



Amélie (2001):

A Parisian's Flaneurism in Paris
and her Imagination of its Outside

Outline

- ▶ Introduction: Jean-Pierre Jeunet & Amelie
- ▶ Discussion Questions
- ▶ Amelie's Flaneurism
 - ▶ The Paris presented
 - ▶ How
- ▶ Mediated Communication
- ▶ Narrator & The Outside world

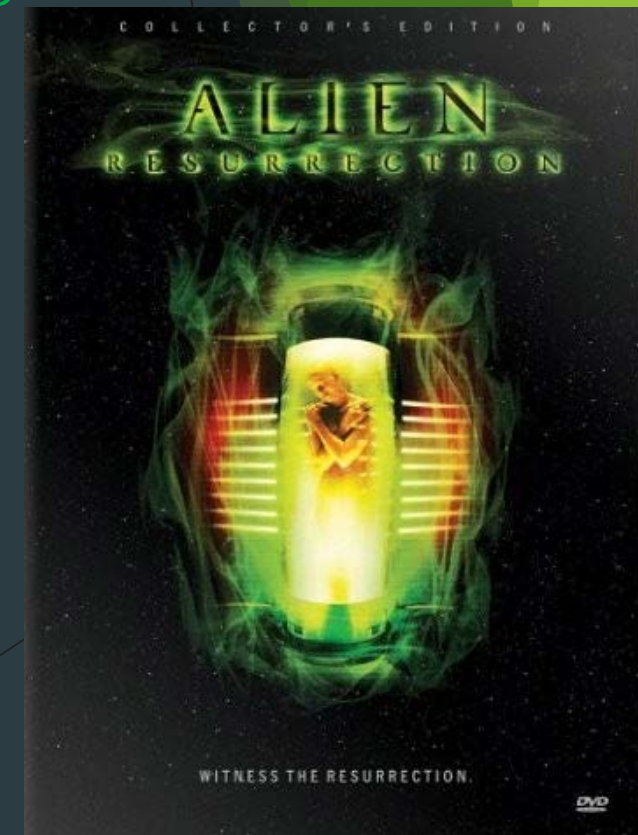
Amélie (2001)

Jean-Pierre Jeunet, (like Luc Besson), belongs to a new generation who makes films with both personal style and box office appeal—

→ 'distinct division between artistic and commercial that the New Wave created is coming to an end' (qtd. in Vanderschelden).

- ▶ Cinema du look - under the threats of globalization or renewal of national film industry
 - ▶ Influence of commercial and bande dessinée (comics) aesthetics
 - ▶ Digital tech.
- or "new New Wave" "cinematic impressionism"
- a digital face-lift of Paris (qtd. in Penz 244)

Alien: Resurrection (1997)



Amelie: a filmic **pastiche** -- with hybrid style & many intertexts

- 1) Specific Time: **1973-1997**; allusions to multiple time frames*
 - Alluding to *Roman Holiday* (1953), *Zorro* (1975), etc.
 - Late 19th -century Painting
- 2) Style of comics
- 3) Animation techniques
- 4) "The film combines **the familiar and the quaint**, because it associates the **local and the universal**, the exotic and the ordinary."
(Vanderschelden)



Characters

Raphaël Poulain —father



目前在安吉昂的水療中心工作

Amandine Poulain —mother



Raymond Dufayel (glass man)



也許，她只是與眾不同

Dominique Bretodeau

Gina & Mme. Suzanne



Georgette



Lucien (called a cretin)



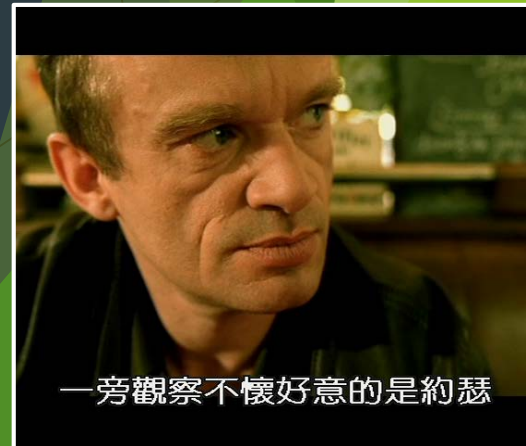
Mr. Collignon (green grocer)



Hipolito



Joseph



Madeleine Wallace

Discussion Questions (G 5's and Kate's)

1. G2 How is Paris presented? Is it just a matter of nostalgia and fantasy?
2. G7 Camera Angles and Fleurism: Why does Amelie look at us? Fluid tracking shots, Close-ups and bird's-eye view,
3. G3 What are the serious issues suggested by this romantic comedy? What is missing from it, or marginalized by it?
4. G1 Does the film stay in the world of fantasy? Are Amelie's ways of helping others manipulative?
 - ▶ What other filmic techniques have you noticed? What can be the meanings produced by the filmic techniques?
 - ▶ How are Amelie's mania/hobbies related to her fantasy? List three details
1. G4 How is this Paris different from Hou's Paris in *Flight of the Red Balloon (spaces and styles)*? Or Paris as is presented in *What Time Is It There (spaces)*?
2. G6 How is human communication in this film similar to, or different from the former two films?

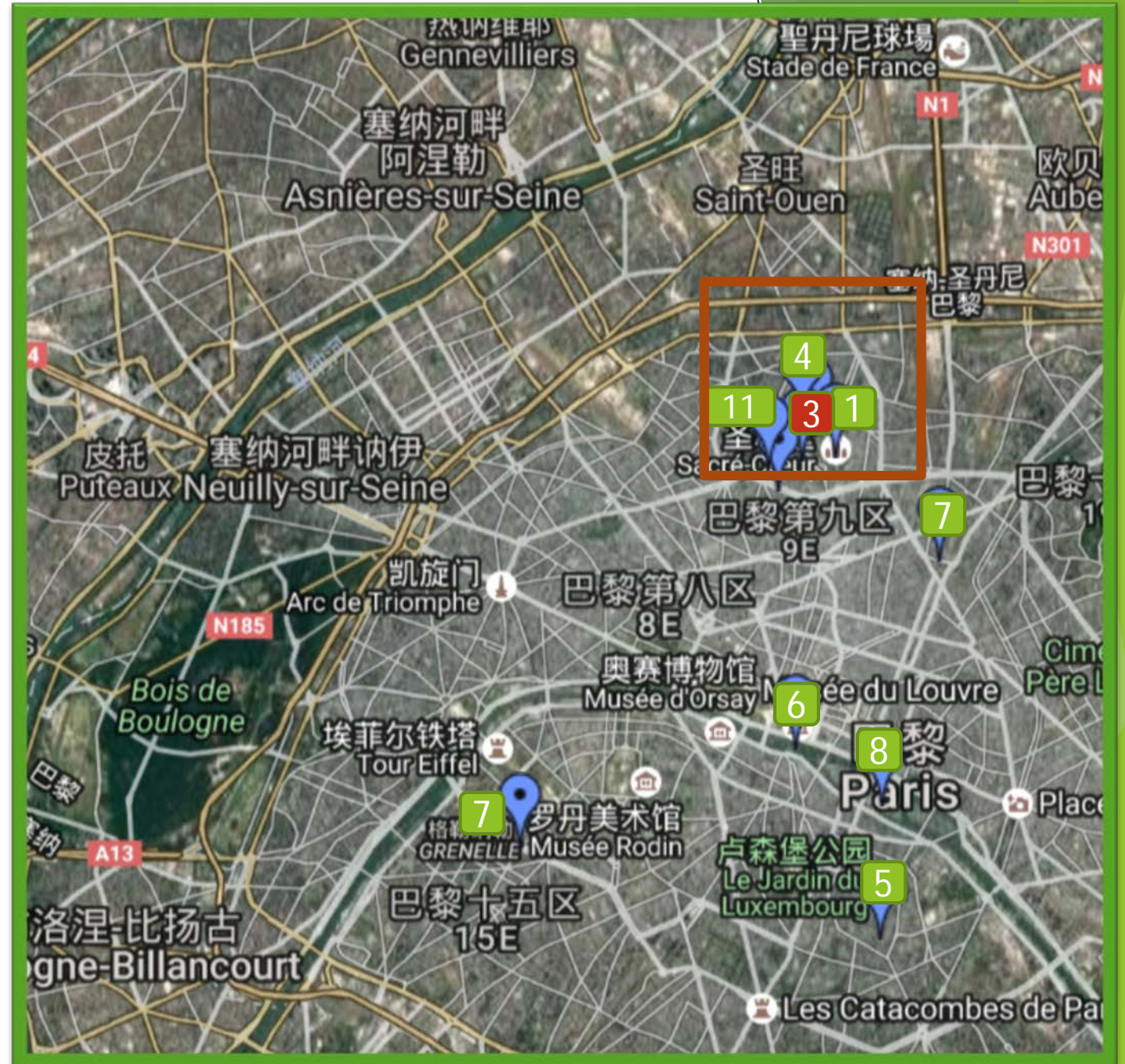
Paris

Presented in *Amelie*

Places in Paris

1. Sacré Coeur
2. rue Saint Vincent
3. Au Marché de la Butte,
rue des Trois Freres
4. Lamarck - Caulaincourt
(blind man)
5. Le Verre à Pied
6. Pont des Arts
7. La Motte-Picquet -
Grenelle ("Ou et quand?")
8. Notre Dame Cathedral
9. Paris Est
10. 37 Boulevard de Clichy
11. Café des Deux Moulins

source



Monmartre -
the setting of **Moulin Rouge**
(1928, 1934, 1952),
Moulin Rouge! (2001)

Paris



Monmartre Represented in its Entirety:

- 1) Representative Sites (high art + daily life; the religious sites)
- 2) Ideal Vision & Metro Stations as Fantasy Spaces

Scenes of
Monmartre
(Penz 242)



La Defense

- ▶ Commercial Area with a lot of high rises
- ▶ Not necessarily a non-place



The Paris in Amélie

1. Architecture of **19th-mid-20 century styles** (Penz, 241; except for Notre Dame, medieval style)
2. No **high rises**; no traffic jams
3. No **bad weather**; no people of color
4. All professional actors+ extras, (only a few passers-by—e.g. the boy running among pigeons)
5. + **French accordion music** → Paris of a Romantic Past

Flaneurism of Amelie's and the Film's

- ▶ Amelie-- A flaneur in solitude and fantasies
 - ▶ Imagining sex and observing faces
 - ▶ Making Connections as a do-gooder
 - (1) Bretodou → the blind man
 - (2) Getting hints from her Surroundings
 - ▶ Metro Space as a Fantasy Space
 - ▶ The Camera as a Flaneur
 - ▶ as a hide-&-seeker of love= city guide
- ▶ Amelie: also compiles images of the world and seeks revenge

Urban Spaces of Solitudes and Desires



& Peeping Toms

Amelie as a Flaneur in her Fantasy World

observing faces



Imagining sex



Amelie as a Do-Gooder: Making Connections ①

w/ Childhood



Connection ①

leading the blind man thru' the market

People, Sights and Sounds: We just passed the **drum major's widow!**

She's worn his coat since the day he died. Careful.

The horse's head on **the butcher's** has lost an ear.

That's **the florist laughing**. He has crinkly eyes.

Foods: In the bakery window there are **lollipops!**

Mmm. Smell that. They're giving out **melon slices**. **Sugarplum ice cream!**

Prices: We're passing the pork butcher. Ham, 79 francs. Spareribs, 45! Now the cheese shop. Picodons are 12.90, cabecous 23.50.

Connections: At the butcher's a baby's watching a dog that's watching the chickens roasting.*

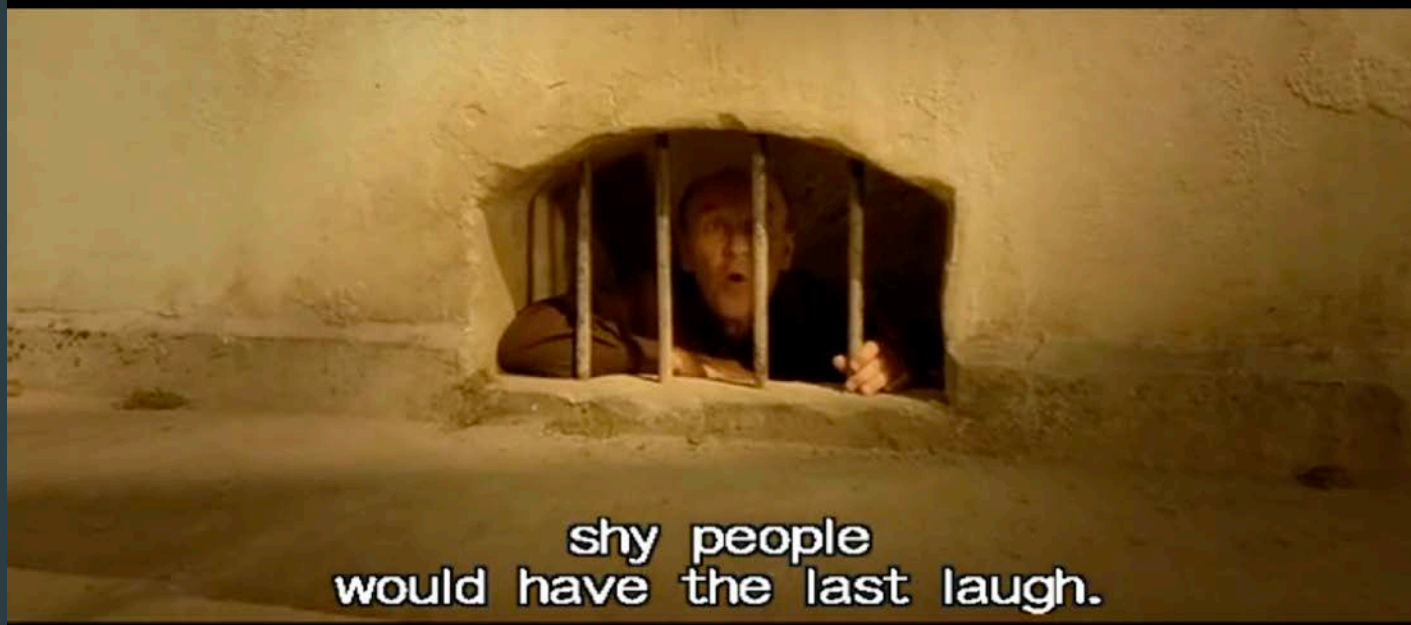
Now we're at the newspaper kiosk by the métro. I'll leave you here.
Bye.

Ideal City "Vision"?
"produits du terroir"

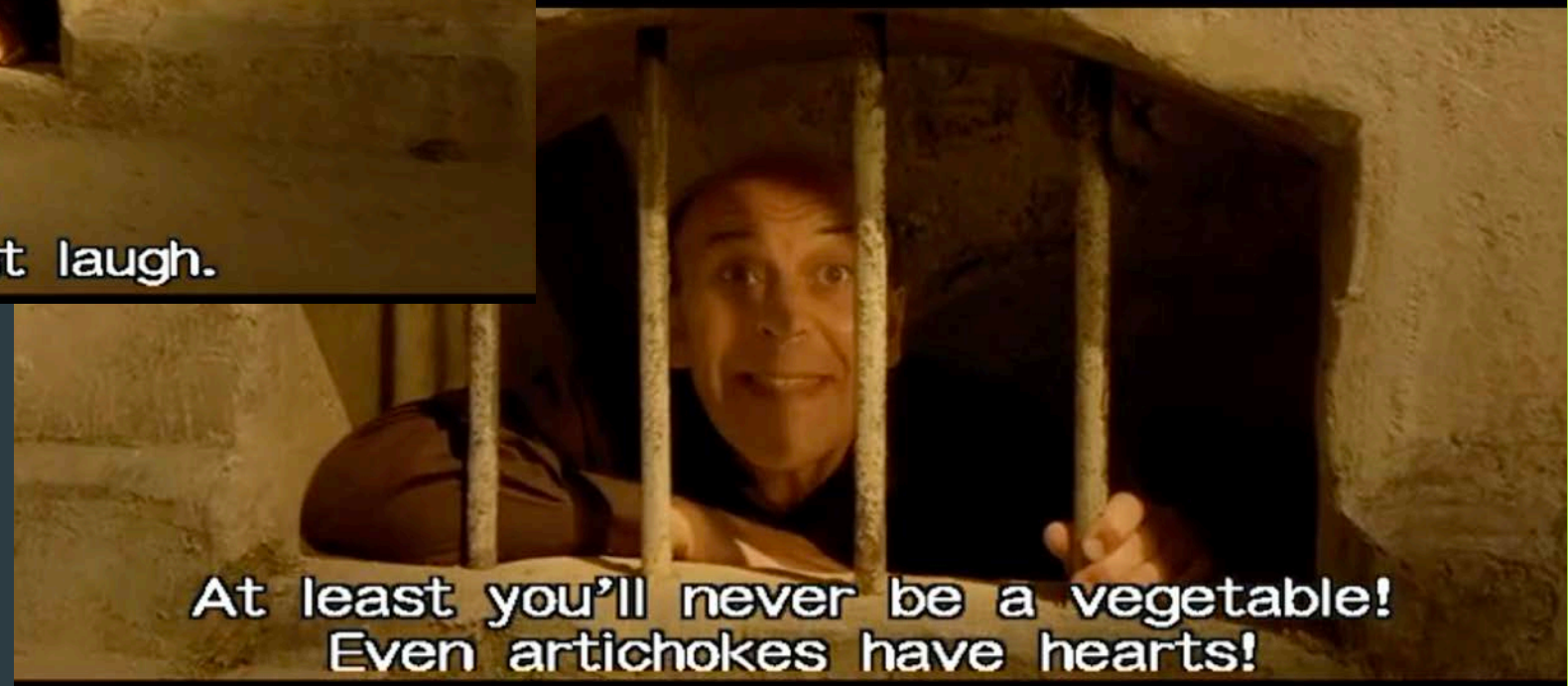
Connections ② Random Selection of Clues

- ▶ Stealing the father's garden gnome → Nino's "family album"
- ▶ Mme. Suzanne's Idea of Love → Matching Georgette and Joseph
- ▶ News about Letters → Letters for Madeleine

Connection ③ imagining words from the cellar



You'll never be a vegetable.
Even artichokes have hearts!

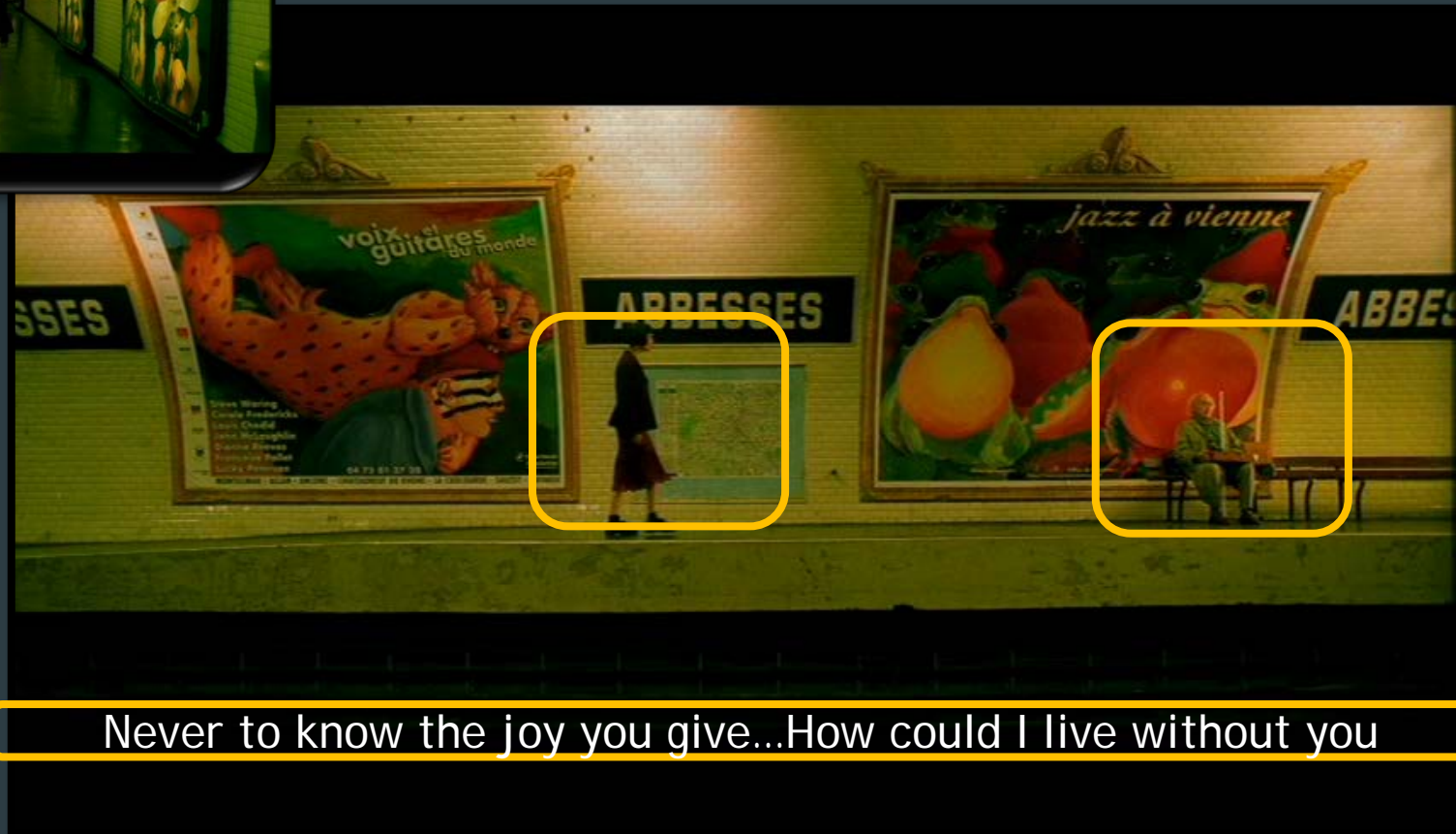


Metro Station: Fantasy Space for Seeking Love, like the fun fare



Connection ③ --Nino- Metro Station: Fantasy Space? 21:35

1) Search for Bretodeau Begins → First Encounter with Nino



快照亭下找東西的男孩叫尼諾

Never to know the joy you give...How could I live without you

Nino

Metro Station: Flaneurial View? 40:38;

2) after the B episode → Isolation → Gnoming →

Run after Nino

3) Gets Nino's address → 57:13 animation

- ▶ Omniscient, Playful
Camera dolly view –
Zooming in and out, Going
up and down →
- ▶ Photo Album – “what a
family album”



Connection ③ --Nino- Another Collector and Child



(4) Hide-and-Seek in the City

Saint Coeur Episode

Nino's Fantasy



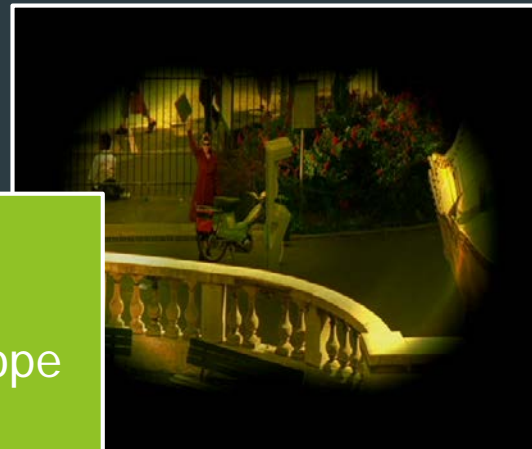
1.
telephone



2. Statue
impersonator
+ a kid



3.
telescope



4. Photo



Hide-&-Seek Clues: playgrounds, metro, work places

- ▶ 1. [A: **fun fare**] *5pm tomorrow, **Montmartre carousel*** near the phone box. Bring a 5 franc piece.
- ▶ 2. [A: **at Saint Coeur**] Follow the blue arrows,... telescopic view
- ▶ 3. [A: **at Saint Coeur**] page 51 [inside the photo album] -Do you want to meet me?
- ▶ 4. [N: **Metro Station**] 1: 25 "**Où? Guand?**" Photo booth message (**Two Windmills** after 4:00)
- ▶ 5. [A: **Two Windmills**] 1:41 [via Gina] *Photo booth, **Gare de l'Est ticket hall**, Tuesday 5pm.*



Amélie as A
City Guide

Locations in Paris: The Quotidian vs. The Academic/High Art

1. Well-dressed Beggar who does not work on Sundays.
2. Rue Androuet -the green grocer
3. Rue Cauchois -deux Moulins



Reference

Locations in Paris: The Quotidian vs. The Academic/High Art

1. Beggars,
2. the green grocer
3. Café -- deux Moulins
4. Pont des Arts (Musée du Louvre)
5. Institute de France
(a French learned society)



Reference

The Religious: Death & Love

Notre Dame + Outsider



But not the cemetery???

▶ Saint Coeur & the Carousel



Ideal City Vision

- ▶ (after seeing M. Bretodeau's response to getting the box)
- ▶ Amélie suddenly has a strange feeling of **complete harmony**. It's a perfect moment. Soft light, a scent in the air, **the quiet murmur of the city**, ...She breathes deeply. **Life seems so simple and clear**. A surge of love, an urge to **help mankind** suddenly engulfs her.

Understanding of
the City/World?
Communication?

Metro: Fantasy Space



Mediated Communication

Amelie's Quest:
--for Communication?
--or Understanding of the
City/World?



Recognition at
First Sight?

Love



City in Harmony

Help



Self-indulgence

Death/Solitude/Fantasy



Q. Why does Amelie look at us?
A. The whole film is (like) her fantasy.

Paris (1): Space of Solitude, Fantasy, & Mediated (Secret & Indirect) Connections

<http://www.movie-locations.com/movies/a/amelie.html#.WD6VlrJ96Tw>

Fantasy Space: Bedrooms – expressions of desire



Fantasy Space

Photos



Fantasy Spaces & Media

- ▶ Theatre -- observing others
- ▶ TV - fragments for self-projection
- ▶ Photo Booth - self-construction/collecting others
- ▶ Porn video parlor



The Last Fantasy Space: Home (with mirrors)



Mediated Connections:

1) The Girl with a Glass (not able to capture her)



Mediated Connections: 2) to care and help

Telescope, Videotape



Also her father, Georgette & Joseph,
the Concierge Madeleine, Dufayel
& Lucien

Telephone booth, Mr. Bretodeau & Nino



Mediated (Secret) Disruptions of Daily Routine:

3) to seek revenge

Neighbor



Mr. Collignon



Mr. Dufayel & the Video Camera



Talking to Lucien;
Talking to Amelie



Watching Amelie's
video



Watching the
clock

Mediated Connections: 4) of Mr. Dufayel (1) painting

- ▶ [watching the painting] [The girl with a glass]
She's in the middle, yet she's on the outside.
- ▶ 0:49 [after reading the photo album]
 - ▶ Q: Maybe she tries hard to fix other people's messy lives. What about her? And her own messy life? Who'll fix that?
 - ▶ A: It's better to help people than a garden gnome.
- ▶ [watching the painting] Urge her to pursue more actively 1) 1:07 → calls the number
 - ▶ Tell me about that boy she saw. Did they meet again?
 - ▶ No. They're into different things.
 - ▶ Luck is like the Tour de France. You wait, and it flashes past you. You have to catch it while you can.
→ 2) goes to Video parlor → fun fair; photo; "p. 51"

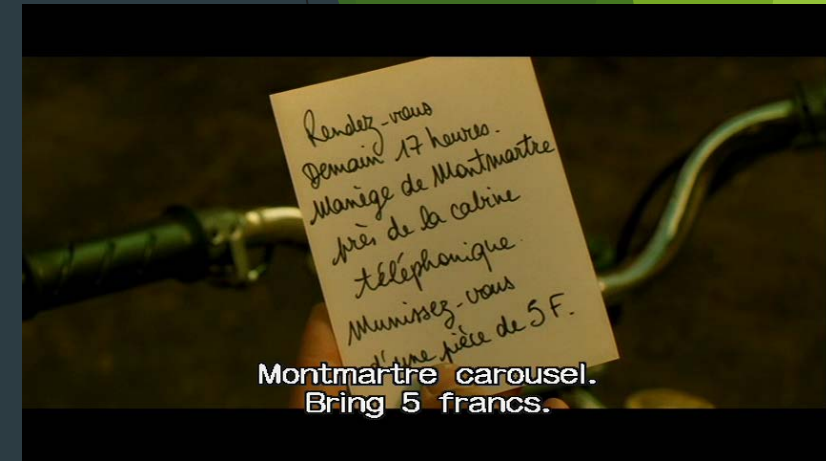


“Indirect” Connections: 4) of Mr. Dufayel (2) Video

- ▶ 4) Leave photos (w/ her address)
- ▶ 1:39 [Glass Man] Is she in love with him?
 - ▶ Yes.
 - ▶ I think it's time she took a real risk.
 - ▶ She might just do that. She's devising a stratagem.
 - ▶ She's fond of stratagems.
 - ▶ Yes.
 - ▶ In fact, she's cowardly.
 - ▶ → Amelie's self-projection when watching TV
 - ▶ →3) takes action to reveal the identity of red-shoe man
- ▶ 1:51 So, little Amélie, your bones aren't made of glass. You can take life's knocks. If you let this chance go by, eventually your heart will become as dry and brittle as my skeleton. → Amelie rushing to open the door



Mediated Connections: 5) w/ Codes and Notes to seek love



Mediated Communication: More Examples

Father



Gina to Nino

- ▶ G: One swallow doesn't make...?
- ▶ N: A swallow? A summer.

- ▶ G: And clothes...?
- ▶ N: The man.

- ▶ G: - A good cat deserves...?
- ▶ N: - A rat.

- ▶ G: - Patience...?
- ▶ N: - Is a virtue.

Communication w/ Audience

Omniscient Narration

Aerial View, Map View + Flaneurial Walks and Sights

Looking at the Audience/Narrator & Camera

Amelie //

Narrator & Camera

- ▶ Connecting people
 - ▶ Bricolage (random selection)
 - ▶ Large-eye, childlike, impish
- ▶ Connecting people
 - ▶ Bricolage
 - ▶ Close-Up + Bird's Eye + Mobile tracking = like comics or animation (40:27; 57:07; 1:43)



Omniscient Narrator: ab ovo + “In the meantime” → Sense of Community

- ▶ [beginning] **On September 3rd 1973**, at 6:28pm and 32 seconds, a bluebottle fly capable of 14,670 wing beats a minute landed on Rue St Vincent, Montmartre.
- ▶ **At the same moment**, on a restaurant terrace nearby, the wind magically made two glasses dance unseen on a tablecloth. Meanwhile, in a 5th-floor flat, Avenue Trudaine, Paris 9, returning from his best friend's funeral, Eugène Colère erased his name from his address book.
- ▶ **At the same moment**, a sperm with one X chromosome belonging to Raphaël Poulain dashed for an egg in his wife Amandine.

Omniscient Narrator: "In the meantime" (2)

- ▶ 1:26 [chance encounter with the man in red shoes] -- At the same time, a man leaves his home at 108 Rue Lecourbe.
- ▶ 1:56 [ending] 'September 28th 1997. It is exactly 11am. ... the marshmallow twister is twisting.
- ▶ Meanwhile, on a bench in Villetette Square, Félix Lerbier learns there are **more links in his brain** than atoms in the universe.'
- ▶ [aerial view] meanwhile, at the Sacré Cœur, the nuns are practising their backhand.

Love "in" the City





Outside World

1. fantasy
2. tourist
3. history
4. A Quebecois woman



Outside World

- ▶ Fantasy Space
- ▶ Place Names for Tourist
- ▶ Real sense of history?



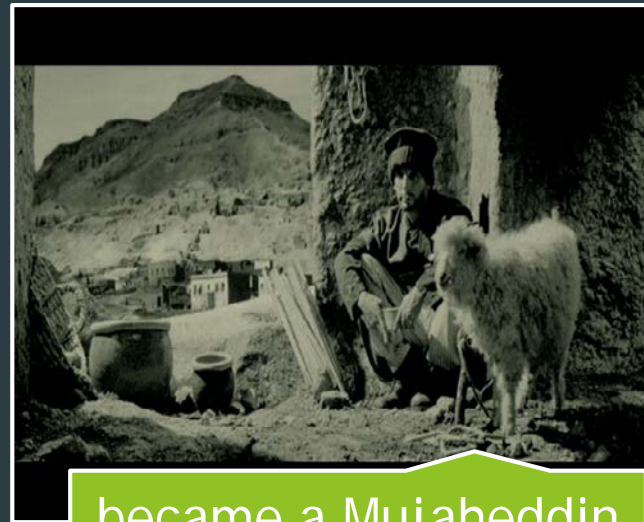
把他藏進貨櫃運往伊斯蘭堡

Taken to Istanbul



Steal Russian warheads

1:35 Nino is late. Amélie can only think of two possible explanations.
1) He didn't find it; 2) He was taken hostage by bank robbers.



became a Mujaheddin
聖戰者

Gnoming vs. Garden Gnome Liberation Front*

► Place Names & Cultural Icons

(e.g. NYC, Angkor Wat, Cambodia)



Nostalgia Film & Pastiche style –for Iconic/stereotypical Representation of History



Prince
Di



Tin
Box



Works Cited

- ▶ Penz, F. "The Real City in the Reel City: Towards a Methodology through the Case of Amélie." *The City and the Moving Image: Urban Projections*. Eds. R. Koeck, L. Roberts. Springer, 2010.
- ▶ Vanderschelden, Isabelle. "Amélie": *French Film Guide*. I.B. Tauris, 2007.