *The Pont de l'Europe* expressed this sense of modernity that reflected the period they were living in. The atmosphere reflected in Monet's work as well as the effect of speed conveyed by the arrival of the train at the station show some pro-cinematographic qualities that became later used films such as *L'Arrivée du train en gare de la Ciotat*. The effect of movement constitutes an important element of Impressionism. Gilles Deleuze used the notion of "image-mouvement" to define the experience of the moving gaze.<sup>291</sup> Indeed, cineastes fulfilled the Impressionists search to record movement. As Ségolène Le Men argues, the railway has a symbolical dimension within the evolution of Impressionism. The railway reflects how Impressionism slowly became a road towards cinematography.<sup>292</sup> In 1897, Georges Brunel reported his experience at the projection of the Lumiere film *L'Arrivée du train en gare de la Ciotat*:

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<sup>289</sup> Segolene Le Men quoted from Georges Sadoul, Segolene Le Men, *op.cit.*, p 257

<sup>290</sup> Segolene Le Men, *Impressionnisme et Naissance du Cinématographe, op.cit.*, p 258

<sup>291</sup> Segolene Le Men, *op.cit.*, p 259

<sup>292</sup> Segolene Le Men, *op.cit.*, p 259

Il vous semble que la locomotive va arrive sur vous et vous ecraser; j'étais justement, un jour de projection, au premier rang des spectateurs; certains, par un mouvement instinctif ont reculé.<sup>293</sup>

The angle from which the train was filmed was so convincing that the spectators had the impression that what they saw was reality. Indeed, as the train approached towards them, the spectators felt the need to move away. Impressionists were seeking to convey such sensations on the spectator by attempting to represent movement. Cinematography aroused the same reactions as Impressionism did among the public and the academic critics. At the occasion of the First Impressionist Exhibition, Monet's *Impression Soleil Levant* produced scandalized responses from critics as it was challenging the viewer's perception. Similarly by depicting nature and atmospheric effects in movement, Caillebotte stimulates the visual response of the viewer by sharing with them his impressions of reality. By adopting a more Impressionistic approach, Caillebotte learnt how to convey new visual experiences. Instead of focusing on the structure of the composition, the artist put more emphasis on the sensations produced by the environment.

This chapter demonstrates why and how Caillebotte evolved towards a more Impressionistic style. During the period of 1880, the artist started privileging the experience visual sensations rather than the experience of space. Indeed, as argued in this chapter, Caillebotte's aim is to provide the viewer with a new experience. The artist begins to adopt a style that is more comparable to Monet than Degas as it was the case in his urban paintings. The purpose of this chapter is mainly to identify why Caillebotte moved towards a more Impressionistic technique that involves a looser and freer structure. One of the main reasons is certainly the change of environment of the artist. A letter from Caillebotte to Monet from Trouville July 1884 evokes the artist's wish to connect more with nature and focus more on landscapes. In this letter, the artist advocates a calm and peaceful environment which he aimed at representing in his works. Another reason of his change of compositional technique might be his argument with Degas 1880. Indeed, during that same year, the artist did not participate in the Sixth Impressionist Exhibition. Caillebotte disapproved Degas's attempt to invite Realist artists to take in the Impressionist Exhibition. Therefore, he presumably started to orient his style towards a more Impressionist method of composition. A third reason might be his desire to provide the viewer with a new visual experience. Although Caillebotte showed more

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<sup>293</sup> Segolene Le Men quoted from Georges Brunel, *Impressionnisme et Naissance du Cinématographe, op.cit.*, p 161

proximity with Monet in his choice of motif, colours and light effects he still preserves a sense of structure in his work. The artist still insists on what to incorporate within the frame of the motif and the choice of viewpoints is well studied. Aside from his wish to maintain a structure sense of composition, Caillebotte seems to have provided the viewer with a new visual experience which is focused on sensations rather than spatial order. Indeed, the artist seems to put more importance on the motif than the structure of the composition. Caillebotte and Monet especially have in common their use of the *envelope* in order to render atmospheric effects. Caillebotte started being more and more interested in the sensations produced by nature such as the rhythm of the water on the river and atmospheric effects. Indeed, the aim of the artist to depict what the eye cannot perceive. Similarly to Monet, Caillebotte began to show the effects of the weather on the landscape in order to challenge the eye of the viewer. The two artists are attracted by the idea of invisibility by conveying the sensations produced by unnoticeable effects such as the contact of the rain on the river or the wetness of the pavements. Caillebotte is not only focusing on the use of light and colour but also tactility which widely employed by Monet in his Rouen Cathedral series. Indeed, the Impressionists try to stimulate all the sensory perceptions of the spectator by bringing tactility in their works. Capturing nature in movement is one of Caillebotte and many other Impressionists' main objectives. The effects of movement have always been a subject of fascination for Impressionists. The sense of dynamism and repetition is present in Caillebotte's paintings from Yerres. The search for movement has always been present in Caillebotte works. However, instead of privileging the effects of speed created by perspective and space, Caillebotte chose to focus more on the vibration of nature. It is important to understand in which context the search for movement and apparition of cinematography started developing. As argued by Walter Benjamin, the desire of cinema originates from a desire of change. Caillebotte witnessed this culture of change which influenced the effects of movement produced in his works. This chapter showed that the artist was seeking for a change of environment as a way of challenging the visual experience of the viewer. The effects of movement have always been present in Caillebotte's works, however they start appearing in a more Impressionist manner. The aim of the artist is especially to convey the experience of life and movement by adopting a more Impressionist technique. Furthermore, by studying the cultural context of the artist and more precisely his argument with Degas, it seems as if the artist wanted to defend the Impressionist movement.

## CHAPTER 4

### A STUDY OF THE GAZE, THE VIEWER, THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE FIGURES AND ABSORPTION

Caillebotte's representation of figures strongly exemplifies the sense of modernity that prevails during Impressionism. Here I want to ask a cluster of questions. In what sense did the new organization of Paris influence society and the *flâneur*? How does the spectator contribute to the composition? How did Caillebotte manage to combine imagination and instantaneity? To what extent are Caillebotte's figures readable or unintelligible? In what sense does the viewer identify himself with the figure? In order to examine these questions, the chapter will be structured in three sections focusing on the different portrayals of the individual: looking at the window from the back, walking in the street and in a state of complete absorption. The argument of this section consists of demonstrating Caillebotte's use of the figure's gaze as a way of providing a visual experience. This chapter will firstly examine the experience of *flâneurism* and the notion of spectacle from the window. The window creates a frame within the painting that leads the eye of the viewer into the spectacle of the city through the perception of the figure. The presence of the *Rückenfigur*, or figure seen from the back accompanies the gaze of the viewer through the perception of this same figure. Caillebotte's use of the window produces an effect of *mise-en-abîme* that leads the viewer to experience the scene of the scene from different viewpoints. The window constitutes an interesting motif regarding the identity of the individual as it emphasizes the sense of imagination produced by the urban city. It also marks the separation between the private and public sphere that is prevailing in Paris. The confrontation between the public and private sphere clearly seems to reflect the concept of individuality that started developing as part of the environment of the new Paris. The observer at the window provides us with a psychological dimension of the individual confronted by the modern life of the street. Caillebotte's approach to the figures conveys an effect of detachment and distance from the artist. The second section will explore the theme of individuality in relation to the public sphere of the city. Caillebotte perfectly understood Baudelaire's definition of the *flâneur's* individuality within the public space in his representation of the gentleman immersed and yet aloof from the city life.<sup>294</sup> Caillebotte's figures especially reflect the typical thoughtful

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<sup>294</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne*, Mille et une nuit, mai 2010

attitude of the stroller or the *flâneur* in relation to the city and participate in the atmosphere of the city while remaining detached. As I will argue, the *flâneur* is both mingling and dissociating himself from the crowd through his individuality. The *flâneur* depicted in Caillebotte's paintings is actually in search for his identity. The attitude of the *flâneur* reflects the new atmosphere that prevails in the city of light. The depiction of the *flâneur* in Caillebotte's urban scenes and Baudelaire's writings offer an interesting insight on the relationship between self and society. Furthermore, this sense of mystery regarding the figure's psychology is accentuated in the depiction of the *flâneur* in the urban scene. As it will be argued in this chapter, the gaze participates in the notion of *voyeurism* and provides a guide to the viewer. The gaze also invites the viewer to reflect on the different viewpoints of the picture. The gaze of the figures is very important as it engages the viewer in the scene. There is also a sense of identification that prevails in the scene as the viewer identifies himself with the figure. For instance, the representation of the figure depicted from the back encourages the viewer to identify with him. The third fragment of this chapter will study the theme of absorption in Caillebotte's portraits by taking into account the social environment of Paris. I will especially explore the theme of identity and self-awareness in relation to society. This chapter will attempt to explain the notion of painter-spectator. Indeed, the viewer is not just spectator but instead participates in the painting by becoming "painter-spectator."<sup>295</sup> Furthermore, there is no guidance about where our gaze is supposed to focus since the figures are not looking directly at us but inviting us to observe other sections of the painting. As argued in the previous chapter, there is also a pro-cinematic quality in the immersive attitude of the figures unaware of the painter's presence.

Caillebotte presented *Jeune Homme à la Fenêtre* (fig.1) at the occasion of the second Impressionist exhibition. The scene focuses on the silhouette of a figure and the urban space divided by the window. This contrast between the figure and the world outside is emphasized by the entrance of light into the apartment and the silhouette portrayed in *contre-jour*.<sup>296</sup> *Jeune Homme à la Fenêtre* conveys a sense of intimacy and psychological dimension. The figure depicted is Caillebotte's younger brother René. This scene offers a wide range of possibilities about the viewer's gaze and the context. The figure is apparently staring at the silhouette of the woman in the street. This painting expresses two different approaches that are

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<sup>295</sup> Richard Brettell, *Impressionism et Naissance du Cinématographe, op.cit.*, p 198

<sup>296</sup> Anne Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte, Urban Impressionist*, The Art Institute of Chicago, New York, London, Paris, 18 February-28 May 1995, p 142

Impressionistic and introspective. The effects of colour, light and movement belongs to the sensations attributed to Impressionism, while the sense of thoughtfulness and self-reflection derives from the field of introspection. The stone balustrade outside the window marks a separation between the public and private sphere. Although we suppose that the male figure is observing the woman, his gaze remains invisible to her and us. The figure is therefore 'seeing without being seen.' The sense of isolation and detachment from which the figure is depicted from the behind in *Jeune Homme à la Fenêtre* contributes to the shift from portrait to individual. Indeed, the individuals depicted in Caillebotte are represented as everyman figures and not as models for portrait.<sup>297</sup> The composition of *Jeune Homme à la Fenêtre* creates an effect of *mise-en-abyme* as the figures observe each other without being aware of it. Caillebotte's brother René seems to ignore the presence of the viewer or the painter who is watching him and the woman crossing the pavement cannot see him observing her. The viewer's perception is shifting from the indoor scene to the urban space.<sup>298</sup> There is no definite focal point the eye of the viewer can concentrate on. The viewer is first drawn into the mind of the figure staring out the window and then to the scene depicted outside. Apart from Degas, very few Impressionists attempted to explore the field of contemporary psychology.<sup>299</sup> The sense of psychological dimension also appears in Caillebotte's *Intérieur*, also known as *Intérieur, femme à la fenêtre* (1880) (fig.2). In this painting, the two figures, the man and the woman are absorbed into their activity and thoughtful contemplation. As Distel explains, the lack of communication prevailing in this painting really seems to reflect the modern atmosphere of boredom present in Paris at the time of Impressionism. According to Huysmans, the two interior compositions depicted at the window perfectly represented this modern sensation. Boredom is a typical theme that is especially present in Flaubert Naturalist literature. Indeed, the impression of boredom that is conveyed between the couple corresponds to the image of the interior scenes in the last twenty years of the Nineteenth-Century.<sup>300</sup> Huysmans describes Caillebotte's depiction of the couple in relation to the modern city as being undoubtedly Realist. As he wrote:

Une dame nous tournai le dos, debout a une fenêtre, et un monsieur, assis sur un crapaud, vu de profil, lit le journal auprès d'elle, - voila tout; - mais ce qui est vraiment magnifique, c'est la franchise, c'est la vie de cette scène! La femme qui regarde, désœuvrée, la rue, palpite, bouge; on voit

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<sup>297</sup> Anne Distel, *op.cit.*, p 158

<sup>298</sup> Anne Distel, *op.cit.*, p 144

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, p 148

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, p 158

ses reins remuer sous le merveilleux velours bleu sombre qui les couvre; on va la toucher du doigt, elle va bailler, se retourner, échanger un inutile propos avec son mari à peine distrait par la lecture d'un fait-divers. Cette qualité suprême de l'art, la vie, se dégage de cette toile avec une intensité vraiment incroyable...<sup>301</sup>

Huysmans' comment on *Intérieur, Femme à la fenêtre* gives us an insight of the atmosphere prevailing in the city Caillebotte depicted in his work. Indeed, the realistic approach of the painter towards the composition already creates a narrative image. Paul Signac created a his own version of this painting in his work *Un Dimanche, Paris (1890)*, (fig.3) after meeting Caillebotte in the early 1880s.<sup>302</sup> However in Caillebotte's painting, the psychology of the figure remains the prevailing theme of the composition. Indeed, Paul Signac included more elements suggesting the social environment of the figures. Caillebotte chose to focus more directly on the intimacy of the figures by depicting them from a more proximate distance. Although Caillebotte's approach to the figure at the window could remind us of Gaspar David Friedrich, the intention of the artist differs from the actual German Romanticism representation of man's relationship with nature. For instance, there is a sense of expectation reflected in Gaspar David Friedrich's composition of *Woman at a Window, 1822* (fig.4) that denotes a tendency towards Romanticism.<sup>303</sup> Unlike Gaspar David Friedrich, Caillebotte's representation of the figures at the window seems to convey an atmosphere that is more related to boredom. Furthermore, Caillebotte's theme of the figures at the windows shows a more direct confrontation between the interior and the exterior sphere. Furthermore, the thick stone balustrade marks a strong separation between the world outside and the inside. Unlike, *Woman at the Window* by Gaspar David Friedrich, Caillebotte invites the viewer to also witness what is depicted in the street by setting the viewpoint from a plunging space. This elevated viewpoint conveys a sense of movement by drawing the gaze of the spectator into the street. Indeed, the close-up of the window frame in *Homme à la Fenêtre* allows the viewer to look beyond the stone balustrade, which is less accessible in Friedrich's painting. As Varnedoe argues, Caillebotte played with the distance between the pillars of the balustrade to convey an effect of movement into space. Indeed, one of the pillars which should be between the legs of the figure has been moved to the left in order to create a space that offers a view on

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<sup>301</sup> J.-K. Huysmans, *Ecrits sur l'Art, 1867-1905*, Bartillat, 2005, p 167

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>303</sup> Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte, Urban Impressionist, op.cit.*, p 144



the street.<sup>304</sup> Varnedoe explains that there is no real opposition between the interior space from which the man is standing and the deserted street outside. Both viewpoints feature a sense of solitude and emptiness.

Caillebotte's views from the window offers a confrontation between the individual and the city. The relationship between the individual and society is exemplified through the notion of gaze. Paul Smith compares the street the man is observing as a stage and the window as a proscenium arch of a theater.<sup>305</sup> Caillebotte possibly invited the viewer to experience the figure's perception of reality. The line of the balcony emphasizes this separation between the private and public sphere. Indeed, as Distel argues, the presence of the stone balustrade could be interpreted as a symbol of separation between the interior and the exterior. However, the idea of exteriorization is uniquely reflected by the view of the sky. As explained by Distel, the view offered by the window creates an inter-relationship between interior and exterior space. The construction and the architectural organization of the city with its streets, courtyard and rooftops as stated by Distel, convey the same impression as the interior of the apartment. The notion of intimacy and privacy became more and more present among Impressionist painters and public exhibitions. The representations of indoor space among Impressionists arise from a desire for individualism and privacy among the bourgeoisie. In such a context the relationship between interior and exterior space enters into a complex dialectic. According to Distel, Caillebotte's representation of the window, especially his painting *Homme à la Fenêtre* may have influenced Duranty's writing in the *New Painting*. The critic wrote of Caillebotte's work:

Du dedans, c'est par la fenêtre que nous communiquons avec le dehors; la fenêtre est encore un cadre qui nous accompagne sans cesse, Durant le temps que nous passons au logis, et ce temps est considérable. Le cadre de la fenêtre selon que nous en sommes loin ou près, que nous nous tenons assis ou debout, découpe le spectacle extérieur de la manière la plus attendue, la plus changeante, nous procurant l'éternelle variété, l'impromptu qui est des grandes saveurs de la réalité.<sup>306</sup>

The artist used the window as a way of cropping a portion of the real world outside. The window provides a view that focuses on fragments of reality. By using the cropping

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<sup>304</sup> J. Kirk. T. Varnedoe, *Gustave Caillebotte, A Retrospective Exhibition*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston-October 22 to January 24, 1976, p 90

<sup>305</sup> Paul Smith, *Impressionism Beneath the surface*, Perspectives, Harry N. Abrams, 1995, p 41

<sup>306</sup> Charles S. Moffett, *The New Painting Impressionism 1874-1886*, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1986, p 482

technique, the artist draws the gaze of the viewer towards an interesting section of the landscape. The painter shows a view of what he can directly perceive from his own apartment and therefore, invites the spectator to participate in the composition.<sup>307</sup> As Distel states, it is important to note Caillebotte's tendency to study the theme of the deserted city. However, this sense of emptiness contrasts with the atmosphere of the city in the Nineteenth-Century. Many artists, including Caillebotte, were attracted by the representation of busy and vibrant streets. But Caillebotte was also interested in its emptiness, in moments when the street is deserted, and thus explores two contrasting moods of the city. Many Impressionists chose the motif of the window in order to convey the effect of light emanating from the exterior into the interior. However, Caillebotte may also have studied the whole environment from which the figure is depicted. The aim of the artist is also to understand the psychology of the figure and his participation in the deserted environment.<sup>308</sup> The deserted city contributes to the atmosphere of boredom that prevails in the composition. The effects of light and shadow also reinforce the contrast between the individual and society. The play of light and shadow is mostly representative in Caillebotte's *Homme au balcon*, also known as *Homme au balcon, boulevard Haussmann, 1880* (fig.5). The balustrade of the balcony emphasizes the separation between the bright landscape and the other darker side of the balcony from which the figures are looking. The effect of shadow is conveyed through the use of purple-gray tonalities, while the brightness of the landscape is suggested through little dashes of white and beige paint. The effect of purple shadow employed by Caillebotte did not remain unnoticed by the critic Hennequin who wrote: "Caillebotte abuses violet shadows."<sup>309</sup> The emanation of light coming from the exterior is especially reflected in *Femme à la Fenêtre*. Indeed, the woman seems to absorb the light coming from the outside as Charles Ephrussi describes: "What a soft and warm light illuminates the young woman seen from the back standing before a balcony!"<sup>310</sup>

Again, this interaction between darkness and bright light contributes to the figure's visual experience of the city. The relationship between shadow and light perfectly reflects the atmosphere that prevails in the city and the contrast with night entertainments. Caillebotte's approach to *Homme au balcon, boulevard Haussmann* is slightly different to the method employed in *Jeune Homme à la Fenêtre* and *Intérieur, Femme à la Fenêtre*. Firstly, the cropping of the motif seems much closer than in other paintings as the spectator can only

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<sup>307</sup> Distel, *op.cit.*, p 144

<sup>308</sup> Distel, *op.cit.*, p 148

<sup>309</sup> Emile Hennequin in *La Revue Littéraire et Artistique*, 1882, Charles S. Moffett, *The New Painting Impressionism 1874-1886, op.cit.*, p 398

<sup>310</sup> Charles Ephrussi in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1 may 1880, Charles S. Moffett, *op.,cit.*, p 319

perceive the scene from the frame of the window. The viewpoint in *Jeune Homme à la Fenêtre* is constructed in the diagonal whereas in *Homme au balcon, boulevard Haussmann*, the view is more straightforward. There is also a closer relationship between the spectator and the figure who both witness the scene from the same angle. In this painting, the artist chose to focus on the effects of perspective and the combination of vibrant colours between the red and white canopy and the flower instead of exploring the atmosphere of the street.<sup>311</sup> In *Homme au balcon, boulevard Haussmann*, one can see that Caillebotte focused on the combination of colours by matching the white and red canopy with the red flowers on the balcony as well as the green vibrant tonalities of the trees with the leaves of the flowers. Although one tends to associate “*flânerie*” with idleness, the *flâneur* is actually an active viewer who not only absorbs the movement of the city life but also meditates on what he sees. According to Baudelaire, “*flânerie*” allows the poet to think about his work.<sup>312</sup> As he wrote in *Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne*’:

Pour le parfait flâneur, pour l’observateur passionné, c’est une immense jouissance que d’élire domicile dans le nombre, dans l’ondoyant, dans le mouvement, dans le fugitive et l’infini.<sup>313</sup>

Indeed, the particularity of the *flâneur* is to be able to discover his own individuality within the crowd. The *flâneur* is the one who observes and perceives everything in the scene while remaining unnoticed. As Baudelaire explains, the *flâneur* is someone who appears everywhere in disguise. He writes in his work: “L’observateur est un prince qui jouit partout de son incognito.”<sup>314</sup> The viewer at the window actually reflects Baudelaire’s definition of the active *flânerie* which consists in seeing without being seen. He also adds in his description of the *flâneur*:

Être hors de chez soi, et pourtant se sentir partout chez soi; voir le monde, être au centre du monde et rester caché au monde, tels sont quelques-uns des moindres plaisirs de ces esprits indépendants, passionnés, impartiaux, que la langue ne peut que maladroitement définir.<sup>315</sup>

The artist *flâneur* embraces the crowd and yet he remains independent from it. In *Homme au balcon, boulevard Haussmann*, the viewer is thoughtfully contemplating the street while

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<sup>311</sup> Distel, *op.cit.*, p 168

<sup>312</sup> Eric Hazan, *L’Invention de Paris*, Edition du Seuil, Octobre 2002, p 433

<sup>313</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne*, Mille et une nuit, mai 2010, p 22

<sup>314</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne, op.cit.*, p 22

<sup>315</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *op.cit.*, p 22

being at home. As Baudelaire demonstrates it, the *flâneur* is in the street and feels as if he is at home everywhere: “L’observateur est un *prince* qui jouit partout de son incognito.”<sup>316</sup>

Delacroix explains the *flâneur’s* setting himself apart by what he calls the *badaud*. The *badaud* is passive and simply absorb the movement of street life. In “Le Flâneur à Paris”, Delacroix wrote: “Le badaud ne pense pas; il ne perçoit les objets qu’extérieurement.”<sup>317</sup> Unlike the *badaud* who just experiences the atmosphere of the street, the *flâneur* is able to work and think while observing the crowd. The *flâneur* not only experiences the movement of the city but also acts on his environment. As Victor Fournel argues in *Ce que l’on voit dans les rues de Paris*, individuality is what makes the *flâneur* stand out from the *badaud*. As he writes:

(Le flâneur) est toujours en pleine possession de son individualité. Celle du badaud disparaît, au contraire, absorbée par le monde extérieur qui le ravi à lui-même, qui le frappe jusqu’à l’enivrement et l’extase. Le badaud, sous l’influence du spectacle, devient un être impersonnel; ce n’est plus un homme: il est public, il est foule.<sup>318</sup>

Caillebotte’s depictions of the figure at the window feature an individual in a reflexive state rather than someone bored and absorbed by the environment. Therefore, the theme of ennui is to be questioned. Indeed, the figure at the window is not necessarily bored but actively observes what is manifesting outside.

While most of Caillebotte’s figures gazing onto street scenes are masculine, occasionally he depicts a woman at the window. Baudelaire described the experience of the *flâneur* in exclusively masculine terms. But in her work *The Invisible Flâneuse*, Janet Wolf provides a re-understanding of the female’s vision of the urban space in the Nineteenth Century. The modern *flâneur* rendered the identity of the woman invisible from the urbanization of Paris. As Wolf argues painters and writers of the modern life such as Baudelaire tend to overlook the presence of women within society.<sup>319</sup> But while Caillebotte’s imagery of male gazing figures suggests their confident assertion of presence, the theme of the woman at the window arguably signifies exclusion from the public domain as much as the possession of the male position of the gaze. In *Intérieur, Femme à la Fenêtre*, the woman seen

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<sup>316</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne*, *op.cit.*, p 22

<sup>317</sup> Richard D. E. Burton quoted from Delacroix, *The Flâneur and his city*, University of Durham 1994, p 1

<sup>318</sup> Richard D. E. Burton quoted from Victor Fournel, *The Flâneur and his city*, *op.cit.*, p 2

<sup>319</sup> Janet Wolf, *The Invisible Flâneuse*, Manchester University, 2006, p 19

from the analogous window shows a possibility of interaction between the two women.<sup>320</sup> The woman depicted from the back is not only looking at the window but also seems to be thinking. Caillebotte attempted to maintain a sense of mystery in his composition. What the woman is really thinking remains an enigma to the spectator: is the centre of her reflexive thought her husband, the woman on the other window or people in the street? It is also useful to note that the presence of the figures at the window is dominating in the scene. The figures at the window do not fade away in the décor of the scene by being absorbed into the street life but instead detach themselves from the background through their individuality. By turning the back from the viewer, the figures' psychological dimension clearly shows through their environment and draws us into their thinking.

The reconstruction of the new Paris had a strong effect on the public and their perception of identity. Indeed, the organization of the street influenced and participated to the influence of the *flâneur*. According to Christopher Prendergast, the new Paris was very representative of the individual's search of his or her identity. The heterogeneity present in Paris contributes the colour to the city. In his essay *Histoire et physiologie des boulevards de Paris*, Balzac wrote: "Autant d'hommes, autant d'habits different, et autant d'habit, autant de caractères."<sup>321</sup> The attitude and clothing choice of the population are also what create the identity of the modern city. As Prendergast states, the gaze of the individual provides a "mobile window on the world."<sup>322</sup> Indeed, the gaze of the *flâneur* conveys a new perception of the city. Paris provides the viewer with a unique experience that stimulates all his senses, especially his imagination. According to Anke Gleber, there is a strong association between *flânerie* and *reverie*. Walter Benjamin describes the experience of the *flâneur* in Paris by writing: "Whoever enters a city feels as if he were in a dream web where an event of today is attached to the one that is most in the past."<sup>323</sup> The *flâneur* constantly researches the visual experience created by the exterior world. As argued by Gleber, the activity of walking gives to the *flâneur* the opportunity to experience timelessness. Benjamin described Baudelaire's sense of *flânerie* as "an intoxication (that) overcomes the one who walks for a long time aimlessly through the streets."<sup>324</sup> By wandering aimlessly in the streets, the *flâneur* can

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<sup>320</sup> Distel, *op.cit.*, p 158

<sup>321</sup> Christopher Prendergast quoted from Balzac, Christopher Prendergast, *Paris and the Nineteenth Century*, Blackwell, Oxford UK and Cambridge USA, 1992, p 2

<sup>322</sup> Christopher Prendergast, *op.cit.*, p 4

<sup>323</sup> Anke Gleber quoted from Walter Benjamin, Anke Gleber, *The Art of Talking a Walk*, Princeton University Press, 1999, p 49

<sup>324</sup> Anke Gleber quoted from Walter Benjamin, *op.cit.*, p 50

experience the modernity of the city. The *flâneur* is in search of the modern experience produced by the city and is absorbed by what is around him. The *flâneur* is someone who prevails and dominates his environment. More importantly, he is aware of his identity and is “always in full possession of his individuality” to state Victor Fournel’s words.<sup>325</sup> The *flâneur* is able to record the sensations conveyed by the atmosphere of the street. He not only explores the streets of the city but also feels and experiences what he sees and as Benjamin wrote: “In the *flâneur*, the joy of watching is triumphant.”<sup>326</sup> As argued earlier, the *flâneur*’s experience of the city differs from the casual individual who is just seeking to reach a destination. The *flâneur* uses his own creativity as a way of constructing his perception of the city as opposed to any other individuals. For Benjamin, the *flâneur* collects the experience of modern life and reflects it through his work. His curiosity depicts a new vision of reality. There is a sense of mystery that arises in the scenes of *flânerie*. Indeed, the lack of information leads the viewer to question the identity of the figures. As exemplified in Baudelaire’s definition of the *flâneur* in *Le Peintre de la vie moderne*, the poet inhabits the crowded street while still asserting his identity. To quote Baudelaire: “La foule est son domaine, comme l’air est celui de l’oiseau, comme l’eau celui du poisson.”<sup>327</sup> The artist *flâneur* as Baudelaire describes him embraces modern life. Caillebotte’s two main paintings *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* and *Pont de l’Europe* are the most representative of the experience of the artist *flâneur* in the street.

The sense of order that predominates in *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* produces a perturbing visual experience. Although the viewer feels drawn into the scene, the impersonal atmosphere of the painting also creates an impression of distance. Furthermore, there is a strong lack of communication between the figures. Like the viewer’s relationship with painting, the figures seem close and yet remote from one another. This social division is emphasized by the umbrellas, which also are a symbol of modernity. The umbrella separates each individual or groups of individuals. There is equally an absence of mutual gaze between the figures, notably the couple in the foreground. The relationship between the couple introduces a clear sense of mystery. The psychological notion of division is reinforced by the use of gaslight. The central gaslight creates a distinct division between the couple and the public. The gaslight also contributes to the geometrical arrangement of the street as well as the golden section. The use of the gaslights reminds us of the renewal of the city.<sup>328</sup> Both the gaslight and the

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<sup>325</sup> Anke Gleber quoted from Victor Fournel, Anke Gleber, *The Art of Talking a Walk*, *op.cit.*, p 51

<sup>326</sup> Anke Gleber quoted from Walter Benjamin, *op.cit.*, p 51

<sup>327</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne*, *op.cit.*, p 22

<sup>328</sup> Distel, *op.cit.*, p 96

umbrella convey a sense of rational order that is emphasized by the display of the figures. Caillebotte's approach to *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* shows some theatrical qualities, especially in the arrangement of the composition. As his drawings show, the artist started the composition by planning the décor. In his *Perspective Study of Streets* (fig.6), Caillebotte incorporated the main elements that frame the structure of the composition. This study of the street also allowed him to construct the perspective and work on the effect of three-dimensionality. Caillebotte's study of the street is comparable to a theatrical stage in which he displayed his figures. Interestingly, as Distel suggests, the artist made very little changes between his study drawing and the completed painting.<sup>329</sup> It is also worth noting that the lamppost was one of the first elements included in the painting. The architectural study drawing of the street allowed Caillebotte to obtain a base for the composition. The remaining studies of *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* focus on the figures. Caillebotte indeed, studied each figure individually in his drawings and sketches. Although the couple in *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* seem distant with one another and their relationship is not clear enough, one may notice, especially in the drawings that the female figure is holding the arm of the gentleman. As one can see in Caillebotte's *Study of a Couple Seen from the Front under an Umbrella* (fig.7), the hand of the woman appears underneath the elbow of the male figure. Intriguingly enough, as the evolution of the couple study drawing shows it, Caillebotte brought more emphasis on the male figure than on the female one. In the second drawing for *Study of a couple Seen from under an Umbrella* (fig.8), the suit of the man is more detailed than the dress of the woman. Caillebotte meticulously highlighted every element of the gentleman's suit while the dress of his companion is just outlined. Furthermore, the artist's use of charcoal is more assertive on the male figure than the woman. In the third sketch for *Study of a couple under an Umbrella*, it is clear that Caillebotte chose to study the male figure first (fig.9). Indeed, the woman is hardly suggested as a shadow which contributes to underestimate her presence in the painting. Furthermore, in the three study drawings of the couple in the street, the gaze and expressions of the figure are absent. Caillebotte was possibly alluding to the atmosphere of social conformism that prevailed in the city.

The notion of narration present in Caillebotte's compositional works reinforces the proto-cinematic approach of the artist. From one painting, one can recreate a story based on the gaze of the figures and their attitude. As the film director Alain Jaubert argues in his film *Gustave Caillebotte ou les Aventures du Regard*, Caillebotte, in his scenes, acts as a novelist or even a

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<sup>329</sup> Distel, *op.cit.*, p116

cinéaste.<sup>330</sup> Furthermore, the artist carefully chose his figures according to the theme of each scene. Caillebotte used a device later employed by cinematography known as the low-angle shot effect. This technique accentuates the direction of the gaze of the figure who is looking downward at the woman crossing the pavement. By incorporating the balcony and the sensation of height, Caillebotte successfully conveyed the impression of “seeing without being seen.” As Jaubert argues, the accessory of the balcony exemplifies the notion of secrecy and voyeurism.<sup>331</sup> Marie-Amélie Anquetil in her article *Peintre et Cinéaste*, Caillebotte could be the “inventor of the traveling.”<sup>332</sup> The artist clearly insisted on the visual experiences created by the effects of viewpoints. In *Jeune Homme à la Fenêtre*, one cannot see where the gaze of the figure is precisely being directed, even though the presence of the woman on the pavement may suggest the man is looking at her. A similar effect is also present in Caillebotte’s representation of the figure leaning on the rail in *Pont de l’Europe*. Although the worker is possibly looking at the train downward, the viewer cannot see exactly where his gaze is pointing at.<sup>333</sup>

The lack of facial features in the study drawings also seems to reflect the disconnection between the city and the figures. Caillebotte especially seemed to privilege comportment and de-emphasize physiognomy. He uses comportment of the figures as a way of providing information. The artist studied the position of other figures in a similar way as he did for the couple. Indeed, his approach to the figures is almost sociological. As Prendergast in reference to Baudelaire’s poem *Les Yeux des Pauvres*, argues, one can recreate an individual’s life just by looking on his facial features and the way he is dressed. Therefore, the gaze of the viewer may also lead to misunderstanding about a person’s life or past. Prendergast quotes a passage from Baudelaire’s poem *Les Fenêtres*:

Avec son visage, avec son vêtement, avec son geste, avec presque rien j’ai  
refait l’histoire de cette femme, ou plutôt sa légende, et quelque fois je me  
la raconte en pleurant.<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> Alain Jaubert, *Gustave Caillebotte, ou les Aventures du Regard*, (Palette, Arte), Les films du Paradoxe, Musée d’Orsay, Paris Première, France, 1994

<sup>331</sup> Marie-Amélie Anquetil, *Caillebotte, Peintre et Cinéaste*, Dossier de l’Art, N°20 – Bimestriel, Septembre 1994, p 59

<sup>332</sup> Stated by Marie-Amélie Anquetil as “L’Inventeur du Travelling”, which is a cinematic technique that was used for the first time by Alexandre Promio, *op.cit.*, p 59

<sup>333</sup> Marie-Amélie Anquetil, *Caillebotte, Peintre et Cinéaste, op.cit.*, p 60

<sup>334</sup> Christopher Prendergast, *Paris and the Nineteenth Century*, Blackwell, Oxford UK and Cambridge USA, 1992, p 37



Prendergast explains that the truth of this imaginative story could be questioned. Baudelaire ends his poem by writing: “Es-tu sure que cette légende soit vrai?” He replies to the interrogation of the reader by arguing: “Peut-être ce que peut-être la réalité place hors de moi, si elle m’a aide à vivre, a sentir ce que je suis.”<sup>335</sup>

It is worthwhile comparing Caillebotte’s study drawings to the figures represented in the final painting. This would allow us to explore his method and how he managed to reflect the psychological attitude of the figures. The comparison between his final painting and the drawings shows that the artist remained faithful to his initial thought (fig.10 and fig.11). In *Study of a Man under an Umbrella* (fig.12) Caillebotte preserved the same figure in his final painting. Furthermore, as it is indicated in the caption of the drawing, Caillebotte may have transferred the figure from the drawing to the canvas by using graphite on tracing paper. However, other studies such as *Study of a Man under an Umbrella* and *Studies of Two Men under Umbrellas Walking Past Each Other* (fig.13) are not present in the painting. Interestingly, Caillebotte used typical individuals who reappear in different paintings. The artist explored from various angles the woman with a small umbrella. In *Two Studies of a Woman under an Umbrella, One from the Back, the Other in Profile Facing Left* (fig.14), one can distinguish a description underneath each figure that indicate their position and actions in the painting. Underneath the drawing of the woman seen from behind, one can read: “Femme a gauche/ du groupe de deux/ personnes qui s’encadrent à l’arrière entre le personnage principal/ du 1er plan et le lampadaire.”<sup>336</sup> One can read in the second description: “femme qui va descendre du trottoir au coin de la maison de droite a l’arrière plan.”<sup>337</sup> This figure is located on the right in the background just by the gentleman’s umbrella. This same figure reappears in the background of *Peintres en bâtiment* crossing the road (fig.15). This woman is very intriguing as she appears many times in Caillebotte’s works. Furthermore, in the *Study for the House-Painters* (fig.16) the female figure is represented with an umbrella. Richard Brettell uses the expression “*peintres spectateur*” to indicate the way the viewer is implicated in being positioned in a way that converges with the artist’s vantage point or way of seeing. The viewer becomes a *flâneur* by imagining themselves as the protagonist story within the painting or an observer of a scene they witness. By cropping the picture Caillebotte creates an implied overlapping of the fictional scene of the painting and the actual space occupied by the viewer, thereby inviting the viewer to suspend his or her disbelief and imaginatively become

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<sup>335</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Petits Poemes en Prose*, Manchester University Press, 1968, p 66

<sup>336</sup> Distel, *op.cit.*, p 130

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*

part of the scene. The effects of this in Caillebotte's works are often complicated. In *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*, one has almost the impression of being in very close proximity with the couple with the umbrella when looking at the painting, but there is no interaction between the viewer and the gaze of the couple. The two figures seem to avoid the gaze of the spectator by turning their head towards another direction.<sup>338</sup> The lady and the gentleman purposely distract us from looking at them and invite us to consider the rest of the painting. This distraction between the gaze of the viewer and the figure appears for example in Manet's *Un bar aux Folies Bergère* (fig.17). The spectator is firstly drawn into the gaze of the waitress; however, the mirror quickly reflects another scene for the viewer to focus on. The viewer is therefore active by participating in the scene. In this painting, the mirror emphasizes the impression of *mise-en-abyme* that can also be perceived in one of Caillebotte's painting *Dans un Café* (fig.18) in which the viewer is invited to explore beyond the figure in the foreground.

Gaze is an essential component that connects the viewer to the experience of the figure. According to Norman Bryon, the gaze or *regard* entails a sense of repetition and perseverance from the beholder who is looking at something specific with wariness. The *regard* equally suggests a re-discovery of what has been perceived before.<sup>339</sup> The gaze establishes a connection between the self and society. Indeed, there is a communication between the self and the external world that is manifesting through the gaze. But Caillebotte's use of the gaze is very subtle as the artist shows little indication of the facial expressions of the figures. The notion of gaze is very important in this painting as the viewer is looking at the man with the top hat who is observing the figures in the background playing cards. Nevertheless, the man could be looking at different direction such as the first player seen from the back, the second one facing the mirror or the top of the mirror to see any new customer arriving at the café. The illusion created by the mirrors allows more depth to the interior. The gaze of the spectator is firstly mesmerized by the man standing in the foreground and then starts being directed towards the scene reflected on the mirror. The use of mirrors clearly contributes to convey a sense of optical illusion that challenges the perception of the viewer. As Varnedoe explains, the fragment of window with the striped canopy may be confusing for the viewer who is inclined to think that what he sees is the actual window and not its reflection in the mirror. The reflection of the hat in the background, especially the window

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<sup>338</sup> Richard Brettell, *Impressionism et Naissance du Cinématographe, op.cit.*, p 198

<sup>339</sup> Norman Bryson, *Gaze and Painting*, The Macmillan Press, London, 1983, p 93

confirms that the hats are actually hanged on a mirror (fig.19).<sup>340</sup> As one can see in the study of the painting, the two mirrors are underlined in blue. The plan of the picture below illustrates the picture's complex arrangement. The plan of the painting shows the position of the mirrors and how they interact with one another by creating an illusionistic space. It is not precise whether the mirror continues towards the coat and the chandelier. However, the bottom of the coat overlapping the sofa proves that this fragment of the painting is a wall and not a mirror. Although, the scene takes place in an interior, the man is wearing a hat which is a symbol of modernity. The thoughtful attitude of the man gives the impression that he is alienated from the space around him. Indeed, the depicted man cannot be easily classified as he is both present and detached from his environment.<sup>341</sup> Although the male figure is physically situated in the café, his mind seems to be outside the window reflected on the mirror. Through his reflective attitude, the gentleman is adopting the attitude of the *flâneur*. Indeed, the atmosphere of the café described by Huysmans is very similar to the impression of boredom conveyed through the scenes at the window. Caillebotte wrote in *L'Exposition des Indépendants en 1880*:

Un monsieur, debout, nous regarde, appuyé au rebord au d'une table ou se dresse un block d'une médiocre bière, qu'a sa trouble couleur et a sa petite mousse savonneuse nous reconnaissons immédiatement pour cet infâme pissat d'âne brasse, sous la rubrique de bière de Vienne, dans les caves de la route des Flandres.<sup>342</sup>

As Edmund White explains, the relationship between the interior and exterior space contributes to the *flâneur's* experience.<sup>343</sup> The *flâneur* is able to recreate the atmosphere of an apartment in the streets of Paris. For the *flâneur*, there is no separation between the interior and the exterior, which explains the disconnected attitude of the man inside the café. To illustrate his argument, White quoted from Walter Benjamin:

Just as “*flânerie*” can make an interior of Paris, an apartment in which the neighborhoods are the rooms, so neatly marked off as if with thresholds, in an

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<sup>340</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *Gustave Caillebotte, A Retrospective Exhibition*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1976, p 145

<sup>341</sup> Distel, *op.cit.*, p 209

<sup>342</sup> J.-K. Huysmans, *Ecrits sur l'Art, 1867-1905*, Bartillat, 2005, p 169

<sup>343</sup> Edmund White, *The Flâneur, A Stroll through the Paradoxes of Paris*, London: Bloomsbury, 1 April 2008, p 48-49

opposite way the city can present itself to the stroller from all sides as a landscape stripped of all thresholds.<sup>344</sup>

In Caillebotte's work *Dans un Café*, the mirrors reinforce the correspondence between the outside and the inside. From the reflection of the mirror where the male figure is standing, one actually perceives the exterior of the café. To illustrate the interaction between the exterior and the interior, Baudelaire uses the example of the window which attracts the gaze of the *flâneur* and induces him to explore the shop. To quote from the poet:

Celui qui regarde du dehors a travers une fenêtre ouverte, ne voit jamais autant de choses que celui qui regarde une fenêtre fermée. Il n'est pas d'objet plus profond, plus mystérieux, plus fécond, plus ténébreux, plus éblouissant qu'une fenêtre éclairée d'une chandelle.<sup>345</sup>

Comparatively to the mirror, the window establishes a correspondence between the street life and the welcoming atmosphere of the shop. The windows allow the *flâneur* to be lost in thought and imagination. The correspondence between the window shops and the *flâneur* entails a psychological experience which connects the *flâneur's* perception of the street to the inside of a café.<sup>346</sup>

Like the other figures depicted by Caillebotte, the man's gaze guides us towards a new direction. Again, it is interesting to see how the viewer engages with the self-absorbed figure. In *Pont de l'Europe*, the gaze of the *flâneur* seems to be directed towards the woman who appears to be looking back at him.<sup>347</sup> The notion of gaze here is very intriguing as it is not clear whether the man is directly looking at the woman or if he is absorbed by the worker leaning on the bridge. It almost seems as if the dog is guiding the gaze of the viewer towards the couple occupied to look at another direction. By avoiding the gaze of the viewer, the couple invites him to turn his eyes towards the rest of the painting. The viewer is therefore attracted towards a new viewpoint which is the worker. Caillebotte's approach to the composition shows some proto-cinematographic qualities regarding the frame of the motif and the viewpoint. He knew exactly where to crop the picture in such a way that he could captivate the modernity of the bridge. By using the cropping method, the artist provides the painting with naturalness and authenticity. Like in the *Pont de l'Europe*, the cropping of the

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<sup>344</sup> Edmund White quoted from Walter Benjamin, Edmund White, *The Flâneur, A Stroll through the Paradoxes of Paris*, Bloomsbury, op.cit., p 49

<sup>345</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Petits Poemes en Prose*, Manchester University Press, 1968, p 65

<sup>346</sup> Christopher Prendergast, op.cit., p 37

<sup>347</sup> Distel, op.cit., p 102

motif in *Rue de Paris; Temps de Pluie* captures the most interesting fragment of the composition. Again the artist's choice of viewpoint reinforces the atmosphere of modernity of the street. Caillebotte decided to cut the male figure in the right foreground with the umbrella. This choice of cropping produces a natural effect that is similar to photography and even a proto-cinematic sequence. By contrast to *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*, Caillebotte's initial sketch of the painting almost shows entirely the man in the foreground with the umbrella.<sup>348</sup> The cropping of the image also reflects the sense of detachment and disinterest gaze that is present in the painting. The same notion of disengagement reappears in *Pont de l'Europe* in which Caillebotte's figures appear absorbed by their environment. As Georges Riviere wrote: "Les personnages sont dessinés d'une façon très intelligente et très amusante."<sup>349</sup>

As stated earlier in this chapter, Caillebotte lays the emphasis on the comportment of the figures represented in each scene rather than their physiognomy. Caillebotte seemed to set himself the task of articulating the sense of his paintings only through the attitude implied by the arrangement of each individual in the picture, thereby creating an open-ended effect of implied narrative. The information is especially relayed through the gaze of the individual who guides the eye of the spectator towards a particular viewpoint. The gaze of the figures gives the viewer the opportunity to experience the scene from different perspectives. In this context, the term perspective should be understood as the approach of the figures towards a particular point of view by contrast to the first chapter which analyses perspective as a compositional technique. The gaze and body language of the figures provide an understanding of the painting making it more readable to the viewer. The relationship between the *flâneur* and the woman is very intriguing as it is not clear whether they know each other. The lack of precision in the painting leads the viewer to imagine and interpret a story based on the attitude of the figures. It is interesting to note that Caillebotte attempted to create interaction between two distinct social classes in the variant painting for *Pont de L'Europe*. Although the three men depicted remain anonymous, one can recognize the *flâneur* among the two workers in the way he is dressed. The figure in the middle is depicted with a top hat, a white scarf and a frock coat which clearly indicates he comes from a middle class. As Distel notes, his hands appear soft and clean which proves that he belongs to a middle class social class.<sup>350</sup> The second one leaning over the bridge is possibly both a worker and business man considering

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<sup>348</sup> Distel, *op.cit.*, p 118

<sup>349</sup> Denys Riout, *Les écrivains devant l'Impressionisme*, Macula, 1989, p 192

<sup>350</sup> Distel, *op.cit.*, p 107

his dress code.<sup>351</sup> As for the third man, only a fragment of his body is shown on the picture. The artist seemed to have avoided revealing any of the men's faces that could have a contact with the viewer. The dressed appearance of the figure strongly reveals their social class and their personalities. Although Caillebotte incorporated social interfaces between the worker and the bourgeois *flâneur* in his pictures of the street, though these are often implicitly stratified through the compositional arrangement. The shadow line in *Pont de l'Europe* marks a separation between the two social worlds. Indeed, as Distel explains, the two men, apparently workers guessing by the way they are dressed are represented on the side of the railing bridge. By contrast, the male and female bourgeois figures are depicted on the other side of the railing bridge shadow more in the direction of the Haussmann buildings. Indeed, Caillebotte positioned the workers on the bridge rail shadow which creates a dark pathway. Conversely, the *flâneur* is walking on the brighter area of the bridge.<sup>352</sup> However, the aim of Caillebotte was not to separate the *flâneur* from the worker but unite them together through the gaze. Indeed, the *flâneur's* gaze seems to be directed towards the leaning worker by the bridge. Similarly, the middle-class man on the pavement is observing the worker on the ladder. Georges Riviere wrote:

Le tableau des Peintres en bâtiments a un coté satirique assez amusant.  
Ces ouvriers, qui bourent consciencieusement une pipe en contemplant le  
travail a faire, ne manqué pas d'observation.<sup>353</sup>

This comment clearly describes the relationship between the workers and the employer who are keeping a close eye on their chores. Furthermore, as in *Pont de l'Europe*, the workers are displayed on the side of the ladder by the shop window which is darker than the pavement. Indeed, in the two paintings, the working class figures are depicted by the bridge or the ladder, which both symbolize the industrialization. As Distel indicates, the *flâneur* in *Pont de l'Europe* might actually be a self-portrait by Caillebotte. It is interesting to note that the figures of *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie*, *Pont de l'Europe* and *Les Peintres en Batiment* seem to correspond to one another. The leaning figure dressed in a white smock and a hat in *Pont de l'Europe* (fig.22) strangely resembles the man starring at the worker on the ladder in *The House-Painters* (fig.21). The same figure re-appears in the background on *Rue de Paris; temps de pluie* (fig.20).

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<sup>351</sup> Michael Fried, *Caillebotte's Impressionism*, Representations, No. 66 (spring 1999), p 18

<sup>352</sup> Distel, *Gustave Caillebotte; An Urban Impressionist*, *op.cit.*, p 97

<sup>353</sup> Denys Riout, *Les écrivains devant l'Impressionisme*, Edition Macula, Paris, 1989, p 200

According to Distel, the two figures in *Pont de l'Europe* may reflect Caillebotte's inner conflict between his actual social class and his identification to the working class painter.<sup>354</sup> Coming from a bourgeois background, Caillebotte wanted to convey the image of being a more demure artist.

Unlike the other Impressionists such as Degas, Monet and Renoir, Caillebotte focused more on the modernity of Parisian street and its individual social types and forms of social identity rather than its cafés (except *Dans un Café*), restaurants, theaters or Opera. What connects Caillebotte with modernity is especially his naturalistic approach towards the figures. Zola described Caillebotte's figures as "firmly modeled portions."<sup>355</sup> The aim of the impressionists is to record the instantaneous moment in which the figures are absorbed. As Ephrussi explains, in order to captivate the spontaneity of the figure, one has to stay detached from any subjective judgment. Indeed, Ephrussi wrote:

To compose one's picture, not in a studio but on the spot, in the presence of the subject, to get rid of all convention; to put oneself in front of nature and interpret it frankly, brutally, without worrying about the official way of seeing...<sup>356</sup>

Taking into account Ephrussi's argument, it is important to note that Caillebotte's approach to modern portraits differs from conventional pictures in which the figure is posing. To exemplify this argument, one has to look at Caillebotte's *Portraits à la champagne* (1876) (fig.23). Unlike conventional group portraits, each figure is absorbed into an occupation or activity without worrying about the painter. As Varnedoe mentions, one could compare Caillebotte's composition with Frédéric Bazille's work *Réunion de Famille* (1867) (fig.24) especially in the attitude of the figures. Although there is a strong relationship in the theme of the composition, Caillebotte's approach to the figures completely contrasts with Bazille's more traditional family portrait. Bazille's composition appears more deliberate and calculated than Caillebotte's family portrait. Bazille's figures are united in staring back at the painter and contrasts with Caillebotte's sense of naturalness. The mode of presentation of the figures present in Caillebotte's work is actually closer to his teacher Léon Bonnat's painting *Portrait de la mere, du frère, et de la soeur de l'artiste* (1893). In the two paintings, the figures are in a state of absorption, each of them focused in their activities. Both family portraits have in

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<sup>354</sup> Distel , *Gustave Caillebotte; An Urban Impressionist, op.cit.*, p 97

<sup>355</sup> Distel quoted from Zola, *op.cit.*, p 178

<sup>356</sup> Distel quoted from Ephrussi, *op.cit.*, p 182

common the same type of activity such as reading, sewing and embroidery. The object of absorption is as important as the absorption itself as it engages with the viewer. As Michael Fried argues, the objects employed by the artist are actually essential to produce a state of absorption. Therefore, the absorptive attitude of the figures usually originates from an accessory introduced by the painter such as a book or a sewing wool fabric.<sup>357</sup> As opposed to Caillebotte's family portrait, there is no accessory present in Bazille's work that may indicate or trigger a state of absorption. As Karin Sagner, referring to a point made in Jules Antoine Castagnary's *Salons* writes: "The figures in a painting must take up their positions as in the theatre in order to play their role and contribute to the basic ideas of the work."<sup>358</sup>

Caillebotte's portrayal of the figures again conveys an impression of absorption. The figures are acting as if the beholder was absent from the scene. According to Fried, it is only when the figures are aware of being perceived that theatricality appears.<sup>359</sup> To illustrate his argument, Fried uses as an example Courbet's *Une après-dinée à Ornans* (1849) (fig.25). In the painting, the figures are attempting to project what the beholder expects to see, which renders the absorption less natural. As Fried argues, the figures are deliberately acting, by pretending to think and feel. Fried compares Courbet's painting to Caillebotte's *Jeune Homme à la Fenêtre*, who displays a very disinterested and daydreaming pose. Unlike the figures in Courbet's painting *Une après-dinée à Ornans*, the male figure's attitude seems more natural and free. Unlike Caillebotte who privileges the gaze and the visual experience, Courbet chose to reinforce the theatrical gesture. To elaborate Fried's view on theatricality, one can compare *Jeune Homme à la Fenêtre* with Courbet's *La Source* (1868). The woman depicted in Courbet's painting displays a thoughtfully researched pose as if she was acting. In *Jeune homme à la fenêtre*, there is no specific search for a pose or sense of acting evidence as the man simply appears to be posed naturally. As Varnedoe remarks, Caillebotte's posers are so immersed into their activity that they forget the artist. In *Portrait de Famille*, the presence of the "bizarre, though true" perspective as described by Georges Riviere p 193 the background of the painting reflects the personality of the artist<sup>360</sup> Although, Caillebotte showed a more intimate aspect of his life, very little information on the family emotions or expressions is

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<sup>357</sup> Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality, Painting and Beholder in the age of Diderot*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1980, p 13

<sup>358</sup> Karin Sagner quoted from Jules Antoine Castagnary's *Salons*, Karin Sagner, *An Impressionist and Photography, Gustave Caillebotte*, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Himer, 2013, p 154

<sup>359</sup> Michael Fried, *Caillebotte's Impressionism*, Representations, No. 66 (spring 1999), p 5

<sup>360</sup> Quotation by Georges Rivière, J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *Gustave Caillebotte, A Retrospective Exhibition, op.cit.*, p 215

Georges Riviere in Denys Riout, *Les écrivains devant l'Impressionisme*, Macula, 1989, p 193



conveyed to the viewer.<sup>361</sup> The figures depicted include his cousin Marie Caillebotte in the foreground, the mother of Marie and her sister Zoe on the bench, a friend of the family Madame Hue, Caillebotte's mother reading a book in the background.<sup>362</sup> The artist's sense of intimacy reappears in his work *Le déjeuner* (fig.26). Again, Caillebotte unveils a private view of his family life. According to Philippe Burty, the members depicted in the painting are "in the constant pursuit of some one particular occupation."<sup>363</sup> By depicting his family in constant action, Caillebotte emphasizes the sense of naturalness that prevails in most of his paintings. The artist is trying to captivate movement in its spontaneity by painting his sitters during their usual activities. In the composition, René is busy cutting his meat, but originally Caillebotte depicted him reading a book. The initial aim of the artist was to reinforce René's psychological absorption by distancing him from the rest of the family.<sup>364</sup> As Distel argues, by focusing on the plate instead of the book, René anticipates on the mood of isolation that will dominate during the luncheon which differs from conventional family reunion. The table participates to convey a perturbing visual experience which underlines René's psychological separation from Mme Caillebotte who prevails over the scene. Indeed, the composition is inhabited by an atmosphere of self-reflection.

The way the artist chose to frame the picture stimulates the viewer's curiosity and visual response. In order to create an atmosphere of suspense and draw the viewer's curiosity into the painting, Caillebotte needed to select the right viewpoint as if he was filming the scene. In comparison with cinematography, the artist was firstly working on the space, light and frame that would best capture the figure in his or her activity. As argued earlier, the attitude and gaze of the figure acting in the painting contains most of the information needed to understand the mood of the composition. Caillebotte's portraits split into two categories that both feature a state of absorption. The artist clearly distinguished the figures absorbed by an object from the ones who are simply daydreaming. Fried mentioned that the presence of an object in a particular compositional arrangement can contribute to a mode of pictorial absorption. To illustrate this argument it is useful to compare *Portrait de Jules Richemont* (fig.27) with *Portrait d'Henri Cordier* (fig.28). The two individuals are in a state of absorption, one lost in his thoughts and the other actively focused on writing. In *Portrait de*

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<sup>361</sup> Dominique Lobstein, *Caillebotte à Yerres, au temps de l'impressionnisme*, Flammarion, Yerres, Paris, 2014, p 46

<sup>362</sup> J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, *Gustave Caillebotte, A Retrospective Exhibition, op.cit.*, p 97

<sup>363</sup> Ruth Berson, *The New Painting: Impressionism, 1874-1886, documentation*, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 1996, p 65

<sup>364</sup> Distel, *op.cit.*, p 72

*Jules Richemont*, the figure's gaze gives the illusion to be directed towards the painter but he is not mindfully looking at him. Instead of staring at the viewer or the painter the figure is daydreaming. In this portrait, Caillebotte reveals the temperament and the noble personality of the figure.<sup>365</sup> In *Portrait d'Henri Cordier*, the figure is equally absorbed, but not in the same way as Jules Richemont. Henri Cordier's absorption into the activity of writing is reinforced by the studious environment of the scene and accessories such as the pen. Unlike *Portrait de Jules Richemont*, the elements of the scene constitute a mode of absorption. This painting is reminiscent of *Portrait d'homme écrivant dans son bureau* (fig.29). Similarly to *Portrait d'Henri Cordier*, the figure, here known as Emile Fontaine, focuses on the figure's studiousness. As Distel mentions, the individual is so focused into his work that he forgets any distraction around including the painter. Furthermore, in both portraits, there is a strong nearness between the viewer and the figure as if the spectator was witnessing the scene.<sup>366</sup> This proximity allows the viewer to enter into the psychology of the figure and also identify with him or her. Fried uses the term of obliviousness, or *oubli de soi* as an indication of absorption. Indeed, the state of absorption in which the figure is depicted entails a forgetfulness of the viewer's presence. This state of absorption allows the viewer to experience the concentration of the figure in relation to his work. Caillebotte's *Portrait de Jules Richemont* and *Portrait d'homme écrivant dans son bureau* are comparable to Chardin's *Un Philosophe occupé à sa lecture* (fig.30). Chardin's painting perfectly reflects the notion of self-forgetting through the philosopher's thoughtfulness and *reverie*.<sup>367</sup> As in *Portrait d'homme écrivant dans son bureau*, there is a proximity that is being created between the figure and the viewer. However, there is no contact between the two of them. These three portraits again show some proto-cinematic qualities, anticipating the technique of close-up is present in the three paintings. The comparison between *Portrait d'Henri Cordier* and the three portraits discussed proves that a state of meditation is present in the two types of portraits. Both Henri Cordier and Jules Richemont are in a state of meditation, however, one is absorbed in his thoughts and the other one by a book. As Jaubert argues in the film *Gustave Caillebotte ou Les Aventures du Regards*, Caillebotte is creating a story in each painting. In *Homme au Bain* (fig.31), Caillebotte is allowing the spectator to witness the figure's private space.<sup>368</sup> This scene could easily be derived from a film sequence. Unlike academicians,

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<sup>365</sup> Distel, *op.cit.*, p 201

<sup>366</sup> Michael Fried, *Caillebotte's Impressionism*, Representations, No. 66 (spring 1999), p 17

<sup>367</sup> Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality*, *op.cit.*, p 13

<sup>368</sup> Alain Jaubert, *Gustave Caillebotte, ou les Aventures du Regard*, (Palette, Arte), Les films du Paradoxe, Musée d'Orsay, Paris Première, France, 1994

Caillebotte depicted the scene as he perceived it in every detail.<sup>369</sup> Although the musculature of the male figure is reinforced by the use of brushwork and purple shades of contour, nothing is idealized. The scene depicts the male figure roughly toweling himself. As Distel argues, the notion of *voyeurism* and spectating is present as the viewer is invited to be present to witness the figure's private activity.<sup>370</sup> Although there is enough information provided in the comportment of the figure, the lack of intelligibility in his facial expressions could leave the spectator free to interpret the scene and contribute to the painting through his imagination.

This chapter explored how the artist used the gaze of the figure as a way of producing complex visual experiences. As Prendergast and Fried have argued, Caillebotte created complex visual effects of spectating in his organizing his paintings around the tropes of the figure at the window, the gaze and the notion of absorption. Caillebotte established a correspondence between the figure and the viewer largely through the mode of compositional absorption. These effects give the opportunity to the viewer to identify with the figure and experience the images of the city in way that invokes experiences associated with *flâneurism*. The confrontation between the individual and the external world in Caillebotte's paintings is one of the key ways Caillebotte incorporates features of experience associated with the *flâneur* and modernity. As argued in this chapter, there is a process of identification of the viewer through the attitude of the *flâneur* that arises in the scene. The resulting pictures provide the viewer with different viewpoints by making him or her an active participant in constructing the scene. By incorporating the motif of the figure at the window, Caillebotte allowed the viewer to experience the scene from two different perspectives: from the eye of the artist and then from the point of view of the figure facing the window. The representation of the figures at the window contributes to the modernity that prevails in Caillebotte's works. The trope of the window perfectly reflects the psychology of the figures in relation to the external world. One of the questions implied in exploring these issues of the gaze and point of view is to what extent Impressionist figures are readable. The lack of information regarding the facial expressions of the figures in one sense inhibits a clear reading of the state of mind or emotion of the figure, but on the other allows the viewer to interpret the signification of the scene in a more open ended fashion. The comportment and sociological representation of the figures give us very little evidence of their identity.

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<sup>369</sup> Distel, *op.cit.*, p 216

<sup>370</sup> Distel, *op.cit.*, p 216

Through his methods of composition the artist employed techniques that would later become staples of cinematographic representation such as the close-up, framing and the cropping of the image. These techniques allow the viewer to understand the mood of the environment and to imagine the thoughts and reflections of the figures in the pictures and thereby stimulate the imagination of the viewer. Through the depiction of the *flâneur*, Caillebotte, in a sense, invited the spectator to experience the world from his own perspective.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this dissertation was to understand Caillebotte's approach to spatial composition and his ways of producing visual experiences to the viewer. The four chapters provided an understanding of the artist's methods of composition through the use of perspective, photography, light and colour and the depiction of the figures. In his early works from 1870s, Caillebotte's method of composition and choice of motifs showed a strong attraction towards realism. It is not until the 1880s that the artist started evolving towards techniques of Impressionism. Caillebotte's tendency towards realist motifs resulted in him being marginalized from the history of Impressionism. From the 1970s, the artist's methods of spatial composition started to receive more attention from recent scholarship and there has been an attempt to reassess his position within the debates about Impressionism. In the 1970s, new attitudes towards the art history led to a redefinition of Impressionism, a broadening of its understanding and a re-examination of its compositional style, technique and motifs.

Throughout the dissertation I have sought to show Caillebotte's complex transition from a realist method of composition to a looser and freer Impressionistic technique. Caillebotte chose realist motifs and methods in order to distinguish himself from other Impressionist artists. In his early works, Caillebotte distances himself from other Impressionist artists through his choice of motifs, techniques of perspective and methods of composition. However, from the 1880s, Caillebotte started privileging a more Impressionist and looser technique over a more realistic one. The artist began to share more similarities with Monet in terms of freer brushwork, a greater emphasis on light, atmosphere and colour. But unlike Monet, Caillebotte still maintained a more tightly structured and organized method of composition. In the third chapter, I explored how in his later work we see the artist's transition from spatial organization to visual sensations.

A further aspect I have explored in relation to Caillebotte's composition is the ambiguous question of the artist's engagement with photography and how his early pictures seem reminiscent of the photographic images. In these early works Caillebotte produced visual experiences that often bear comparison with the mechanical objectivity of the photograph. In his later work the artist captured visual experiences that are more Impressionist and arise from human sensations. Caillebotte's compositions also show other qualities associated with photography such as the cropping of the image, unorthodox

viewpoints, perspectives and atmospheric effects that are found in photographic imagery of Paris. Studies of his squared drawings strongly suggest that Caillebotte may have employed a photographic device such as the *camera obscura* or the *camera lucida*. In examining this issue I look at the evidence of his possible use of such lenses or artistic devices in his composition, but also examine the issue of affinities of Caillebotte's compositions with photography in the context of the complicated relationships between realism, Impressionism and photography in the artistic debates of the time. A further issue explored that bears upon the question of Caillebotte's possible interest in photography is the relationship of his work with his brother's photography, which draws heavily on Caillebotte's motifs and compositions.

The perspective in Caillebotte's pictures is by no means straightforward. Although Caillebotte shares some affinities with the tradition of perspective established by Renaissance artists and embedded in academic theory, his approach towards perspective remains unconventional. The artist went beyond the traditions established by Renaissance by creating a wider field of view and lengthening his perspective. This spatial construction produces effects of looming perspectival depth, sharp recession from foreground to background and conveys the impression of the viewer being drawn into the painting. Caillebotte's perspectival effects seem to create pictorial correlates that are associated with the experience of flux, change, speed and movement corresponding to the modernity of the new Paris. Caillebotte's arrangement of space is meticulous, so that each element has a signification in the scene and contributes to the visual experience of the viewer. In *Raboteurs*, although the elements are displayed in an apparently random way in the picture, Caillebotte conscientiously organized them within his composition. Through the seeming disarrangement produced by the elements of the picture, the artist added an effect of compositional counterpoint or contrast to the very rational and organized space. The presence of elements such as the knife or tools was traditionally restricted to still-life paintings to bring life to the composition. The idea of disorder in a very well organized space contributes to create an impression of naturalness and authenticity.

By contrast to his early works that seem to imitate reality, Caillebotte's later paintings increasingly turn their attention to the unreproducible aspect of nature. In his works from the 1880s, Caillebotte seemed to privilege immaterial motifs such as the wind, the rain and the weather. Through his attempt to record what is invisible to the eye, Caillebotte's work showed closer convergence with Monet's, especially in his use of colour and brushwork. The artist reassessed how he conveyed effects of movement and rhythm in his representation his motifs.

While a concern with movement is present in both his city and the countryside motifs, there is a decisive shift in his painting in communicating these effects, from his initial emphasis on perspective to a greater preoccupation with suggesting more ephemeral effects through colour and brushwork. However, this is a shift in emphasis rather than an absolute change as pictorial structure and organization continued to be something that Caillebotte grappled with and his relationship to Monet's work was by no means a simple and straightforward one.

Although there is no clear evidence of his familiarity with the photography of Eadweard Muybridge, the decomposition of movement found in the latter's images bears comparison with effects found in Caillebotte's compositions. Muybridge's decomposition of movement certainly had an influence on other artists known to and associated with Caillebotte's circle, such as Edgar Degas.

In the course of the dissertation I have attempted to explain why it was only at a certain point in history that movement started to take on a particular intense fascination for artists of the time. The modernity of Paris was linked to particular technological innovations that transformed the experience of city. As Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer have both argued, the establishment of new means of transportation that brought new experiences of speed and movement, such as trains and trams, as well as other new kinetic technologies and the incorporation into the burgeoning sphere of new consumer entertainments of scientific instruments used to create moving images, such as moving dioramas, panoramas and magic lantern shows among other things. The new environment of Paris was a place marked by experiences of massive transformation and change and this required an adaptation of the individual who, stimulated by the new rhythms of modern life, began to search out these sensations. The increasing desire for such stimulus, reflected in popular, sensationalist spectacles of entertainments later led to cinematography. The environment in which Caillebotte was living, I argue, almost certainly had an impact on his style and methods of composition. The relationship of his gradual evolution towards Impressionism might possibly be associated to his change of environment from the city to the countryside. The most significant evidence is a letter from the artist on Flaubert addressed to Monet in July 1884 from Trouville, in which Caillebotte expressed his search for serenity and in which he advocated a more Impressionistic approach. But the evolution of his style probably had multiple causes. His change from a realistic method of composition to a more impressionistic one may also be related to his progressive antagonism with Degas from 1880 on. Caillebotte was angered by Degas's increasing tendency to stuff the Impressionist exhibitions with

painters who were his pupils or, like Jean-François Raffaëlli, whose realism Degas admired and whose work was quite some distance from the Impressionist concerns of many of the other exhibitors. The arguments between the two painters came to a head at the Sixth Impressionist Exhibition, where Degas's attempt to make the exhibition into a realist salon led to Caillebotte's withdrawal. This may have encouraged further the already progressive affiliation of Caillebotte with Impressionism. In shifting towards Impressionism, Caillebotte's work began to change, and to place more emphasis on stimulation the viewer's sensory perceptions.

In the final chapter of the dissertation I have returned to the question of the figure and the ways in which Caillebotte manipulates the perceptions and attention of the viewer through the directional gaze of the figure in the picture. Caillebotte often used the gaze of the figure in the picture gazing onto some scene as an intercessor or conduit between his perception and that of the viewer. This chapter explores some of the ways artist creates convergences between the perspective of the viewer and the figures in his works. This is particularly evident in his city pictures, which explore the possibility of creating various viewpoints that capture something of the new city's visual experiences. Here I have sought to show how Caillebotte's pictures of the city connected with particular experiences associated with *flâneurism*, The experience of *flâneurism* as articulated in the writings of Baudelaire is given prominence in this account, pointing to a particular masculine way of responding to the visual experience of modernity associated with the leisured class that Caillebotte belonged to. The inclusion of pictures in which a window onto a city scene is present, often with a male figure gazing out of it, creates an interface between the figure, the interior and the external world. The figure before the window acts as a *Rückenfigur*, but one at the intersection between private and public space. Caillebotte used the window as a way of guiding the perception of the viewer by firstly presenting the scene from the viewpoint of the artist and secondly from the perspective of the figure. Therefore, through the use of the figures, the artist produced alternate and multiple ways of seeing the world, which contrasts with the single viewpoints favoured in his earliest paintings.

In this final chapter I have also sought to understand to what extent Caillebotte's figures are readable or unintelligible. The pictures under discussion are largely organized around the gaze of the figures in the scene and their comportment. However, very little detail is provided through the treatment of the figures faces. In line with Duranty's recommendations, the artist privileged the comportment of the figures over their



physiognomy. The attitude of the figures gives enough indication for the viewer to imagine a story, but lacks information regarding their physiognomy contributes to the sense of mystery prevailing in the scene. The notion of suspense present in Caillebotte's scenes shows some proto-cinematographic qualities. This lack of information leads the viewer to imagine any potential sequel to the scene depicted. By representing the figures in their state of absorption, Caillebotte encouraged his viewers to enter in their mind and identify to their activity. The artist not only invites the viewer to explore his paintings but also guides him through his works by providing different points of view and perspectives. Caillebotte manifested a desire to represent his own vision of the world by utilising effects of perspective, photography, light and colours and employing a mode of compositional absorption. Through his evolution towards Impressionism, Caillebotte invited the viewer to perceive the world from different perspectives.

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