Paris in cinema -

The representation of Paris in the films *An American in Paris* by Vincente Minnelli, *Playtime* by Jacques Tati and *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* by Jean-Pierre Jeunet

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A. Summary

This master thesis analyses the representation of Paris in film as cinema has turned Paris into a city of symbolic value, being attached to several meanings and images. Hence, the three films *An American in Paris* (Vincente Minnelli, 1951), *Playtime* (Jacques Tati, 1967) and *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 2001) have been chosen in order to illustrate the different representations of Paris as it is displayed as a romantic, artistic and fantastic place. The visual analysis as well as the directors' authorial signatures illustrates the different approaches in the three films. In order to point out the effects of the different representations of Paris, Foucault's concept of heterotopia, Barthes' notion of myth-making and Urry's tourist gaze are employed.

The musical *An American in Paris* combines music, painting and dance with a dramatic love story and thus, creates a fantastic *Parisland* (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 75). This is emphasized by the film finale in form of a fantastic ballet as well as by the references to famous French paintings which contribute to Paris' mystification. In contrast, the film *Playtime* displays a more futuristic and modernist image of Paris and does not add to the notion of a fantastic *Parisland*. As *Playtime* displays the mythical Paris through reflections on the modern surface of office buildings, Tati employs these in order to comment on modernity itself and to question Paris' mystification (Andrew, 2004, p. 45).This duality of Paris' representation is also illustrated in the film *Le fabuleux destin d' Amélie Poulain* as it displays a sanitized and picturesque Parisian landscape which either adds to the mystification of Paris or deconstructs it, or both at the same time.

To sum up, the three films display the ambivalence in the representation of Paris as its image becomes mystified as well as deconstructed. Simultaneously, the changing cultural mindsets of the different time periods are exhibited as the films range from being set in the post-war period after World War II to being placed in the time period of modernity. Likewise, the films exhibit the relationship between American and French culture as well as the change from post-war euphoria to the fear of modernity. Hence, the analyses provide insights in the representation of Paris in film and the connected cultural mindsets.

B. Introduction

Paris is considered the „cinematic city par excellence" as it is an iconic film setting and has been crucial to the development of French cinema (Phillips and Vincendeau, 2018, pp. 1-2). Due to the frequency of Paris as a setting in cinema, the topography of Paris evokes many associations and images in its viewers. Thus, Paris has become an urban icon off-screen, attracting tourists with the aim to experience what is considered to be the most romantic city (p. 17). Furthermore, Paris is associated with the fields of fashion, glamour, intellectualism and art (p. 143, p. 169, p. 174). This emphasizes the symbolic value of Paris as a city and how it can be perceived from many perspectives, depending on its audience. Hence, it seems impossible to perceive Paris without having any of these associations prescribed as the media has constituted various images over the years. These changing perceptions also reflect the shifting mindsets in different periods (pp. 1-3). Furthermore, the French New Wave Cinema of the 1960's has produced the image of Paris being the city of unlimited opportunities which attracted many tourists as the cinema turned regular Parisian locations into attractions (pp. 2-4). Hence, by shooting films in specific locations, space is turned into a particular place by becoming attached to certain meanings (Appadurai, 1996, p. 183). Thus, media such as films can project particular images on the landscape and thereby, transform the relationship between information and mediation (p. 189). Through the high availability of media and the social practice of sharing it, these associations become common knowledge and can create a vision of a place like Paris, being attached to particular meanings like romance (p. 180, p. 191).

Hence, it seems impossible to perceive Paris without having prescribed images or expectations as these have been induced by media. This master thesis aims to analyse the representation of Paris in film and especially how these images and expectations are constituted in different time periods. Thus, the three films *An American in Paris* (Vincente Minnelli, 1951), *Playtime* (Jacques Tati, 1967) and *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 2001) have been chosen in order to analyse how the image of Paris is constructed in cinema. These will be analysed by making use of semiotic and visual analysis, examining all elements of picture and

sound in terms of contributing to the construction of different images of Paris. As the films are shot in different decades, the analysis will highlight the changing portrayal of Paris as well as the cultural mindsets during these periods. Furthermore, the construction of the narrative and the use of the Parisian landscape as a supportive background will be researched. Therefore, the focus will be on the relationship between the narrative and the landscape, including the use of music and colour, as these contribute to the perception of Paris. Through the analysis of the visuals and sound, the cinematic style of the films will be identified. Overall, the visual analysis scrutinizes the different representations of Paris and how these are portrayed in the three films.

First of all, the film *An American in Paris*, directed by Vincente Minnelli in 1951, will be analysed concerning its representation of Paris, as the musical creates a fairytale version of the city (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 63). The musical tells the story of an ex-GI who paints in Paris and ends up falling in love with a French girl (p. 65). The dramatic storyline of a love triangle between the main characters and the happy ending in form of a big ballet finale will be analysed regarding their contribution to a romanticized representation of Paris (p. 71). Furthermore, Minelli's musical consists of a mixture of music, painting and dance and thus, the role of the cinematic style will be examined as it can influence the creation of a certain gaze (p. 75). Additionally, the notion of a mythical *Parisland,* with reference to the American concept of Disneyland, will be taken into account as such a strong metaphorical relation emphasizes the fantastic notion of Paris (p. 78). Therefore, the analysis of the film will show how it establishes different representations of Paris through its plot and cinematic style, presenting Paris through the angle of art as a city of fantasy, myth and love (pp. 79-81).

In second instance, the movie *Playtime* by Jacques Tati will be discussed as it shows a different and more futuristic image of Paris. The film was made in 1967 and creates a more modernist image of Paris which will be compared to the more classical image in *An American in Paris*. Even though *Playtime* contributes to the postcard image of Paris, its picturesque display is achieved in a more comic way by exhibiting sights, as the Eiffel Tower and Sacré-Coeur, through reflections on the surface of office buildings

(Andrew, 2004, p. 45). This aspect can be considered crucial as it plays with the perception of Paris as a historical place and Paris as a modernist whole within the film itself (Hilliker, 2002, p. 323, p. 326). Furthermore, the portrayed tourist group is characterised by the desire for an authentic Paris which can only be found in the form of reflections in the modernist environment (p. 326). The setting in an urban and modernist Paris does not exclude the integration of a love story as the main character and one of the American tourists become romantically engaged which can be seen as representative of the old romantic Paris (p. 320). This more modern representation of Paris will be compared to the more artistic projection of Paris in *An American in Paris* as Tati plays with the tourist gaze by displaying it only in certain sequences (p. 326).

Finally, the film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain*, released in 2001 and directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, will be investigated as it is a more recent film, telling the life and love story of a young woman in Paris.[1] *Amélie* represents Jeunet's return to his original inspiration as the film rediscovers the fairy-tale and mythic Paris of his youth (Andrew, 2004, p. 34). Besides, the film is set in popular Parisian places, like the area of Montmartre, and generally aims to highlight the postcard version of the Parisian landscape (p. 38). The cinematic style of Jeunet also contributes to the image of a picturesque and flawless Paris as every element of picture and sound is controlled, making the shots look like paintings (ibid.). Simultaneously, the sanitization can be employed as a deconstructing element as it creates a fictional version of Paris which has never existed. Hence, *Amélie* can either be considered as enhancing the mystification of Paris or as questioning it, or both at the same time.

In order to analyse the different representations and images of Paris, the Foucauldian concept of heterotopia will be applied as it describes places of otherness and, thus, it can be understood as an alternative ordering of space (Hetherington, 1997, p. viii). Hence, heterotopia can only exist in relation to other spaces as it simultaneously contests the real and the mythical space by juxtaposing, reversing and opposing these (Hetherington, 1997, pp. 42- 43; Foucault, 2000, p. 175; 179). This illustrates its placement between the

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[1] Following, the film title will be abbreviated and referred to as *Amélie*.

good-places and non-places of utopian space as it is located outside all places but is still localizable (Foucault, 2000, p. 178).

Subsequently, the concept of heterotopia has been analysed in the field of philosophy and has been picked up by other philosophers, discussing the conception of space. Hence, Henri Lefebvre's *La production d'espace* (1974) and Edward Soja's *Thirdspace. Journeys to Los Angeles and other Real-and-Imagined Places* (1996) analyse the construction of space and both introduce a three-part order of space in which heterotopia can be placed as a third space within the sphere of lived space (Pratt, 1998, p. 192). The concept of heterotopia can be applied to the representation of Paris in film as these project particular images on the Parisian landscape (Appadurai, 1996, p. 189). Thus, the creation of a heterotopian image of Paris contributes to the formation of different representations of the city, depending on the film. Hence, the concept of heterotopia highlights the production of different representations as a place like Paris does not have the same meaning for various social groups in different time periods (Hetherington, 1997, p. 20). As Foucault has introduced the concept of heterotopia in his books *Different Spaces* (1967) and *The Order of Things* (1971), the outlined characteristics and principles of heterotopia will be integrated into the film analysis.

Due to the frequency of Paris being used as a film setting, many different images and representations of Paris circulate in the sphere of media. Hence, the aim of this thesis is to analyse the different representations of Paris in the three films as well as how these are shaped by the cinematic elements. The thesis will focus on the portrayal of Paris in these films, analysing how these contribute to different representations such as the romantic or fantastic image of Paris (Phillips and Vincendeau, 2018, p. 7; p. 20). Generally, it can be argued that Paris can be considered as a multi-layered construction as it is represented in many different ways. Hence, this thesis is aware of other constructions but wants to focus on the representations shown in the chosen films.

Furthermore, Urry's concept of the tourist gaze will be applied as it will enlighten the process of how certain tourist gazes are constituted and what kind of effects these imply (Urry and Larsen, 2011, p. 3). Also, the range of

films makes it possible to analyse the constitution of different images and tourist gazes over time and compare as well as contrast these. Additionally, Barthes' notion of myth-making will be addressed, as the concept of heterotopia includes the general mystification of Paris as a city. In *Mythologies* (1957), Barthes addresses how myths naturalize the associations connected to an image, turning them into reality (Weyand, 2012, p. 265). Hence, certain associations with Paris become naturalized and cannot be identified as an associated image but become part of its identity. This can be illustrated through the Parisian icon of the Eiffel Tower which simultaneously represents different myths and projects these on Paris as a city (Bazgan, 2018, p. 17). As the Eiffel Tower itself has become an inherent part of the Parisian landscape and a film star on its own, it has acquired visual power as a representation of Paris (ibid.). Hence, the landmark is screened as an image of romantic love, a site of playful adventures and mysteries or as a monument of spectacle (p. 19). Thus, this emphasizes how cinema is able to naturalize the city as a myth by mediating the experience of a landmark and Paris itself in these particular ways (ibid.). Therefore, it will be discussed how the films mythicize Paris by attaching certain meanings and naturalizing these as part of Paris' identity. Furthermore, Debord's *The Society of Spectacle* (1967) will illustrate the transformation of the Parisian image through the influence of modernity which is characterised by being simultaneously uniform and divided (Debord, 1967, p. 23). Hence, this emphasizes the ambivalence in the representation of Paris in film.

I. Literature Review: Paris' role in cinema and media tourism

As Paris has been described as one of the most cinematic cities, the discussion of Paris in relation to cinema is inherent to such status (Baecque, 2012, pp. 12- 13; Alastair, 2004, pp. 10-11; Conley, 2012, pp. 53-54, Cinquegrani, 2010, pp. 165-166; Hospers, 2009, p. 229; Phillips and Vincendeau, 2018, p. 1). Therefore, Paris and its importance for the development of the French Cinema have been extensively discussed (Rollet, 2008, p. 45). For example, Phillips and Vincendeau have dedicated a whole book to Paris in cinema, focusing on the Baudelairian figure of flaneur

which enables a dualistic Parisian experience (Phillips and Vincendeau, 2018, p. 5). Therefore, the figure of flaneur is able to describe Parisian modernity by simultaneously registering the fugitiveness and eternity of the modern Parisian experience (ibid.). This concurrence of uniformity and division in modern society is also illustrated in Debord's *The Society of Spectacle* (Debord, 1967, p. 23). Hence, Paris has been discussed in cinematic studies in terms of flaneur as well as being the setting for multiple films and thus, for being part of many film analyses (Rollet, 2008, p. 45; Harris and Mary, 2011, pp. 84-87; Alastair, 2004, pp. 73-106).

Since *An American in Paris, Playtime* and *Amélie* are all set in Paris, they have been discussed in connection to Paris as a film setting as well as due to their popularity (Andrew, 2004, pp. 35-37; Durham 2008, p. 174; Genné, 1983, p. 247; Johnson, 1958, p. 21; McDonough, 2008, p. 153). Furthermore, the directors Minnelli, Tati and Jeunet are known for being film *auteurs*. This term was first introduced by the filmmaker Francois Truffaut in 1954 as part of a call for a shift from commercial cinema back to the exercise of artistic integrity in cinema in an article in the French film magazine *Cahiers du Cinema* (Staples, 1966-67, pp. 1-2). Hence, the term film auteur describes directors with a particular directional signature and originality (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 63; Rountree, 2008, p. 129). *Auteur cinema* has been further shaped by André Bazin as the founder of *Cahiers du Cinema* had deepened the theory in his article *La Politique des Auteurs* (1957) (p. 3). Simultaneously, the American film critic Andrew Sarris has built on these arguments in his essay *Notes on the Auteur Theory* (1962) and has coined author theory in the United States (Menne, 2011, pp. 36-37).

Based on this view, *auteur cinema* is characterised by uniqueness, originality and freedom and was originally strongly associated with the French New Wave Cinema of the 1960's (Mary, 2010, p. 160). Hence, the stylistic originality of the directors and their possession of a cinematic vision have turned the directors into authors of their own work, creating a special experience for their audience (Mary, 2010, p. 161; Rountree, 2008, p. 129). Thus, all three films have been discussed extensively as their play with elements of picture, sound and colour illustrate the signature of a cinematic auteur (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 63; Rountree, 2008, p. 129). The

influence of *auteur cinema* is also visualized in the display of Paris as the artistic and fantastic approach to cinema emphasizes these representations. Accordingly, the film *An American in Paris* has been well discussed for its creation of a fairytale musical with a strong connection to the field of painting (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 63). Especially the final ballet sequence has been discussed intensively as Minnelli has been described as „a master of integrated musical", being able to tell the story through additional elements as song and dance (Genné, 1983, p. 247). The merging of American pace and French taste creates nuances in colour, design and action and thus, turns the ballet into a poetic and „choreographic essay" (Johnson, 1958, p. 33). Additionally, the daring use of colour and the fusion of music and camera movement contribute to Minnelli's signature as a cinematic auteur (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 63). Hence, the combination of the cinematic style and the storyline of an American painter in a love triangle produces a romantic as well as an artistic representation of Paris (p. 71). In addition, the film has been recognized as an introduction to the beauty and delights of Paris as a tourist destination (Kirkham and Cohen, 2017, p. 113). Thus, the musical merges several representations of Paris by combining its playfulness with a dramatic love story (Johnson, 1958, p. 32).

Likewise, *Playtime* has been analysed as it focuses on displaying a contemporary and urban Paris, playing with the perception of the past by removing most markers of it (Hilliker, 2002, p. 319). The film is considered to play with the tourist gaze as American tourists travel to the city in order to experience the real Paris (Cardullo and Tati, 2013, p. 359). Thereby, Tati also plays with the spectator's gaze of Paris by displaying reflections of the old Paris on the modern surface of office buildings (Andrew, 2004, p. 45). Hence, the cinematic style and the storyline play with the different representations of Paris, combining the modern and historical Paris in a comic way (Hilliker, 2002, p. 323, p. 326; Andrew, 2004, p. 45). Additionally, the contrast of these representations is illustrated by the lostness of the main character Hulot in the space-age version of Paris (Cardullo, 2002, p. 286). As *Playtime* is characterised by long-shot tableaux, Tati leaves it to the spectator whether to focus on the gags in the foreground or background and thus, once more plays with the perception of the

audience (ibid.). Furthermore, McDonough discusses the presented relation between Paris and myth as the urban setting challenges the notion of Paris being a mythical city (2008, p. 153). Hence, *Playtime* addresses the myth-making of Paris and questions it through its contrasting representations.

Thirdly, *Amélie* has been widely discussed as it is a more recent film, being characterized by the spontaneity of the main character Amélie as well as by the controlled and sanitized image of the Parisian landscape (Andrew, 2004, p. 38). Hence, Amélie's wanderings through the city lead her to iconic Parisian landmarks like Notre Dame and Sacré-Coeur and contribute to the picturesque representation of Paris (Celestine, p. 43). Additionally, Paris is displayed in a nostalgic mode as *Amélie* borrows images from well-known films by, for instance, Marcel Carné (Oscherwitz, 2011, pp. 505- 506). The stereotype of a picturesque Paris is supported by the choice of the characters as the story includes „a weary *patronne*, an irascible customer, a weepy concierge, a hypochondriac tobacconist, a cantankerous grocer, a mysterious old man [..] as well as the sassy porn-video shop assistant and the photo-boot repairman" (ibid.). As *Amélie* portrays these stereotypes and clichés of the Parisian lifestyle and landscape, the film contributes to a Disneyfication of Paris (ibid.). Furthermore, *Amélie* also supports the image of commercial Frenchness, making the consumption of French accessible for mass culture (p. 40).

Thus, the selected films have been analysed cinematographically and concerning their contribution to a Parisian image but this thesis aims to go more in depth as it will reflect further on the creation of different representations of Paris and their effects. The visual analysis will be used to discuss the construction of Paris in film and draw conclusions on the cultural mindsets which reflect the films being set in different time periods. The comparison of the films also enables the reflection of the changing representation of Paris and analyses its effects.

The role of Parisian image is also examined in the field of media tourism as it discusses Paris as an example for the constitution of a romantic tourist gaze and its representation for romantic love (Urry and Larsen, 2011, p. 4). Hence, Paris as a travel destination is discussed in terms of creating an urge for tourists to experience the city and its monuments (p. 141). Additionally,

Paris has been discussed in cinematic studies and tourism studies including the recent effects of its cinematic representations on media tourism (Dung and Reijnders, 2013, pp. 288-289; Park and Santos, 2017, pp. 18-19; Urry and Larsen; 2011, p. 4; Les Roberts, 2012, p. 128).

Concerning the field of media tourism, the concept of heterotopia has been applied in order to describe the attachment of a fictional story to a real place as well as for the creation of a media- heterotopia (Chung, 2012, pp. 89-92). Furthermore, the creation of otherness as being part of heterotopia and its employment for tourism have been addressed by Salazar as he describes the influence of popular media on the constitution of exotic places (2013, p. 674). Additionally, the simplification of culture for the field of tourism is approached, which highlights the role of media for such process (ibid.). Therefore, the cinematic effect of Paris and the creation of media heterotopia have been addressed with focus on the impact on media tourism (Dung and Reijnders, 2013, pp. 288-289; Park and Santos, 2017, pp. 18-19; Urry and Larsen; 2011, p. 4; Les Roberts, 2012, p. 128). Additionally, Lynch discusses the constitution of a graphic city image with the examples of Los Angeles, Boston and Jersey City (Lynch, 1960, pp. 45-58).

The literature review on the chosen films and the fields of media tourism and cinema have shown the recognition of Paris as a cinematic city as well as the relevance of heterotopia and the creation of myth for media tourism (Bazgan, 2018, p. 17, Chung, 2012, pp. 89-92, Salazar, 2013, p. 674). Hence, this thesis intends to apply different concepts such as Foucault's heterotopia, Barthes' myth-making and Urry's tourist gaze to the film representations of Paris in order to analyse the constitution of Paris in the three films. The contextualisation and comparison of *An American in Paris*, *Playtime* and *Amélie* can contribute to insights in the representation of Paris in film. Hence, the semiotic and visual analysis will emphasize the role film plays for such constitution as its effect on the tourists' perception will be discussed. The combination of this methodology and these various concepts will show how Paris is constructed through different cinematic representations and contribute to research on the representation of Paris in film.

C. Main Part

I. Film Analysis *An American in Paris*

1. Approach and background

The following analysis will discuss the film *An American in Paris* (Vincente Minnelli, 1951) which will be examined concerning its constitution of different representations of Paris. Therefore, the film will be analysed by making use of visual analysis as well as by taking the narrative into account. This combination of visuals and narrative will also illustrate the cultural mindset of the time period. The analysis will be conducted step-by-step, starting with general background information of the film, proceeding to the plot and its characters and the use of the elements of music and colour. Since the visuals and the narrative can be considered as strongly entangled, their effects will be discussed simultaneously. Furthermore, the finale of the ballet sequence will be analysed on its own as it represents a poetic and „choreographic essay", being full of nuances of colour, design and action (Johnson, 1958, p. 33). Thus, the ballet can be considered as crucial for the analysis of the constitution of Paris in film.

The film was one of the thirteen musicals in Vincente Minnelli's career as a director and was shot in 1951 (Genné, 1983, p. 247). It can be considered as a dialectic product between the collaborators of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer production house and Minnelli's artistic signature as it has been produced within the system of a big studio but still represents his personal autograph (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 63). This dialectic also becomes visible in Minnelli's aim to combine cinema and painting as well as Hollywood and art which is achieved through the integration of French art references and Hollywood elements like a happy end (p. 69). Furthermore, Minnelli's artistic signature has been described as a „lush and daring of colour, seamless fusion of music and camera movement" which turns the film into a fairytale musical with the end of a big ballet finale (pp. 63- 65).

The story of the musical is told through elements such as song and dance which do not interrupt the flow of the story and thus, turn the film into an integrated musical (Genné, 1983, p. 247). Additionally, the musical is based

on the orchestral compositions by George Gershwin which highlight the importance of music for the film and its storyline (Levy, 2009, p. 306). This underlines the hybrid character of the musical as Gershwin is considered as an artist transcending the boundaries between Europe and America as he is representative for a whole generation of soldiers having been sent to Paris (ibid.). The film can be seen as a personal homage to Gershwin as he had been already dead for over a decade by the time the film was made (Levy, 2009, p. 296). Hence, his brother Ira Gershwin got involved in order to provide adaption for lyrics and music (ibid.). The integration of the musical and visual elements in the storyline will be discussed further in the analysis of picture, sound and cinematic style.

As the musical's story is placed in Paris, Minnelli had aimed to shoot the whole film in Paris in order to contribute to the authenticity of the story (p. 300). But due to production costs, it could not be shot in Paris and thus, parts of the city have been recreated in the studios in California (ibid.). Hence, particular parts of Paris such as „portions of Left Bank, a Montmartre street below Sacré-Coeur, the quay behind Notre Dame, Café Bel Ami near the Seine" were chosen to be re-created in order establish an authentic Parisian landscape (p. 301). Additionally, exterior shots by second director Peter Ballbusch were integrated in the opening montage (ibid.). This illustrates the film's emphasis on being set in Paris as recognizable locations like Sacré-Coeur and Notre Dame were chosen. Thereby, the film wants to highlight its setting in Paris as these locations are expected to be seen in the context of Paris and Minnelli could have chosen to recreate any other city or set the film in California itself.

Hence, the interplay of the picturesque setting in Paris and the narrative of a dramatic love triangle create a fairytale version of the city (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 63). As the ballet contributes to the fantasy version of Paris, the musical will be analysed concerning its creation of a fantastic *Parisland* with the reference to the American concept of Disneyland (p. 78). Disneyland has been described as the utopia of leisure as well as a place of beauty, magic and inspiration and thus, can be considered as an overall fantastic place (Sorkin, 1992, pp. 5-6). Hence, the concept of Disneyland has been discussed as a way of place-making as it attaches myth to place

and simultaneously has the effect of sanitizing its image to the grade of perfection (ibid.). This is illustrated in Disneyland's aim to create a lived experience for the visitors (Steiner, 1998, p. 6). Hence, the concept of Disneyland can be understood as a way of myth-making as the notion of fantasy becomes a natural part of a place's identity. This is underlined by the spectator's inability to see the place without the attached myth as it becomes determinant for the whole place. Therefore, the analysis will deconstruct the narrative and characters of the film, examining the different representations of Paris as well as discussing the creation of a fantastic *Parisland*.

2. Narrative

The musical *An American in Paris* tells the story of an ex-GI who becomes a painter in Paris and ends up falling in love with a French girl (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 65). After the end of World War II, the American Jerry (Gene Kelly) decides to fulfil his dream of becoming a painter in Paris as he considers the city as the Mecca for painters (00:02:20). Hence, he focuses on living the Parisian lifestyle, engaging with French people and living in a small studio apartment which is essentially dedicated to fulfil his artistic living conditions. Thus, Jerry focuses on finding his artistic self, not aiming for a monetary reward but for pure art (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 67). When displaying his art in the Parisian streets, Jerry meets the American art dealer Milo Roberts (Nina Foch) who offers to sponsor him. Her female counterpart Lise Bouvier (Leslie Caron) is introduced through her relationship with the musical star Henri Baurel (Georges Guétary) and gets to know Jerry while being in the ambient of a Parisian night club. Thus, she is illustrated as a gamine and young French girl (Kirkham and Cohen, 2017, p. 114).

Moreover, the plot establishes a love triangle as Jerry gets involved with both women even though he aims to charm Lise rather than Milo. Although Milo would be able to support the artist financially he focuses on the rather impecunious Lise who already has a relationship with Henri (Levy, 2009, p. 297). Henri and Jerry have already been introduced by their common friend and French pianist Adam Cook (Oscar Levant) but do not know about having fallen in love with the same French girl. Throughout the story, Lise's

love struggle is illustrated as she keeps on dating both men, having romantic feelings for Jerry and feelings of guiltiness as Henri has taken her in as an orphan after World War II (ibid.). Hence, Jerry and Lise keep on seeing each other secretly in the Parisian setting of the Seine bank which emphasizes the notion of romance. Simultaneously, Milo still tries to convince Jerry of her being more than an art dealer. The awareness of being in love with the same girl just hits both men in the last third of the film when Lise agrees to marry Henri and go abroad with him.

The final section of the film is dominated by a big ballet finale which projects Jerry's feelings of losing the love of Lise and can be seen as a mini-musical itself (p. 305). Hence, the ballet celebrates images of Paris in painting by turning the character of Lise into an embodiment of pure art, dancing in and with the Parisian landscape. The ballet plays through the different seasons, displaying Lise as an embodiment of famous paintings by Dufy, Renoir and Rousseau which are representative for Jerry's different emotions (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 70).

The ballet finale is introduced by Jerry's shorthand calligraphy which is the execution of lettering through the use of a writing instrument like a pen and can be understood as a reference to Raoul Dufy's sketch *The Grid* from 1930 (see fig. 1 and fig. 2). Hence, the sketch illustrates the film's transition into a fantasy world and simultaneously represents Paris as a fantastic place which stimulates imagination as well as serving an artistic purpose. Additionally, the reference to Dufy's *Le Parc de Saint-Cloud* (1919) which displays the left bank of Seine contributes to the picturesque image of Paris (p. 69). This emphasizes the fantastic representation of Paris as well as the beauty of the Parisian landscape.

Fig. 1, Jerry's sketch with reference to Dufy's *The Grid, An American in Paris* (01:32:04), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.[2]

Fig. 2, *La Grille* (engl. *The Grid*) by Raoul Dufy, (c) Raoul Dufy/ Fair Use, Original 1930.[3]

In contrast, the adaption of Renoir's *Pont Neuf* (1872) focuses on the romantic representation of Paris as it dominated by pastel colours and complemented by flower stands in the ballet (see fig. 3 and fig. 4). The reference to *April in Paris* attaches the notion of mild weather to love as well as depicts its fugitiveness (Forgione, 2005, p. 667). Hence, Renoir highlights the romantic representation of Paris which can be considered as fugitive as the fantastic representation dominates the image.

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[2] If not indicated otherwise, all images are screenshots from the original films, taken by the author.
[3] https://www.wikiart.org/en/raoul-dufy/the-grid-1930, 22.07.2018.

Fig. 3, Jerry and Lise dancing in the adaption of Renoir's *Pont Neuf, An American in Paris* (01:39:50).

Fig. 4, *Pont Neuf* by Pierre-Auguste Renoir, (c) Public Domain France, Original 1872.

The following reference to Rousseau's *The Football Players* (1908) once more emphasizes the fantastic and picturesque representation of Paris as it is dominated by its colourful display and entertainment (see fig. 5 and fig. 6). Thus, Paris is displayed as a playful and cheerful city which is portrayed as a place of happiness. Additionally, the notion of a colourful and cheerful Paris is emphasized by the ballet's reference to Toulouse-Lautrec's *Chocolat*

Dancing in the American and Irish Bar (1896) as the painting is dominated by the display of pleasure in dancing (see fig. 7 and fig. 8).

Fig. 5, Adaption of *The Football Players* by Henri Rousseau, An *American in Paris* (01:42:16).
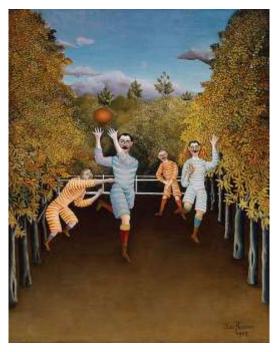

Fig. 6, *The Football Players* by Henri Rousseau, (c) Public Domain France/ US, Original 1908.[4]

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[4] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Henri_Rousseau_-_The_Football_Players.jpg, 22.07.18.

Fig. 7, Jerry's adaption of the painting *Chocolat Dancing in the American and Irish Bar* by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *An American in Paris* (01:49:16).

Fig. 8, *Chocolat dancing in the Irish and American Bar* by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, (c) Public Domain France, Original 1896.[5]

Thus, the different representations of Paris are visualized through references to various paintings by famous French painters. This illustrates the domination of art in the representation of Paris. Furthermore, these

[5] https://www.wikiart.org/en/henri-de-toulouse-lautrec/chocolat-dancing-in-the-irish-and-american-bar, 22.07.18.

references are dominated by their portrayal of Paris as a colourful and fantastic place as well as by its fugitive notion of romance. Hence, the ballet presents art as alternative option for love as the former is shown as a recurrent element while the latter is defined as fugitive. This ambivalence of the two representations of Paris is also emphasized by the emergence of female furies which symbolize the relationship with Milo (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 70; see fig. 9). Additionally, this element underlines the fantastic notion once more as the furies can be considered as a strong element of fantasy. The ambivalence of the different representation is also illustrated in the characters of Milo and Lise as they represent the opposite as the latter one still becomes truly loved without having any financial possibilities (Kirkham and Cohen, 2017, p. 113).

In addition, the different stages of mood in the ballet are highlighted by the change from black and white to colours, leading the story to a happy end as Lise returns to Jerry. Hence, the film ends in a Hollywood like happy ending, leaving out the faith of the other characters by focusing on one particular love story (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 65). Therefore, the Hollywood like ending and the film credits remind the audience of the film being shot in the United States (Levy, 2009, p. 307).

Fig. 9, Dance of the female furies, *An American in Paris* (01:36:14).

3. Characters

The film does not present any human characters until having established the status of Paris as a beautiful and inanimate city and thus, focuses on displaying the Parisian landscape in the opening sequence (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 75). This highlights the importance of the story being set in Paris as the verbal and visual introduction precedes the presentation of the main characters. Thus, Jerry is first presented by his relation to Paris as he simultaneously mentions his American origin and his residence in Paris. Jerry also shares his story of being an Ex-GI who has fulfilled his dream of becoming a painter and thus, describes Paris as the Mecca and most inspirational city for artists (00:02:20). This illustrates the notion of Paris being a fantastic place which becomes the literally embodiment of one's dreams as for Jerry's vision of becoming an artist. His introduction continues with displaying a typical Parisian street as his home which is illustrated by small cafés and flower stands outside. Hence, the representation of Paris is constantly dominated by its picturesque landscape and its stimulation for artistic inspiration.

Jerry's apartment also emphasizes his focus on an artistic lifestyle as the arrangement of it primarily aims to fulfil its purpose as an artist's domicile (00:03:59). This is illustrated through the exhibition of paintings and artistic material, dominating the presentation of the apartment. Even though the character's focus is on art, Jerry's painting technique is not shown as love becomes the more dominant field in his life (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 68). Despite the dominance of love, Lisa herself embodies art for Jerry and her charm serves as a source of inspiration for his artwork (ibid.). Simultaneously, this represents Jerry's inner fight as well as a general conflict between art and love which is illustrated throughout the whole film. This reflects on the ambivalence between the artistic and romantic representation of Paris as the film illustrates both and questions their simultaneous existence as embodied in Jerry's struggle to pursue art or love. This struggle is highlighted in the ballet finale as Jerry celebrates various paintings of Paris after having lost his relationship with Lise. As discussed, the ballet is dominated by the display of famous French paintings but simultaneously illustrates love as the artworks are embodied by the

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character of Lise. Thereby, the link between art and unhappiness is established as well as the association of art with femininity since Lise becomes a personification of art (p. 67). Even though Lise represents Jerry's full access to French culture and art, the happy end does not clarify whether he will continue painting (p. 65). Thus, the ballet questions the co-existence of the romantic and artistic representation of Paris. This conflict is visualized in form of an ending which re-unites the two lovers. Therefore, the rivalry between art and love is emphasized through the establishment of two romances.

Moreover, Jerry personifies the ambivalence between American and French culture, considering the story being set in the post-war period of World War II (Levy, 2009, p. 307). This is, for instance, demonstrated by Paris being shown as the only city in which an American can paint and the presentation of French culture as a psychological nourishment for an American artist (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 66). This illustrates the fantastic representation of Paris as it is displayed as a source of inspiration and a place in which one can pursue art. Even though art does not win over the love to a French girl, art becomes Jerry's key to acceptance within the French culture and Paris itself as he is acknowledged for being a painter (p. 72). Although the film is set in the time period after World War II, the characters do not display any prejudice towards the American culture.

Additionally, other characters are introduced through their relation to the Parisian landscape as the pianist Adam Cook establishes his preference of living in Paris. Moreover, Adam embodies the artistic Paris as he focuses on creating art rather than on pursuing happiness through love (p. 65). Hence, the importance of music for the narrative is illustrated by Henri being a French musical star and thus, highlights the position of the film as a French musical. The constant connection to artistic forms such as painting and music establishes an artistic portray of Paris throughout the whole story.

Throughout the interaction of the two characters, the main female character Lise is introduced as Henri presents her as his girlfriend. Thus, Henri provides the audience with the background of their love story as he took care of Lise when becoming an orphan during World War II (Levy, 2009, p. 297). Without having a visual introduction of Lise, she is described as a

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vivid young girl, representing the beauty of Paris (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 75). Her different facets become visualized through her dancing performance as in which she is presented as colourful, vivid and charming and thus, can become all different kinds of women Henri would be interested in (p. 67). Simultaneously, Lise's characteristics can be transferred to the representation of Paris as Lise becomes an embodiment of its artistic representation. Thus, the role of art for the plot and the film is constantly visualized since it becomes an omnipresent topic.

Next, Henri's and Jerry's mutual friend Adam is introduced through the artistic element of performing a song together. Furthermore, the contrasting lifestyles of Henri and Adam become visible as Henri is representative for successful art and money while Jerry presents unprofitable art. Thus, this establishes the conflicting relationship between success and art as money is not accompanied by love which is illustrated in the love triangle.

The last main character Milo is introduced by approaching Jerry who displays his art in the Parisian streets. Her American origin first becomes apparent when trying to buy Jerry's pictures and converting the prices in dollars (Kirkham and Cohen, 2017, pp. 114- 115). Her character also illustrates the connectivity of the American and French culture as she is dressed in expensive French clothing (p. 114). Moreover, Milo's clothing, lifestyle and her ability to sponsor Jerry as an artist display the cliché of the typical old and rich American women, being able to live the American Dream abroad. This notion of the American Dream can be understood as the display of Paris as a fantastic place in which one is able to fulfil dreams and thus, contributes to the creation of a fantastic *Parisland*. As Milo is more interested in men than in art, Paris becomes a romantic destination for her in order to find happiness through love (Kirkham and Cohen, 2017, p. 114). Hence, the conflict between the artistic and romantic representation of Paris is established in the character of Milo.

Thus, the two female characters do not only represent the contrast between their origins but also oppose two representation of Paris as a vivid and playful place versus Paris as a cold and static place (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 69). Hence, the characters represent the relationship between America and

France as well as embody the different representations of Paris which will be discussed further.

4. Film finale

As the love triangle of the narrative falls apart when Lise decides to go abroad with Henri, the musical continues with a big final ballet sequence which reflects Jerry's feelings about the loss of Lise. Hence, the ballet projects seventeen minutes of a delirious dream of Jerry, showing his lost love dancing with the fantasy landscape of Paris. Due to the intensity of the ballet, it has an emotional and visual impact on the audience and leaves a final impression of the film (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 69).This is illustrated in the reception of the ballet sequence as an „extravagant and imaginative dream ballet finale".[6] Additionally, the ballet is representative for Minnelli's authorial signature as the stylistic originality and uniqueness create a special experience for the audience (Mary, 2010, pp. 160- 161; Rountree, 2008, p. 129). The authorial signature is also strongly carried by the music, costume design and choreography (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 69). Hence, the placement of *An American in Paris* in auteur cinema reflects on the representation of Paris since it is shown as particular unique in its role for art and love. Additionally, Paris is displayed as colourful and fantastic which is emphasized through Minnelli's specific use of visuals as the integration of artistic references.

Furthermore, Minnelli's dialectic approach to the contrary pairs of cinema and painting and Hollywood and art is underpinned by the relationship between the final ballet and the rest of the film (ibid.). Minnelli constantly merges these categories as the film becomes dominated by painting and art in the ballet section. In contrast, the happy end re-establishes the connection to Hollywood as the lovers become reunited in the final sequence. This dialectic is also visualized in the narrative as Jerry states his changing intention of staying in Paris. First, Paris has been a city of art and artistic achievement as his aim was to follow inspirational artists like Rousseau and Lautrec (01:30:00). But the loss of Lise has changed his perception as the artistic achievement cannot keep up with the accomplishment of pure love.

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[6] http://www.filmsite.org/amer2.html, 21.07.18, 16:32.

Hence, the ballet illustrates this struggle between art and love and the dualistic representations of Paris as artistic and romantic.

The ballet consists of six sequences in which Jerry is chasing his French dream girl throughout the Paris of his favourite French artists as famous French paintings come to life, underlined by the music of Gershwin and the Parisian landscape (p. 65; see fig. 10). The different paintings and musical compositions represent the changing mood within the ballet, leading to the big finale of the film (p. 70). Therefore, the emotional rollercoaster is highlighted by the use of a seasonal iconography as the ballet plays through the seasons fall, spring and summer. Even though the sequences differ inherently in their compositions, they are connected through the element of the symbolic red rose which Lise drops before leaving Jerry (01:35:36; see fig. 11).

Fig. 10, Lise in the female adaption of Rousseau's *The Football Players* by Henri Rousseau (see original in fig. 6), *An American in Paris* (01:42:55).

Fig. 11, Lise holding the symbolic red rose in the setting of Renoir's *Pont Neuf* a flower market with the reference to the femme fleur of the surrealist (see original in fig. 4), *An American in Paris* (01:40:35).

The ballet starts with the pieces of a sketch which Jerry has been torn apart after having lost Lise. Its seamless reconstitution and the transition from black-and-white to colours point out the entering of a magical and fantastic world in which logic and reality are left behind (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 69; see fig. 1 and fig. 2). Especially the splash of colours emphasizes the entrance to magical world and is initiated by Jerry picking up the rose.

The sketch itself is redolent of Raoul Dufy's shorthand calligraphy, being a lettering technique with a writing instrument. Hence, it produces several references to art works as it can be linked to the depiction of a threshold in Dufy's *La Grille* from 1930 (see fig. 2). Hence, it serves as a metaphorical entrance to the fantasy world of Paris, being *Parisland* with reference to the American concept of Disneyland (p. 78). The undulations of the trelliswork have allowed Dufy to pursue his aim for baroque playfulness in nervous and elegant lines (ibid.).

Instead of a gate, Jerry walks through the entrance of a park which is framed by statues of horses on each side, being as eager about leaving their marble pedestals as Jerry wants to be lost in reverie (ibid.). This set can be understood as a reference to Dufy's views of *Saint- Cloud* which is a park on the left bank of the Seine, to the northwest of Paris. In the painting *Park of Saint-Cloud* (1919), a gravel path in the foreground leads to a balustrade under which the Seine flows (ibid; see fig. 12). Hence, Jerry is positioned on a balcony, having the Parisian landscape in front of him and devotes himself

to the notion of the picturesque and lost Paris as Dufy illustrates the Paris of the 19th century painters (ibid.). Even though Jerry has lost Lise, Paris is still a beautiful and mythical place to him which is illustrated by the play of colours during the ballet.

Fig. 12, *Le Parc de Saint-Cloud* (engl. *The Park of Saint-Cloud*) by Raoul Dufy, (c) Public Domain US, Original 1919.[7]

Simultaneously, Paris is represented as a fantastic city in which one can dream of pursuing art or love. As the last scene before the ballet in Beaux-Arts Ball is shown in black-and-white, the transition to colour in the ballet sequence emphasizes this notion of fantasy. On the one hand, the absence of paintings and the use of colour take the ambivalence between art and love on as the colours represent fantasy and emotion. On the other hand, the exhibition of famous French paintings emphasizes the artistic fulfilment French art can offer. Additionally, the wide range of colours can be considered as overwhelming for the audience as it turns the ballet into a feast and the paintings into kitsch (ibid.).

As Jerry has lost the love of Lise and thus, his source of inspiration for art, Lise becomes the embodiment of famous French paintings by Lautrec,

Renoir and Dufy. Hence, Jerry creates a non-painterly reunion with Lise which indicates a reference to Hollywood. In order to illustrate Jerry's emotional struggle, the ballet plays through the different seasons, starting with Dufy as representative for autumn and his sadness after the break-up with Lise. Hence, the seasonal iconography underpins the different moods as Dufy's black-and white sketch flies across in a swirl of autumn leaves while spring signals a newly found peace as Jerry and Lise are engaging in classical dance (p. 68). Thus, Dufy is fall, Renoir is spring and Rousseau represents summer whose work is not cited through a specific painting but rather appropriated.

As discussed, the Dufyesque starting sequence of the ballet displays the notion of a lost Paris as Jerry's perception of the city changes with the absence of Lise as a source of inspiration and love. Consequently, fall is characterised by Jerry's dramatic dance with white and red female furies in a Dufyesque Place de la Concorde which simultaneously represent his relationship with Milo and his separation from Lise (p. 70). This dramatic notion is emphasized through the music and rather hasty dance movements.

In contrast, the spring sequence exhibits a free adaptation of Renoir's *Pont Neuf* (1872) which is characterised by pastel colours and serves as a „painterly location and spatial framework"(ibid.). As the original painting illustrates pedestrians on the *Pont Neuf*, it does not only display the picturesque Parisian setting but also movement for the film itself as the pedestrians are spread over the *Pont Neuf* (Forgione, 2005, p. 666; see fig. 4). Hence, the display of spring is characterised by graceful movements and contrasts the furious dance of the previous sequence (see fig. 4). Hence, the sequence is focused on the love story itself rather than on the Parisian landscape which differentiates between the adaptation and the original painting (p. 667). Additionally, the revisitation of Renoir's *Pont Neuf* refers to the stereotype of *April in Paris* which links love with mild weather (ibid.). Furthermore, the positioning of flower stands with light blue flowers prepares Lise's metamorphosis into the femme-fleur of the surrealists (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 70).

The summer sequence of the ballet refers to the art of Rousseau as the tap dancers in the centre remind of his work *The Football Players* (1908) (ibid.;

see fig. 6). This is illustrated by the colourful outfits of the dancers which are borrowed from the famous photograph of a Parisian shop window with the title *Men's Fashion* (1925-27) by Eugene Atget (ibid.; see fig. 13 and fig. 14). Moreover, the scene is underlined by being colourful and the dominance of entertainment and dance. This sequence is followed by an emotional dance of Lise and Jerry dancing around a fountain at *Place de la Concorde* and thus, returns to the lover's impression of losing each other.

Fig. 13, *Men's Fashion* by Jean-Eugéne-Auguste Atget, (c) Jean-Eugéne Atget/ Victoria and Albert Museum London, Original photograph taken in 1923-24 in Paris, Printed in 1956.[8]

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[8] http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O166741/mens-fashions-photograph-atget-jean-eugene/, 22.07.18.

Fig. 14, Adaption of Photograph of *Men's Fashion* by Eugéne Atget, *An American in Paris* (01:43:36).

In contrast, the fifth sequence and climax of the ballet returns to an upper mood as it is underlined by jazz music. Moreover, the sequence refers to the painting *Chocolat Dancing in the Irish and American Bar* (1896) by Toulouse-Lautrec in which a black man performs for his own pleasure at the Nouveau Cirque (ibid.; see fig. 8). This also illustrates Jerry not being a great artist himself but making all kinds of French people dance with him. The original character Chocolat is replaced by the performance of a white man which critics claim to be a white-washing. But Minnelli uses blackness rather as an illustration for the foreignness of Jerry (ibid.). The centrepiece becomes particular energetic through the play of jazz music as well as through the pace of the dance, all leading towards a reunion of the two lovers. The happy end is signified by the return to Dufy's gate and a red rose waiting to be picked up by Jerry. Hence, the final sequence returns to reality and shows the happy reunion of the two lovers, running into each other's arms on the stairway.

In addition, the ballet absorbs the rivalry between love and art as it briefly presents art as an alternative to love in form of the ballet as it focuses on the display of French art. Even though love is shown as pre-dominant through Lise's embodiment of art, the happy end is a rather weak compromise between the two elements as only the Parisian skyline indicates that Jerry and Lise can stay together. Hence, the end still bears an inner struggle and the dialectic does not solve the conflicts between art, love and money

through the Hollywood formula of a happy ending (p. 69). On the one hand, this can be understood as a reference to the Hollywood concept of happy end as it is not completely applicable to French culture. On the other hand, the film creates a fantastic notion of Paris, constituting a magical *Parisland* which refers to the American concept of Disneyland (p. 78). As Disneyland displays a place where fantasy can run free, this notion is projected on Paris as a city (ibid.). Simultaneously the Disneyfication sanitizes Paris as a space for celebration and emphasizes the notion of infinite opportunities within this space (Sorkin, 1992, pp. 5-6). Hence, the creation of a fantastic *Parisland* plays with childhood and adolescence as they are shown as transient states and part of the creative mind (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 79). This demonstrates that the film cannot completely escape the American culture but appropriates parts of it. The music of the American George Gershwin underlines this aspect as it merges both cultures and also unites dance and painting in form of a fantastic Paris (Levy, 2009, p. 306). Additionally, the focus on the visuals and the music of the film is emphasized as it screens a sequence of pure imaginary and music before reuniting the two lovers (p. 307). Hence, the film ends with a final shot of the Parisian skyline.

5. Use of colour and visual references

As the storyline of the dramatic love triangle establishes different contrasts as between art and love, American and French, a vivid and a cold Paris, the film also makes use of particular colours in order to underline these impressions (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 75). On one hand, the Parisian landscape is generally displayed through colours with a nostalgic filter, focusing on displaying the picturesque image of Paris. Thus, the displayed images receive a French charm and contribute to this charismatic portrayal of Paris. On the other hand, the colours also emphasize the ambivalence towards art as the film changes from black and white to colours during the ballet. Hence, the colours illustrate the longing for the richness of French art as Lise embodies different paintings and simultaneously overwhelm the viewer by special effects turning the paintings into kitsch and the ballet in an overall feast (p. 70). Therefore, the colours used during the ballet

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promote a fantastic and emotional representation of Paris as Jerry has just lost Lise to Henri as the ballet is dominated by a colourful display of Paris. Additionally, the different emotions are visualized in pastel colours for happiness and love and the red of the female furies for the conflict between art and love. In order to represent the different moods in Jerry's state of mind the film makes use of seasons, starting with autumn as representative for Jerry's sadness (ibid.). This use of different nuances of colours supports the illustration of the different seasons and moods (Johnson, 1958, p. 33). Additionally, the colours and music are highly entangled as they simultaneously are able to sketch a particular picture of the different feelings. The fusion of both underlines the storyline and the emotions connected to it.

6. Use of music, sound and speech

As the story of the film is told through the elements of song and dance, these do not interrupt the flow of the story but turn it into an integrated musical (Genné, 1983, p. 247). Furthermore, the musical is based on the orchestral compositions by George Gershwin which emphasize the importance of music for the storyline of the film (Levy, 2009, p. 306). Since Gershwin represents the overcoming of the boundaries between Europe and America, the music can be considered as a tool to illustrate this hybrid relationship as Gershwin himself had been a soldier in France (ibid.). Thus, his music can be considered as being influenced by both cultures as he also composed in Paris. Even though the music represents nostalgia for America, it is accompanied by images of the picturesque Parisian landscape and thus, brings together American and French culture (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 75). As Gershwin had been dead for over a decade by the release of the musical, his brother Ira Gershwin provided adaption for lyrics and music in the film (Levy, 2009, p. 296).

Furthermore, the music serves as the connecting element as the three male characters are united by performing a musical piece together. Thus, the music does not adumbrate the upcoming love rivalry between Jerry and Henri. This illustrates the music being a tool to underline the relationships

between the characters and its highlighting of the notion of romance. Thus, the music does not only underline the different relationships but also the different character traits of the female characters Lise and Milo. Especially the introduction of the Lise is dominated by music as she performs different musical numbers in order to express different adjectives, as enchanting or modern, Henri uses for her description. Hence, Lise different facets as her liveliness are emphasized by the changing music and contrast the static and cold personality of Milo (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 67, p. 75).

Moreover, the music plays a crucial role in the big finale as the ballet sequences are accompanied by different musical pieces by George Gershwin. Hence, the appropriation of Rousseau's *The Football Players* is underlined by the tap dance while Toulouse- Lautrec's *Chocolat Dancing in the American and Irish Bar* accompanied by jazz music (see fig. 6 and fig. 8). Therefore, the music supports the choreographically essay of the ballet, emphasizing the different parts of French art history (Levy, 2009, p. 297; Johnson, 1958, p. 33). Overall the music contributes to the different representations of Paris as it underlines the romantic plot as well as underlines the fantastic notion of the ballet finale.

7. Representation of Paris and cultural mindset

As highlighted through the analysis of the visuals and the narrative, *An American in Paris* focuses on displaying the Parisian landscape and its different representations as fantastic, artistic and romantic. The setting of the musical in Paris and its importance is illustrated through the constant display of characteristic landmarks of Paris as the *L'Arc de Triumphe* and the two *Fontaines de la Concorde* which are located in the centre of Paris (00:01:51). Therefore, the characters are introduced in relation to Paris which is shown as a destination of choice, being chosen for artistic fulfilment. As almost all characters are highly involved with art by being a painter, an art dealer, a pianist or a musical singer, Paris is shown as an artistic residence. Thus, the characters contribute to the artistic representation of Paris which becomes highly intertwined with the fantastic notion of Paris as it is displayed as a mythical place in which one can fulfil his or her dreams.

Simultaneously, the characters and their romantic engagement highlight the romantic representation of Paris as it is a dominating element in the narrative of the musical. Hence, the musical contrasts these different representations as it questions the co-existence of love and artistic pursue throughout its narrative. These contrasting elements only become to co-exist in the fantastic representation of Paris as a *Parisland* since the reference to the American concept of Disneyland implies the notion that everything is possible. This will be discussed further, taking the detailed analysis of the artistic and romantic representation of Paris into account.

On the one hand, Paris is illustrated as a city which serves as a source of inspiration and as a hotspot for connecting with other artists (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 68). This is highlighted by the female characters of Lise and Milo as the former serves as embodiment and inspiration for art and the latter provides promoting Jerry's painting among her artistic contacts (ibid.). Hence, the pushing of the painter's career can be understood as an integration of the American Dream motive as Paris is presented as the only city an American can paint in (p. 66). Simultaneously, the motive of the American Dream contributes to the creation of a fantastic Parisland, being characterised by fulfilling dreams and fantasy. As French culture is shown as psychological nourishment for an American painter, the myth of being a source of inspiration and fantasy becomes attached. Hence, art is depicted as a tool of self-expression which can be found in Paris.

Likewise, the dialectic between French and American culture is established as the former one is characterized by being free for imagination while the latter one is rather associated with money and success. Hence, the characters of Jerry and Milo illustrate this struggle between the cultures since they both came to Paris in order to pursue their artistic career (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 67). Hence, the element of art merges both cultures and is able to unite them. This notion is underpinned by the music of Gershwin as the composer is representative for a whole generation of soldiers having been sent to Paris. Thus, the character of Jerry is one of these soldiers who have decided to stay in Paris after the end of the war (Levy, 2009, p. 307). This illustrates the interplay between the artistic and fantastic representation of Paris as the

element of art becomes a fantastic and uniting tool which can only be found in Paris.

On the other hand, Paris is displayed as a city of romance since the plot establishes two romances, being connected in a love triangle as Lise is involved with Henri and Jerry. While the dates with Henri are not shown visually, the secret meetings between Jerry and Lise are always set at the Seine bank which loads the Parisian landscape with romance. Additionally, the musical style of the film contributes to an overall romantic atmosphere, reaching its peak in the finale of the ballet sequence. Hence, this contributes to the myth-making of Paris being a romantic place as the characteristics of the Parisian landscape are constantly used as a backdrop for the romance of the film. Hence, the romantic notion becomes a natural attachment to the Parisian landscape and its characteristics.

The love triangle between Lise and the two different men does not only contribute to the representation of Paris but also to the perception of the relationship between American and French culture as Henri is a French musical star and Jerry an American painter (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 65). Hence, this illustrates the struggle between the two cultures after their history in World War II which is ultimately resolved by the dream ballet celebrating the mythic union of America and Paris as well as of music and painting as art forms (Levy, 2009, p. 307).

The two conflicting elements of art and love are blended in the fantastic representation of Paris as the ballet creates a fantastic *Parisland* by merging art, love and fantasy into one big Parisian picture (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, pp. 78-79). The reference to the American concept of Disneyland is emphasized through the combination of dance, music and painting in the ballet as these are recurrent elements in every performance of Disney. Disneyland itself has been discussed as being the utopia of leisure since it establishes an overall iconography of dreams, hopes and fantasy (Sorkin, 1992, p. 5). Hence, Disneyland as a place is captured by its aura of fantasy and fulfilment which is achieved through the sanitization of every image (ibid.). The aura and overall iconography establish the myth of Disneyland being a place of fantasy and dreams to the point that the spectators would not even notice an irritating image as they are captured by the overall idea and

picturesque images. Hence, the reference to Disneyland places the fantastic notion of Paris within the realm of the possible as Disneyland does not represent a utopia without a location but does exist as a myth (p. 79). Thus, Disneyland as well as the notion of *Parisland* in the ballet perpetuates the image which has been already in place (ibid.). Hence, the recurrent element of fantasy in the musical makes it an integral part of Paris' identity as a place and establishes as well as naturalizes the myth of Paris being a fantastic.

Even though the ballet questions the co-existence of an artistic and romantic Paris, it also merges both representations as Lise becomes representative for love and an embodiment of French art. Thus, the merge of the artistic and romantic representation of Paris emphasizes the fantasized notion even more as it creates the feeling of endless opportunities. The fantastic notion of Paris also illustrates the coexistence of American and French culture as *Parisland* can be considered as the American way of staging French culture (p. 64).

As the final section of the ballet reunites the two lovers Jerry and Lise, it indicates that love wins out over art. Thus, the romantic facet of Paris seems to dominate over the artistic facet of the city. This metaphor can be transferred to the American-French relationship as the co-existence of both cultures is questioned through the love triangle but resolved through the reunion of the lovers. Hence, the liaison of Jerry and Lise also represents the union of the American and French culture and their possible co-existence (Levy, 2009, p. 307) Hence, the old France of Henri Bourel steps aside in order to let the American Jerry marry the young France, represented by Lise (ibid.). Therefore, the representation of Paris is highly interconnected with the cultural mindset of the time as the romance represents the bridge between Hollywood and Paris as well as the optimistic Zeitgeist of the post-war era (ibid.)

To sum up, the musical *An American in Paris* establishes three different representations of Paris, as it is displayed as a city of art, romance and fantasy. These constitutions are constructed through the visuals as the focus is on the picturesque landscape of Paris and supported by the plot and its characters. As the romance of Jerry and Lise is set at the Seine Bank and Lise becomes an embodiment of art, the landscape is loaded with art and

romance. Additionally, art is shown as part of everyday life and thus, contributes to the image of Paris as an artistic city. Moreover, the final ballet merges all three images into one big picture of Paris, creating a fantastic *Parisland*. Hence, Paris becomes attached with the meaning and myth of being a place of fantasy and dreams as one can find artistic or romantic fulfilment in it. The colours and music contribute to these representations of Paris as the colours support the picturesque and nostalgic facet of the city as well as the music underlines the romantic notion of the plot. Furthermore, the change from black and white to colours emphasizes the romantic facet of Paris as the colours indicate the reunion of the two lovers (p. 70). Even though the musical establishes various images, it also questions whether an artistic and a romantic Paris can co-exist as they are presented as rivals. According to the film, the romantic Paris wins over its artistic facet as the ballet concludes with Lise returning to Jerry. Simultaneously, love is displayed as a rather fugitive element but is also constantly projected on the Parisian landscape. Hence, the image of the romantic Paris seems to be more dominant and art is rather connected to unhappiness. As both facets become merged in form of the ballet finale, the representation of a fantastic Parisland is emphasized and displays the city as a naturally fantastic and picturesque place in which one can either follow artistic fulfilment or find pure romance.

II. Film Analysis *Playtime*

1. Approach and Background

The following film analysis discusses *Playtime* (Jacques Tati, 1967) as it displays a more modern and futuristic image of Paris which will be discussed in comparison to the classical image in *An American in Paris*. The analysis will take the elements of narrative, characters and their emphasis through the use of visuals, colours and sounds into account and thus, analyse how these contribute to the representation of Paris. The play with the audience's perception as a stylistic device will be examined in particular as it contrasts the different constitution and images of Paris. Additionally,

the cultural mindset becomes visual through the interplay of Parisian inhabitants and American tourists, visiting the city as a touristic destination. Hence, the representation of Paris is displayed in the interactions of the characters which highlight the play with the audience's perception.

The film *Playtime* is one of the eighteen films Tati has directed. It was shot in 1967 (Cardullo, 2002, p. 286). The film took about three years to be shot as Tati had started the constructions of the artificial setting on a wasteland outside Paris in 1964 (Borden, 2000, p. 218; Cardullo, 2002, p. 286). Hence, an area of 162.000 square feet with 65.000 squares of cubic concrete were turned into a modern and futuristic display of Paris, being dominated by the materials of glass and steel (Borden, 2000, p. 218; see fig. 15). This construction emphasizes the authorial signature of Tati as he had a particular vision of at the Parisian setting for *Playtime* in mind. Hence, the setting itself became the highlight of the film as it displays a Paris comprised of „glass, steel and concrete architecture" with reference to the destroyed *Esso* building at *La Defénse* (1963) and to the *Lever House* (1952) in New York. (ibid.; see fig. 16 and fig. 17). These references will be discussed further concerning their relevance for the representation of Paris as they have been chosen to be part of Tati's re-creation of Paris outside the city itself.

Fig. 15, Opening scene *Playtime*, display of modern architecture in *Tativille*/ Paris, *Playtime* (00:03:28).

Fig. 16, *Esso Building* in business district *La Defénse* in Paris (1963- 1993), (c) mirhat.ru.[9]

Fig. 17, Lever House (1952- today) in New York, (c) Ezra Stoller.[10]

Generally, Tati's films can be seen as a comment on modernity and its architecture as his films *Les Vacances de M. Hulot* (1953), *Mon Oncle* (1958) and *Trafic* (1971) each pick up different elements of modernity as the technological invasion of the automobile and reflects on these in a comic way (Cardullo, 2002, p. 287). In *Playtime* the modern architecture and its

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[9] https://mirhat.ru/de/walls-and-partitions/area-dfense-in-paris-a-large-arch-photo-how-to-get-architecture-la-dfense-directions-map-address-photo-history/, 23.07.18.

[10] https://www.som.com/projects/lever_house, 23.07.18.

uniformity become the theme of Tati's criticism as Tativille can be understood as an „assault on modernism" (Borden, 2000, p. 218). Hence, Tativille itself plays with the audience's perception as it represents a combination of history, memory, family and other aspects of old France as well as the modern and business side of Paris, Thus, the film can be seen as representative for the ambivalence towards modernism in French post-war society and its simultaneous struggle with Americanisation (p. 219). This aspect will be picked up in the discussion of the cultural mindset of the time period. Even though the film positions itself against modernism, it does not criticise all modern objects in general but rather the bigger image of the consumerist society itself (p. 218). Therefore, the modern architecture becomes a metaphor in order to express this criticism as well as contributes to the representation of an urban Paris.

This criticism of modernity is achieved through the element of comic and the application of a combination of mis-en-scène cinema and comic sound effects (Borden, 2000, p. 219; Valck, 2005, p. 224). Hence, the use of mimic and gesture and as well as the related use of sound is crucial in order to understand Tati's approach of criticism. This can also be understood as a reference to director's background as a mime artist as which he had a breakthrough in 1936 (Valck, 2005, p. 224). Thus, language only plays a minor part in Tati's cinema as it is not particularly needed as a support for the narrative (ibid.).

Moreover, Tati rather expects the spectator to actively participate as there is no use of close-ups or montage as guidance for the audience (Cardullo, 2002, p. 286). Thus, *Playtime* can be understood as an invitation to explore the modern construction of Paris without a directional guide (ibid.). Even though Tati's cinema is characterised by an authorial signature as he constructs every detail of it, such is also coined by the aim of leaving freedom to the audience. This can be described as a „return to innocence of vision" as the image is not organised hierarchically (p. 285). On the one hand, this freedom is reflected on the representation of Paris as the film is not dominated by a hierarchical order of images. On the other hand, this freedom plays with the audience's perception as the juxtaposition of different film elements contributes to the overwhelming feeling of

modernity. The visual analysis will emphasize this notion and its interplay with the audience.

Additionally, Tati's authorial signature and comic is comprised in the creation of the character of Mr. Hulot who is first introduced in the film *Les Vacances de Monsieur Hulot* in 1953 and becomes a connecting element throughout the following films such as *Playtime* (ibid.). Hulot can be understood as Tati's alter ego as he is characterised as an outsider, being incompetent to react to human life and thus, creates a comic vision on everyday life (ibid.). The comical nature is not even created by the character itself but rather through his naive interplay with modernity and its environment. This is illustrated in Tati's use of everyday life as an inspiration for his comic interventions (ibid.). Additionally, Hulot is enacted by Tati himself which becomes visible in the mimic expression of the character (Valck, 2005, p. 228). Hence, the analysis will take these different elements in account in order to examine the constitution and criticism of Paris in *Playtime*.

2. Narrative

The film *Playtime* accompanies the character of Mr. Hulot (Jacques Tati) during one day of everyday life in modern Paris and creates a comic criticism through the character's interaction with the urban architecture and its inhabitants. Hulot's everyday's life is characterised by getting lost in the uniformity of Paris' urban architecture and ending up in comic situations with Parisian inhabitants as well as foreigners. Throughout Hulot's exploration of the city, the audience gets to know different spaces of the city which are all dominated by the elements of steel and glass (Borden, 2000, p. 218). Thus, the different setting cannot be categorised without having them announced as a particular space. This is already highlighted in the opening scene as the setting seems to be a hospital but turns out to be an airport. Hence, this contributes to the representation of Paris as a modern and urban place.

The airport also becomes the setting for the introduction of a group of female American tourists who accompany Hulot in his exploration of Paris. In comparison to Hulot, the tourist group is rather looking for the old and

touristic facet of Paris than for its modern counterpart but still enthusiastically interacts with both parts. Hence, their stories and ways intersect throughout the story until they meet in the setting of the French restaurant *Royal Garden*. Their interactions turn the criticism of modernity in a comic one as their cultures and languages constantly clash in the everyday life of Paris as they represent different facets of Paris. Even though Hulot interacts with the modern environment of Paris, he also represents the struggle of being overwhelmed with modern inventions. The tourist group also engages with the modern Paris but is more driven by the intention of finding the picturesque and romantic display of Paris like it is represented on postcards.

The film does not introduce any of the characters before having displayed the urban Parisian landscape as well as not without having explored its uniformity first. Hence, the focus is on the setting of the story as it is placed in a clean and sterile environment, dominated by its uniformity. The group of American tourists is briefly introduced when arriving at the airport while Hulot is introduced by having a business appointment in one of the skyscrapers. Following, the plot focuses on Hulot exploring the office space in a comic way as well as ending up on a fair for household items. Generally, Hulot's everyday life is characterised by coincidences and the flow of urban life as he constantly ends up in different places as well as meets people who recognize him by chance. Additionally, Hulot and the American tourist Barbara (Barbara Dennek) bypass each other rather randomly in settings like a household fair and the French restaurant *Royal Garden*.

Throughout comic and chaotic break-downs at the *Royal Garden*, Hulot and Barbara end up celebrating the modern disorder. The mixture of different languages and the use of subtitles emphasize this notion of disorder. Therefore, the communication between Hulot and Barbara is dominated by mimic and gesture which does not stop them from a romantic engagement as they spend the night together, exploring a French drugstore. The romantic notion is highlighted by Hulot's purchase of a goodbye present for Barbara as she and her tourist group are leaving Paris in the morning. Thus, the narrative establishes different topics such as the different facets and

lifestyles in Paris and the post-war atmosphere between France and America. These different aspects become visible in form of the overall criticism of modernity and the comic approach to it.

3. Characters

The film does not present any human characters until having established the modern Parisian landscape, displaying images of skyscrapers in an urban setting. Thus, the aspect of modernity and its inhabitants is established before introducing more relevant characters for the story. But throughout the film the characters become important in order to explore modernity and urbanism.

The main character Hulot is first introduced through a mix-up in the Parisian streets. Even though the audience never gets to know Hulot's first name, he constantly gets recognized by Parisian people as an old colleague from military service (Borden, 2000, p. 220). Simultaneously, Hulot is not given a first name as he is representative for everyone in the city, being peripheral to it (ibid.). This is emphasized by the overall dress code of the urban business men as they are all wearing the same jackets and hats, dominated by the colours black and grey. Hence, the uniformity of modernity is not only expressed in the urban setting of the film but also through the uniformity of its inhabitants.

As the film is mostly shot in long-shots tableaux, the audience gets to see Hulot in a full image (Cardullo, 2002, p. 286). Hulot's usual appearance is characterised by an attempt to dress properly with wearing a bow tie or open collar but simultaneously is accompanied by comic elements as too short trousers (Borden, 2000, p. 231). This highlights an issue of modernity as people are able to dress better and focus on luxury but disappear from the world itself (Cardullo, 2002, p. 295). Hulot can be considered as part of modern society as he responds to the uniformity of dress. This means Hulot is not criticizing modernity and its uniformity but rather playing with it through exploring its environment and interacting with its inhabitants. Hence, Hulot represents Paris as a place influenced by modernity and its uniformity as he becomes part of the grey and black dominated landscape of the city. This illustrates the modern transformation of Paris from a romantic

and picturesque place to an urban and uniform setting without particular interaction.

Furthermore, the exploration of the modern environment becomes comic through Hulot's interaction with it as he constantly gets lost within the city's uniform setting and its modern objects. For instance, he explores the waiting room of an office building as he plays around with the chair, creating comic sounds through normal movements. But it is not Hulot himself turning his exploration into comic but rather the surrounding environment which creates this effect (p. 292). Hence, the comic potential of the modern city is visualized through Hulot's interaction with it as he does not follow the instructions of modern architecture (Borden, 2000, p. 221, p. 236).

Additionally, Hulot barely speaks but is rather characterised by the noises he produces through the interaction with modern objects. Therefore, the use of sounds like footsteps and movements in the modern environment attaches identity to the characters and create comic situations in case of Mr Hulot (p. 225). This interaction with the modern environment also turns his body into a mediator between humans and modern objects (p. 229). Simultaneously, Hulot observes the interaction between other humans and the modern environment in order to reproduce these. Hence, this enhances the effect of uniformity which is displayed in the setting and the characters.

In addition, the character of Hulot can be understood as a reference to Guy Debord's *The Society of Spectacle* (1967) in which modern society is characterised by its simultaneity of uniformity and division (Debord, 1967, p. 23). Hulot visualizes this spectacle in form of his movements within the space of concentrated bureaucratic capitalism as he has to wait for his appointment in an office building and is turned into a spectacle himself by being put in a glassy room (p. 26; see fig. 18). Hence, this visualizes the notion of homogenized space as the Parisian image is dominated by its uniformity and the materials of glass and steel (p. 63).

Fig. 18, Hulot interacting with the modern environment of an office building, *Playtime* (00:18:16).

Likewise, the modern life of Paris is explored through a group of female American tourists who have travelled there in order to experience the real Paris. Hence, they are introduced in the sterile setting of the airport, including the female main character Barbara. The tourist group is characterised by their acceptance of and enthusiasm about modern life which is emphasized by one of the tourists statement about her feeling home everywhere she goes (00:08:30). Thus, this confirms the uniformity of space as the tourist group could have arrived in the airport of any European city. Simultaneously, it illustrates the banalization of travelling as it becomes a pre-packaged consumption through which tourists experience cities like Paris in a uniform way (Debord, 1967, p. 63). The uniformity is also reflected in groups' clothing style as the women are all dressed the same, wearing similar dresses and hats. Additionally, the tourist group represents the expectations which are connected to a visit of Paris. As the tourist gaze is dominated by its increased sensibility for the landscape, tourists tend to look for features outside everyday life in order to have an experience outside the ordinary life (Urry and Larsen, 2011, p. 4). This is highlighted by the tourists' immediate wondering about the location of the monuments (00:11:21). Even though the American tourists have accepted modernity and urbanism, they are looking for the old Paris which is characterised by monuments like the Eiffel Tour and Sacré-Coeur rather than by skyscrapers. Their ambivalent attitude is also reflected in their enthusiasm about the household fair as they are amazed by the modern objects.

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Moreover, the main female character Barbara is torn between the two pools of a modern Paris and its authentic facet. Even though her tourist group is astonished by the abundance of modern objects, Barbara keeps looking for the old facet of Paris as her fellow travellers constantly have to remind her of moving along. Her interest in the old Paris is displayed in her aim to take a picture of a traditional flower stand which is accompanied by an old French woman (see fig 19). This intention of remembering the old Paris is constantly disrupted by modern life as pedestrians cross her pictures (Boden, 2000, p. 239).

Fig. 19, Barbara's attempt to take a picture of a Parisian flower stand, Playtime (00:31:00).

Additionally, her fellow travellers constantly order her to keep up as they rush through Paris in order to see the important sights as well as explore Paris' modernity. Hence, the ambivalence between the old and modern Paris and the connected expectations are embodied by the character of Barbara. Even though the film focuses on displaying the modern Paris, Barbara enables the audience to discover images of the old Paris in form of reflections on the glass of the office buildings (see fig. 20). Hence, Barbara plays with the modern environment just as much as the character of Hulot since she accepts modernity but interacts with its material.

Fig. 20, Reflection of the *Eiffel Tower* on the surface of an office building,
Playtime (00:33:18).

Simultaneously, the interaction between Hulot and Barbara represents the
relationship between America and France in the ongoing post-war period.
Throughout the film, Hulot's and Barbara's ways intersect several times
before they actively engage in the setting of the restaurant *Royal Garden*.
This interaction is dominated by mimic and gesture as well as by a multi-
lingual dialogue in French and English (p. 225). Even though they cannot
understand each other verbally, Barbara is entertained by Hulot's comic
interaction with the modern Paris. Thus, their interaction reminds the
audience of the romantic facet of Paris which is only displayed in the
interaction of the main characters as well as in the dancing of couples in the
French restaurant. The romantic notion is highlighted as Hulot buys flowers
as well as a scarf with a Parisian imprint as a goodbye present for Barbara.
As the modern environment gets in his way, Hulot instructs another man to
give the present to Barbara as she is about to leave Paris with her tourist
group and makes the scenery more romantic. This establishes a positive
connotation to the post-war relationship between America and France as the
American tourist group is overall accepted and Barbara even takes a
memory of France home. Simultaneously, the differences of the cultures are
reflected through the use of multi-lingual dialogues which do not contribute
to the communication between American and French people (p. 225). These
rather show that there is still some struggle between the two countries.

Moreover, the characters Hulot and Barbara move between the space of work and leisure as they explore office buildings as well as the restaurants and Parisian streets (p. 240). Thus, the characters display the everyday life in a modern Paris and interact with its uniform environment and its inhabitants as well as tourists. Their interplay with different materials of the modern Paris also visualizes several underlying facets of the city as the old and romantic Paris is displayed in form of reflections and gestures. Especially Barbara is constantly playing with the reflections of the old Paris as she discovers these in glass doors. The characters and their interaction with Paris contribute to the different representations of Paris and question these as the romantic Paris still seems to exist underneath its modern surface.

4. Film Finale

The finale of the film is set in the French restaurant *Royal Garden* and continues in the discovery of the Parisian streets later on. The *Royal Garden* is introduced as a place of modernity as its appearance is shaped by the sterile combination of the materials stone, steel and glass. As the restaurant has just opened, the audience gets to the see the staff fixing the last things in order to keep up its modern appearance. Hence, the interior of the restaurant contributes to the uniformity of a modern Paris. Throughout the night the restaurant becomes crowded with Parisian inhabitants as well as foreigners with whose impressions the restaurant is most concerned. The preservation of the modern facet seems to be most important as guests should get the right impression of Paris for which the restaurant can be seen as a metaphor. This urban facet of Paris becomes hard to maintain as the staff and guests of *Royal Garden* experience comic and chaotic breakdowns since the facade of the restaurant is literally breaking apart. Hulot and Barbara end up celebrating this modern disorder as they create a playful interaction with the lose material. This disorder is emphasized by the mixture of different languages and the use of subtitles. Hence, the different origins and cultures of the guests become irrelevant as they celebrate the disorder and break-down of modernity together (see fig. 21). Hulot and Barbara also end up celebrating the modern disorder together as they interact through mimics

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and gestures. Hence, this break-down of the restaurants displays Paris' break with its modern transformation and contributes to the argument that there also different facets of Paris underneath the surface.

Fig. 21, Celebration of the modern disorder in the *Royal Garden*, *Playtime* (01:46:30).

Additionally, this scene merges the French and American culture through the element of modern disorder and shows certain consent in the post-war setting of France. Hence, there are no prejudices towards American culture displayed and the American guests even engage with French culture by performing French songs in front of the restaurant's audience. The union of the two cultures is also illustrated in the romantic engagement of Hulot and Barbara who communicate through the element of comic. Hence, a small group of American tourists and French people continues the celebration in the streets of Paris, ending up in a Parisian drugstore.

The display of the Parisian café and drugstore contributes to the representation of the romantic Paris and fulfils the expectations of the American tourists as it is dominated by posters of the *Eiffel Tower* and *L'Arc de Triumph* as well as by Parisian inhabitants coming in from the farmer's market. Thus, the more rural life is visualized and contributes to the existence of an old Paris within the modern environment. This is also illustrated in the inhabitant's comic engagement with the modern Parisian setting as they convert tubes into taps in order to drink liquor as well as turn cars into market stands. Hence, this emphasizes the old and more rural representation of Paris, being in contrast with its modern version.

Additionally, the representation of the old Paris is highlighted in the glass reflections on the modern surface as the café's door displays the reflection of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre (see fig. 22). Therefore, the representation of the old and romantic Paris is shown through the use and interplay with the modern materials. This means that the representation of the old Paris has not completely vanished yet but still co-exists in interplay with modernity. Hence, Tati plays with the audience's expectations by detaching Paris from the myth of being the most romantic place but simultaneously encourages it to interact with the modern surface in order to realize the mystification of Paris. Therefore, *Playtime* point outs the natural attachment of the romantic myth to Paris which is assumed to be an immanent part of Paris' identity. This romantic myth also implies a romantic tourist gaze as signs and monuments like Sacré-Coeur evoke the notion of a beautiful and romantic Paris (Urry and Larsen, 2011, p. 4). Additionally, the tourist gaze is focused on elements of the landscape which differ from everyday experience (ibid.). Thus, *Playtime* creates interplay between the everyday space of work and the special space outside everyday experience. This is illustrated by the lack of hierarchical guidance for the film as the audience is forced to find their own focus in the provided images. Simultaneously, this freedom can contribute to the audience's discovery of different representations of Paris.

Fig. 22, Reflections of Sacré-Coeur on the glass door of a French drugstore, *Playtime* (01:53:13).

Furthermore, the romantic representation of Paris is highlighted as Hulot gets Barbara a goodbye present which he is not able to give her himself as the modern environment prevents him from it. Hence, the present is

delivered by a random French boy and turns out to be a scarf with the imprint of the Eiffel Tower. Hence, the romantic notion is emphasized and Barbara gets to keep a piece of the romantic and old Paris.

The film finale reaches its peak as a modern roundabout is turned into a merry-go-round as the cars start moving in a circle which underlines the feeling of being on a fairground (see fig. 23). Hence, this transformation into a merry-go-round is emphasized by the wide range of different cars as a car of fire fighters, a garbage truck and a family van are shown. Additionally, the cars as well as the Parisian inhabitants are illustrated as colourful and filled with joy as the Parisian landscape turns into a playground.

Fig. 23, Roundabout turned into a Merry-go-round, *Playtime* (01:59:32).

This final section underlines the fantastic representation of Paris as it is turned into a magical place. It also adds to the idea of several representations of Paris being hidden in its modern surface but can still be found by paying attention. The scenery of the fantastic merry-go-round is turned into a postcard by taking the perspective of a man cleaning the windows inside. Hence, the image of Paris becomes framed by the window frame which simultaneously plays with the perception of the Parisian landscape as it constantly switching between the fantastic and modern display of the city (see fig. 24). The fantastic display of the merry-go-round is accompanied by the joyful exclamations of the American tourists before leaving the image of the old and fantastic Paris behind as they return to the urban setting of the airport.

Fig. 24, Play with the perception of the Parisian landscape, *Playtime*
(02:02:10).

5. Use of colours and visual references

As the film starts with establishing a rather urban Parisian landscape, the first images are dominated by the grey colour of the skyscrapers. Even though the film is shot in colour, this dominance of grey, black and white is pervaded throughout the whole film which contributes to an overall uniformity of the Parisian landscape. Hence, the skyscrapers and office buildings cannot be differentiated and the audience is dependent on the film defining space as a particular place. This emphasizes Tati's directional signature as he does not guide the audience but rather leaves it to interact with the provided images (Cardullo, 2002, p. 286). Hence, the colours contribute to the uniformity of space and visualize the effect of modernity. The display of a uniform Parisian landscape contrasts the romantic representation of Paris as this facet is only visualized in form of reflections on the glassy buildings of modernity. Debord and Chevalier refer to this as the „dead of the myth of Paris" as Paris has become a myth, being considered the most romantic city but has been turned into a uniform place by the influence of modernity (McDonough, 2008, p. 153). *Playtime* does not completely banish this idea but rather displays the transformation of Paris' physical and social fabrics in the 1970's as modernity becomes more dominant through the rise of business districts (ibid.).

This transformation of post-war Paris is also illustrated in Jean-Luc Godard's *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (orig. *2 ou 3 choses que je sais d'elle*; 1967) as the film displays the everyday life in contemporary

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France and criticizes its consumerist society (Macbean, 1968, p. 16). Hence, *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* discusses the growing infrastructure of the French capital and its contemporary struggle by displaying 24 hours of the life of a Parisian woman in the banlieues of Paris (ibid.). This highlights the relevance of *Playtime* and its discussion of the modern city as both films have been shot in 1967. Thus, it reflects on the cultural mindset of the time period as it shows the French society's struggle with the modern transformation of cities like Paris. Furthermore, Godard's *Alphaville* (1964) has already picked up the notion of a totalitarian future for Paris and displays of a pop version of the present (Thiher, 1976, p. 949). In comparison, *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* and *Playtime* rather works with a documentary view by taking future developments into account (ibid.). Thus, both films can be considered as an advanced version of *Alphaville*.

Especially the primary use of the colours grey and black contrasts the colourful display of Paris in *An American in Paris*. Simultaneously, this illustrates the difference between the time period as the Parisian landscape and its image is changing through the rising influence of modernity. The uniformity is also displayed in the conformity of dress as it is also dominated by the black and grey uniform of the French business men while *An American in Paris* is characterised by its colourfulness. Also the American tourist group is characterised by a uniform dress and thus, the characters of the film are placed in the same uniform setting but can still be distinguished through their dress.

Additionally, the inside of the buildings are characterised by their uniformity as they are dominated by grey and black and being a sterile space. Hence, space is only turned into a place by attaching it to certain meanings as *Playtime* uses verbal announcements to define space (Appadurai, 1996, p. 183). This underlines Tati plays with the perception of space as he makes use of the uniformity and the conformity of colours in order to leave the definition of space to the audience itself. The dominant use of the materials of glass and steel contribute to the creation of a uniform Paris as they equate the space of leisure and work. This is visualized in the business appointment Hulot attends for which he is expected to wait in a

glassy waiting room. Additionally, work and leisure become blended through the employment of the same interior items in both spaces as the same chairs are displayed in the waiting room and on the household fair. Even though the restaurant *Royal Garden* is dominated by the material of glass and steel, it simultaneously breaks with the uniformity of space as it is still under construction and falls apart throughout the chaotic events of the evening. Tati uses this setting of the restaurant in order to question the uniformity of space and modernity.

Simultaneously, Tati makes use of particular architectural references as the re-creation of Paris in form of Tativille outside the city allowed him to employ these (McDonough, 2008, p. 154). Hence, Tativille can be considered as being based on the Parisian *Esso Tower* (1963) and the *Lever House* (1952) in New York (Borden, 2000, p. 218). The *Esso Tower* has been the first office building in France and contributed to the establishment of the business district *La Defénse* in the west of Paris. Hence, the *Esso Tower* is used as a signifier for the beginning of modernity in France and Paris itself (Hilliker, 2002, p. 320). Even though the first tower has been demolished in 1993, the *Coeur Defénse Tower* still represents the business district today. Further, the Lever *House* can be understood as another reference for modernity and its uniformity as it characterised by the *international style* of classic and modern architecture (McDonough, 2008, p. 154) As the skyscraper has been built in 1951 and 1952 and is set in New York, it contributes to Tati's notion of the uniformity of cities. Thus, Tati uses the facets of anonymous post-war towers in order to display reflections of the old and romantic Paris (ibid.).

These architectural references add to the blending of work and leisure space and visualize the uniformity of modern architecture as it homogenizes the inhabitants itself. Even though Tati criticizes modernity, he displays the beauty of modern architecture as he does not aim to criticize modern objects per se but rather the consumerist society represented by it (p. 218). Thus, Tati does not shot modern architecture itself but displays the everyday life within it (p. 219). The setting in the uniform modern architecture contributes to Tati's comic approach as rigidity contrasts the characters' interactions with it.

Therefore, the dominant use of the dark colours and modern architectural monuments contributes to the modern representation of Paris as it becomes a unified space. The architecture and colours also underline the relationship between the city and its inhabitants as it is influenced by modernity and simultaneously biased by the notion of the old Paris. It also forces the audience to actively engage with the film as there is no guidance provided which illustrates Tati's authorial signature. Moreover, the use of colours and materials plays with the audience's perception as it is used to display other representations of Paris in form of reflections in the modern environment (Andrew, 2004, p. 45). Hence, *Playtime* contrasts the colourful display of the Parisian landscape in the musical *An American in Paris* which focuses on the romantic and fantastic representation of Paris. This illustrates the importance of colours for the representation of Paris as it changes the perception inherently. Thus, *Playtime* establishes a rather modern and urban representation of Paris but simultaneously questions this uniformity of space through the use of reflections.

6. Use of music, sound and speech

As Tati criticizes modernity in a comic way, he underlines this approach by making use of comic sound effects (Borden, 2000, p. 219; Valck, 2005, p. 224). Even though Tati's cinema is dominated by mime and gesture rather than language, he integrates particular sound effects to emphasize the comic visuals (Valck, 2005, p. 224). Hence, language only plays a minor part in Tati's cinema as well as in *Playtime* and is not particularly needed in order to understand the narrative (ibid.).

The rare use of language in *Playtime* is dominated by multi-lingual and unarticulated dialogues as the main characters Barbara and Hulot communicate through mimic and gesture (Boden, 2000, p. 225). Hence, Tati merges different languages together as English and French are mixed in particular (Chion, 1994, p. 180). This is emphasized in dialogues between the American tourist group and French waiters in the *Royal Garden* as they constantly keep on talking their own languages without understanding each other. The unimportance of the dialogues is also illustrated in the use of subtitles as just parts of the dialogues are captioned (p. 177). Moreover, the

dialogues are partly submerged in order to emphasize other sounds as chattering in the environment of the restaurant (ibid.). Thus, Tati uses emanation speech which cannot be fully understood and is not inherently tied to the narrative action (ibid.). This does not counteract the narrative and the interactions between the characters as these are illustrated by the use of mimic and gesture and do not need speech as a supportive element. The character of Hulot highlights this notion by his inability to respond in form of language and his dominant use of mimic and gesture in order to communicate with his environment.

Even though *Playtime* is not dominated by the use of speech, Tati makes use of sounds such as particular noises in order to underline the comic effect. In Tati's film speech, music and noise have to be differentiated as they have different functions. As Tati plays with the visual perception of the audience, he also plays with the spectator's audiovisual perception. For instance, Tati uses all kind of different sounds to accentuate the character's footsteps (p. 64). Hence, the use of sound contributes to the comic effect as it exaggerates Hulot's interaction with the modern Paris. This is also depicted in Hulot's interaction with the modern interior as he explores chairs in the waiting room of an office building which becomes comic scene through the use of sound. This underlines Tati's employment of non-verbal humour as the counteractive use of sound plays with audience's perception of the visuals (Mayer, 1955, p. 22). Tati particularly plays with the spectator's expectations as certain scenes create a sound expectation which is not fulfilled. Hence, the sounds break with the uniformity of the urban Paris as they do not match.

On one hand, the incomprehensibility of the dialogues contributes to the representation of a modern and uniform Paris as it presents human interactions as unimportant for modernity. On the other hand, the use of comic sound effects breaks with the modern representation of Paris and questions it. Thus, the use of comic sound effects plays with the audience's perception as it challenges the domination of modernity.

7. Representation of Paris and cultural mindset

The analysis of the visuals and the narrative emphasize Tati's play with the audience's perception as well as the interplay between the different representations of Paris. As the film is set in a modern and futuristic Paris, its landscape is dominated by a uniformity of modern architecture and colours. The dominant materials of glass and steel add to the uniformity of Paris as exterior and interior space becomes indistinguishable in their visuals. Hence, the visuals depict the uniform and urban image of Paris and create the idea of Paris being just another modern city as Tati uses references to modern office buildings as the discussed *Esso Tower* and *Lever House* (see fig. 16 and fig. 17).

Tati uses the modernist setting of *Playtime* in order to not only show the ambivalence of modernity but also to criticize the consumerist society itself as it is considered as the creator of uniformity (Borden, 2000, p. 218). This uniform representation of Paris is highlighted by the uniformity of dress of the Parisian inhabitants, being dominated by colours black and grey. Hence, the Parisian everyday life becomes influenced by the modern transformation of the city which is visualized in the amplitude of modern architecture. Tati employs this display of the modern transformation in order to point out the influence of modernity on the city. Hence, this play with the modern landscape and its contrasting of different representations can be considered as a heterotopian approach as these representations are simultaneously juxtaposed and reversed. This is underlined by the use of reflections of the old Paris on the modern surface of the city.

Furthermore, the characters' interactions with the modern surface are defined by their comic approach as Hulot for instance explores modern objects through naivety (Hilliker, 1998, p. 60). Additionally, the American tourist group draws attention to the existence of an old and romantic Paris as their intention is coined by the aim to experience the real Paris in form of famous monuments. *Playtime* displays this notion of the real Paris in form of reflections of the old Paris on the modern surface as on office buildings. This is illustrated in the display of the Eiffel Tower and Sacré-Coeur on the glass surface of office buildings (00:33:15). The old Paris is also visualized in the interactions and movements of the American tourist group as their trip

is dominated by a list of things to see which embraces the touristic representation of Paris. Simultaneously, the tourist group is characterised by its excitement for modernity and underlines ambivalence between the old and modern Paris.

Therefore, Tati uses the modern surface of Paris to display the romantic and old representation of Paris which is expected to be experienced as the American tourist groups shows. Simultaneously, the film explores the thinned-out texture of modern everyday life and shows the replacement of the romantic vision of Paris through its modern transformation (McDonough, 2008, p. 154). Thereby, *Playtime* constantly plays with the different representations of Paris and mixes them as for instance Hulot's view outside the office buildings is characterised by a mixture of skyscrapers and sights like the Eiffel Tower (see fig. 25).

Fig. 25, Skyline of modern Paris with elements of its old representation, *Playtime* (00:29:40).

The music contributes to the interplay of the representations as it does not match with the visuals of the setting. For example, the described scene of the Parisian skyline is accompanied by a sort of Hawaiian music which breaks with the scenery of being in Paris. Hence, Tati creates constant clashes of the modern Paris and its touristic and romantic representation and plays with the visually implied expectations. The creation of these disruptive moments makes the audience question their expectations as well as underlines the subjectivity of perception. This is exhibited in Barbara's attempt to take a picture of a flower stand as she considers it to be the real

and authentic Paris while the stand could be placed in any modern setting (00:31:02).

The modern environment is also used as a place of engagement of French and American culture as they interact in the same settings. As the communication is a mixture of different languages and subtitles, it becomes dominated by mimic and gesture. Hence, there is no culture dominating which is illustrated in the united celebration of modern disorder in the *Royal Garden*. On the one hand, there are only small moments in which the cultures clash as for instance Barbara's picture is interrupted by teenagers, listening to American music (00:31:02). These refer to historical background of the nation and the process of such as Americanisation is seen as a treat in the time period. On the other hand, the romantic engagement between the main characters Hulot and Barbara contributes to the interaction of both cultures. Simultaneously, it contributes to the romantic representation of Paris which is emphasized by Hulot's romantic gesture of a goodbye present.

This is underlined as the goodbye present of a scarf is imprinted with landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower which are representative for the old Paris. Hence, *Playtime* constantly juxtaposes these representations in order to contrast them and criticize the modern transformation of Paris. Even though Tati criticizes the Americanisation as being an indicator for the modern transformation, the joyful interaction of the French and American characters can be considered as a positive remark on the engagement of the cultures. This engagement is illustrated in the united performance of a French song in the *Royal Garden*.

Furthermore, *Playtime* displays the fantastic representation of Paris in form of the transformation of a modern roundabout into a merry-go-round which turns Paris back into a magical place. The combination of the visuals of different cars in the roundabout and the music of a kermis create a throwback to Paris being a place of fantasy and magic. This produces a nostalgic perception as the kermis and merry-go-round remind of childhood and a time before the modern transformation. Hence, the existence of a fantastic representation of Paris is pointed out to the audience. This section

can be seen as representative for a mythical Paris which cannot co-exist in the transformed environment of modernity.

To sum up, *Playtime* constantly plays with the audience's perception of Paris as well as with the tourist gaze and the connected expectations. Even though the film is dominated by the image of the modern Paris, it is contrasted by reflections of its old and romantic facet on the modern surface. Hence, the modern transformation of Paris is illustrated by the uniformity of its landscape which does not confirm the myth of Paris as a romantic and beautiful place, differing from everyday life. Simultaneously, the modern surface exhibits the touristic and old Paris in form of reflections of famous Parisian sights like the Eiffel Tower and Sacré-Coeur. Thus, the representation of the old and romantic Paris is hidden underneath the modern surface of office buildings. The romantic representation of Paris is emphasized by the romantic engagement of the main characters and their romantic gestures. This also illustrates the relationship between American and French culture as their relation is characterised cultural clashes as well as by openness and positivity.

Additionally, *Playtime* displays the fantastic representation of Paris by turning the modern landscape into a merry-go-round. Hence, the romantic and fantastic representation are displayed as rather nostalgic and swamped by the process of modernity. Hence, the romantic and fantastic representation of Paris is hidden in the comic interplay of the characters with the modern Parisian landscape and illustrates its subtle disappearance, evoked by the influence of modernity. Therefore, the modern and urban representation becomes dominant as the romantic and fantastic representation cannot coexist with modernity. This implies the detachment of the Parisian myth as well as a changing tourist gaze as the modern Paris cannot keep up with the connected expectations. Simultaneously, the reflections of the old and romantic Paris indicate that it does still exist. It can also be understood as a creation of awareness for the different representations of Paris as well as raising attention to details in the perception of Paris. Hence, *Playtime* critically reflects on the different representations of Paris.

III. Film Analysis *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain*

1. Approach and Background

The following film analysis examines the film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 2001) as it is a more recent film which displays Paris in its picturesque postcard version. The analysis will take the elements of narrative, characters as well as visuals, colours and sound into consideration and analyse their contribution to the representation of Paris. The film *Amélie* focuses on the display of a picturesque and romantic representation of Paris which is achieved through editing of the images. Hence, the displayed images contribute to the stereotypical portrayal of the Parisian landscape and lifestyle which implies a romantic mystification of the city.

Simultaneously, the use of sanitized images represent Jeunet's authorial signature which is shaped by his background in animation and advertising and his aim for perfectionism in images (Vanderschelden, 2007, pp. 3-4). This is illustrated in the picturesque and sanitized images of Paris in *Amélie* as all markers of time and modernity are erased (p. 66). Therefore, the film reflects Jeunet's authorial signature as being characterised by a „mixture of perfectionist composition and fertile imagination" and exhibits a duality in his artistic signature as well as in the representation of Paris in *Amélie* (Vanderschelden, 2007, p. 1).

One the one hand, the emphasis on a mythical and stereotypical portrayal of Paris supports the commercial image of French culture in cinema and thus, makes it more accessible for mass culture (Celestin, 2009, p. 40). On the other hand, the display of a flawless Paris can be considered a deconstructing element as it plays with the perception of the past by pointing out the emergence of a postmodern Paris. This demonstrates the duality of the representation of Paris in *Amélie* and will be discussed further as it is influenced by elements of nostalgia and fantasy (Oscherwitz, 2011, p. 512). This duality will also be employed in order to reflect on the cultural mindset of the time.

The film *Amélie* was the fourth feature film of Jean-Pierre Jeunet after having produced the features *Delicatessen* (1991) and *La cité des enfants*

perdu (1995) in collaboration with film director Marc Caro which have contributed to the acknowledgement of Jeunet as an *auteur* (Vanderschelden, 2007, p. 1). Additionally, Jeunet has created the film *Alien: Resurrection* (1998) which has been a solo production in the United States (p. 6). Hence, *Amélie* can be considered as Jeunet's return to his original inspiration as the film rediscovers the fairy-tale and mythic Paris of his youth (Andrew, 2004, p. 34). The film title itself can be understood as a reference to Sacha Guitry's *Le Destin fabuleux de Désirée Clary* (1942) which narrates the story of a French girl in Marseille and hence, can be seen as another inspirational source for Jeunet (Vanderschelden, 2007, p. 16).

The return to a mythic Paris is also illustrated by the setting of *Amélie* in popular Parisian places as the narrative is spun around the area of Montmartre and displays a postcard image of Paris. Hence, the main character's wanderings through the city are dominated by iconic Parisian landmarks which contribute to the picturesque representation of Paris (Celestin, 2009, p. 43). Likewise, the nostalgic mode is visualized through the borrowing of images from well-known films by for instance Marcel Carné which will be elaborated further in the visual analysis (Oscherwitz, 2011, pp. 505- 506).

Moreover, the narrative of *Amélie* emphasizes the mythic and romantic representation of Paris as the story focuses on a young French waitress who works in the area of Montmartre and shocked by the events of princess Diana's death decides to devote her life to repairing the lives of the people surrounding her. The combination of the picturesque visuals and the optimistic and playful approach of the main character Amélie can be considered a major contribution to the film's success as it was not predicted to become a box office hit (Vanderschelden, 2007, p. 1). Thus, the playfulness of the film is emphasized by the choice of characters as the story portrays for instance a weary patronne, a hypochondriac tobacconist and a sassy porn video shop assistant with whom Amélie ends up falling in love (Celestin, 2009, p. 40).

The interplay of visuals and narrative illustrate another layer of duality as it exhibits Jeunet's position between popular culture and animation as well as his aim to bridge the gap between art cinema and mainstream cinema

(Vanderschelden, 2007, pp. 7-8). In *Amélie* Jeunet has been able to pursue his personal artistic signature which is characterised by poetic realism and state of the art special effects and his education in animation and comic (pp. 3-4). Thus, the interplay of temporally concentrated action, the integration of a love story with happy ending and the setting in the picturesque landscape of Paris can be considered as reasons for *Amélie's* success (Durham, 2008, pp. 177- 178).

In addition, the duality of *Amélie* is exhibited in its genre as it has been discussed as both *heritage film* and *cinema du look*. Hence, *Amélie* can be considered as a renewal of heritage film as it is dominated by the element of the past. The critical term *heritage film* developed by English film critics in the 1980's and 1990's and has been applied retroperspectively to a number of films that share certain features, such as reproducing and inventing the national past (Hill, 1999, pp. 76-77). A characteristic feature of the heritage film is the adaption of a literary or theatrical source which is chosen by its cultural standing as it implies its position as heritage (p. 78). In contrast to Hollywood's direct approach to adaption, heritage film employs three main approaches, being reproduction, alteration and subversion (ibid.). Even though heritage film still aims for a faithful reproduction of the original, its visuals are dominated by the display of buildings, properties, costumes and landscape and thus, it rather focuses on the heritage spectacle than on the narrative (p. 81). Its emphasis on spectacle and costume drama opposes the historical accuracy and the encouragement of a historical sensibility as it can turn the film into a „fetishization of period effects" (p. 83). This illustrates the heritage film's focus on a spectacular and glorified display of the past.

Films like *A Passage to India* (1984), *A Room with a View* (1985) and the adaptations of the literary works of E.M. Forster, Jane Austen, Henry James and other canonical nineteenth-century authors are commonly categorised as heritage films as they use historical and cultural heritage as source material (Hill, 1999, p. 77). These characteristics can be employed for *Amélie* as the storyline and the visuals emphasize elements of the past and nostalgia (Vanderschelden, 2007, p. 10). This is illustrated by the film's focus on popular Parisian landmarks and a picturesque display of the landscape which erases the modern transformation of the city and thus, contributes to

the mythic and romantic representation of Paris. As the film presents the most popular French heritage by displaying the capital and its picturesque landmarks as Montmartre and the Eiffel Tower, the film has been considered as a contribution to the heritage of French cinema (Durham, 2008, p. 174).

In contrast, Amélie has integrated more action and fantasy than traditional heritage cinema and could also be placed in the genre of *cinema du look* as it shows a postmodern fantasy world (Vanderschelden, 2007, p. 10). The film genre *cinema du look* has originated as a key aesthetic mode in the 1980's of France and is characterised by it spectacular visuals, using mis-en-scene elements like the preoccupation with decor and colour (McCann, 2015, p. 166). Simultaneously, it uses recycled images and employs the sanitized display of the past in order to deconstruct it (Oscherwitz, 2011, p. 505). This is illustrated in the film's employment of recycled images of paintings by Pierre-Auguste Renoir and films by Marcel Carné as these can contribute to the deconstruction of the sanitized image of Paris. Moreover, the sanitized images turn the Parisian landscape into a postcard which is exhibited by the preoccupation with colour and framing.

Thus, *Amélie* could be categorized as a heritage film as well as a late example of cinema du look as both focus on stunning visual images (Oscherwitz, 2011, p. 505). As the heritage film aims to glorify the past, it contrasts cinema du look which focuses on the contemporary world and popular culture (p. 505). Elements of both genres can be found in *Amélie* as it displays Paris in a nostalgic mode and zooms in on the characters' past but also questions it through the actions of the main character Amélie, revealing images of the present. This interplay of the two genres will be discussed further as it simultaneously contributes to and questions the romantic and mythic representation of Paris.

Therefore, the analysis will discuss *Amélie* concerning its different representations of Paris, taking the elements of narrative, visuals and its categorisation as a heritage film as well as a cinema du look film into account. I will investigate whether *Amélie* contributes to a stereotypical portrayal of Paris and French culture or whether it rather deconstructs these images through its interaction with the elements of nostalgia and past. Thus,

the notion of myth-making will be discussed as *Amélie's* picturesque and nostalgic display of Paris can be considered as emphasizing this representation as well as it can become a tool of deconstruction. This duality will be highlighted in the following discussion of the different cinematic elements.

2. Narrative

The film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* depicts the contemporary Parisian lifestyle by focusing on the life and love story of the young French waitress Amélie Poulain (Audrey Tautou). As the narrative is set in the area of Montmartre, the film displays a picturesque Parisian landscape which contributes to a stereotypical postcard image of the city (Andrew, 2004, p. 38; 00:01:04). Hence, the film displays Paris as it is expected to be seen in cinema as sites like Sacré-Coeur and the Eiffel Tower constantly serve as a backdrop for the narrative (00:01:09, see fig. 26). Hence, the film tells the story of Amélie's wandering through the picturesque setting of Paris, devoting her life to repairing the lives of the people surrounding her.

Fig. 26, Picturesque display of Sacré-Coeur as a backdrop for the narrative, *Amélie* (00:01:09).

The film starts with displaying Amélie's childhood as she has been raised by eccentric parents who mistakenly assume her having a heart defect. Thus, her childhood is characterised by the bizarre behavioural patterns of her parents and the dramatic event of her mother dying as a result of a tourist

committing suicide by jumping from the roof of Notre Dame. As a consequence her father withdraws himself from social interaction and Amélie creates her own imaginary world to cope with the loss. Following, the film moves fast forward to Amélie's adulthood as she decides to leave home in order to become a waitress in Montmartre. The narrative does not explain her choice of moving particularly to the area of Montmartre but it contributes to the fantastic and picturesque representation of Paris as this setting reflects how Paris is imagined through the influence of media as cinema and advertisement. It also illustrates Amélie's imaginativeness as she might have imagined Montmartre as the perfect display of contemporary Parisian life. Thus, the story's setting emphasizes the picturesque representation of Paris as its focus is on the sanitized display of Parisian landmarks. Simultaneously, the change of setting to Montmartre romanticizes Amélie's past as growing up in a distant family does not seem to be an issue anymore as she keeps visiting her farther in the weekends (Moore, 2006, p. 10).

Therefore, the film accompanies Amélie's ordinary life as a waitress as she does not interact outside her workplace *Café des 2 Moulins*. But the death of Princess Diana becomes a turning point for Amélie as the simultaneous discovery of a lost box from a former tenant triggers her to change her life. Subsequently, Amélie successfully detects the former owner of the box in order to return the collected memories (00:14:30). As Amélie is still occupied by her shyness, she drops the box off in a phone booth and observes the happiness of Dominique Bredoteau as he is able to reconnect with his past as well as with his lost daughter and grandson. Amélie becomes inspired by this success and decides to devote herself to repairing the lives of the people close to her. Consequently, Amélie tricks her co-worker Georgette and the regular guest Joseph into falling in love with each other as well as creating long lost love letters from her congierge's dead husband in order to bring happiness back into their lives. She also steals her father's garden gnome and makes him travel around the world with a stewardess as her father has always dreamt of touring the world with her mother. Her mind games with the grocer Collignon turn him into a nice person towards his assistant Lucien.

This illustrates the constant integration of the element of the past in the story as Amélie triggers the characters' involvement in their past in order to find closure with it. Likewise, the examination with the past of the character's lives and memories contributes to a nostalgic representation of Paris. As the characters are able to find closure with the past and pursue happiness, this does not only sanitize the past and Paris itself but also displays Parisian existence in the present. Hence, the narrative contributes to the duality of *Amélie*, being placed between displaying a sanitized Paris of the past and deconstructing the image of a Paris as its modern transformation is not shown.

As Amélie does not pursue her own happiness, her neighbour Dufayel (Serge Merlin) encourages her to get involved in her own life. Therefore, he employs the painting *Le Dejeuner des Canotiers* (1881) by Renoir as he repaints it every year (see fig. 27). It illustrates a friend group having lunch on a balcony at the *Maison Fournaise* restaurant along the Seine in Chatou, including the girl with the glass in the middle of the painting who he still tries to capture (p. 506). The girl with the glass is placed in the middle of the painting and seems only to observe the other figures enjoying their lives instead of actively engaging. Thus, Dufayel uses the figure of the girl with the water glass in order to encourage Amélie to think about her own life and to engage romantically with the porn-shop assistant Nino (Mathieu Kassovitz) (Oscherwitz, 2011, p. 509).

Fig. 27, *Le Dejeuner des Canotiers* by Pierre-Auguste, Renoir, (c) Public Domain France, Original 1881.

As their ways have crossed accidentally in a Parisian Métro station where Nino collects discarded passport pictures from photo booths, their relationship is characterised by a scavenger hunt in the picturesque Parisian landscape around Montmartre (01:13:04). Since Amélie has found Nino's lost photo book, she places clues around Montmartre in order for Nino to find her. Thereby, Amélie manages to find closure for own past by falling in love with Nino and leaving her isolated life.

This illustrates the fantastic representation of Paris as Amélie is able to not only change the other characters' lives but also her own isolated life by creating closure with the element of the past. The display of Amélie in the costume of the fictional character of the vigilante Zorro emphasizes this fantastic notion as Zorro's protection of the Californian citizens from crime can be transferred to Amélie (Valadez, 2016, p. 140; 00:55:39). Thus, Amélie intervenes with the other character's lives in order to protect them from unhappiness and rather motivates them to find closure with their past.

Moreover, the narrative is dominated by the love stories of the characters which enhance the romantic representation of Paris as the characters are able to find peace with a lost love or find a new love. This contributes to the stereotypical portrayal of Paris as the quintessential romantic city and highlights the nostalgic notion of it. In addition, the picturesque

representation is emphasized as the love stories are all set in the sanitized area of Montmartre.

The happy ending of *Amélie* highlights the stereotypical and romantic representation of Paris as all characters have found peace with their past and are able to pursue happiness within the picturesque Parisian setting. Therefore, the end of the film displays a harmonic Paris as narrative and setting are both showing a happy contemporary life in Paris. Even though all characters have found closure with the past, the film does not move on to displaying a modern and contemporary Paris but holds on to the stereotypical display of Paris in the past. Hence, the narrative contributes to the myth-making of Paris rather than deconstructing it as the focus is on displaying the myth in form of the romantic and picturesque Paris, creating a feeling of nostalgia rather than modernity. The analysis of the characters will examine the film's contribution to stereotypical Parisian image further.

3. Characters

The film starts with the picturesque display of a cobble street in Montmartre, continuing with a view over whole Paris and Sacré-Coeur as a backdrop (00:01:20). Thus, the film establishes the setting of the story in a picturesque Paris before introducing any characters (see fig 28). The introduction of *Amélie* is dominated by a scientific approach as the voice over narrates the sperm of her father reaching her mother's ovum which is followed by a display of the whole pregnancy process. This contrasts the romantic introduction of the film's setting and thus, produces a comic note.

Fig. 28, Opening scene in *Amélie* establishes the picturesque setting in Paris, *Amélie* (00:00:40).

In order to understand Amélie as a character as well as her social awkwardness, the film shows captions of her childhood which has been dominated by the eccentric behavioural patterns of her parents and their belief in Amélie having a heart defect. This is illustrated in the relationship with her father who is focused on Amélie's heart as he has been a doctor for the military. The relationship with the mother is also shaped through her profession as a teacher as she decides to home school Amélie in order to protect her from the outside world. Hence, Amélie's childhood is coined by loneliness as she does not have playmates and leads to her focus on creating an imaginary world. But, the parents also provide Amélie with a camera in order to keep her occupied which contributes to her strong imagination.

This illustrates the role of control in the film as it is visualized in the sanitized images of the Parisian landscape as well as illustrated in the relationship between Amélie and her parents (Moore, 2006, p. 13). Concerning the visuals, this constitutes a romantic and picturesque representation of Paris as it is illustrated as flawless. In contrast, the relationship of Amélie and her parents is not displayed as flawless but control is shown as the dominating element. Thus, the element of control plays an important role for visuals, narrative as well as for the character of Amélie as it explains her later behaviour and position in life. This is also illustrated by Amélie's escape into an imaginary and fantasy dominated world.

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The film moves fast forward to her ordinary life as a waitress in Montmartre which is changed by the death of Princess Diana, triggering Amélie to change her life (00:15:10). By coincidence, she finds a box of collected memories from the former tenant and thus, Amélie makes it her mission to return it. The successful return and the witnessing of happiness turn Amélie's focus on repairing the life of the people around her. Hence, she gets involved in the lives of the other characters which are „the weary patronne, an irascible customer, a weepy concierge, a hypochondriac tobacconist, a cantankerous grocer, a mysterious old man, as well as one or two new types such as the sassy porn-video shop assistant and the photo-booth repairman" (Celestin, 2009, p. 43).

The choice of characters can be considered as rather stereotypical as they correspond with the illustrated clichés of Paris and France in cinema. This contributes to a stereotypical representation of Paris and matches with the nostalgic and picturesque setting in Montmartre. This nostalgic notion is emphasized as Amélie is played by the actress Audrey Tautou and thus, becomes representative for the latest French gamine by recalling images of French gamines as Audrey Hepburn and Leslie Caron (Durham, 2008, p. 176). Hence, the character of Amélie evokes images of the young French gamine which contribute to the representation of Paris of being in the nostalgic past. This is illustrated by the appearance of the figure in *An American in Paris* which already makes use of it in 1951.

As Amélie observes the other characters in order to figure out how to improve their lives, she does not only return to her imagination but also to the element of the photo camera. Thus, she becomes a camera herself as she experiences other people's life from the perspective of a lens (Moore, 2006, p. 14). This can be transferred to the representation of Paris as it seems to be constantly displayed through the lens of fantastic camera as the image seems sanitized. As Amélie makes plans according to her observations, she sanitizes the image in order to see what is missing in the person's life. Thus, Amélie considers persons as products of their past and aims for them to move on in the present (Oscherwitz, 2011, p. 512).

This is illustrated in the story of the different characters as for instance the concierge Madame Wallace still grieves about her cheating husband who

has died before being able to return. Her name already implies her destination of being full of tears as Madeleine is a reference to the tears of Madeleine and her last name refers to the Wallace fountains which are public water fountains in form of small sculptures and scattered around whole Paris (ibid). As Amélie sends her a default lost letter, Madeleine is able to find closure with her past as she receives the apology she was waiting for.

Moreover, Amélie is able to improve the life of the hypochondriac tobacconist Georgette and the nagging customer Joseph as she couples them and thus, they are able to escape loneliness and their eccentric behavioural patterns. Hence, Amélie's relationships are dominated by the aim for repairing the lives of people surrounding her as she fulfils her father's dream of travelling the world by sending his garden gnome on trips with a stewardess. Thus, the father receives postcard images with the garden gnome standing in front of recognizable sites in Moscow, New York and Cairo (Durham, 2008, p. 179; 00:56:51; see fig. 29). This illustrates the integration of the element of the camera as the characters are able to perceive the present and the world outside Montmartre through the lens of a camera. Likewise, it contributes to the romantic and picturesque representation of Paris as the characters focus on this display of Paris rather than on seeing the present outside this image.

Fig. 29, Postcard of the father's garden gnome visiting Moscow, *Amélie* (00:56:51).

The interplay between Amélie and the grocer Collignon adds a comic note to the film as Amélie messes with Collignon minds through installing small

adjustments in his apartment as for instance swapping tooth paste and foot crème. Consequently, the choleric Collignon turns friendly towards his assistant Lucien who he has been blaming for working too slow. Lucien's slow movements and wariness towards the fruits and vegetables visualize the stagnation in the past as the characters are not able to move on. Amélie's engagement with her neighbour Dufayel contributes to this impression as he has repainted Renoir's *Le Dejeuner des canotiers* (1881) for the last twenty years. Thus, Amélie encourages him to focus on painting something new and engaging with the present. Dufayel's act of repainting visualizes the nostalgic and artistic representation of Paris as it focuses on a painting of the past and contributes to the stereotypical image of Paris being full of nostalgia and an artistic city.

Simultaneously, Dufayel encourages Amélie to engage with her own life and pursue her love life with the porn-shop assistant Nino. Therefore, Dufayel uses the metaphorical image of the girl with water glass in Renoir's *Le Dejeuner des canotiers* as it is the only figure he has not captured throughout the years. Amélie engages with this figure as she tries to explain reasons for her isolation and realizes that she has to change her life in order to escape this loneliness.

As Nino collects discarded pass photo images in the Parisian Métro, Amélie finds his lost photo book by accident. As Amélie is still occupied by her shyness, she creates a scavenger hunt through the picturesque setting of Montmartre. Thus, the relationship with Nino is characterised by a fantastic and imaginary notion as Amélie creates different hints throughout Montmartre and gets on a ghost train in order to see Nino working as a skeleton (01:10:19). This fantastic representation of Paris is emphasized as the carousel in Montmartre becomes a meeting point for the later couple (01:12:46; see fig. 30). Moreover, the romantic engagement of the two characters adds to the romantic representation of Paris as it highlights the notion of everyone being able to find love in Paris. This is highlighted in the communication between Amélie and Nino as they do not communicate in form of speech but create themselves a world in which images dominate (Moore, 2006, p. 17).

Fig. 30, Carousel at Montmartre, symbolizing the begin of a fantastic
scavenger hunt, *Amélie* (01:12:46).

Hence, the relationship between Amélie and Nino contributes to the
romantic and fantastic representation of Paris as they have found each other
in the magical setting of Montmartre. This emphasizes the stereotypical
portrayal of Paris as the stories of the characters and their ability to find a
happy end in Paris confirm the romantic and fantastic representation of
Paris. Even though the characters deconstruct their past in order to pursue
happiness, the present is displayed in the same picturesque and nostalgic
way as the past. This displays the dominance of the element of the past in
the characters as their stories are told through it as well as their development
is characterised by their engagement with their past. Thus, the characters do
not break with the picturesque Parisian setting of the past and its romantic
representation in cinema.

4. Film Finale

The film finale of *Amélie* is characterised by the scavenger hunt through the
picturesque Parisian setting of Montmartre as Amélie and Nino are aiming
to meet by following each other's clues throughout the whole area. In order
to communicate with each other, Amélie and Nino place mysterious
messages and flyers all over the area of Montmartre, turning their
interaction into a hide and seek within the picturesque landscape (see fig.
31). This playful scavenger hunt all over Montmartre contributes to the
romantic notion as it makes them fall in love with each other.

Fig. 31, Scavenger hunt placed in the setting of Montmartre, displaying Sacré-Coeur in the background, *Amélie* (00:15:07).

Additionally, Amélie solves the mystery of the man who constantly turns up in Nino's collection of discarded pass photos as he turns out to be the repair men of the photo booths all over Paris. Amélie aims to share this discovery with Nino but the first attempt of a face to face meeting fails because of her shyness. But the final push by the painter Dufayel unites the two lovers as they manage to meet at Amélie's apartment. Hence, the scavenger hunt has its peak with the romantic reunion of the two lovers which is the first time for Amélie being able to engage romantically with a man. This enhances the romantic representation of Paris as even the isolated Amélie in able to find a happy end in form of love in the city of Paris. Therefore, the film displays the present of the couple as they are riding a motorbike through the picturesque setting of Montmartre (01:56:56).

Furthermore, the film focuses on the consequences of Amélie's actions concerning repairing the life of the other characters as it displays everyone pursuing a happy end. It also shows the different characters having moved on with their lives as Dominique Bretodeau has reconnected with his lost daughter and grandson, Madeleine Wallace has found closure with the death of her husband and Dufayel has decided to paint a different art work after twenty years (01:55:59). In addition, her father has decided to fulfil his dream of travelling the world and thus, is displayed on his way to the airport. This emphasizes the fantastic representation of Paris as the characters are able to pursue happiness in the Parisian setting. Simultaneously, the romantic representation of Paris is highlighted as the main character of Amélie turns from romantically inaccessible to being

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engaged in a romantic relationship. This portrays Paris as a city in which everyone is able to find love which contributes to the stereotypical image of Paris as a romantic city.

Moreover, the finale is dominated by the element of the past as the characters are able to engage with their past in order to find closure. On the one hand, the finale shows that the different characters have been able to leave their past behind and move on to the present as the interrogations by Amélie have triggered closure. On the other hand, this movement is not visualized in the images of the film as it still displays the same nostalgic and picturesque Parisian setting and there is no visible change in the sanitized images.

This contrasts the turning point in the narrative as there is no break with the sanitized display of Paris. Even though the story is set is a contemporary Paris, it is hidden behind the visual portrayal of Paris of the past. This perpetuates the stereotypical image of Paris as the audience only gets to see the expected representations of a romantic, fantastic and picturesque Paris. This contributes to the myth-making of Paris as the sanitized setting as well as the narrative filled with love and happy endings emphasize this notion. Although the narrative aims to move the story to the present, the dominance of happy endings rather highlights the sanitized visuals of the film than deconstructing them. Thus, Paris is displayed in its former glory and characterised by clichés such as the happy end which turns it into a sign for the whole French culture (Celestin, 2009, p. 44).

5. Use of colour and visual references

As the film starts with displaying the picturesque Parisian setting around Montmartre, the images contribute to a sanitized postcard image of Paris. These sanitized and picturesque images dominate throughout the film as they serve as a backdrop for the narrative and contribute to a nostalgic atmosphere.

This sanitization of the images also illustrate Jeunet's background in animation, comic and advertising as post-production plays a major role in these fields (Vanderschelden, 2007, pp. 3-4). Hence, Jeunet's artistic signature has developed through this educational background and Amélie is

shaped by his aim of creating a perfectionist composition (ibid.). Although the exterior shots have been challenging with being shot in the crowded streets of Montmartre, this is not visible in the final images of the film (ibid.). As Jeunet has erased all modern elements in the area of Montmartre, this adds to the fairytale atmosphere of the film (p. 66). This emphasizes the sanitized image of Paris as Jeunet's version displays a picturesque and nostalgic Paris of the past (see fig. 32).

Fig. 32, Sanitized display of the Parisian landscape, *Amélie* (00:00:59).

Moreover, the places shown become attached to notions of romance and fantasy as they become a romantic meeting point for the characters and are coined by the fantastic scavenger hunt of Amélie and Nino. Thus, Jeunet turns public spaces into places as they become attached with particular meanings as with romance and fantasy in the case of *Amélie* (Appadurai, 1996, p. 183). The combination of stylised images and recycled images of the past contribute to mystification of Paris as the film focuses on displaying the postcard version of the city. This is emphasized by the attachment of romance and fantasy as well as by the erase of temporal markers as the images do not reflect the time period the film is set in. Even though the story depicts contemporary life in Paris, this is not particular underlined by the visuals of the film as they are dominated by a nostalgic filter. The film seems to become representative for the myth of Paris and reminds of an advertisement. This rather reinforces a stereotypical portrayal of Paris than deconstructing its past as the film does not display images of the modern present of Paris.

It also illustrates the tension between the film being seen as an artistic work or as a commercial product (Vanderschelden, 2007, pp. 7-8). As Jeunet's

artistic signature is coined by his aim for perfectionism, it influences the appearance of his images as they seem to be more commercial. The manipulation of the images can be considered as part of Jeunet's artistic intention and the artistic product itself. Taking this into consideration, the film can even be seen as bridging the gap between art cinema and commercial cinema as *Amélie* has broadened the audience of art cinema by becoming a commercial success.

As the film focuses on displaying iconic and picturesque past and makes uses of recycled images, the visuals can be considered as reference to the genres of the *heritage film* and *cinema du look* (Oscherwitz, 2011, p. 504). As discussed the critical term of *heritage film* is characterised by the aim of reinventing, reproducing and even inventing the national past (Hill, 1999, p. 77). Moreover, the heritage film can be distinguished in three emphases as in aristocratic, rustic and industrial and thus, illustrates only a particular version of the past, projecting this version on everyone (ibid.). This is illustrated by the use of iconic images and a glorification of the past, highlighting the wish of returning to it (Oscherwitz, 2011, p. 505).

These features can be applied to *Amélie* as the film focuses on displaying sanitized and picturesque images of Parisian landmarks and the area of Montmartre. This is emphasized by removal of temporal markers and the creation of a nostalgic atmosphere. Thus, the film depicts a Paris of the past which does not exist anymore (p. 504). The amplitude of sanitized images even turns the displayed Paris into a fictional version of itself as it has never existed in this sanitized form.

Simultaneously, *Amélie* can be considered as a late example of the *cinema du look* as the film makes uses of recycled images and its sanitization can be understood as deconstructing the past (p. 505). Moreover, it recycles images from the past as well as from other films but applies these in an antirealist mode in order to question the past (ibid.). This recycling of images is illustrated in the echo of various films by the French filmmaker Marcel Carné as the scene of Amélie skipping stones on the canal St. Martin features a scene from Carne's drama film *Hôtel du Nord* (1938) which tells the story of married couple operating a hotel business in Paris (ibid.; 00:12:43; see fig. 33). Simultaneously, the character of Amélie itself can be

considered as a reference to Marcel Carné's films as her appearance resembles the actress Arletty who was a French film star in the 1930's and 1940's and appears in several films by Carné (ibid.).

Fig. 33, Amélie skipping stones at the canal St. Martin in Paris, resemblance to Marcel Carné's film *Hôtel du Nord* (1938), *Amélie* (00:12:43).

Additionally, the film integrates several references to paintings by Renoir as Amélie's neighbour Dufayel is obsessed with repainting Renoir's *Le Dejeuner des canotiers* (1881) which depicts a friend group lunching on a balcony at the Maison Fournaise restaurant along the Seine in Chatou (p. 506). The film uses the figure of the girl with the glass as a reference to the character of Amélie as she is placed as an observant figure in the middle of the painting, exhibiting no engagement with the others and the scenery. Thus, the neighbour Dufayel applies this figure to Amélie in order to change her focus from repairing the life of others to pursuing her own happiness. This underlines the painting's employment as a deconstructing element as it changes Amélie's focus from the past to the present and thus, illustrates the intention of cinema du look.

Additionally, the picturesque setting in Montmartre and Amélie's wandering along the Seine as well as a particular shot of the scenery resemble Renoir's painting *Le Pont des Arts Paris* (1867-68) (see fig. 34). This underlines Jeunet's aim for a nostalgic and picturesque image of a Paris of the past as the film focuses on depicting this nostalgia. Therefore, these visual references to films and paintings illustrate the film's use of recycled images of the past and thus, reflect the aesthetics as well as the deconstructing element of cinema du look.

Fig. 34, *Le Pont des Arts Paris* by Pierre-Auguste Renoir, (c) Public Domain France, Original (1867-68).

On the one hand, the film constantly displays sanitized and picturesque images of the past and hence, creates a nostalgic mode and representation of Paris. On the other hand, it makes use of recycled images and thereby, creates a rather fictional version of Paris as it has never existed like this outside cinema (p. 510). This exaggeration of the sanitized representation of Paris can be considered as a deconstructing element. As illustrated, the film exhibits elements from both heritage film and cinema du look, and thus, cannot clearly be placed within one genre as they feature similarities in their visuals. Both genres make use of pastiche of images as the heritage film is dominated by nostalgia and retro and cinema du look borrows images of the past from iconic films (p. 505). *Amélie* applies both kind of pastiche and uses these mix of images in order to represent the past of Paris.

As the film cannot clearly be placed within one of these genres, this duality shapes the representation of Paris in *Amélie* as it is not clarified whether the film embraces the nostalgic representation or deconstructs it. Hence, Paris is displayed as a romanticized and mystified place as the film's visuals focus on the romantic and fantastic version of Paris and supports the narrative of the characters pursuing happiness. Simultaneously, the exaggeration of sanitization of the images creates a rather fictional version of Paris and questions whether this version of a perfectionist Paris can even exist. Even though the film integrates recycled images and uses exaggeration by perfecting every image, this does not question the overall stereotypical and nostalgic representation of Paris as these elements are not employed in a

strong manner. Thus, it depends on the perspective whether these visual elements enhance the stereotypical and nostalgic representation of Paris or question it.

The combination of the two genres turn the film into a moving postcard itself as the shots are focused on recognizable landmarks as the Eiffel Tower and Sacré-Coeur (p. 506). Thus, the photogenic process enhances the reproduction of stereotypes and clichés as it sanitized the images to a degree of manipulation (Durham, 2008, p. 179). This is emphasized by the inclusion of actual postcards as these show recognizable sites of other world capitals as of Moscow, New York and Cairo. Although the postcards could be implied as a reference to a modern world outside, they rather enhance the impression of Paris being a postcard itself. Thus, the film displays Paris like a postcard as it only displays the area of Montmartre which can be considered as one of the most stereotypical settings of Paris, being visually loaded with picturesque landmarks and sites.

As the film's narrative attaches romance to the setting, its romantic representation is emphasized by the love story of the main character. Moreover, the love story of Amélie and Nino is triggered by their love for photography as Amélie has used it as an escape from her childhood and Nino creates collections of discarded passport pictures. Further, Amélie only pursues her own happiness after being triggered by the death of Princess Diana, seeing her own unfilled life passing by (00:38:52). This highlights the motive of seeing the film through a particular lens which is simultaneously shaped by nostalgia.

Therefore, photography and its process become omnipresent in the visuals as well as in the narrative. This also contributes to the duality in the romantic and nostalgic representation of Paris and unites both genres, heritage film and cinema du look, in its airbrushed images of the city. Thus, the visuals highlight the romantic and picturesque representation of Paris as well as question it in regard of the rather hidden deconstructing elements.

6. Use of music, sound and speech

As the film is dominated by its picturesque visuals, sound and dialogue play a minor part. This is illustrated in the character of Amélie as her childhood

is characterised by the suppression of communication by her parents. Despite the minor role of it, such elements as the off-screen narrator, soundtrack and dialogue still contribute to the film's image.

For example, it is the voice of the narrator who introduces the audience to the films story and adds the first comic to the film as its first shot is dominated by a scientific story about the blue fly, followed by a scientific display of Amélie being born (00:00:52). Thereby, the narrator adds a documentary view to the film as he also mentions the exact dates and times of events (Vanderschelden, 2007, p. 59). Besides factual knowledge, the narrator also provides the audience with subjective insights in for instance Amélie's childhood as he illustrates Amélie's excitement about her father's monthly health check-ups (ibid.). The mixture of scientific facts and personal insights creates the impression of the narrator connecting random elements with each other and simultaneously adds a comic notion to the film. Furthermore, it implies the story being set in a chaotic world which is controlled by the narrator and thus, implies the control of the director himself (ibid). This illustrates Jeunet's authorial signature and his aim for perfection.

Moreover, the dialogue between the characters is characterised by its limitation to a basic communication. This is pointed in the relationship between Amélie and her parents as they suppress any kind of communication besides the sharing of necessary information concerning schooling or health. It can be considered as the origin for Amélie's incapability of communicating with her environment and expressing emotion. The minimal amount of communication is characterised by memories and self-conscious reflections which are triggered by outside events as the death of Princess Diana. Even though Amélie decides to change the life of others and her own, she does not pursue this change in form of communication but through silent actions and manipulations of situations in everyday life. Thus, this change of her lifestyle is not vocally expressed as she interacts through the use of images as the scavenger hunt with Nino highlights. Even the romantic relationship between the two lovers is dominated by silence as they do not talk about their romantic engagement.

This emphasizes the film's reliance on images rather than on speech as it only employed as a supportive tool.

The soundtrack of *Amélie* itself can be considered as the most contributing sound to the film as it underlines the mood of the film. The film is dominated by compositions by musician Yann Tiersen as he has created ten out of eighteen tracks in *Amélie* (p. 60). The soundtracks have only been created on the base of the screenplay which provided Jeunet with the control over the soundtrack as he could match the different tracks to specific shots (ibid.). Tiersen's compositions are dominated by his education at a *Conservatoire* as he is a formally trained and multi-instrument artist (ibid.) Thus, the bricolage of traditional instruments and recycled retro rhythms contributes to the romantic timelessness as well as reflect a postmodern form of creation (pp. 60-61). This illustrates the soundtrack's contribution to the fantastic and romantic representation of Paris as it underlines the picturesque shots of Paris with a nostalgic mood. This notion of nostalgia is emphasized in the opening scene as the music serves as an entrance into the picturesque setting of Montmartre (00:00:41).

Even though Tiersen makes use of a postmodern creation process which can be seen as a form of deconstruction, the soundtrack does not break with the stereotypical image of Paris. Likewise, the use of speech and music contribute to the narrative and visuals of the film as the overall atmosphere and mood of the film is underlined. Even though the film relies heavily on its images, the music contributes to the nostalgic and romantic representation of Paris as these shots are emphasized by the use of music. The minor role of the dialogues adds particularly to the romantic representation of Paris as it implies that romance is an inherent element of Paris.

7. Representation of Paris and cultural mindset

The analysis of the narrative and the visuals emphasize the duality of the representation of Paris in *Amélie* as they contribute to the stereotypical portrayal as well as contrast it by employing deconstructive elements. First of all, the film's story focuses on the picturesque display of Paris as it is set in the area of Montmartre and thus, uses famous Parisian landmarks as the

Eiffel Tower and Sacré-Coeur as a backdrop. Jeunet's authorial signature contributes to the picturesque display of Paris as it is coined by sanitizing and controlling the shown images. Thereby, the images reveal a flawless as well as timeless Paris as Jeunet has erased all markers of time which illustrate the film's focus on the past.

The element of the past is a recurrent element for the discussion of the narrative as well as for the visuals as it dominates the representation of Paris in *Amélie.* The duality of the representation is emphasized by the film's placement in the genres of the heritage film and the cinema du look as it exhibits characteristics of both by its constant reference to the past. Both genres focus on displaying stunning visual images which is illustrated in the film's focus on the picturesque setting of Montmartre (Oscherwitz, 2011, p. 505).

One the one hand, the film glorifies the past as it only displays timeless and picturesque images of Paris and thus, creates a sanitized postcard version of it. Hence, the placement in heritage film would contribute to a rather stereotypical and romantic image of Paris. On the other hand, the exaggeration of the sanitized image of Paris can be understood as a deconstructing element as it questions the existence of this perfectionist version of Paris. Thus, the placement in cinema du look would imply a heterotopic representation of Paris as its image can be seen as opposed to reality and revealing this representation as being a fictional version of Paris. The struggle of placing the film in one of these two genres reflects the duality in the representation of Paris as it depends on the perspective the audience takes. The film's visuals can either enhance the stereotypical image of Paris of being romantic and picturesque or question it as the film can be considered as creating a fictional and exaggerated version of Paris.

The narrative contributes to this duality as it examines the past of the characters as well as their ability to find closure through Amélie's interrogations. This illustrates the narrative's movement from the past to the present as the characters are able to pursue happiness. As there is a happy ending for each character as well as for the main character Amélie, it could also be considered as an exaggeration of this element. This exaggeration is underlined by Amélie's and Nino's scavenger hunt through the picturesque

setting of Montmartre and her sudden ability to commit to a romantic relationship. This emphasizes the romantic and fantastic representation of Paris as it presented as a city in which everyone can pursue happiness and romance. The fantastic notion is visualized in the scavenger hunt as it is dominated by its communication through images and the picturesque backdrop of Montmartre. This illustrates the dominance of the visuals in the film as the sound plays a minor role but underlines the nostalgic mood of the film with its soundtrack.

Therefore, the visuals and the narrative contribute to the duality of the representation of Paris in *Amélie* as it can be either seen as supportive for the stereotypical image of Paris or as questioning this exaggerated image. The picturesque setting in Montmartre and the attachment of a romantic and fantastic notion to these places emphasize the stereotypical image of Paris as a city of romance in which everyone can pursue happiness. Thus, this combination describes Paris as a dreamlike, timeless and magical city as the film does not only erase markers of time but also of any modern transformation of the city (Durham, 2008, p. 178). The scavenger hunt turns the city into a giant playground for lovers and contributes to the fantastic representation of Paris.

Simultaneously, this sanitized image of Paris reflects on the fear of modernity and change as the representation exhibits a Paris of the past, suppressing the influences of time and modernity as elements of transformation (ibid.). This echoes the cultural mindset of the period as there it illustrates a fear which is originated in the modern transformation of Paris and the fast changing world of technology. This is illustrated in the integration of the recurrent elements of the camera, the photo booth and the postcards, depicting images from other capitals in the world (00:57:05). The focus on the Paris on the past can be considered as a resistance to change as the film does not display any contemporary problems of a modern Paris.

The film *Amélie* presents a sanitized version of Paris which suppresses any modern transformation of the city. Thereby, the film indulges itself in the nostalgic Paris of the past. As discussed this focus on the sanitized and picturesque display of Paris can have two different effects on the representation of Paris. On one hand, it contributes to the stereotypical

image of Paris as it focuses on displaying the beauty of the heritage site Paris by focusing on the capital's area of Montmartre. This stereotypical image is emphasized by the narrative's focus on the past and a mythical Paris as well as by the attachment of a romantic and fantastic notion to the displayed places. Hence, the stereotypical display emphasizes the mystification of Paris as it is constituted as a dreamlike and romantic city.

On the other hand, the focus on the stereotype of Paris and Jeunet's removal of markers of time and modernity can be considered as an exaggeration of the Parisian image. This exaggeration can be understood as questioning of the sanitized image of Paris by not only focusing on a Paris of the past but creating a non-existent version of Paris. This creation of a fictional Paris constitutes a heterotopic version of the city in order to question its stereotypical portrayal in cinema. This attempt of using the displayed representation as an opposing and revealing element can be considered as rather hidden in the picturesque display of Paris. Thus, it depends on the perspective whether the film enhances the stereotypical representation of Paris or questions the mystification of the city.

D. Conclusion

This master thesis has aimed to analyse the representation of Paris in film as the city has become an urban off-screen icon and symbol itself, due to its frequent appearance on screen (Phillips and Vincendeau, 2018, p. 17). Moreover, the representation of Paris reflects on the cultural mindset of the different time periods. Hence, the three films *An American in Paris* (Vincente Minnelli, 1951), *Playtime* (Jacques Tati, 1967) and *Amélie* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 2001) have been chosen in order to analyse the different representations of Paris in film. The films were analysed by making use of visual and semiotic analysis as it illustrates the various characteristics of these representations.

As the films all emphasize their stories' setting in the Parisian landscape, the visuals as well as the narrative of the films underline the different representations of Paris as being romantic, fantastic and artistic. These representations are characterised by the employment of different approaches

as each film has its own emphasis. This is also illustrated in the authorial signatures of the filmmakers as Minnelli, Tati and Jeunet are considered as *auteurs* which describes directors with a particular directional signature and originality (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 63; Rountree, 2008, p. 129). Therefore, their artistic signatures each contribute to and underline different representations of Paris as they employ visual references, colours and music differently. Additionally, theoretical concepts as Foucault's heterotopia, Barthes' myth-making and Urry's tourist gaze have been employed in order to illustrate the effect of the different representations. Moreover, the displayed representations of Paris illustrate the cultural mindset of the time period and its change over time as the films are shot in different time periods. In order to analyse the change of the cultural mindset, the findings on each film will be summarized and compared with the representations of Paris in the other films.

As the visual analysis shows, the musical *An American in Paris* merges several representations of Paris as it combines a colourful mixture of music, painting and dance with a dramatic love story (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 75). Hence, the employment of visual references to paintings by Renoir, Dufy and Rousseau and the use of Gershwin's orchestral compositions contribute to an artistic representation of Paris. This is also illustrated in the narrative as all characters are focused on pursuing different art forms. Simultaneously, the visuals and narrative underline the romantic representation of Paris as the story focuses on a love triangle which reaches its climax in the film finale in form of a fantastic ballet sequence. As the relationship between romance and art is characterised by rivalry, the ballet merges the romantic and artistic representation by turning Paris into a fantastic *Parisland*. The reference to the American concept of Disneyland implies Paris being an overall fantastic place, resolving the rivalry between love and art (Sorkin, 1992, pp. 5-6). Hence, this contributes to the mystification of Paris as it is shown as a place full of fantasy and dreams coming true. This is underlined by the happy ending of the love story which is triggered by the ballet sequence. Likewise, it has the effect of sanitizing the image of Paris as its fantastic representation implies an image of perfection.

Moreover, the fantastic representation of Paris is supported by Minnelli's authorial signature as it is strongly carried by music, costume design and choreography which are the dominant elements in the ballet finale and thus, contribute to the creation of a fantastic *Parisland* (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 69). Likewise, the employment of artistic references emphasizes the notion of Paris being a mythical place which serves as source of inspiration and fantasy. Hence, *An American in Paris* displays the romantic and artistic representation of Paris and merges these in form of a fantastic and mythical *Parisland*. This illustrates the film's emphasis on the fantastic representation of Paris as fantasy becomes an integral part of Paris identity and thus, the mythical image becomes naturalized. The display of a picturesque and sanitized image of the Parisian landscape underlines this myth.

Simultaneously, the musical reflects the cultural mindset of the time period and the relationship between France and America in the post-war period of World War II. The dialectic between French and American culture is established in the different characters and their relationships as it exhibits the perception of the two cultures. This is illustrated in the female characters of the French Lise and the American Milo as the former one becomes representative for art and free imagination and the latter one is associated with money and success. Hence, the characters represent the rivalry between romance and art as well as the understandings of both cultures. Moreover, the love triangle between Lise, the French musical star and the American painter illustrates the struggle between the two cultures after their history in World War II. Despite the historical background, the French characters do not exhibit any prejudices towards the American painter Jerry who considers French culture as an inspirational source for this artwork. The struggle between the characters and cultures is ultimately resolved in the dream ballet which celebrates the mythic reunion of America and France (Levy, 2009, p. 307). Hence, the creation of a fantastic Parisland does not only blend the romantic and artistic representation of Paris but also implies the co-existence of American and French culture as Parisland can be considered as the American way of staging French culture (Dalle-Vacche, 1992, p. 64).

In contrast, the film *Playtime* illustrates a more futuristic and modernist image of Paris and does not contribute to the notion of a fantastic Parisland. The display of the Parisian landscape is dominated by a uniformity of modern architecture and dismal colours and thus, exhibits a Paris transformed by modernity. As *Playtime* displays sights as the Eiffel Tower and Sacré-Coeur through reflections on the modern surface of office buildings, Tati employs the interplay with the perception of Paris in order to comment on modernity itself (Andrew, 2004, p. 45). Hence, *Playtime* plays with the perception of Paris as a historical place and Paris as a modernist whole which is also illustrated in the interaction between the main character Hulot and an American tourist group (Hilliker, 2002, p. 323, p. 326). Thereby, Tati's authorial signature is exhibited in the comic approach which is embodied in the character of Hulot as well as highlighted by the application of mis-en-scène cinema and comic sound effects (Borden, 2000, p. 219; Valck, 2005, p. 224). This can be understood as an invitation for the audience to actively engage with the modern construction of Paris without a directional guide (Cardullo, 2002, p. 286).

This play with modern landscape and display of reflections of the old Paris also contrasts the different representation as the display of modernity challenges the existence of a mythical Paris. Thus, the characters emphasize the different representation as the main character Hulot represents the engagement with the modern transformation of Paris while the American tourist group is characterised by its simultaneous excitement about modernity and the dream of experiencing the mythical Paris. The notion of a mythical Paris also implies a romantic tourist gaze as the search for signs and monuments like Sacré-Coeur illustrates (Urry and Larsen, 2011, p. 4).

This is emphasized in *Playtime's* contrasting juxtaposition of the modern and mythical representation in order to criticize the modern transformation of Paris. This contrast is also exhibited in the narrative which integrates a love story between the French Hulot and the American tourist Barbara and thus, displays the romantic representation of Paris. Likewise, the film finale produces a nostalgic perception as it turns the modern Paris into a fairground and reminds the audience of a time before the modern transformation. This section contributes to the mythical and fantastic Paris

which cannot co-exist with the environment of modernity. Therefore, *Playtime* employs a heterotopic approach in order to juxtapose and contrast the different representations as well as the mystification of Paris. Even though the film contributes to the romantic and fantastic representation, these are rather displayed as nostalgic and swamped by the process of modernity. Hence, the representation of the old and romantic Paris is hidden underneath the modern surface of office buildings which underlines the ambivalence between these representations.

Simultaneously, this reflects the cultural mindset in the setting between a post-war atmosphere and modern transformation as the narrative establishes these different lifestyles in the characters. The overall criticism of modernity and the comic approach are illustrated in the characters' engagement with modernity. This also refers to Debord's *Society of Spectacle* which is characterised by its uniformity and division (Debord, 1967, p. 23). These characteristics are underlined by the uniformity of dress and colour in the film as well as by the lostness and anonymity of the characters in the modern Paris. Even though the characters actively engage with their modern environment, *Playtime* criticizes the modern transformation by displaying reflections of the old and romantic Paris. These nostalgic elements illustrate the post-war ambivalence between the wish for a return to the old Paris and the acceptance of a modern transformation of life. The interaction between Hulot and Barbara also represents the relationship between America and France in the ongoing post-war period. As their communication is dominated by mimic and gesture as well as by a multi-lingual dialogue in French and English, the cultures are presented as equivalent. There are only small moments in which the cultures clash for instance as Barbara's picture is interrupted by teenagers, listening to American music which refers to the historical background of France considering Americanisation as a threat. Hence, *Playtime* displays the ambivalence between the post-war atmosphere and the shift towards a modern transformation.

This duality of the representation of Paris is also illustrated in the film *Le fabuleux destin d' Amélie Poulain* as it displays a sanitized and picturesque Parisian landscape which either adds to the mystification of Paris or can be understood as a deconstructing element. As the film's plot is set in the

picturesque area of Montmartre, it portrays a sanitized postcard version of Paris (Andrew, 2004, p. 38). Thus, *Amélie* does not only represent Jeunet's rediscovery of the fairytale and mythic Paris of his youth but also illustrates Jeunet's authorial signature, being shaped by his background in animation and advertising and his aim for perfectionism in images (Andrew, 2004, p. 34; Vanderschelden, 2007, pp. 3-4). The sanitized and picturesque images of Paris as well as the removal of all markers of time and modernity in *Amélie* emphasize this signature (Vanderschelden, 2007, p. 66).

Hence, the past becomes a recurrent element in the film as it is either erased in order to emphasize the display of an old and mythical Paris or becomes a central theme as the narrative examines the past of the characters and their aim of finding closure with it. The duality of the element of the past and thus, of the representation of Paris, is exhibited in the film's genre as it has been placed in both *heritage film* and *cinema du look*. As the visual analysis shows, the sanitized and picturesque display of Paris can either glorify the past or deconstruct its image by creating an exaggerated version of the city. One the one hand, *Amélie* exhibits characteristics of *heritage film* as its setting in the picturesque area of Montmartre and the characters' ability to pursue happiness contribute to a romantic and fantastic representation of Paris. This illustrates the mystification of Paris as it is shown as a place in which everyone is able to find love. On the other hand, the use of sanitized and recycled images like references to paintings by Renoir and films by Marcel Carné can be understood as deconstructing the past. Thus, the placement in *cinema du look* would imply a heterotopic representation of Paris as the sanitized images can be seen as opposed to reality. Hence, the exaggeration of a mythical Paris can be seen as a creation of a fictional version of Paris whose non-existence becomes revealed through its deconstruction in *Amélie*. This represents the duality of the representation of Paris in film as it depends on the perspective whether the film enhances the myth of Paris or questions it by creating a heterotopic version.

The duality of the representation of Paris can also be translated to the cultural mindset of the time period which is caught up between the wish to return to the past and the acceptance of the modern transformation of Paris. Hence, the sanitized and picturesque display of Paris denies the modern

transformation and simultaneously, displays the fear of change through the fast changing world of modernity and its technology. Even though *Amélie* is not set in the post-war period, the fear of modernity can still be considered as rooted in it as it illustrates the fear of change. In contrast, the narrative of the film exhibits a movement towards the acceptance of modernity as the characters are able to find closure with their past and move on to the present.

As the visual and semiotic analyses of the films illustrate, the three films show and contribute to the dominant representations of Paris being romantic, artistic and fantastic. Therefore, the films employ different approaches in order to emphasize a particular representation or question it. The film *An American in Paris* focuses on the mythic and romantic representation of Paris and thus, employs picturesque images of Paris. Additionally, the film makes use of the figure of a French gamine which is illustrated in the main character Lise, embodying a young and beautiful French girl. Likewise, a similar approach can be found in *Amélie* as the main character Amélie represents a French gamine and the film's display of Paris is dominated by sanitized images of the area of Montmartre. Moreover, both films make use of references to paintings by Renoir and focus on a love story with a happy ending and thus, emphasize the artistic and romantic representation of Paris, contributing to the mystification of Paris. In contrast to *An American in Paris*, the film *Amélie* does not only enhance the image of picturesque Paris but simultaneously questions it through its exaggeration of the myth. Hence, the representation of Paris in *Amélie* is characterised by its duality while *An American in Paris* does not question its creation of a fantastic *Parisland*.

As discussed, the deconstructing element can also be found in Tati's *Playtime* as it plays with the different representations by displaying the mythic Paris in form of reflections on the modern surface. In contrast to *Amélie*, the images in *Playtime* do not deny the modern transformation of the city but rather embrace it with humour. Therefore, *Playtime* visualizes modernity in the amplitude of modern architecture and objects while *Amélie* erases all temporal and modern markers. Even though the two films employ a different approach in order to deconstruct the mythical image of Paris, the

concept of heterotopia applies to both as the films juxtapose and oppose the representations of a mythical and modern Paris. Although both films imply the active engagement of the audience with its images, this juxtaposition of the mythical and modern representation of Paris is more observable in *Playtime* as the deconstruction is visualized in form of reflections of the old Paris on its modern surface. In *Amélie* the visibility of the deconstruction depends on the perspective of the audience as it can either enhance the mythical Paris or question it. Hence, Jeunet leaves it to the audience which representation of Paris it wants to perceive.

As *An American in Paris* and *Playtime* illustrate contrasting representations of Paris as the former one creates a fantastic *Parisland* while the latter one questions this mystification of Paris, *Amélie* can be paired with both of them as it either contributes to the myth or questions it. Since *Amélie* has been produced most recently among the three films, it picks up this ambivalence in the representation of Paris. This ambivalence has evolved from the changing cultural mindset during the different time periods and can be seen as rooted in the fear of change. *An American in Paris* displays the positive attitude towards change in the post-war period as the end of World War II indicates a positive change. Hence, the musical emphasizes the creation of a fantastic *Parisland* as everything seems to be possible. In contrast, *Playtime* shows the next transformation of the city, being modernity, and criticizes the emergence of a uniform and divided *Society of Spectacle* by displaying reflections of the old Paris. Consequently, *Amélie*'s sanitized images of Paris neglect its modern transformation and rather highlight the mythical representation of Paris as a wish to return to it. Simultaneously, it questions whether the mythical Paris has ever existed in reality or has always been a fictional version, evoked by the fear of change. Therefore, the representations of Paris in these three films reflect the change of the cultural mindset which is shaped by the shifting attitude towards change.

This master thesis can only serve as an indicator for the changes in the cultural mindset as it does not take other media and historical sources into account. In order to provide a more accurate image of the representation of Paris and its reflection of the cultural mindset, the thesis recommends looking into more films (*Les Enfants du Paradis,* Marcel Carné, 1947; *Mon*

Oncle, Jacques Tati, 1958; *Jules et Jim,* François Truffaut, 1962; *Alphaville,* Jean-Luc Godard, 1965; *2 ou 3 choses que je sais d'elle,* Jean-Luc Godard 1967; *Diva,* Jean-Jacques Beineix, 1982; *Les Amants du Pont-Neuf,* Leos Carax, 1991; *La Haine,* Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995; *Paris je t'aime,* Various, 2006; *Midnight in Paris,* Woody Allen, 2011).

Moreover, the representation of Paris and its cinematic effect can be considered as an interesting field of research in order to gain insights in the impact on media tourism (Urry and Larsen, 2011; Chung, 2012; Les Roberts, 2012; Dung and Reijnders, 2013; Salazar, 2013;Park and Santos, 2017, Bazgan, 2018). Additionally, the analysis of the representation of Paris in film can be translated and compared to other film capitals such as London, New York and Vancouver.

Simultaneously, the analysis of the three films has depicted the role of space for the representation of Paris as the display of particular landmarks of the Parisian landscape has dominantly contributed to its representation. This highlights the role of space as it serves as the setting for the narrative and either emphasizes or questions it. Thus, the representation of Paris is inherently connected to the displayed space which is illustrated in the different settings in the films. As *An American in Paris* and *Amélie* focus on a picturesque display of Paris, both contribute to a romantic and mythic representation. In contrast, the modern setting in *Playtime* influences the representation of Paris as it questions the mystification of Paris. Hence, this indicates another interesting field of research in order to gain more insights in the construction of space in Paris and its influence on the representation of Paris (D'Souza and McDonough, 2006; Ross, 2008; McDonnell, 2016).

Hence, the analysis of the representation of Paris can be deepened by taking more films and media into account as well as points out opportunities in other fields of research. As the analyses of the three films illustrates, there are several dominant representations of Paris in film, being romantic, artistic and fantastic, which either contribute to a mystification of Paris in film or question it through the use of deconstructing elements.

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Appendix

All other figures have been last accessed at the 2nd of August, 2018.

- Fig. 1, Jerry's sketch with reference to Dufy's *The Grid*; *An American in Paris* (01:32:04), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 2, *La Grille* (engl. *The Grid*) by Raoul Dufy, (c) Raoul Dufy/ Fair Use, Original 1930, https://www.wikiart.org/en/raoul-dufy/the-grid-1930.

- Fig. 3, Jerry and Lise dancing in the adaption of Renoir's *Pont Neuf*, *An American in Paris* (01:39:50), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 4, *Pont Neuf* by Pierre-Auguste Renoir, (c) Public Domain France, Original 1872.

- Fig. 5, Adaption of *The Football Players* by Henri Rousseau, An *American in Paris* (01:42:16). (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 6, *The Football Players* by Henri Rousseau, (c) Public Domain France/ US, Original 1908, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Henri_Rousseau_-_The_Football_Players.jpg.

- Fig. 7, Jerry's adaption of the painting *Chocolat Dancing in the American and Irish Bar* by Toulouse-Lautrec, *An American in Paris* (01:49:16), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 8, *Chocolat dancing in the Irish and American Bar* by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, (c) Public Domain France, Original 1896, https://www.wikiart.org/en/henri-de-toulouse-lautrec/chocolat-dancing-in-the-irish-and-american-bar.

- Fig. 9, Dance of the female furies, *An American in Paris* (01:36:14), (c) Screenshot from the original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 10, Lise in adaption of Rousseau's *The Football Players*, *An American in Paris* (01:42:55), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 11, Lise holding the symbolic red rose in the setting of Renoir's *Pont Neuf*/ a flower market with the reference to the femme fleur of the surrealist, *An American in Paris* (01:40:35, (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 12, Le Parc de Saint-Could (The Park of Saint-Cloud) by Raoul Dufy, (c) Public Domain US, Original 1919, https://www.wikiart.org/en/raoul-dufy/the-park-of-saint-cloud-1919.

- Fig. 13, *Men's Fashion* by Jean-Eugéne-Auguste Atget, (c) Jean-Eugéne Atget/ Victoria and Albert Museum London, Original photograph taken in 1923-24 in Paris, Printed in 1956, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O166741/mens-fashions-photograph-atget-jean-eugene/.

- Fig. 14, Adaption of Photograph of *Men's Fashion* in *An American in Paris* (01:43:36), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 15, Opening scene *Playtime*, display of modern architecture in *Tativille*/ Paris, Playtime (00:03:28), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 16, Fig. 16, *Esso Building* in business district *La Defénse* in Paris (1963- 1993), (c) mirhat.ru, https://mirhat.ru/de/walls-and-partitions/area-dfense-in-paris-a-large-arch-photo-how-to-get-architecture-la-dfense-directions-map-address-photo-history/, 23.07.18.

- Fig. 17, Lever House (1952- today) in New York, (c) Ezra Stoller, https://www.som.com/projects/lever_house, 23.07.18.

- Fig. 18, Hulot interacting with the modern environment of an office building, Playtime (00:18:16), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 19 Barbara's attempt to take a picture of a Parisian flower stand, Playtime (00:31:00), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 20, Reflection of the *Eiffel Tower* on the surface of an office building, *Playtime* (00:33:18), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 21, Celebration of the modern disorder in the *Royal Garden*, Playtime (01:46:30), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 22, Reflections of Sacré-Coeur on the glass door of a French drugstore, *Playtime* (01:53:13), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 23, Roundabout turned into a Merry-go-round, *Playtime* (01:59:32), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 24, Play with the perception of the Parisian landscape, *Playtime* (02:02:10), (c) Screenshot from the original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 25, Skyline of modern Paris with elements of its old representation, *Playtime* (00:29:40), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 26, Picturesque display of Sacré-Coeur as a backdrop for the narrative, *Amélie* (00:01:09), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 27, *Le Dejeuner des Canotiers* by Pierre-Auguste, Renoir, (c) Public Domain France, Original 1881.

- Fig. 28, Opening scene in Amélie establishes the picturesque setting in Paris, *Amélie* (00:00:40), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 29, Postcard of the father's garden gnome visiting Moscow, Amélie (00:56:51), *Amélie*, (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 30, Carousel at Montmartre, symbolizing the begin of a fantastic scavenger hunt, *Amélie* (01:12:46), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 31, Scavenger hunt placed in the setting of Montmartre, displaying Sacré-Coeur in the background, Amélie (00:15:07), (c) Screenshot from original, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 32, Sanitized display of the Parisian landscape, *Amélie* (00:00:59), (c) Screenshot from original film, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 33, Amélie skipping stones at the canal St. Martin in Paris, resemblance to Marcel Carné's film *Hôtel du Nord* (1938), *Amélie* (00:12:43), (c) Screenshot from original, Marie Rode.

- Fig. 34, *Pont des Arts Paris* by Pierre-Auguste Renoir, (c) Public Domain France, Original (1867-68).