



universität  
wien

# MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

EXPLORING THE CINEMATIC URBAN NIGHTSCAPES OF  
COPENHAGEN AND MARSEILLE

verfasst von / submitted by

Elsa Moulinié

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, / Vienna, 31/08/20

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /  
degree programme code as it appears on  
the student record sheet:

A 066 664

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /  
degree programme as it appears on  
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium DDP Urban Studies

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Ass.- Prof. Henrik Reeh, PhD (University of Copenhagen)

## ABSTRACT (English and German versions)

Ever since the industrial period, cities have undergone mutations that have changed their role, function and aesthetic and this at an exponential pace. Simultaneously, ways of capturing reality and communicating it have also evolved and innovated. Cinema is an industrial art form. If one time, film was used to capture daily life, it has now become an entertainment industry which creates content that goes beyond depictions of reality. Nonetheless, Cinema was from its conception and early days, and is still today deeply involved in the urban. As the very first films were extremely sensitive to light, the earliest productions were only shot in broad daylight. But as technology advanced, cameras have become tools that can capture details even at night. The city nightscape tends to cultivate different messages, feelings and perceptions. This thesis develops a cinematic analysis of the urban night through contextualization, an academic literature overview and an analysis based on two case studies, the films *Drømme i København* (2010) and *La ville est tranquille* (2000).

---

Seit dem Industriezeitalter, haben die Städte mehrere Mutationen erlebt, die ihre Rolle, Funktion und Ästhetik mit einem exponentiellen Tempo verändert haben. Gleichzeitig hat sich die Erfassung der Realität und ihre Vermittlung innovativ entwickelt. Obwohl die Filmkunst damals genutzt wurde um den Alltag einzufangen, ist es heutzutage zur Unterhaltungsindustrie geworden, die über die Darstellung der Wirklichkeit hinausgehende Inhalte erstellt. Trotzdem ist Kino schon seit seinen Anfangstagen (und immer noch) sehr in die städtische Umwelt involviert. Schaut man auf die Filmtechnik zurück, konnte man damals nur bei Sonnenlicht Filme drehen. Doch haben die technologischen Fortschritte Kameras entwickelt, die ebenfalls während der Nachtzeit filmen können. Das Nachtleben der Stadt neigt dazu, verschiedene Botschaften, Gefühle und Empfindungen zu kultivieren. In dieser Arbeit, wird eine filmische Analyse der städtischen Nacht durch eine Kontextualisierung, einen akademischen Literaturüberblick und eine auf zwei Fallbeispielen - die Filme 'Drømme i København' (2010) und 'La ville est tranquille' (2000) - basierte Analyse entwickelt.

## *ACKNOWLEDGMENTS*

I wish to thank my supervisor Henrik Reeh, for his enthusiasm in regard to the topic of the urban nightscape, and his generosity when sharing with me his precious knowledge, advice and time. I am also grateful for his ability to provide me with constructive criticism and for keeping me on track, focused on my subject and motivated to stay the course.

I would like to thank Walter Matznetter, second reader for my thesis. Thank you for your time and interest.

I would like to express gratitude to my friends and family and specifically to my mother, for their interest in the subject of my thesis and with whom I have shared engaging and stimulating conversations on the topic. Thank you for your encouragement, advice and comments.

Finally, I would like to thank the 4CITIES lecturers, staff and students, without whom this enriching and invaluable experience would not have been possible. The memories I have of my experiences, discoveries and friendships made in Brussels, Vienna, Copenhagen and Madrid have made a lasting impression for which I am grateful.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.1	INTRODUCTION .....	3
<b>CHAPTER 1.....</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b>POSITIONING OF RESEARCH FIELD .....</b>	<b>6</b>	
1.2	AN UNDERSTANDING OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS .....	6
1.2.1	<i>THE ORIGIN OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS.....</i>	6
1.2.2	<i>INVESTIGATING THE MEANING OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS.....</i>	7
1.2.3	<i>LINGUISTIC HERITAGE, THE METAPHORS AND SYMBOLICS .....</i>	8
1.3	THE URBAN NIGHT.....	10
1.3.1	<i>THE URBAN .....</i>	10
1.3.2	<i>EXPLORING THE URBAN NIGHT WITH ANNE CAUQUELIN AND SIMONE DELATTRE .....</i>	12
1.4	COPENHAGEN AND MARSEILLE .....	14
1.4.1	<i>INTRODUCTION.....</i>	14
1.4.2	<i>INVESTIGATING GEOGRAPHICAL AND CULTURAL SPECIFICITIES.....</i>	16
1.4.3	<i>CINEMATIC COPENHAGEN .....</i>	17
1.4.4	<i>CINEMATIC MARSEILLE .....</i>	18
1.5	RESEARCH GAP AND RESEARCH QUESTION.....	20
<b>CHAPTER 2.....</b>	<b>21</b>	
<b>METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>21</b>	
1.6	FILM ANALYSIS.....	21
1.6.1	<i>FILM AND THE CITY.....</i>	21
1.6.2	<i>FILM AS A REALITY.....</i>	21
1.6.3	<i>METHOD .....</i>	23
1.7	THE COPENHAGEN OF MAX KESTNER.....	29
1.7.1	<i>THE FILM.....</i>	29
1.7.2	<i>SCENE ANALYSIS.....</i>	30
1.8	THE MARSEILLE OF ROBERT GUÉDIGUIAN .....	40
1.8.1	<i>THE FILM.....</i>	40
1.8.2	<i>SCENE ANALYSIS.....</i>	43
1.9	DISCUSSION .....	52
1.10	LIMITATIONS.....	56
1.11	CONCLUSION 8350 CARACTERES.....	58
1.12	BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	60
1.13	INDEX.....	62

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

*« Au cinéma, deux noirs se répètent : celui de la ville, celui de la salle. Mais celui de la salle représente celui de la ville. J'ai une situation privilégiée que je souhaite avoir dans l'obscurité : voir sans être vu ; sans être vu ni par l'homme qui de l'écran, me parle ou se montre à moi en images, ni par mes voisins que je devine sans les voir ni en être vu. »*

Anne Cauquelin

In this quote from La ville la nuit, Anne Cauquelin introduces the reader to multiple themes that the exploration of nighttime in cities imply. By mentioning the movie theater, she addresses nocturnal activities, and the theme of darkness. She then tackles the matter of seeing without being seen which relates to topics later discussed throughout this thesis such as privacy, transparency, penetrability and permeability. Seeing without being seen signifies privilege as it implies visibility and therefore knowledge, but also relates to themes of privacy in public, discretion and even perhaps suspicion.

Supposedly, night seems like a straightforward notion to define. Only, through the exploration of night in interdisciplinary literature referring to natural sciences, history, sacred texts, then the complexity and diversity and layers of meanings, interpretations, and imaginaries of night appear and night materializes in ways that are unexpected.

Seizing this unpredictable and moving reality that fascinates as much as it frightens, that is full contrasts and contraries, which is simultaneously dream and nightmare, can only be an ambitious task. Thus it is important to grasp the wide range of meanings it withholds and representations it produces. This thesis will not attempt to generate simply one, but rather to draw from extracts of two cinematic explorations, imaginaries, representations and meanings and confront them. Elementary definitions characterize and participate in creating that common understanding of light and darkness and day and night being interdependent opposites.

The literature related to the topic, aims at positioning the research field by creating a broad understanding of the thematic as context and is necessary to understand the meanings that night and darkness withhold.

Throughout the works of pioneer writers such as the urban sociologists Robert Park, David Harvey and Henri Lefebvre the thesis defines the urban, the starting point of the research.

The literature review then explores a definition of the urban through the topic of light and questions with the writings of Anne Cauquelin whether light is an aspect of the city that is so inherent to it, that it is part of its very meaning. The rural may then be contrasted to the urban through that lens. Therefore it appears necessary to nuance our understanding of the night by adding a layer to our definition which

will distinguish the urban night from the rural night.

Finally with the help of Simone Delattre, the thesis investigates the historical evolution of light in nineteenth century Paris, which allows the reader to grasp the different functions light withholds, anteriorly and sometimes still today.

The relevance of research about the topic of the urban night in urban studies is still underestimated. Indeed, studies of the urban are often set during the daytime. The nightscape appears of less relevance. We argue that the study of night is as pertinent as day, and that when a topic is explored, it deserves to be explored from a nocturnal perspective as well. Disregarding the urban nightscape only exacerbates the lack of common knowledge and understanding of the urban night our societies are experiencing. In addition, the literature acknowledges the valuable need for an understanding of cross-cultural perceptions of night and darkness. As perceptions differ from one culture to another, film is a way to identify representations which comment differently on the theme of urban night.

For a director to share a message, and to orient the message in their desired way, film can be seen like a window, through which the spectator dives into a director's reality, or the one they have decided to produce. Through the lens of two directors from different cultural backgrounds, the urban night will be portrayed according to their own distinct realities. Therefore, the formulated research question

driving this thesis, inquires into how the cinematic discourse constructs and comments on the condition of the urban nightscape in Marseille and in Copenhagen.

Such interrogations are too extensive for this thesis to offer an exhaustive answer, as this area of research opens up to numerous possible case studies, methods and fields of research. This thesis has no pretention in applying the findings to the cities but rather to the Copenhagen of Max Kestner and the Marseille of Robert Guédiguan. Hopefully, this study will essentially bring researchers to reflect on the urban nightscape when confronted by it and consider it for more than the moment where sun is not shining.

The aim is to gain a better understanding of the representation of the urban nightscape in film by comparing movie scenes taking place in two distinct geographical locations with the objective of potentially drawing cultural specificities. The hypothesis is that the directors are reflecting a reality of the urban night in their films which is influenced by their directorial cinematic decisions and entails when confronting both films, specific cultural features will appear.

The first chapter presented as the positioning of the research field initiates a discussion around the themes of night, darkness and light in order to grasp an understanding of the subject matter. By first

exploring the origin of light and darkness and understanding their implications from an evolutionary perspective, the chapter then investigates the meanings held by light and darkness. To complete the first section, the chapter explores the symbolic aspect of light and darkness by looking into metaphors and linguistic heritage of the themes in question.

The second section of the chapter attempts to define the urban, building on David Harvey and Henri Lefebvre, introducing the urban as a creation. Then, the section gives an understanding of the urban, the city and the rural which leads to the next part that aims at distinguishing the urban night from the rural night. Finally, chapter 1 explores the urban night with two pertinent writers, Simone Delattre and Anne Cauquelin.

The last section in the chapter focuses on building context regarding the case cities. The cities are introduced through geographical and demographic data, with a specific section on sun light hours and the use of sun graphs. This leads to the next part which investigates geographical and cultural specificities. Finally, the section introduces the cinematic profiles of both cities. Which leads us to identify the gap and formulate the thesis research question.

The second chapter engages in the methodological aspect which first includes a part about film analysis discussing the topics of film and the city and film as a reality and then presents the methodology used in throughout the thesis. The two following parts dive into the

Copenhagen of Max Kestner, director of the case study film Dreams in Copenhagen; and the Marseille of Robert Guédiguan, director of the second case study film La ville est tranquille. Respectively, the films are presented in order to give context and the choice is justified. Then the selected scenes are presented and analyzed according to the method previously presented. The collected data is then discussed in a new section and the final section the discussion's limitations.

Film analysis lies at the heart of the subject matter. Three scenes from each selected film will be described through specific criteria. Key themes will emerge from that description which will then be examined and data gathered from each film will then be confronted and discussed.

# CHAPTER 1

## POSITIONING OF RESEARCH FIELD

The following Chapter analyses our western society's understanding of light and darkness through a scientific lens and a historical perspective based primarily on society's biblical heritage. The chapter later explores and attempts to define the urban night and presents the case cities I have selected to focus on through their cultural specificities and their cinematic nature. Finally the chapter introduces the thesis research question.

### 1.2 AN UNDERSTANDING OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

This section aims at creating a broad understanding of the evolution of society through a particular lens that has been central to civilizations across time: light and darkness and their relationship to day and night.

#### 1.2.1 *THE ORIGIN OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS*

What is light ? According to the Oxford Dictionary, light can be defined as “the energy from the sun, a lamp, etc. that makes it possible to see things” (Oxford University Press, 2019). Through this definition emerges the idea of natural and artificial light which is central to the themes of night and day and light and darkness. On the contrary, the dictionary defines darkness as “the state of being dark, without any light” (Oxford University Press, 2019). These elementary yet meaningful definitions show that it is a common understanding that light and darkness are opposites. Going through the history of light can help us understand more in depth where we, as a society, stand in regard to our relationship with light and darkness and why.

Biologists assert that light is life as light enables photosynthesis which can be defined as “the process by which green plants turn carbon dioxide and water into food using energy obtained from light from the sun”. (Oxford University Press, 2019) Most living beings depend on sun light to survive as they depend on plants to feed or depend on their feed to feed on plants and so on, according to the food chain (Plants, herbivores, carnivores that eat herbivores and carnivores that eat carnivores). Then again, there are some exceptions such as certain types of bacteria that do not require

sunlight to survive so we cannot say that light is a sine qua non condition for life on earth. Therefore, biologically speaking, it is incorrect to radically oppose the phenomenon of darkness and life, although light is indeed necessary for the survival of most organisms (University of California SB Science Line, 2019).

Because light is a condition to human beings' and most living organisms' survival, it is somewhat a natural instinct than to be attracted to light. Dating back to the history of human kind, from 1.5 Ma onwards on the timeline of the evolutionary history of life, « Some evidence of burnt material » has been observed on a « surprising number of sites» (Gowlett, 2016). From then on, fire became central to human survival and evolution. Fire brought heat and light. The heat cooked food which had a massive influence on human biology “assisting in providing the high-quality diet which has fueled the increase in brain size through the Pleistocene” (Gowlett, 2016). And light aided with artistic expression, socializing, communication as it is a hypothesis that fire was part of the formation of the origins of language. “Fire control has had a major impact in the course of human evolution» and « fire became embedded in human behavior » (Gowlett, 2016).

## 1.2.2 INVESTIGATING THE MEANING OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

### 1.2.2.1 THE DUALISM OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

When looking into some of the most commonly known verses of the Genesis one to five, a notable opposition between light and darkness appears which respectively carries a clear connotation of “good” and “bad”. God brought light, light is “good” versus darkness which is the unknown “without form”, “the depths”. The light was called “day” and the darkness was called “night” by the Biblical Creator. So logically, day is good and night is an unknown and untrustworthy entity.

*“1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

*2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*  
*3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*

*4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.*

*5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.”* (Book of Genesis - King James Version).

Above this dual representation of light and darkness, what is interesting when referring to the Genesis is the fact that darkness was the

status quo until God brought light. Now when the philosophers of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century addressed darkness, it was defined as the lack of natural light, the lack of day. De Jaucourt, contributed greatly in the creation of the Encyclopedia, alongside Diderot and d'Alembert but didn't get the credit some believe he justly deserves. The definition of darkness in the Encyclopedia written between 1751 and 1772 by de Jaucourt<sup>1</sup>, shows that he saw darkness rather as the end of the day, when sun didn't shine. « La nuit est la cessation du jour, c'est-à-dire le temps où le soleil n'éclaire plus »<sup>2</sup> (FERENCZI, 2017). This definition is particular because it clashes with the Genesis which says that light came after dark, whereas De Jaucourt presents darkness as something that comes after day light or when day light is no more. In a way he refutes the notion of light being god's making as he changes the order of events. It is therefore no surprise that de Jaucourt dedicated his life's work to the fight against religious obscurantism and spreading the benefits of knowledge over clerical abuse.

De Jaucourt was in favor of the separation between Church and State. Just like Voltaire, he was critical of religious superstition and fanaticism, which he believed created chaos on which the Catholic Church's abuse fed on. An example was the Church's lack of tolerance for the practice of other religions. Indeed, after the

revocation of the Edit de Nantes in 1685, the practice of the Protestant faith was forbidden in France. Moreover, it was in Protestant countries (England, Netherlands, etc.) that the enlightenment spirit took shape. As the movement developed, the concept of truth and its source shifted from Religion to Science. "In Christianity, the idea of truth is reflected in the eternal light God has given humankind" (ROGER, 1968). Therefore scientific facts began to clarify and define the grey areas where knowledge was lacking and where the Church used religion and superstition to fill those gaps. Light became a symbol of science and reason allowing one access knowledge and to see more clearly.

### 1.2.3 LINGUISTIC HERITAGE, THE METAPHORS AND SYMBOLICS

According to Alain Delaunay, researcher at the Collège International de Philosophie, the opposition between light and darkness constitutes a universal symbol. (DELAUNAY) He refers to the symbolic of creation (the Genesis) and the symbolic of knowledge (Enlightenment) and refers to a final symbolic: purification (catharsis). During the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, light is a metaphor for progress, knowledge, reason, tolerance, etc. In contrast, darkness was portrayed by many enlightenment writers as decline or

<sup>1</sup> FR : « les ténèbres sont la cessation de la clarté »  
EN : « darkness is the cessation of brightness »

<sup>2</sup> EN: « Night is the cessation of day, meaning the time when the sun is no longer shining. »

underdevelopment which is mostly associated with the Middle Ages of which a specific period between 400 AD to at least 700 AD is also known as the Dark Ages. This period was rather undocumented with fewer contributions in terms of literature, architecture, etc. rather than it being a period of underdevelopment (TUNTURI, 2011) Indeed, popular vision of the medieval society being “dark”, “uneducated” or barbaric as a whole is a reductionist misconception.

The symbolic of the color black is a subject of its own that nonetheless is worth mentioning here given the ties between the terminology of darkness and Black which can both designate the absence of light. Blackness and darkness which are biblically associated with the night, have been the color of death or hell but has not always been a negative color. It has, throughout human history also been associated to fertility or dignity. (ADLER & BOUVIER, 2013) Nowadays black is used in fashion and is esthetically considered elegant and contemporary. Some colors are considered warm and cheerful and others cold, sad or scary. According to the genesis, darkness, or the absence of light and color, was the first “color” to have ever been. And because of what the color itself implies, it has kept a pejorative image.

## 1.3 THE URBAN NIGHT

### 1.3.1 THE URBAN

#### 1.3.1.1 THE CITY AS A CREATION

"The city is man's most consistent and on the whole, his most successful attempt to remake the world he lives in more after his heart's desire. But, if the city is the world which man created, it is the world in which he is henceforth condemned to live. Thus, indirectly, and without any clear sense of the nature of his task, in making the city, man has remade himself." wrote the urban sociologist Robert Park . This quote entails that the city mirrors who we, as a society are and aspire to, as we have created it and have built on it. David Harvey who used this quote in The Right to the City, commented on it adding that, "if Park is correct, then the question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of what kind of people we want to be, what kinds of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish, what style of daily life we desire, what kinds of technologies we deem appropriate, what aesthetic values we hold" (HARVEY, 2003). Harvey introduces the idea of the need for a vision, a narrative that has benefited from a common reflection. This idea meets the thought of Henri Lefebvre, who insisted on the diversity of urban forms which brought him to characterize the city and the urban as "a projection of society on land,

perceived and conceived by thought and reflection" (PAQUOT, 2009). This definition which according to Lefebvre was temporary and raw, built on the assumption that urban space is not a given fact of nature, but is rather the product of a social process which is central to comprehend and define the urban. It is then essential to focus on another set of questions, such as "who produces urban space"; "for whom"; "how" and "in whose interest"? It is also necessary to acknowledge urban space as a social construction produced according to material, normative and symbolic terms. Which entail means that the production of space is fundamentally conflictual, for it builds on diverging interests, aspirations, needs, ideologies. Hence, through these lenses, urban issues are also political issues.

Urban issues are political issues and fundamentally very complex ones as they are matters of conflict among diverse constituents or urban actors – bearing divergent interests, aspirations, cultural models, political subjectivities and ideologies. Urban space is about power struggles, alliances, collaborations, coopetition, competition, and resistance among diverse actors controlling diverse resources (public funds, private capital, electoral support, symbolic legitimacy...).

### 1.3.1.2 CITY, RURAL SPACE, AND THE URBAN

Urbanization can be defined as the process of becoming urban or more urban, therefore less rural. It refers to the clustering of population in increasingly large, dense, and diverse, cities over time. Urbanization represents and reinforces a division of labor in society as urbanities cannot produce enough food, they rely on farmers who themselves rely on cities as a market for their products. Therefore the tendency for a dichotomic perception between the city and the countryside appears more meaningful. The phenomenon of increasing urbanization occurred because of the expansion of capitalistic production patterns across European territories (COSTES, 2010). Lefebvre prematurely identified the term of the industrial city and the materialization of a new phenomenon, the urban. (PAQUOT, 2009) It entailed the formation of suburbs and peripherals, creating urban areas that neither were part of the city, nor were they rural. Lefebvre will put into perspective his earlier work where country side and city were opposed and puts forward the new identified phenomenon that is the urban.

### 1.3.1.3 DISTINGUISHING THE URBAN NIGHT FROM THE RURAL NIGHT

Part 1 which gives us an understanding of light and darkness from a scientific point of view, as well as a historical perspective, helps us understand the fascination that humans have for light. Light being central and essential to life, and darkness being, to a certain extent, feared. We thus understand the investment society has put into artificial light infrastructure in the urban. Almost as if the ultimate goal was for the nocturnal urban to match the day time urban, which remains an unattainable fantasy. Anne Cauquelin describes the urban day as a “full text” and the urban night as “crippled text” (CAUQUELIN, *La ville la nuit*, 1977). But the way she defines the city by asking “l'éclairage ne ferait-il pas partie de la ville comme fondant son sens de ville ?<sup>3</sup>» (CAUQUELIN, *La ville la nuit*, 1977). Therefore, if we use the concept of light to define the urban in its physical sense and as a symbolic of knowledge; can we oppose the urban to the rural in this manner? The rural being dark at night with little to no artificial light, but also dark in terms of knowledge as cities concentrate that knowledge to a certain extent. Cities gather the arts, the sciences, literature and the actors involved, but also Universities which have the role of spreading the said knowledge. The urban is light, it is knowledge and it is artificial, man-made. To a certain extent, it can be opposed to nature

<sup>3</sup> Is lighting (artificial) not a part of the city as a founding the very meaning of the city?

which has only one rule, its own. But the urban cannot be opposed in that manner to the rural, as it is also artificial to some extent as fields and roads are man-made and the rural also has know-how and knowledge about its environment.

### 1.3.2 EXPLORING THE URBAN NIGHT WITH ANNE CAUQUELIN AND SIMONE DELATTRE

The nocturnal city has dragged negative connotation throughout time. Indeed, as we've mentioned previously, darkness and light have been opposed. « Enlightenment » being a synonym of « awareness » : « understanding » ; «clairvoyance» and « darkness » having « ignorance » , « mystery » , « isolation » , « secrecy » or « blindness » as synonyms. All rather negative terms. Hence the names given to the enlightenment period, a humanistic renaissance (a rebirth or revival), it was also called the « Age of reason ». These terminology's were used to mark a clear separation with the Middle Ages, also known as the « Âge sombre » or «Dark Ages».

Towards the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> Century, access to electricity started to spread within the urban scape. First reserved to the elite and commercial spaces, it then democratized and spread to the streets, boulevards and avenues

of cities. Street lighting had a specific purpose whether it was gas lighting or later electric, the aim was to ensure order in the streets. In Paris, bringing light to the streets appeared as a social imperative (PAINTER, 1996). Indeed as is still the case today, it was at that time already assumed that there was a direct correlation between darkness and crime. Therefore darkness is not detached from the feelings of fear (PAIN, MACFARLANE, TURNER, & GILL, 2006).

In Les douzes heures noires - La nuit à Paris au XIXe siècle, Simone Delattre traces the history of lighting in Paris, explaining how it grew particularly fast in public space while taking some time to reach private households, pointing to the political agenda of urban lighting in Paris during the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century and onwards. She opposes this « luminous sentinel » to the « seductive lights <sup>4</sup> » visible in some neighborhoods of Paris, where entertainment and consumption are central (MALANDAIN, 2000). Delattre sees the play of light as a way to blur the physical boundaries between interior and exterior. Electricity is described as a triumph of day over night and the night has no future according to the engineers of the « fin de siècle » period (DELATTRE, 2004). We wonder if the triumph of light can also be considered as a triumph of one class over another. Indeed, one's presence in the urban night separates yet again « good » from « bad ». A Bourgeois in the

<sup>4</sup> Original quote : « Les lumières séductrices »

nightscape will be socializing with other Bourgeois in an appropriate place, at an appropriate time. A poor person (part of the working class) who is not able to afford to go to the places the Bourgeois enjoys, should therefore be at home, and should have nothing to do outside at night. That's when Simone Delattre describes how society differentiated « the good poor » from « the bad poor » (DELATTRE, 2004). The working class versus the dangerous class. In theory, the « dangerous class » was made up of the worst individuals of society, and light would rid society of these individuals. Public street lighting was there to fight the working class night presence as it was feared by the Bourgeois and the authorities due to its' unpredictability. The last chapters of Les douzes heures noires, focus on how night and darkness are considered to be a privileged setting for deviation to occur. Delattre focusses on the way the media, during the second quarter of the XIX<sup>th</sup> Century, covered nocturnal crime putting forward the spectacular aspects of the attacks (DELATTRE, 2004). Although they were statistically rather uncommon, those « faits divers » filled the imaginary of the population and were used by police forces to justify the discourse on insecurity of dark hours and to push forward the argument for the need of a war on night.

## 1.4 COPENHAGEN AND MARSEILLE

### 1.4.1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.4.1.1 LOCATION AND POPULATION

##### *COPENHAGEN*

The city of Copenhagen is located on the eastern coast of Zealand Island, as well as on Amager Island which is located on the Øresund detroit which links the Baltic and Northern seas and are the divide between Denmark and Sweden. The city's geographic coordinates are 55.6761° N, 12.5683° E. Copenhagen is the largest city in Denmark which has a population of 510 000 within the administrative boundaries, which does not include Frederiksberg nor the larger functional metropolitan area. Denmark is predominantly rural with two thirds of its population considered rural and a rural population double the average of OECD countries . Only 5% of Denmark's population is considered predominantly urban according to the OECD .

##### *MARSEILLE*

Marseille is a coastal city of the Mediterranean basin located in the South-east of France. The city is populated by a little under 870 000 inhabitants and spreads across just over 545 000 square kilometers. Marseille is located between Spain and Italy, the geographic coordinates of the city are 43.2964°N, 5.3700°E

(INSEE, 2017). Unlike Denmark, France is predominantly urban with just over 80% of its population being urban and just over 19% being rural according to the World Bank collection of development indicators (Trading Economics, 2019). This trend occurring predominantly in the post war period following the second world war.

Unlike Denmark's figures, the percentages for France don't include an intermediary between rural and urban which affects the statistics to a certain extent.

#### 1.4.1.2 SUN GRAPHS

Figures 1 and 2 bellow, represent the times at which the sun rises and sets year round, month by month. Using the Summer and Winter solstices as two extremes, one can grasp the differences in daylight availability according to season and geographical location. Because the two cities have distinct geographic coordination, the level of sunlight varies from one geographical location to another. We will briefly discuss what such differences entail.

In December and January, the months closest to the winter solstice<sup>5</sup>, the graph shows the city of Marseille having sun light from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM (10 hours per day). In other words the city will be in darkness for 14 hours. In June and July, months closest to the summer solstice<sup>6</sup> this time, the graphs indicates sun light from 4:00

<sup>5</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> December

<sup>6</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> June

AM to 11:00 PM (14 hours per day) in Marseille. Which means 10hours of darkness in those summer months (Cf. Figure 2).

When referring to Figure 1 concerning the city of Copenhagen and looking at the same period (months of December and January), the graph shows the city having sun light from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM or 9 hours per day. So the city will be in darkness for 15 hours. During the months around the summer solstice, Copenhagen sun light shines rather continuously from 00:00 AM to 00:00 PM ( 25 hours per day).Although the level of sunlight varies and is not at its maximum for those 24 hours, the sun actually never sets. In other words, the city will at no point be in total darkness.

These specificities that are due to the geographical local of both cities are a clear illustration that it would not make sense to automatically pair night with darkness and day with light in some regions of the world.

Indeed in northern countries, numerous “daytime activities” (School, work, shopping, exercise...) are carried out long after the sun had set (4:00 PM in the winter time). In parallel, in the summertime when the sun doesn’t set, night time activities such as the vital necessity of sleep are obviously still carried out. Still, examples demonstrate how although populations may adapt their habits according to seasons and light (to a certain extent), light and darkness do not completely regulate urban life. Due to our need for sleep ; du to access to artificial light. The increase of exposition to light, notably from screens due to 24/7 news broadcasts, entertainment en communication has amplified time spent awake. This problematic has been explored by Anne Cauquelin in an article called La ville transparente (CAUQUELIN, La ville transparente, 1988) and by Jonathan Crary in 24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep

(CRARY , 2014).

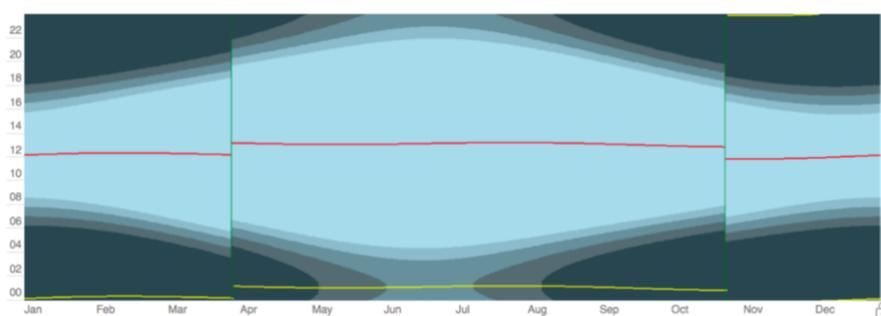
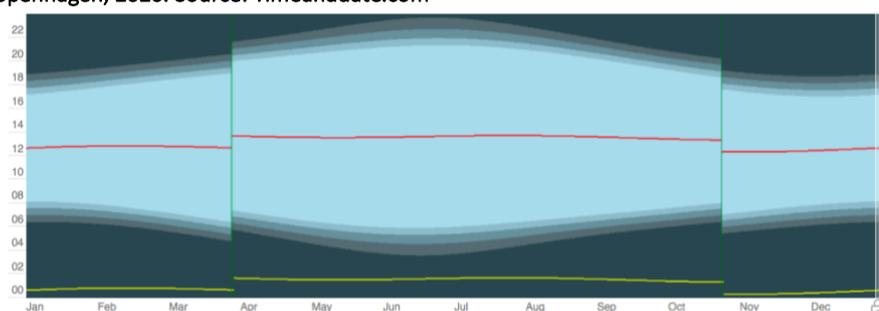


Figure 1: Sun Graph, Copenhagen, 2020. Source: Timeanddate.com

Figure 2: Sun Graph, Marseille, 2020. Source: Timeanddate.com



#### 1.4.2 INVESTIGATING GEOGRAPHICAL AND CULTURAL SPECIFICITIES

Culture and Geography from North to South have a strong impact on use and custom. A striking way to illustrate this idea is by referring to some towns and cities in Spain, Italy, Southern France, which can feel like ghost towns depending on the time of day, as folks have the habit of closing their shutters during the night when temperatures rise and almost systematically at night on the street side. In contrast, Northern European households (Netherlands, Denmark) are transparent by day and glow at night as façades let the light in all day long as folks don't have the habit of using curtains and shutters but rather of optimizing the flow of natural light into their homes.

There is therefore a fundamental distinctness in people's relationship with light in Southern Europe and in Northern Europe. Norms, purpose, habits around light are profoundly linked to the geography.

Above, was mentioned « Northern Europe » and « Southern Europe » as if there were a clear and accepted divide. It appears important to define and delineate North and South in Europe as scholars themselves don't agree on this differentiation. The World Atlas gives the following definition: « Northern Europe is the geographic region that covers the northern part of the European continent. It consists of eight

countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, and Sweden. Some definitions of the region sometimes also include the United Kingdom, Ireland, northern Belarus, northern Germany, and northwest Russia. The narrow definition of Northern Europe is based on factors such as ecology and climate, but a broader definition defines Northern Europe as all European territories north of the Alps. Central Europe lies between Northern and Southern Europe. Historically, the Romans considered everything north of the Mediterranean region as Northern Europe, including what currently constitutes Central Europe ». If we use this definition, then it means that all territories below the Alps can be considered part of Southern Europe. In addition, if using the Romans considerations of being northern, 'territories that were north of the Mediterranean' then it would mean that France is half Northern, half southern and the divide would be the Alps (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Map of Europe  
(In yellow, a possible visual divide of Northern and Southern Europe)

When considering geography, it appears obvious that what distinguishes night from day reached far beyond the simple presence or absence of daylight. In some places it would not make sense to pair night and darkness and day and light. Neither would it make sense to oppose day and darkness and night and light. Indeed, the argument makes sense when looking at a map that represents the latitudes and longitudes of the globe. It appears quite clearly that from the extreme northern point of Norway to the extreme southern point (Malta) of Europe, peoples experience of daylight and night time will vary immensely as we have previously illustrated with the use of the sun graphs (Figures 1 and 2).

In the previous paragraphs we have mentioned natural light several times. It appears necessary when studying the night scape to make the distinction between natural and artificial light. Indeed, it is the lack of natural light that “causes” night, and artificial light plays a big role in the urban nightscape. But natural light also affects the use of artificial light in indoor living spaces, not just at night but also by day. Indeed, the lower solar angle in northern countries as well as intermittent and common overcast sky in the North (SEGHI, Noskaitis, & Spanos, 20017) versus the direct 90° bright and hot sun in the South with little cloud covers and less rain imply very different illuminance levels from one region to the other. Hence, this affects not only

the color of light but also public and private space, the way it is used, thought about, built upon.

There has been quite a deal of research done on the concept of Northern lighting and it is harder to find scientific data to define clearly Southern lighting. Although some research has been conducted to compare North and South through the aspect of lighting culture. For example, though a scientific and cultural approach, Carlo Volf analyses Northern countries preference for warm artificial light and Southern countries use of cooler lights<sup>7</sup>.

#### 1.4.3 CINEMATIC COPENHAGEN

The next two sections (1.2.3 and 1.4.4) of this chapter that aims at laying out the aspects of the research field will introduce the cities on which the study focuses from a cinematic perspective. As film analysis is the method used to explore our subject, it appears necessary to introduce the reader to each city’s cinematic context.

Copenhagen has been the scene of numerous movies with ever changing themes and locations. Love, crime, daily life, power struggles, are all themes that have been explored throughout various urban itineraries. Documentaries for instance are mainly filmed in

<sup>7</sup> Light and the Aesthetics of Perception

the physical city, for one because a documentary ought to be filmed in the real scene and not in a studio, but also because the city concentrates a large part of the country's population and therefore collects their stories. Dreams in Copenhagen by Max Kestner (2014) is a great example to name.

The theme of love can be explored in Copenhagen through Tom Hoopers' film, The Danish girl (2015). Unlike Dreams in Copenhagen, the film is a foreign production which does not prevent its director from having selected beautiful locations in the city; to explore love, romance and one's inner self. On a different note, Copenhagen can also be a city of crime, and a great example is the film Murder in the dark by Dan Turèll (1986). Through scenes of police cars chasing gangsters, one gets to know Copenhagen through dark alley ways, shortcuts and by jumping over walls and onto trains. Film in Copenhagen though is not only about wild adventures, crazy love stories or long and tangles pursuits. Film in Copenhagen is also about popular life and the citizens that live in the city. Films such as Nyhavns glade gutter (1967) by Folmer Rubæk contribute to the filmography of the popular Copenhagen and introduce the notion of opposition between the upper class and the people. Such themes are interesting given the political context in Denmark which aims at a rather flat, redistributive social system. Although the capital has also been portrayed as exactly the opposite of that in A Royal Affair by Mads

Mikkelsen (2012) (SOMMER BOYSEN & ENGBERG SONNE, 2017)

#### 1.4.4 CINEMATIC MARSEILLE

Marseille is the regional capital that attracts the most film and television shootings in the whole of France (THABOUREY, 2019) . Looking back at the city's filmography where Marcel Pagnol, Jean Renoir, Robert Guédiguian and many more have shot in, what remains the most noticeable aspect is the plurality of ways the city has been read and translated into film. The urban paths never resemble each other whether the film makers are locals or foreigners. Far too often reduced to two imaginaries, the gangster town or the fisherman town, Marseille has, since "Le train entrant en Gare de La Ciotat", been able to reveal many new faces.

Marseille has always had the image of an independent and rebellious city, and many locals like to share the story of the time when Louis the XIV<sup>th</sup> had a Fort built, not so much to protect the city from an invasion from the sea, but rather to hedge against and watch the rebelled inhabitants (MANELLI, 2017). During the Revolution, both forts Saint-Jean and Saint-Nicolas had their canons facing inwards, representing the power of the monarchy. Other episodes in history have maintained this reputation, notably the French Connection in the late sixties and seventies. It was the source of inspiration for numerous movies, such as The

French Connection by William Friedkin 1971) or La French by Cédric Jimenez (2014). It must be mentioned that in the seventies, it is estimated that 80% of the heroin distributed on the East Coast of the United States came from Marseille and its region. Therefore, the politico-mafioso filmography of Marseille is quite present through films such as the ones mentioned above but also in less recent productions such as Le Comte de Monte-Cristo by Robert Vernay (1954) or Justin de Marseille by Maurice Tourneur (1935) and many more.

The city of Marseille is inherently working class and its filmography and musical repertoire are both influenced by that reality. Music from Marseille has always drawn its inspiration from what it knows, the people, daily life and their aspiration for a better life. That specifically is noticeable in La ville est tranquille, with the classical piano introduction piece which will be discussed later.

## 1.5 RESEARCH GAP AND RESEARCH QUESTION

It is a common understanding that the night is the time space that elapses between sunset and sunrise during the Earth's rotation. But the topic of night is extremely diverse and reaches out to many fields of research: biology, sociology, economics, architecture and design, anthropology and of course urban studies. Nonetheless, the study of night in urban studies is still under-exploited. Indeed studies of the urban are often set in daytime as day being the status quo. The nightscape appears as secondary, of less relevance. As if night was not included in the twenty four hour cycle, or was a time apart. We argue that the study of night is as relevant as day, and that when a topic is explored, it deserves to be explored from a nocturnal perspective as well. Disregarding the urban nightscape only exacerbates the lack of common understanding of the urban night our societies are experiencing.

Television and Cinema have become mass media to inform and entertain the masses. Therefore, they play a key role in shaping the narrative around daily life equally by day and by night. Using film to confront two different interpretations of the urban night may help shape an understanding of the plurality of meanings the urban nightscape withholds

The goal here is not to find a clear and common narrative and understanding of what night

means and reflects but rather to explore the multiplicity of themes it is linked to, and also the diversity of ways to address those themes.

There remains a lack of understanding of the ways different cultures perceive night and interact with and in darkness in the urban. Perceptions differ from one culture to another. Film is a way for a director to share a message, and to orient the message in their desired way. Film can be seen like a window, through which the spectator dives into a director's reality, or the one they have decided to produce. Through the lens of two directors from different cultural backgrounds, it is interesting to look at the way they decided to portray the night in order to learn more about the relation each director possesses with the nocturnal urban. We suppose that amongst other parameters culture has an inevitable influence on their work. Thus, we are able to formulate the following research question:

**“ How does the cinematic discourse construct and comment on the condition of the urban nightscape in Marseille and Copenhagen ? ”**

# CHAPTER 2

## METHODOLOGY

### 1.6 FILM ANALYSIS

#### 1.6.1 *FILM AND THE CITY*

The 20th century was a time when most disciplines showed a great deal of interest in cities and urban life. The intellectual, scientific, and artistic communities all displayed a fascination for the urban future, and that period was the time when cinema also showcased its fascination for cities. Indeed cinema's interest in urban life is not new. On the contrary, since the birth of film, the city has been the main setting. When the Lumière brothers showed Le Cinématographe and L'Arrivée d'un train en Gare de La Ciotat, the short reportage that marks the birth of film in 1895, it showed the urban and innovation to an audience at the Grand Café in Paris. The first film ever made was about the urban, and was shown in one of the biggest cities at the time to an urban audience. The Lumière brothers, along with other film makers were forced to film outdoors in full daylight because of the quality of film at the time. Even "nighttime" scenes were filmed in daylight with a cinematic technique called "day for night" which is still sometimes used when it

is too difficult or expensive to actively shoot during nighttime. Daylight substitutes for darkness by adding blue filters and underexposing the film. Other effects are often used to heighten impressions of night or darkness.

The cameramen and staff took their equipment to the streets of big cities to catch a glimpse (on film) of daily urban life: traffic, people, streets, buildings. Films only lasted a couple of minutes and documented real life actions. They did not have either a plot or a narrative. They were simple glimpses of urban, life portraying "reality" in the city (SOMMER BOYSEN & ENGBERG SONNE, 2017). What Barbara Mennel argues is that "by conjoining icons of modernity - urbanity, speed, cinema, and the city - in one seminal moment, the often-cited myth reproduces the story that cinema tells of itself: when the lights go off, an illusion appears and seems so real that we forget we are watching moving pictures" (MENNEL, 2008). But even at a time when films were short documentaries with no plot or narration, they still maintained one reality, the one the camera man had decided to look at.

#### 1.6.2 *FILM AS A REALITY*

"The cinematograph reigns in the city, reigns over the earth [...] More than the preaching's of wise men, the cinematograph has demonstrated to everyone what reality is".

<sup>8</sup> Andrei Bely's reaction to the Lumière brothers' film in the quote above, is representative of the period in time. Indeed, it was the first time that a moving image had been projected onto a screen for a crowd to see. It was revolutionary. The audience's reaction is quite telling as to how real the screening felt. When the clip Le train entrant en Gare de La Ciotat was played, some members of the audience, fearful of a collision with the train of the screen stood up and panicked stepped away from on screen, hoping to avoid getting hit (THABOUREY, 2019) . The link between film and reality described by Dietrich Neumann (NEUMANN, 1999) puts film forward as a mean to depict life in the urban as well a way to travel, dream, fantasize in a deeper manner than any other media could ever be able to translate. Literature that discusses the link between film and cities acknowledges the meshing between the physical city (constructed materialization of urban space) and the fancied city. The literature highlights the distinctness between fiction and the act of becoming aware of a something as a specific fact, realization; which is different to reality.

From one production to another and from one genre to another, a city can be portrayed in an abundance of different ways. A film is not a representation of reality. It is rather a representation of one reality, the one the director chooses to portray, and most likely one

of his own. It is then up to the spectator to interpret what they see; which can be different to what the director sees. Interpretation is key when discussing a film. The spectator is positioned by the choices made by the director. Things that are important to him will be obvious and things that are not will be put aside. The director is already making a selection, in terms of what the audience will see or not see, but he also has an influence on the way they will see it. There is an obvious bias because the audience will see what the director considers relevant. So already, the spectator is not looking at a truthful and realistic representation of (in our case) the city. A good example is the screening of Un train arrivant en Gare de La Ciotat; the camera was deliberately positioned in a way that would make it appear as if the viewer is actually standing on the platform. If the Camera had been positioned further away, the public probably would have related differently. But the goal was for this screening to be a spectacle. It was a deliberate decision made by the Lumière brothers. And that is true for most films, very little is left to fate.

The aim of this paper aim is not to analyze Copenhagen and Marseille through films set in these respective cities. Instead, this thesis attempts to understand how the urban night has been portrayed in each film. Acknowledging the indicated bias from the directors' decisions and my own interpretation of those decisions.

<sup>8</sup> Quote by Andrei Bely (1908)

The decisions may include, but are restricted to the camera angle, the intensity of light, the soundtrack, the location. All these aspects are thought through by directors in order to position their audience. As a spectator, we integrate and react to these decisions which create meaning without the use of words.

### 1.6.3 *METHOD*

#### 1.6.3.1 **READING FILM AND THE CINEMATIC CITY**

“An analysis of a filmic representation of a city begins most helpfully with observing how individual films represent the conditions of said city or neighborhoods in the specific historical moment, and then moves beyond seeing film as mere representation of social reality to focus on how the cinematic text constructs and comments on those conditions.” (MENNEL, 2008)

Film is a conciliation between different steps that all take part in the production of the final material. Each step means a different level of analysis to recognize. *Mise-en-scène* which includes the setting, acting, costumes, lighting; Post Production Cinematography, meaning the manipulation of the film strip; Editing which creates the speed and rhythm of the film;

Shots, or the way the film is connected in each scene; Sound which includes noise, dialogue, music, etc. All these different aspects contribute to creating a specific environment and dynamic to a scene or a movie. To read a film is to first be aware of the different steps that are part of producing it.

Exploring nocturnal Copenhagen and Marseille through film entails considering the nature of cinematic space. To look at Copenhagen and Marseille through the respective films we have selected, we started by considering and researching the nature of cinematic space in general. The cinematic space is a creation, the result of directorial decisions, actors' propositions and a part of chance or luck, but mainly cinematic space is crafted by the directors' vision. In addition, cinema is extremely versatile and can have different roles and purposes as it can observe or document; connect or relate; critique or valorize; speculate or simulate (MENNEL, 2008); all prone to individual interpretation which entails that the meanings are endless.

### 1.6.3.2 THICK DESCRIPTION AS THE ANALYTICAL APPROACH

“To thickly describe social action is actually to begin to interpret it by recording the circumstances, meanings, intentions, strategies, motivations, and so on that characterize a particular episode. It is the interpretive characteristic of description rather than detail per se that makes it thick.” (SCHWANDT, 2007). Stake (STAKE, 2010) differentiates a rich description and a thick description by stressing the nuance between a description that offers detailed and abundant information with “interconnected details” (rich) and a description that provides a link to theory and scientific knowledge.

Thick description is called upon by the scientific community and specifically those supporting qualitative research methods as a post-analytical tool used for representation. The argument supported by Melissa Freeman is that thick description “can be more productively considered as an aesthetic encounter guiding the research process from beginning to end” in the way that “description is more than an analytical consideration of context but is rather an articulation of how we see and understand” (FREEMAN, 2014). She draws on Hans-Georg Gadamer’s work which puts forward the idea that, “there is an aesthetic quality to our experiencing that is never completely rendered visible in our accounts” which Freeman explains by the fact that considering contexts is key

when attempting to make sense of evidence, and it is too often disregarded.

Thick description offers an opportunity to write about how one personally relates to the phenomenon in focus (urban night); identify emergent patterns, categories, themes, concepts and assertions but also to get a first-hand answer in regard to the study’s research questions, specifically to understand how the nocturnal urban reality is represented in the given films or scenes. The decryption allows for the creation of a common representation.

The following section aims at describing each scene according to pre-established criteria which helps drive and organize the information, focusing on relevant aspects and assuring uniformity in the depiction of all six scene.

It will thus allow us to interpret, find meaning and comment on our findings in order to have a discussion. Indeed, identifying themes and finding relations between those themes and narratives, will help us in understanding how the cinematic text of Dreams in Copenhagen and La ville est tranquille constructs the nocturnal urban in Guédiguan’s Marseille and Kastner’s Copenhagen and how they and comments on its’ condition.

### 1.6.3.3 DESCRIPTIVE CRITERIA

To describe all six scenes in a consistent way, we have decided to put the scene into context by writing a short summary of the

action taking place in the scene, as well as using stills. Depending on the scene, one or more stills have been used. In addition, we have looked at five different aspects that have become headings to organize the description. The headings are "Camera Play: Angles, Framing and Movement" ; "The Build Environment" ; "Light" ; "Human Activity" ; "Sound and Music". The next paragraph will attempt to define the meaning of each heading and justify our decision.

- Camera Play: Angles, Framing and Movement

What matters most when discussing camera play and specifically angles, is interpretation. Angling is used to position an audience, as angles frame what is shown or not and present the aspects that are or are not important to the film maker. By showing a place or person in a specific way or light indicates a certain bias on the behalf of the director for the given subject. That can materialize through more lines, more screen time, being placed in the foreground more often... These decisions position the audience by anticipating how the members will react. The way a camera is set up can translate a lot in terms of what the director is trying to express to the audience. Although those decisions can be interpreted in a personal, individual way. Still film makers will make sure the intended purpose of the scene is readable and one of their tools is the angling of the camera. Context is important to interpret the meaning of a scene and allows for a more

relevant analysis of camera play. Camera angles are a tool for the film maker to communicate without words and a tool for the audience to interpret the message.

Framing creates boundaries in terms of what is happening and what is not. What is included in the frame represents the reality that the director wants you to see. Each shot shows something specific and deliberate which will construct meaning and communicate a message. The scene can be seen as a window and should therefore be treated like one. Looking out, one can see the world and depending on where they stand, they will see the world from a different angle. A simple way to approach this is to wonder "what sort of reaction do I feel when I've been positioned that way by the camera ?" "what is the director trying to say?" and reflect on the overall reaction.

Camera movement has a major impact on the audiences' perception of image in film as movement modifies the frame and the elements that compose it. The angle, height, scale may all be altered as the camera moves around the set (GROCSIK & BARSAM, 2007). Movement opens up cinematic space which is a helpful tool to create desired effects. For example, the camera can act like the audiences' eyes and by moving create the feeling that the audience is present on set. Movement may create surprise or suspense, as it can hide something and by moving reveal it.

- The built environment

Referring to Windsor University's definition of "the built environment": "The term built environment is used when referring to those surroundings created for humans, by humans, and to be used for human activity. Examples would include cities, buildings, urban spaces, walkways, roads, parks, etc. The study of the built environment is interdisciplinary in nature." Therefore various aspect can be analyzed when studying "the built environment" in the selected scenes from each film. Whether it's façades, urban furniture and infrastructure, green areas or pavements and crossroads, the built environment can have a different function at night and during the day. Indeed, at night parks may be closed, traffic may be more or less heavy, and shutters may or may not be closed. Some questions that are interesting to ask oneself when exploring the built environment in night scene are: "what feeling or information does it convey?", "what is its function?", "what is its purpose in the scene?". As a key part of what defines the urban, the built environment is worth exploring and commenting on when analyzing urban night scenes. Therefore it is one of the criteria selected for the description.

- Light

Lighting shapes a films' aesthetic and participates in communicating a message (GROCSIK & BARSAM, 2007). Among its properties are its source, quality, direction and style. The different characteristics of lighting (source, quality, direction, style) (GROCSIK &

BARSAM, 2007) impact the overall atmosphere and meaning of a scene. Just like in film, light and darkness influence usage, behaviors and the atmosphere in and of a city.

By using chiaroscuro ("claire-obscur" in French) the painter Caravage created a new pictorial language during the XVII<sup>th</sup> Century. This realistic and naturalistic style is particular to Caravage. His work reveals a fracture with the optimism of the Renaissance. His work is a more truthful representation of what he sees, without any esthetic artifice added. It is during the XVI<sup>th</sup> Century that Caravage shifted his focus on light and the range it has in the night (LE VAICHER, 2016). The painting *Judith and Holopherne* (1599) illustrates the points mentioned previously about the importance of light, shadows and realism for Caravage.



Figure 4: *Judith and Holopherne* (1599) - Caravage

The use of chiaroscuro as a technique allows Caravage to accentuate and contrast colors which allows for the expression of emotion such as shock, disgust, violence or pain. Caravage often uses an unknown source of light which creates a realistic character to the pieces he

paints. Because the background is dark a-but the characters are lit-up, a contrast appears and positions the spectator face-to-face with the subjects. It entails, the use of light in paintings but in most artistic representations such as theater, ballet, photography or film, and does three things. It positions the spectator, creates emotion and depicts a certain reality. Anytime a frame encloses a picture (a stage, a screen, the frame of a painting or a photography) the source of light and its way of playing with darkness and shadows has a key impact on the way the piece will be read.

Referring back to our initial point, when watching a film, what impact do the directors decisions (in terms of use of light) have on the viewers' senses, the way the characters act and interact, the way the characters and the built environment are portrayed, and on the overall meaning of the scene. A good example is a dark alleyway or cul-de-sac, with very little light and activity, may transmit a sentiment of fear or suspense to the viewers. Although light could be integrated in the criterion of "the built environment" as it may include, public lighting or may be linked to façades, we have decided to keep "the use of light and darkness" separate, as its own criterion as the question of light and darkness in the urban is very central to our research. It therefore deserves as much attention as "the built environment" as a whole. Indeed looking at the private and public aspect

and the indoor and outdoor interplay is crucial as they join together in one frame but may be discussed separately.

- Human Activity

Human activity can be defined as "something that people do or cause to happen"<sup>9</sup>. Again the night has an impact on human behavior and activity. Therefore it is key to look at the way humans interact in and with their environment but also interact with each other in the context of the urban night. Some question that we can ask ourselves when looking at the selected scenes could be: "Is there human activity?"; "What are the characters doing?"; "Are they interacting?" "Do they seem comfortable ?"; "How is the spectator situated in comparison to the characters" (Cf. Caravage painting mentioned above, where the spectator is clearly facing the subjects); etc.

- Soundtrack and Soundscape

Music and film have always had close ties. Especially in the time when films were silent, they were commonly accompanied by a piano. At the dawn of cinema, projections took place in former theaters and music halls where the public was accustomed to live musical performances. In the days before "the talkies<sup>10</sup>", music was an integral part of the auditory and sensory experience of the film, adding necessary drama to the scenes. Music

<sup>9</sup> Definition from the Webster Dictionary Online.

<sup>10</sup> Expression referring to films with dialogue.

still plays a key role in cinema nowadays as films try to captivate spectators through all their senses. The sense of hearing has become complementary to the visual sense in films. Therefore it makes sense to see directors choosing renowned composers to create their film's original sound track. Indeed a great example is *Dreams in Copenhagen* which is sold with the film's DVD and a CD of the film's soundtrack by Johan Johansson. In this case, like in many others, the sound track seems to be as important as the film itself. Music can be used to transport the audience to a specific geographical location like the Middle-East, South-East Asia, Northern Africa, etc. Or more broadly a jungle, a city, the countryside...It can as well, transport the audience to a specific time in history. But, if music instruments can inspire a time and place, music can also inspire emotion. Indeed, one can easily tell the difference between a sad, dramatic or joyful tune. If a character is thinking, the music can help the audience to depict what their thoughts or emotions (sadness, happiness, fear, anger).

But music in film is not just about the melodies, it also includes the background sounds, the subtle notes that are not necessarily noticed. The sound track as a whole, even the smallest sounds participate in sharing a specific message. It is therefore interesting to look at what decisions the director made when shooting night scenes in the city, to see what clues, messages and emotions he wanted to share: tension, joy, fear... Sound is often taken

for granted although its role is key. Particularly at night, when everything is silent, sounds are magnified, thus the importance to consider sound when studying the urban nightscape.

## 1.7 THE COPENHAGEN OF MAX KESTNER

« Celui qui regarde du dehors à travers une fenêtre ouverte, ne voit jamais autant de choses que celui qui regarde une fenêtre fermée. Il n'est pas d'objet plus profond, plus mystérieux, plus fécond, plus ténébreux, plus éblouissant qu'une fenêtre éclairée d'une chandelle. Ce qu'on peut voir au soleil est toujours moins intéressant que ce qui se passe derrière une vitre. Dans ce trou noir ou lumineux vit la vie, rêve la vie, souffre la vie. » <sup>11</sup>

There is a certain poetry to Max Kestner's film Drømme i København. It is remarkable to observe that a poet who lived in the nineteenth century and a film director of the twenty first century share a fascination for world's behind lit up windows, and the dreams and mystery they suggest.

### 1.7.1 THE FILM

#### 1.7.1.1 PRODUCTION FACTS & SYNOSYS

Drømme i København by Max Kestner is a 70 minute long documentary film portrait of

<sup>11</sup> Charles Baudelaire, Le Spleen de Paris. – English translation : “Whoever looks from the outdoors into an open window will never see as many things as the one who looks at a closed window. There is no object deeper, more mysterious, more fruitful, more somber, more

Copenhagen. The Danish film was produced by Henrik Veileborg in 2009. The well-known composer Jóhann Jóhannsson composed the film's original soundtrack. Refer to Table 1 for additional technical information related to the film.

Original Title	Drømme i København
Director	Max Kestner
Producer	Henrik Veileborg UPFRONT FILMS
Release Date	2009
Nationality	Danish
Genre	Documentary film portrait
Duration	70 minutes
Script Writer	Dunja Gry Jensen, Max Kestner
Image	Henrik Bohn Ipsen
Montage, Editing	Anne Østerud
Sound Designer	Peter Albrechtsen
Composer	Jóhann Jóhannsson

Drømme i København has the vocation of being a documentary film portrait of the city of Copenhagen. In this movie, Max Kestner puts the built environment to the foreground and portrays the individuals that live in this environment as passing by. In a way, they are in

dazzling than a candlelit window. What one can see in the sun will always be less interesting than what happens behind glass window. In this black or luminous hole, lives life, dreams and suffering.”

the background, not because they do not matter, do not have an effect on their environment, but to the contrary, because they are coming and going. By doing so, they do have an impact and shape the city, but what remains is the physical city. Daily life, things, tasks, facts that aren't necessarily acknowledged make this movie. They aren't usually acknowledged because they are so common, normal, done automatically, robotically, no thought is put into them, it's normal. Max Kestner has interest in these themes, daily life in its physical environment.

### 1.7.1.2 JUSTIFICATION

The film Drømme i København portrays the city's architecture, streets and public spaces, and how those places are shaped and transformed by the people that inhabit them. Kestner introduces the topic of changeability of the city which can feel nostalgic, as the recurring theme is indeed that "the city can never be maintained, but is constantly changing" (SOMMER BOYSEN & ENGBERG SONNE, 2017).

As people come and go and new buildings are built and old ones are demolished, some memories are kept, others are lost. But the film itself can be interpreted as a memory of what Kestner wanted to show of Copenhagen at some point in time. We will explore what is said about the night in Copenhagen in this film. The idea of memory being erased with demolition

and new constructions may be hard to accept, but Sophie Sommer Boysen reminds us that "Kestner's project is deeply humanistic, for through the city social, cultural and historical contexts are created, and the city carries on archaeological layers of human traces." (SOMMER BOYSEN & ENGBERG SONNE, 2017)

In a way, Drømme i København is a choral film; sharing multiple stories happening all at once, where peoples' paths cross sometimes without people meeting. And that is the idea behind Kestner's film. It is in the city that individuals interact with each other across both time and space. What is important is that paths intertwine which keeps the city alive and makes it a community.

### 1.7.2 SCENE ANALYSIS

#### 1.7.2.1 SCENE 1: "DOLL HOUSE" -

**Drømme i København – 15:05  
min to 15:47 min**

#### *CONTEXT & STILL*

In this scene, we, as an audience are facing a façade through which little bubbles of daily life are occurring. Each lit up window let's us sneak into someone's nighttime routine. Some are more private than others. The atmospheres are different, the inhabitants rhythms may vary. It shows the proximity in which people live and simultaneously or paradoxically, how each

isolated bubble possesses its own individual reality.



Still 1: Scene 1 - Drømme i København - 15:05 min

### ANALYTICAL CRITERIA

- Camera play: Framing, Angles and Movement

The camera is still, and through a head on shot, faces the façade of a building. The angle is rather wide, including three floors of the building. This frame is almost horizontally symmetrical. Looking into each apartment unit through the windows, gives the feeling that the building has been condensed to the scale of a dollhouse. Wes Anderson's work fits best to illustrate this technique, "the dollhouse aesthetic"; "living in the doll house". The spectator can have a look into each private apartment and by extension, into the inhabitants' lives at the same time as the narrator is telling the story of, perhaps one of them. Realistically, one could not get such a view from the sidewalk looking up into the

building. The only way to look in, would be through a window from the building across the street. There is a sense of voyeurism in terms of visuals. The camera is facing directly into people's apartments. They are seemingly unaware of that, as they go on about their daily routines. The music and narration, make the scene into something more poetic.

Specific aspects of the framing and angle allow for this scene to be peacefully poetic while still staring right into people's intimacy at night. First of all, the camera remains at a distance and the inhabitants are silhouettes. The distance allows for a wider frame which means multiple flats are part of the frame, therefore the focus is not put on a single window or person, but rather on the building and the little community that inhabit it. Overall, the framing and angle undeniably create a sense of esthetic, but that is useful in removing any impression of nosiness, voyeurism or "Rear Window <sup>12</sup>" attitude.

- The built environment

The façade is extremely penetrable due to three main reasons: The way the camera is aligned with the windows offers the best perspective to get a view of the façade face on. The large windows, quite common in Copenhagen, maximize the spectators view into the apartments. Finally, practically all the apartments are lit up, which allows for the

<sup>12</sup> Referring to Jeff's habit of observing his neighbors in the film Rear Window by Alfred Hitchcock (1954).

spectator to actually see into the flats. There are no curtains or shutters that might get in the way. The façade is practically transparent: justifying the comparison to a doll house previously. The perforated façade of this renovated Vesterbro building is a key factor allowing the audience in and making them, as the narrator tells a story, more and more omniscient about the stories unfolding in Copenhagen.

- Light

The only source of light in this scene comes from each individual apartment unit. There is no visible nor reflected public lighting. Indeed the façade itself is quite dark, contrasting with the different tones of lights coming from the various lit up flats. In every flat, the light is a bit different, but is overall warm and soothing. None of the apartments have bright or aggressive lights, which again is a reminder that we are indeed in a Nordic country. The light is not a *mise-en-scène*, but rather a reflection of Danish lighting culture which distinguishes itself to some extent to the rather bright, uniform, cold lighting culture of southern Europe. The windows that are not lit up, because of our norms and habits, translate the information that either no one is home and that the flat is empty or perhaps that the inhabitant is in bed. In this scene, the light can very much represent activity, human presence, and be associated with life; which reaches back to the biblical meaning of light.

- Human activity

The narrator is sharing an anecdote about a household and their routine. It has the audience guessing, looking into each apartment, and wondering who the narrator could be referring to. It could be any of them. There is a sense of uniformity, the norm is to be home at this time, the “sleeping mass” that Anne Cauquelin often refers to. That bit of free time between work and sleep that people fill when cooking, watching television, relaxing, laying on their sofa, etc. These moments are quite private, and we as an audience are not interrupting but in a way, intruding. A man is naked in his flat, we most probably would not be naked in public. This aspect introduced the idea of privacy and doing things in the public or private spheres. In this way, not only does night have an influence on our actions but privacy also plays a role. And one could argue that the night creates a sense of privacy because of the shelter from darkness, a sort of cocoon, but also of what it entails for some “freedom”, “emancipation” (CAUQUELIN, *La ville la nuit*, 1977).

- Soundtrack and Soundscape

As mentioned above, one could sense a voyeuristic aspect in this scene, as it feels if the spectator is peeking into people’s apartments and therefore into their private lives whilst they remain unaware. Out of context, this could be interpreted as voyeurism, spying, etc. But we may argue that in addition to the specific framing, the soundtrack turns that scene into something utterly different. The music playing

and the narrated story help this scene become a witness of life's every-day moments, which are often forgotten or not looked at twice. There is an aesthetic and poetry to the message.

### 1.7.2.2 SCENE 2: "HOTEL ROOM" -

**Drømme i København – 34:57  
min to 35:25 min**

#### *CONTEXT & STILLS*

In this scene, the camera is facing one of the façades of SAS Jacobsen hotel. The screen is split in half. In the foreground on the right, the façade and in the background on the left, the street. In the building two men are getting dressed. In the background, the city is active, façades are lit up, there is traffic, people out on foot, bicycles, in cars.



Still 2: Scene 2 - Drømme i København - 34:59 min

#### *ANALYTICAL CRITERIA*

- Camera play: Framing, Angles and Movement

The camera is immobile, straight on facing the façade of the building in the foreground. The frame is wide, including two floors of the

building as well as the city in the background. The way that this frame is composed, creates depth which contrasts the left part of the still and the right hand side. This point of view is a privileged one and the framing creates an undeniable aesthetic which participates in sharing a message which we will further develop through the remaining criteria.

- The built environment

The background and foreground contrast each other through their purpose: The indoors on one side, the outdoors on the other; a private space on one side, and public space on the other. This divide between these two spaces is marked by the sharp dark edge of the façade. The deep black façade that seems to absorb any light, that reaches out to it and contrasts itself with two elements of the frame. Firstly with its background from which artificial light seems to emanate from every direction and various sources (which we will discuss in the next heading). Secondly and most obviously, the façade is in contrast with the pockets of light that emanate from the lit up rooms. For one because the façade appears thick and impenetrable; as if it was made of concrete which absorbs light and does not reflect anything back. And then, the generous windows let the audience in, their transparency shares light, color, life. And the building becomes penetrable. The wide windows offer a direct view into the top floor rooms. The floor below has the lights switched off on one side and turned on the other, and the curtains are

drawn. The visual boundary of the curtains allows for more privacy, and therefore creates a physical barrier between indoors and outdoors and between public and private space. But light is what really allows penetrability. The dark window on the bottom left makes the façade completely opaque. Although the window with the drawn curtains creates a divide, it still conveys the idea of human presence and activity.

- Light

Light in this scene is very present and has various aspects and purposes. In the foreground, the light is very aesthetic, smooth, warm, colorful, original, playful. It is made for the indoors, to create a sense of comfort perhaps. Light has more than a practical purpose, it creates an ambiance, an atmosphere. The light in the background has a more practical role. It is outdoor lighting and different sources and purposes can be identified. The neon advertising signs: not only do they serve the purpose of advertising a brand or product, some of these neon lights are part of Copenhagen's protected heritage and therefore inscribe themselves throughout the city with not simply a commercial agenda but also a historical one, serving the duty of memory and heritage. The traffic lights: they serve the purpose of logistics and are key to making sure the traffic flows. Every "modern" city has traffic lights but Copenhagen has to arrange the flow of car traffic and bicycle traffic at the same time which makes traffic logistics all

the more complex and intertwined. The lit up façades: They have mostly an aesthetic purpose, showing buildings to their advantage, again displaying architecture and heritage.

- Human activity

This scene conveys movement. People are on the go, in cars, on foot or by bike, they are moving, going from A to B, crossing, stopping... In the foreground, two men are getting reading, they are adjusting their bow ties, perhaps they are going to a black tie event. Below the dark room suggests that maybe someone has already left the room. Beside that window, the drawn curtains suggest that maybe someone has arrived to their destination. These assertions and suppositions say a lot about how the urban night is a composition of functions and experiences. People leave one place to go out, but they go back in. When experiencing the urban night, the outdoors is often a question of getting from A to B (CAUQUELIN, *La ville la nuit*, 1977). When looking at the traffic going by, it is easy to lose oneself in guesses and imagining a person going home from the office, might stop in a bar and then head home. Inside, then out, then in again... at last. There is always a reason why someone is out at night, a reason, a justification even. Going home, meeting friends, eating out, having a drink. The urban night seems like is it traversed and punctuated by stop-overs.

Another contrasting element in this scene is the pace of human activity. It seems as if, the pace

outside is square, rhythmmed (by traffic lights). There is no need to linger or take the scenic route, to goal it to reach point B. There in no time to waste, the aim is efficiency which creates a sense of franticness. In contrast, indoors, the pace is slower. As if, the fact of being indoors, in private was calming and being outside in public was agitating. The overall idea seems to be that, when in the city at night, one isn't there to stay, rather to be on one's way.

- Soundtrack and Soundscape

This one-take scene with its background and its foreground that contrast and bind in different ways is extremely visual. There's no dialogue, no narration. The spectator is not distracted, he can focus on the different visual elements. But what the composition does in this scene is crucial, as it helps bind those two spaces, atmospheres and paces that have contrasted in every subheading above. The composition acts as a window, that lets spaces merge. It blurs the divide between public and private spaces, notably though the fact that the composition includes urban sounds like traffic that are recognizable but not obvious. It remains distant, as if the audience was also behind a window pane which isolates it from the frantic sound of the city.

The boundary is fluid. The indoors and outdoors along with public and private spaces are two separate entities with singular atmospheres, but the way this scene is filmed and musically

accompanied seems to be inviting the outdoors inside and the indoors out.

### 1.7.2.3 SCENE 3: "NEIGHBORS" -

Drømme i København – 62:30  
min to 63:34 min

#### CONTEXT & STILLS

This scene has camera movement, it is not still like the two previous selected scenes. The scene starts with the camera placed in a couple's flat and slowly retreats, to end up in a different flat, right across the way. By moving back, different aspects are disclosed little by little, as if the camera was zooming out, to offer a larger picture of reality. A man walks into his bathroom, he is brushing his teeth. A women steps out of the bathroom and dries off with a towel handed by the man. Th Camera retreats, they kiss. The Camera ends up in the kitchen of the flat opposite, where a man is on the phone and cooking.



Still 3: Scene 3 - Drømme i København - 62:05 min



Still 4: Scene 3 - Drømme i København - 63:05 min



Still 5: Scene 3 - Drømme i København - 63:29 min

### ANALYTICAL CRITERIA

- Camera play: Framing, Angles and Movement

This scene defines itself through the camera play and more specifically by the camera movement. At first, the camera is still as a character walks into the bathroom. As he hands a towel to the woman getting out of the bathtub, the camera slowly moves back as if to give them some space, some privacy. The camera keeps moving away, widening its frame but the focus still remains on the bathroom through the window. As it keeps moving away the camera drops slightly and enters the neighboring apartment. The couple is kissing. The camera keeps moving back and stops once it is in the neighboring apartment. In the background, the bathroom window is still visible. But the character in the second flat is

not really acknowledging it. The way this scene is filmed illustrates the proximity in which people live. In such a short distance, we can witness different atmospheres, realities, and lives. This scene touches on the theme of privacy and private spaces. But also, through the camera play, the scene tackles the aspect of penetrability and proximity. Indeed the camera seems to be flowing from one private bubble to the other without encountering any obstacles. It seems to be suggesting that, although people are simultaneously living their lives in their own private spaces, paths can cross easily because there are fluid boundaries between each private bubble. Even once the camera is immobile, it still seems to focus on the bathroom.

- The built environment

Buildings encasing an inner courtyard are commonly seen in older apartment units in Copenhagen. The close proximity between flats is obvious and is probably the reason why this location was selected. The built environment was a tool, used by the director in order share a message by allowing the camera to travel from one flat to the other. The location plays an important role in scene because it allows the camera to move in a special way.

- Light

The spotlight put onto the bathroom due to the bright light on the wall, contrasts that room with the darker façade (See still 4). Because the bathroom is lit up in that way, it remains visible

from the kitchen of the second flat. All the windows around that bathroom window are dark which make that one stand out. The light in the bathroom is bright and white. The light in the second flat (the kitchen) is much softer, which makes the frame a uniform picture where nothing stands out particularly. But after having zoomed out of the bathroom where we, as an audience are transported from one flat to another in a very visual manner, it is difficult to keep one's eyes off the bright window across. Is it because we are attracted to light, is it because that's where we started, is it because of the private moment that we have witnessed? Maybe all those reasons combined, are true and is up to interpretation.

- Human activity

The human activity in this scene has the spectator guessing what time it could be. It is dark out, which is a first hint but the sun sets late (see chart) in Copenhagen in the summer time. So darkness can not necessarily be assimilated as night in this part of the world. And the window is open which could only be realistic if it was summer time. Another hint is that the man is brushing his teeth which indicates, he has had dinner and is potentially ready to go to bed. In the second flat, the man is making dinner which suggests it is around dinner time (Danes dine earlier than southern cultures: Spain, France, Italy.) But the time of day is not of real importance because, the location, level of darkness and activities have been chosen on purpose to make this scene

more fluid, poetic, meaningful. This scene is fully staged but it does not mean it cannot tell us something real about the urban night of Copenhagen. What is actually interesting about the human activity here is how the private aspects such as nudity, kissing, or phoning are not taboo. The characters are extremely comfortable in their space, although the windows are open, the lights are on and the neighbors are home. Doing something private in private, without the fear or concern of the outside coming in. It is interesting because put in Filmens København, "the people are usually out of focus or on the periphery of the framework that constitutes a central part of the film's aesthetic." So this is one of the rare scenes where the people in the shot are really in focus and close up. Then as the camera moves back into the kitchen, the man in the kitchen is out of the camera's focus, which remain on the window; on the built, the physical aspect but also where there is life.

- Soundtrack and Soundscape

The music and narration are an important part of this scene. The man in the bathroom is introduced by the narrator as "this man, a tattoo artist that works at the waterfront" who had ordered a Hawaiian pizza "for himself and his girlfriend". The narration is on point, as the narrator mentions "this man" when the scene starts, when later the narrator mentions "his girlfriend", she appears in the frame. The narration stops and the music comes to the foreground and grows in intensity to

accompany the movement of the camera heading backwards into the second apartment. This scene has a closing scene feel to it because it is so thought through, this makes it more special in a sense.

#### 1.7.2.4 SCENE ANALYSIS

Through the numerous viewings of this scene and its description according to relevant criteria, we can identify key themes which are interpretations of the directorial message and mainly are relevant to the exploration of the urban night.

- Proximity, density

By definition, the urban is dense. Most of the time, during the day, housing units are empty as folks are occupied with jobs (referring to the masses). So the time when habitations are used or lived in is at night. That density entails proximity. As we, the audience are introduced to the routines whether visual or narrated, we witness daily life as a larger picture. Scene 1 displays those bubbles of life that only we, as an audience are visually aware of. Those people, neighbors seem to be unconcerned, inside their own individual bubbles. It is the audience that has the fuller picture, that sees those bubbles as an ensemble participating in urban life. This theme is recurrent in all three analyzed scenes. But is particularly present in the third scene. In the second scene, we mentioned the contrast

illustrated in many ways between the individuals indoors and the traffic outdoors.

- Privacy

The theme of proximity is closely linked to the question of privacy. As the inhabitants of that specific building in the first scene cannot visually see one another, we cannot help but wonder, what about the building opposite? In scenes 1, 2 and 3, the façades are extremely penetrable, the windows are large and the rooms are lit up. People do not seem to use shades or shutters (which is quite specific to Copenhagen, not a simple aesthetic directorial decision). Again in scene 3, and even more so, the proximity and the visual link between units (exacerbated by the contrast of light in the darkness of the night) does not seem to matter to the inhabitants. Nudity is not shocking; kissing is not something to hide and the simple fact of being in the privacy of one's home isn't a ground to hide behind shutters or curtains.

It seems like the concept of privacy has its own meaning in the Copenhagen of Max Kestner. And night does not appear like something that creates a rupture with life. The night does not appear segregated from the rest of the twenty four hours of the day. Would the scene have the same meaning by day or night? No, because night brings darkness and switches the lights on. Those lights as we have seen, are what allow us to peek into peoples' realities.

- Function / Itinerary

Each scene in its own way relates to the idea that, at night, there is a specific agenda in the city. Either people are home, and we could list a few things most people do (cook, eat dinner, wash, watch tv, read a book, relax, sleep....) The routine that most people who have a day job will stick to during week days. And then if that is not the case, there is movement. If people are leaving home, it is to go to some other place, then another perhaps, and eventually, end up back home. The goal here is to illustrate the idea that the urban night is a place that is often crossed but is not a final destination. Homes, places of consumption, places of gathering are the reason why people cross the urban night for the masses. That is how the urban night is experienced by some.

## 1.8 THE MARSEILLE OF ROBERT GUÉDIGUIAN

*« L'été, lorsque le jour a fui, de fleurs couverte  
La plaine verse au loin un parfum enivrant ;  
Les yeux fermés, l'oreille aux rumeurs  
entrouverte,  
On ne dort qu'à demi d'un sommeil transparent.  
Les astres sont plus purs, l'ombre paraît  
meilleure ;  
Un vague demi-jour teint le dôme éternel ;  
Et l'aube douce et pâle, en attendant son heure,  
Semble toute la nuit errer au bas du ciel. »<sup>13</sup>*

### 1.8.1 THE FILM

#### 1.8.1.1 PRODUCTION FACTS & SYNOSYS

La ville est tranquille is a factual drama directed by Robert Guédiguian, a French director and screen writer from Marseille. His city of origin is often the setting of his stories, as he produces films on topics that are personal to him. The film was released out in 2001 and was Guédiguian's 10<sup>th</sup> movie. The director is known for his consistent use of the same cast and crew throughout his career. Therefore, Ariane Ascaride, Véronique Balme, Pierre Banderet, Jean-Pierre Darroussin, Gérard

Meylan, Julie-Marie Parmentier all play parts in the movie. Guédiguian and his crew started making movies together when they were in their twenties, making movies about topics they were confronted with as twenty years old. At the time of La ville est tranquille, twenty years later, the crew, made films about topics and characters that were relevant and represented them, as people in their forties. Refer to the table below for more factual information related to the film.

The film tells the rather tragic stories of Michèle, Abderamane, Paul, Viviane, Gérard and Claude. As the paths of the working-class cross and intertwine, those encounters impact the characters for better or worse. The individual stories take place in the same setting, Marseille, a city evolving towards modernity but also a stagnant city, stuck in the past. The daily lives of the various characters illustrate with deep realism the scars of the city in which the film is set. Robert Guédiguian shows it as it is, with notes of optimism, he paints the paradoxical urban reality of the city in the early 2000's. Relate to the table below for more technical facts.

<sup>13</sup> Victor Hugo, Nuits de Juin. English translation : "In summer, when the day has fled, covered with flowers, the plain pours into the distance an heady perfume; Eyes shut, ear open to rumors, We sleep with one eye open in a transparent sleep. The stars

are purer, the shadows feel better; A vague luminous tints the eternal dome; And the soft and pale dawn, awaiting its time, Seems to be wondering all night underneath the sky."

Original Title	La ville est tranquille
Director	Robert Guédiguian
Producer	Gilles Sandoz, Michel Saint-Jean, Robert Guédiguian
Release Date	2001
Nationality	French
Genre	Realistic Drama or "Film de constat"
Duration	132 minutes
Script Writer	Jean-Louis Milesi, Robert Guédiguian
Image	Bernard Cavalié
Montage / Film Editor	Bernard Sasia
Sound Designer	Laurent Lafran
Composer	Jacques Menichetti

### 1.8.1.2 JUSTIFICATION

The main idea was for the film to be a metaphor of western societies. In order to do so, Guédiguian had to find and portray various locations, and very different characters. Locations were key in the making of this movie, as they needed to be representative of the characters' struggles. The scenes needed to be set in locations that would relate to the broken, disoriented, wounded characters. Marseille is a city where "each thing has its opposite" (GUEDIGUIAN, 2001), a city of contrast and paradox.

In the film, Marseille is a city that is looking forward, aiming toward "modernity" (which suits the character of Yves Froment, (Jacques Pieiller) a liberal urbanist that has a vision for the future of the city) and at the same time

Marseille appears to be stuck in the past. "You'll be confronted by behaviors that date back from previous centuries or of countries that are far less developed than what France is today." (GUEDIGUIAN, 2001). This idea matches the reality of most of the characters, the extremely precarious conditions they are living in. Meanwhile, it doesn't match what one would picture France to be like in the early 2000s'. For Robert Guédiguian, this story is an accurate metaphor of the western world, juxtaposing modernity and growth, but with inequality, suffering and the inability to find meaning in this reality, of this world.

Robert Guédiguian, although he is a realist and his movies can be very dark, is also an optimist. (VIDEAU, 2001) He thinks the world should be portrayed in two ways: "we must show it the way it could be and we must show it as it is". The goal of La ville est tranquille is to show the world as it is, it's a factual film<sup>14</sup>. Evidently the film is bleak and dark, but ultimately Robert Guédiguian finds it necessary, as it shows realities that he believes are threats to today's democracies. Guédiguian believes that everyone is rather confused and disoriented. The fact that people are living without an image or a concept of the world means that they have started surviving instead of living their lives (GUEDIGUIAN, 2001). When daily-life appears so meaningless and lacks a narrative or a frame,

<sup>14</sup> Robert Guédiguian calls it a « film de constat ».

when day-time is neglected, what can be expected from the urban night ?

The name of the movie « La ville est tranquille<sup>15</sup>” does not reflect the dramatic story line, which dives into the daily lives of characters that are living anything but a peaceful existence in Marseille. The city appears to be in a state of crisis from social and economic points of view. The movie begins with a slow panoramic view of the city, showing an almost postcard vision of the city. This is poles apart from the rest of the movie. The introductory scene seems to be saying that appearances are not what they seem. The introductory scene matches the title, until we understand that the town only appears peaceful from a distance. Once we zoom into the daily lives of each of the characters, the film takes a dramatic turn. It shows how one’s perspective and one’s point of view have an impact on their imaginary of a place.

The music playing when the movie starts are two classical piano pieces; which contrasts with the working class culture of Marseille. The introduction piece by Jean-Marc Luisada is called “Lent Et Dououreux<sup>16</sup>” which could have been a fitting title for the film. Instead, Robert Guédiguian went for contrast and paradox. The second piece is the first movement of Moon Light Sonata (interpreted by Patrick Péronne)

which suggests sorrow until the second movement.

The last scene of the movie is set on a similar note as the opening scene. After Gérard (Gérard Meylan) commits suicide, the camera follows a truck carrying a grand piano. It gets delivered to Sarkis’s house (Julien Sevan Papazian) who was playing the Mozart piece in the Pharo Park in the opening scene. He had a sign asking for public donations so that he could buy a piano. In the closing scene, the piano is delivered to his house, he plays a Mozart piece as the neighbors watch and listen. The closing scene shows the optimistic side of Guédiguian, showing us what things can be like with solidarity and generosity, ultimately benefiting the common good. The whole neighborhood can benefit from listening to Sarkis’s musical skills now that he has his piano.

The film addresses the urban head on. The title itself “the city is peaceful” sets the location. The entire movie is filmed in Marseille, all around the city, from the Bourgeois neighborhoods with rooftops and pretty views to the working-class and immigrant northern quarter to l’Estaque. Although La ville est tranquille doesn’t specifically address the topic of the urban night, it tackles daily life in the city which includes day and night scenes. It is relevant to see how the different characters experience, use or appropriate the urban night in their daily

<sup>15</sup> English translation: “The city is peaceful”

<sup>16</sup> English translation: “Slow and Painful”

lives. It is interesting to get an understand of how the director has voluntarily decided to illustrate the night, and translate it through film.

## 1.8.2 SCENE ANALYSIS

### 1.8.2.1 SCENE 1: "A VIEW" - La ville est tranquille - 26:51 min to 27:29 min

#### CONTEXT & STILLS

There are two main actions in this scene. In the first part of the scene, three characters Abderamane (Alexandre Ogou) , Kader's sister and her boyfriend, are enjoying a view of Marseille at night and the city lights. Notre Dame de la Garde, the city's famous Catholic Basilica is lit up and can easily be spotted. They are admiring the view from the northern quarters (immigrant and working class district) where they live. Abderamane's friends ask him if he minds giving them some privacy. Abderamane ends up leaving, they kiss. At the top of the hill, Abderamane bumps into Kader and his friends. They have a heated conversation about the couple. The brother is on his way to physically harm his sister for being with a French man. He says "ça ne se fait pas chez nous<sup>17</sup>". The sister is of North African descent, but most probably born in France. The boy is white and French too. The brother does

<sup>17</sup> Meaning that his family and culture do not tolerate her behavior.

not approve of his sister's relationship with the boy.



Still 6: Scene 1 - La ville est tranquille - 26:51 min



Still 7: Scene 1- La ville est tranquille – 27:21 min

#### ANALYTICAL CRITERIA

- Camera play: Framing, Angles and Movement

The scene is shot from two angles. In the initial shot, the city in the background and the camera is positioned behind the characters who are facing the city and turning their back to the camera (still 6). The second angle is reversed. The camera is facing the characters and a building is the background. These two shots enables the audience to visually position itself

in space. The spectators see what the characters see: the city lights (still 1), and they see where the characters are, possibly where they live (still 2). These two camera angles share information about where the scene is taking place in the city, but distinguishes where the characters are and what they are looking at. They are outside a social housing block looking at the view of the city. There is a sense of isolation, with two angles showing two different worlds. Are the characters looking at the view, thinking about freedom (maybe that's the case for Abderamane who was once in prison) ; are they thinking about the future (maybe that's the case for the couple). Ultimately, the angles suggest a divide between two parts of the city. The view that the characters are admiring, versus their housing block. The characters are in the middle, facing one way, turning their backs to another. They are facing the lit up city, which can be linked to the themes of hope, modernity, freedom, the future, etc. They have their backs to the dark building block that is not lit up. They are facing their dreams and hopes and turning their backs to where they come from. Their social condition, is a part of them, but it isn't what must define them. Abderamane is starting fresh with the help of music. The couple is stepping outside of their family's or community's social norms and values. They are modern, hopeful and enthusiastic about the future.

#### ▪ Light

The fact that the scene is shot at night enables the director to go a step further with the visual divide that has created with the two different angles. As noted previously, the characters are facing the lit up side and turning their backs to the dark side. Light as we said, has numerous connotations that are rather positive, which in this context could suggest the idea of looking forward, towards the future linked to the themes of hope and dreams, etc.

Robert Guédiguian himself states that what he tries to show in his movies is "life as it is" (GUEDIGUIAN, 2001), illustrated here by the location in which the scene is set and by the thought of "what life could be like" hence, the characters looking ahead, away. Of course the reality is that they are still where they are now. They can escape for a while but reality catches up. For example, the arrival of Kader, the brother, who reminds Abderamane about his family's expectations. The darkness of the night and the contrast of artificial light enables in these two shots enables the director to illustrate the duality of the present moment, between what things are like, and what they could be like. The symbolic of Kader walking into the frame from the dark side, the side where the block is looking over is quite significant as, his perception of what is unacceptable could be referred to as old fashioned, obsolete, primitive...

- Human activity

The two lovers are meeting at night to avoid the public eye. It is obvious that their relationship is not acceptable in their social, family, or community context. There is a risk, that if the community finds out about them, that there will be consequences. The night allows discretion, it offers privacy. The girl then asks Abderamane for more privacy (“tu peux nous laisser un peu, s’il te plait?”<sup>18</sup>). Meeting at night is about not being seen but it is perhaps also about the night giving the couple the feeling that rules can be broken. The nocturnal aspect in this scene is very important because it shows that the night alters our behaviors and perspectives.

- The built environment

Notre Dame de la Garde is visible in the background. All lit up, it’s far away but it clearly distinguishable. Having the church in the frame is a deliberate choice. The Basilica is the visual reference point to identify the city of Marseille. Like most historical monuments, it benefits from esthetic artificial lighting at night. Historical monuments lit up at night can be interpreted like the ongoing presence of power and order in the night. Ultimately it shows that there is a difference in the way city cores are lit up and the way their surroundings are lit up which demonstrates opposition between the inner city, the place of knowledge, and the

areas of ignorance (CAUQUELIN, *La ville la nuit*, 1977). To be more precise, the zones of ignorance are the ones that are being ignored: the outskirts, peripherals, dead ends. As the Lévi-Strauss writes in *Tristes Tropiques* (p 21) (LEVI-STRAUSS, 1955) « Il suffit en effet qu’un lieu soit éclairé pour qu’il accède à l’existence, non éclairé pour qu’il disparaisse de la surface urbaine. [...] L’espace s’ouvre et se ferme au rythme de la lumière artificielle <sup>19</sup> ». According to him, artificial light dictates which places are alive and which are not and which are worth existing or not. The second part of the quote comments on the idea that light dictates accessibility. The idea of space opening and closing is an allusion to shutters. Opening up a shutter means letting a part of the outdoors in, visually at least.

- Soundtrack and Soundscape

This scene is not accompanied by music. There is a distant sound of traffic. But there is dialogue which we’ve mentioned and commented on previously. The focus in this scene is placed upon the visual aspects and on the dialogues. Perhaps music would have been distracting and the director did not see the necessity of it.

<sup>18</sup> English translation: “Could you please give us a moment ?”

<sup>19</sup> English translation : « A place only needs to be lit up for it to exist, left in darkness it disappears into

the urban surface. [...] Space opens up and closes down according to the rhythm of artificial light. »

### 1.8.2.2 SCENE 2: “PAYPHONE” - La ville est tranquille - 99:12 min to 99:35min -

#### CONTEXT & STILLS

The character Michèle, interpreted by Ariane Ascaride is using a payphone outside her building block. It is dark out. She works nights in a wholesale fish market (La Criée) and overslept. She is on the phone with her employer, explaining herself. Once the conversation is over, he hangs up and exits the frame.



Still 8: Scene 2 - La ville est tranquille - 99:13 min

#### ANALYTICAL CRITERIA

- Camera play: Framing, Angles and Movement

This scene is quite short, it is a single take with an immobile camera facing the character from a slightly low angle. In the foreground, the character is placing a phone call from a public pay phone. In the background, the building is not lit up. The character has a brief conversation, hangs up the phone, walks away.

The building block, as is the case in scene one as well, imposes itself in the background. The immenseness of this concrete structure behind the characters, increases the low angle effect of the shot. More so, the building block in the background (which metaphorically can represent her social status and social origin) appears to be looking down on the character. It makes it look powerful and superior while simultaneously, belittling the character.

It is subtle but the arrangement of the shot creates meaning without the use of words. The director could very much have kept the building out of the shot, by facing the camera in any other direction. He wants the building in the shot, reminding us constantly of the social context illustrated here through housing. The director is ensuring the camera matches the intended purpose of the film.

- The built environment

The building is extremely permeable. It is a concrete structure that is not lit up, in addition the closed shutters and curtains make it seem impenetrable. It appears as one big mass in the background. In the foreground, a pay phone which is a piece of infrastructure that is not so common in public space nowadays. The presence of a pay phone also suggests that the inhabitants of the neighborhood don't have the luxury of owning a home phone or the privacy within their flats to have an intimate conversation.

- Light

There are few sources of light in this night scene. There are two main sources of artificial light. The white and blue light coming from two ground floor windows in the background, perhaps the lobby; the light is cold and unwelcoming. It is there for the functional purpose of light and not the aesthetic one. The second source of light is the payphone's overhead neon light: it is a cold white light. It creates a spotlight effect, which accentuates her central position in the shot (in the foreground, and in the center of the frame).

- Human activity

Out of context, this scene may look suspicious: a phone call at night, on a pay phone. There's a sense of secrecy, the character is doing something private in public, but at night. Put into context the viewer understands it's a call to her employer. She is a night worker and has overslept, she is explaining her absence. Night workers are often not acknowledged when thinking about the urban night. The presence of individuals in the urban night is often assimilated to crime or illegitimate activities. The character is alone, she is having a conversation. Her position in the frame and her being there alone, exacerbates the feeling of her vulnerability, in her own neighborhood. To add to the feeling that her social condition is looming over her, she is on the phone apologizing for her tardiness and negotiating to keep her job. There is a power relationship

between her and the person on the phone and between her and her social condition.

- Soundtrack and Soundscape

Again in this scene, there no soundtrack. The focus is put on the visual aspect and on the conversation. The background noises are close to non-existent, it is very quiet, which give an indication on time, it is probably very early in the day.

### **1.8.2.3 SCENE 3 : "ALLEYWAY" - La ville est tranquille - 106:27 min to 107:38 min**

#### *CONTEXT & STILLS*

The scene starts with a car parking in a narrow street. The top part of the street looks like a dead end. Gérard (interpreted by Gérard Meylan) gets out of the car and grabs a bag from the truck. He locks his car and walks down the street to unlock a fence with a key. He then enters a building which seems deserted (he pushes the building door open without the use of a key). Paul (Jean-Pierre Daroussin) who had been following Gérard, follows his footsteps.



Still 9: Scene 3 - La ville est tranquille - 106:57 min



Still 10: Scene 3 - La ville est tranquille - 107:30 min



Still 11: Scene 3 - La ville est tranquille - 107:36 min

### *ANALYTICAL CRITERIA*

- Camera play: Framing, Angles and Movement

This scene offers a few different angles and movement throughout the scene. In the first shot, the camera is centered in an alleyway, which gives a broad overview of the street. The camera appears to have been placed behind a fence, but the focus is on the background.

There is light camera movement as it follows the moving car as it is being parked. Once parked, the camera stays still (still 9). The next shot is a high angle one, looking down into the truck of the car from where the character is pulling out a bag. The camera follows the character's hand as he reaches to close the truck and shuts it. In the third shot, the camera is placed in the initial position (still 9). As the character walks down toward the camera, the focus remains on him and therefore the focus eventually shifts to the foreground as he gets closer. It is then identifiable that the camera is behind a metal fence. The character unlocks it. A new shot is introduced, the camera is placed behind the character unlocking the fence, looks right and left then enters the gated area surrounding a building (still 10). In the next shot of the scene, the camera returns to its initial position (Still 9). The focus is on the character, as he walks by the camera, the focus shifts to the background where another character appears. Then the camera goes back to facing the building (still 10), thus the spectator sees the first character entering the building. In the next and final shot, the camera again returns to its initial position as the second character walks over to the gate and stops (still 11).

What is the purpose of these different shots and precisely, what is the director trying to communicate? To start, all these shots, angles, perspectives and movement create a dynamic. They keep the audience alert, show them that something meaningful is happening. The

audience's attention is caught, and focuses on the action. A sentiment of suspense is building up.

Secondly, the different shots and camera angles selected for this scene, translate a sense of layering. The street, the fence, the building would be the various layers, the camera being on one side or the other of the fence, facing the street or the building. The fence makes the spectator question the penetrability of the building as it remains constantly within the frame but more importantly in still one, the position of the camera communicates a separation between the spectator and the characters. But even once the first character passes the fence and then enters the building, it still does not appear open or penetrable. So penetrability isn't just about the functionality and the physical accessibility, it's also about the aspect and feeling of a place, whether it feels warm or welcoming.

In still 10, the camera is placed behind wooden boards, which give a sense that the spectator is hiding in a corner, watching the scene unfold. This shot and camera angle again, add to the building up of suspense. It infers that the character is being watched when he opens the lock on the gate. When the character checks right and left, the spectator understands that he is witnessing something he should not be or rather, that the character would rather not want anyone to see. Nothing has happened yet,

there is no dialogue in the scene but the camera angles create suspense and build up suspicion. When the camera gets close to the car and focuses on the bag the character is handling, the audience does not know what it is, but the camera framing informs us that it is important. Further suspicion and suspense are created.

- The built environment

The built environment is quite present in this scene as the camera is positioned on a street surrounded by buildings. The top of the street is blocked off by a parked truck and the bottom of the street is blocked off by a fence. The only way out would be through the perpendicular street cutting across, from where the car came from. The spectator is not only partly trapped on a narrow blocked off street, but they are also positioned behind a gate. It looks like a commercial and residential street. The façades, shutters and narrow street are rather representative of the architecture of Marseille. On the ground floor shopfronts iron curtains are pulled down. The street is dirty: cardboard boxes and plastic wrap lay around. The overall feeling is that the location is uninviting and presents the ideal location for not being seen or recognized. From the stills, one can grasp this feeling of buildings and city streets being uninviting, deserted, and impermeable.

- Light

Although it is a night scene, there is a fair amount of light coming from public lighting on the street. The scene remains rather somber,

but neither the characters nor the audience have trouble seeing what is happening. There is no private lighting coming from the shops or the apartments which accentuates the feeling of being in a ghost town. The lighting is a deliberate choice made by the director to create the desired suspenseful atmosphere to which the audience must react (fear, suspicion, excitement...).

- Human activity

The main character in the scene is being followed. He is not aware of it. He is looking for privacy, is trying to be discreet with his choice of location and is cautious by looking around. The character who follow him is suspicious looking, he is also trying to be discreet and cautious by keeping a distance. There is no dialogue, no direct interaction between the two characters. But one has caught the interest of the other. Again, this scene inscribes itself in a suspenseful dynamic. There already exists a layer of suspicion regarding the activity of the first character, but the fact that he is being followed, confirms the audience's feelings.

- Soundtrack and Soundscape

The silence, the absence of dialogue, and of music have a way of amplifying the suspense in this scene. It is a deliberate decision to increase pressure and focus on the action taking place. No words are needed.

#### 1.8.2.4 ANALYSIS

The viewings and thick description of the selected scenes from the film La ville est tranquille have allowed us to identify the essential points and messages that came across in our commentary and are worth discussing.

- Inequality

By exploring the urban night scenes in La ville est tranquille, the audience is confronted by the social and economic realities of the city. Indeed, even at night the characters cannot escape their social status, whether it be by through their building block looming over them (Scene 1 and 2), or by the fact that at night, Michèle does not sleep, she works. The building block visible in scenes 1 and 2 are not only a visual reminder of where the characters live and what that says about their social status. The way the frames are organized, sends the message that they are reminded of their condition constantly and that they are at the mercy of that condition. The interaction between the characters and the built environment but also with other characters display a relation of power. Scene 2 illustrates that idea, showing Michèle a night working nights, who lives in the Northern quarters of town, on the phone with her employer, anxious and apologetic to her employer, almost in a childish manner. This shows how important her job is for her to survive but also illustrates how aware she is of the social levels of hierarchy separating them and the subjugation that powerplay entails.

Another way inequality is illustrated is by contrasting the lit up city center on which sits the famous Basilica Notre Dame de la Garde to the dark outskirts. In scene 1, the characters are sitting on the dark side, looking out to the shining city lights. As we have discussed previously, light defines the places worthy of attention. The northern quarters, left in the dark are also ignored by public policies.

A theme also linked to inequality is the place women have in the urban night. Whether it is through the character of Abderamane's friend who is being stalked by her brother or Michèle who appears vulnerable, alone in the urban night, both see their legitimacy in urban space in the urban night challenged. These scenes symbolize the inequality of men and women in the public sphere. The darkness of night only exacerbates this vulnerability and inequality.

- Privacy

When examining the topic of privacy, the city of Marseille is true to itself: full of contradictions. When studying the built environment, we have commented on the visual impermeability of the buildings and façades in all three scenes. We've commented on the use of shutters and curtains at night. The night seems to signify a time for confinement in private spaces, isolation from the public. But contrary to that logic, not only are the characters in each scene outdoors, they all seem to have a link with some other character. It seems as if there is always someone trying to get involved in another's

private matters. In scene 1, the girl asks her friend for privacy, and then her brother and his friends interrupt her and her boyfriend, by placing himself and his beliefs and norms in the way of her life. Scene 3 also shows how a character, motivated by his curiosity and suspicion, decides to follow a man and involve himself in that man's private affairs. Finally in scene 2, Michèle has to go outside of her home to call her employer and justify herself, explain something private (that she overslept) in public. These examples show how opacity does not mean more privacy indoors, what it rather shows is that the characters seem to search for privacy in the urban nightscape.

## 1.9 DISCUSSION

The key findings related to the scene analysis from Drømme i København have been broken down into three main themes: proximity, privacy and function. The same goes for the findings relevant to the analysis of the three selected scenes from La ville est tranquille, two key points were identified, inequality and privacy. The discussion section will first present a summary of the key findings for both films, to later confront the results from each one and discuss them.

Based on the criteria of analysis, the themes of proximity, privacy and function in and of the urban night have emerged.

Proximity is linked to density which itself is a parameter of definition of the urban. The urban is dense. So the time of day when housing is used is in the evenings and at night. That is when people are in their private spaces yet also in close proximity. Immersed in their daily lives, and routines, urban dwellers are either not aware of this proximity or decide not to acknowledge it. From the spectator's perspective, the proximity is striking. The audience observes this daily life choreography, the ensemble of individual lives that form the city and urban life.

There is a paradoxical aspect that emerges when thinking about proximity at night. Indeed,

as city dwellers head home in the evenings, physical proximity increases in many ways but simultaneously, because homes are individual bubbles of private space, proximity declines. In the sense that inhabitants, caught in routines and thus do not consider their reality as part of a larger picture. Or perhaps it is the opposite? They are indeed quite aware of this proximity and because privacy is valued, people respectfully keep their distance and attempt to preserve a sense of intimacy.

The topics of proximity and private space are closely linked to privacy which is the next point to be discussed.

Privacy entails "a state in which one is not observed or disturbed by other people"<sup>20</sup>.

The visual aspect is important as our analysis comments on the penetrability of buildings in all three analyzed scenes. The windows are large, lit up, and there is no visual boundary between the outdoors and the indoors. It is not that the line between public space and private space is not clear but rather that one and the other visually allow each other in. Paradoxically, this visual fluidity does not seem to imply less privacy. Indeed, the definition mentions the state of not being observed. It seems as if, the audience may be observing and therefore witnessing, the private moments taking place in each scene but not the city dwellers between them. Scene three illustrates that point quite

<sup>20</sup> Definition from Google's English dictionary provided by Oxford Languages.

well. It appears that there is not a correlation between the proximity and visual permeability of buildings and loss of privacy. Privacy seems to have its own meaning in the Copenhagen of Max Kestner. Night does not create a fracture with daily life. Life goes on, in the intimacy of the indoors.

This brings one to question the type of activity which occurs in the night. As all three scenes are looking into buildings, we wonder what role and function the urban night withholds. Function is the third theme to have come across in the analysis. There is the idea that city dwellers have an agenda, a plan or a schedule they follow. The masses who work will perhaps go from the office to their home, some may stop along the way, only to head back home later. The idea here is that a constant itinerary exists and there is movement in the nocturnal city. The city at night is used to go from A to B. Going out meaning somewhere, into a place. From an office, to a home; from the hotel to a restaurant, etc. The urban night is used to go out and come back in, but is rarely a final destination: homes, places of consumption, places of gathering are.

The analysis of the selected scenes of La ville est tranquille has allowed us to identify two main themes, privacy and inequality. When exploring the topic of privacy in La ville est tranquille, Guédiguan addresses the paradoxes present in his understanding of the city of Marseille. The impenetrability of the buildings

has been commented upon throughout the analysis. At first, the night seems to be a separate time-space signifying confinement in private space and public isolation, because of the impermeability of façades, primarily due to the use of shutters and curtains. Paradoxically, the scenes are set outdoors, portraying characters using public spaces at night. Not only that, the characters interact and private matters seem to be everyone's business. People intervene, and involve themselves in other people's lives, they follow, they suspect, they interrupt. In the nocturnal Marseille of Robert Guédiguan, the night is a meeting place, for friends, lovers and enemies, a time to work (fishing merchant, taxi driver, bar tender/hitman), it is a time for interactions, desired and sometimes forced. Privacy is pursued in the outdoors, that the darkness of the night can offer. A hermetic façade does not imply the wish for privacy indoors and private matters can also be carried out in public.

The second theme to have been identified in Marseille's cinematic nightscape is inequality.

The social and economic context of Marseille in the late nineties, early two-thousands is reflected throughout the film. The night may offer opportunities to seek privacy but it cannot help the characters escape their social condition. The cores concentrate the attention, while peripheries remain in the dark. Even in the dark, the massive housing block built in the

sixties are visible and loom over anyone who stands around them.

Life seems to be dictated by power relations in the build environment and across social interactions.

The night scenes in Drømme i København and La ville est tranquille address specific themes. Some are specific to one movie, and others, are common to both films. The theme of privacy for instance is one discussed in the six selected scenes. It has allowed us to deconstruct the misconception that a visually penetrable façade entails a loss of privacy and a sealed façade results in more privacy. Although privacy has the same definition and meaning (to not be observed or disturbed by others), it materializes differently in each film. In Copenhagen, it seems like individual privacy is valued and respected. That the meaning has been integrated and is applied almost naturally. Windows create a link between the indoors and outdoors but people do not invite themselves in, apart from the audience. In Marseille, it is the opposite; façades are hermetic, windows are closed, shutters are pulled down, curtains are drawn. Yet the characters do private things in public, seeking privacy in the night. Yet people invite themselves into other people's business. It seems like privacy in the Marseille of Robert Guédiguan is not something urban dwellers are entitled to, unlike in the Copenhagen of Max Kestner.

The contrast between light and darkness in the scenes is used as a tool to communicate a message. The Copenhagen of Max Kestner values the aesthetics that pockets of light create and the poetic aspects of life it carries. But more than an aesthetic, this game of transparency created by light in the darkness of night allows the communication of the city dwellers' relation to privacy. The nocturnal Marseille of Robert Guédiguan brings light to the often unaddressed reality of social inequality. The game of contrast with light and darkness makes reality visible but also allows for escape and dream.

Location, climate, architecture, norms, and values that respectively appear throughout the films have an effect on the way night and darkness are apprehended by director and therefore participate in the representations they produce. The elements mentioned above are specific to each city. The director's representations of the urban nightscape in each city are not a scientific representations, they are built on truthful interpretations of the respective cultures.

For instance, as we have mentioned, lighting in Drømme i København is a *mise-en-scène*, but it remains a rather faithful reflection of Danish lighting culture which distinguishes itself to some extent to the rather bright, uniform, cold lighting culture of the south of Europe, which is itself noticeable in La ville est tranquille.

The aim of this thesis is to grasp an understanding of the representations of the urban nightscape in films taking place in two distinct geographical locations. The objective is to draw cultural specificities in the themes identifies in both representations. The hypothesis is that the directors are reflecting a reality of the urban night in their films which is influenced by their directorial cinematic decisions and specific cultural backgrounds.

The following section will discuss the limitations that have arisen from the discussion, as well as future directions that could be taken on this research topic

## 1.10 LIMITATIONS

This section aims to acknowledge the existing limitations of the study which may have had an impact on the findings of the thesis and could have an effect on the conclusions that have been drawn for the study. We have decided to look back on the methodology developed and used throughout this thesis in order to question and challenge it so as to be able to be critical about this paper and to understand how it can potentially be improved.

Different aspects regarding the methodology will be discussed, including the decision to conduct a comparative study between two cities, the selected films, and the method of analysis.

### *FOCUS OF ONE CITY ?*

A comparative study allows for the research to be enriched with cinematic and cultural knowledge about two different geographical locations and to confront two perceptions of the urban night, according to two respected directors who have their individual styles of translating that topic onto film.

Unfortunately, focusing on two case cities means that there are fewer resources available (time) to fully invest in both topics. Therefore, this thesis could have been conducted with the focus on one single city. Different films taking

place in the same city, depicting the urban night.

The selected films could have all been by the same director, in order to explore the different ways they have represented the urban night; or the films could have been made by different directors, in order to contrast those perspectives. This would have allowed to become fully invested in one city's nightscape cinematic representation and reap a deeper understanding of the topic and perhaps more precise results.

### *A ONE SIDED REALITY ?*

It is justified to question the selected films that have been analyzed. Indeed, we have justified the relevance of the films in their way of representing a reality of daily life, and have also introduced the directors which both approached their work by tackling the subject of urbanity and daily life.

But the analysis of different films would have entailed different results, and different representations of the urban night. That seems rather obvious but it is important to mention it to emphasize the fact that those results are representations of two directors individual representation of the reality of the urban night. Those results can therefore not be applied to a city as a whole, nor a country or global region.

Related to this topic, it is relevant to stress that the representations are masculine. Indeed both directors are men and are therefore influenced by their perception and experiences of the

urban night. One's experience of public space can vary depending on their gender. It is common knowledge that women's legitimacy in public space is challenged and questioned. That reality is only exacerbated at night. It could have been an interesting alternative to analyze films set in the same city and directed by both a female producer and a male producer, in order to attempt to identify differences in the expression of urban night that may be explained by gendered experiences of reality.

#### *PERSONAL BIAS*

The method which involved specific films, a movie selections, scene selections, the selection of descriptive criteria, the description of these scenes according to the criteria, the identification of key topics according to my personal interpretation of the scenes and finally an analysis of that information, involves many individual decisions and a rather personal method and writing experience. Similarly in regard to how the directors paint reality is biased (due to their personal experiences), I as the writer am biased because of my own personal experience which thus affects my interpretations. Again, a different writer could interpret directorial decision in a very different way that I personally have which entails different results. That is key here is to keep that fact in mind, but also to challenge the method and to wonder if it would have been meaningful to include participants in the viewings and interpretation of the scenes.

In addition, the fact that I, coming from Marseille, having been brought up in that city, and therefore knowing the city more in depth than Copenhagen, (a city in which I lived for only four months) dictates that the context behind the city of Marseille is more developed. This could also be due to language proficiency.

## 1.11 CONCLUSION

Throughout the course of this research, cinematic representations of the urban night have been analyzed as an opportunity to explore different perceptions on the topic.

Within the context of this thesis, the urban night was defined as a time space that fascinates and frightens, a representation rooted in historical heritage.

As the thesis aims to analyze urban and nocturnal cinematic discourses in search of meaning, the dynamic between public space and private space, and the indoors and outdoors were addressed. We take note of the sometimes fluid boundary between those spaces and other times the solid boundary respectively Copenhagen and Marseille. That dynamic brought the topic of privacy to the foreground of the thesis. The meaning of privacy and the way to practice it and respect it has shown to be different in each film. In the nocturnal Copenhagen of Max Kestner, privacy seems to be a right city dwellers are entitled to. Privacy, as a right seems to have been integrated and is respected in a manner that seems inherently natural. In the nocturnal Marseille portrayed by Robert Guédiguan, privacy is something city dwellers seek. In private or in public space, privacy is not a given. City dwellers are not entitled to it, they need to go looking for it. It is not accepted that one's privacy must be respected, perhaps more so in public space.

This touches back upon the thesis' hypothesis, that supposed the directors would be reflecting a reality of the urban night through which specific cultural features would appear. We can admit that the divergent attitudes with regard to privacy are a cultural expression of norms and values specific to each cinematic location.

As this research was exploratory in nature, it confirms the plausibility that filmic representations of the urban nightscape are influenced by directors cultural backgrounds and participate in creating a narrative and common understanding of the topic by reproducing norms and habits on screen.

This research is significant as it illustrate and proves the point that the urban nightscape is a time-space which addresses topics that are relevant to urban studies (proximity, density, inequality, privacy, public scape...) and not specific to the urban night but to the urban as a whole.

Film analysis is a legitimate method of research which allows researchers to grasp identify narratives and compare different representations and perspectives of a topic of interest.

The main limitation is that film will only illustrates one representation of the urban night. The topic of urban night relates to an immense diversity of urban topics which cannot all be discussed. Therefore, as this thesis only addresses two films, the results cannot be interpreted as a truth for any other film.

Nowadays, the night is not entirely a time of darkness, quiet, dedicated to resting and symbolized by curfews and silence ad sleep. In our modern times, life after sunset, has spread. As it is always day somewhere around the globe, with modern technologies and interconnectivity, it is much easier to communicate between different parts of the world. The party scene has massively democratized itself and is no longer reserved to an elite. Under-utilized on a cultural, social or economic level once, the night scape is today a central time-space for various actors, such as citizens, various levels of institutions and organizations as well as economic actors.

As some may argue that the night is being colonized and is disappearing, others may see there an opportunity to study that evolution of the nocturnal urban. As films document the way night is interpreted and expressed, in a time of rapid change of societal habits, studies on the urban night seem more and more relevant.

## 1.12 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ADLER, L., & BOUVIER, B. (2013, 12 25). *France Culture*. Consulté le Mars 2020, sur FRANCECULTURE: <https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/hors-champs/des-gouts-et-des-couleurs-avec-michel-pastoureau-le-noir-et-le-blanc-35>
- Book of Genesis - King James Version. (s.d.). Récupéré sur kingjamesbibleonline: <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Genesis-Chapter-1/>
- CAUQUELIN, A. (1977). *La ville la nuit*. Politique éclatée.
- CAUQUELIN, A. (1988). *La ville transparente* (Vol. Télé-ville).
- COSTES, L. (2010). Le Droit à la ville de Henri Lefebvre : quel héritage politique et scientifique ? *Espaces et sociétés*, n° 140-141(CAIRN INFO), pp. pp. 177 - 191.
- CRARY, J. (2014). *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* . Broché.
- DELATTRE, S. (2004). *Les Douze Heures noires. La nuit à Paris au XIXe siècle*. (Broché, Éd.) Paris: Albin Michel.
- DELAUNAY, A. (s.d.). *LUMIÈRE & TÉNÈBRES*. Consulté le 2020 August, sur Encyclopædia Universalis [en ligne]: <http://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/lumiere-et-tenebres/>
- FERENCZI, T. (2017). Le chevalier de Jaucourt, un combattant des Lumières. *Le Philosophoire*, vol. 47, no. 1(Cairn), pp. pp. 77-133.
- FREEMAN, M. (2014). *The Hermeneutical Aesthetics of Thick Description*. Athens, USA: University of Georgia.
- Gowlett, J. (2016, June 5). The discovery of fire by humans: a long and convoluted process. *The Royal Society Publishing, Volume 371*(Issue 1696).
- GROCSIK, K., & BARSAM, R. (2007). *Looking at movies : an introduction to film*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co.
- GUEDIGUIAN, R. (2001, September 28). Interview with Robert Guédiguian, wrtier/director of *La ville est tranquille*. *The Movie Show*. (T. M. 27, Éditeur)
- HARVEY, D. (2003, December 17). *The right to the city*. Récupéré sur davidharvey: <https://davidharvey.org/media/righttothecity.pdf>
- INSEE. (2017). *Recensement de la population - Populations légales en vigueur à compter du 1er janvier 2018 Arrondissements - cantons - communes*. Bouches-du-Rhône.
- LE VAICHER, L. (2016, February 2). LE CARAVAGE. *Clair-Obscur en Italie*. <https://leclairobscur.wordpress.com/2016/02/02/le-caravage/>.
- LEVI-STRAUSS, C. (1955). *Tristes Tropiques*. [https://biblio.helmo.be/opac\\_css/doc\\_num.php?explnum\\_id=1571](https://biblio.helmo.be/opac_css/doc_num.php?explnum_id=1571).
- MALANDAIN, G. (2000). *Simone Delattre, Les douze heures noires. La nuit à Paris au XIXe siècle*,. (M. Albin, Éd.) Paris: Dans Revue d'histoire moderne & contemporaine.
- MANELLI, S. (2017, April 27). Histoire : quand Louis XIV fit tourner les canons vers la ville de Marseille. *LA PROVENCE*.
- MENNEL, B. (2008). *Cities and cinema*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

- NEUMANN, D. (1999). *Film Architecture: Set designs from Metropolis to Blade Runner*. Munich: Prestel Verlag.
- Oxford University Press. (2019, November 21). *Oxford Learners Dictionaries*. Consulté le November 21, 2019, sur oxfordlearnersdictionaries: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com>
- PAIN, R., MACFARLANE, R., TURNER, K., & GILL, S. (2006). *When, Where, if, and but Qualifying GIS and the Effect of Streetlighting on Crime and Fear Show less* (Vol. Volume: 38 issue: 11).
- PAINTER, K. (1996). *The influence of street lighting improvements on crime, fear and pedestrian street use, after dark* (Vols. Landscape and Urban Planning Volume 35, Issues 2–3). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Institute of Criminology, Cambridge University.
- PAQUOT, T. (2009, April 24). Redécouvrir Henri Lefebvre. *Rue Descartes*, vol. 63, no. 1, pp. pp. 8-16.
- ROGER, J. (1968). *La lumière et les lumières* (Vol. n°20). (PERSE, Éd.) France: Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises.
- SCHWANDT. (2007). The SAGE dictionary of qualitative inquiry. *Thousand Oaks*. SAGE (3rd edition).
- SEGHI, L., Noskaitis, S., & Spanos, S. (20017). *Northern and Southern Lighting Cultures in Europe. Lighting Scenarios for the Indoor Living Spaces*. Copenhagen: Aalborg University. Thesis, Aalborg University., Copenhagen.
- SOMMER BOYSEN, K., & ENGBERG SONNE, S. (2017). *FILMENS KØBENHAVN - HOVEDSTADEN I LEVENDE BILLEDER*. Copenhagen: GYLDENDAL.
- STAKE. (2010). *Qualitative research: Studying how things work*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- THABOUREY, V. (2019). *Marseille mise en scène*. France: Espaces & Signes.
- Trading Economics. (2019). *Urban population percent of total*. Récupéré sur Trading Economics: <https://tradingeconomics.com/france/urban-population-percent-of-total-wb-data.html>
- TUNTURI, j. (2011, December). Darkness as a metaphor in the historiography of the Enlightenment. *Approaching Religion, Vol 1, No. 2*. University of California SB Science Line. (2019, November 21). *Science Line UCSB University of California Santa Barbara*. Récupéré sur scienceline.ucsb.edu: <http://scienceline.ucsb.edu/searchkeywords.php>
- VIDEAU, A. (2001). La ville est tranquille, Film français de Robert Guédiguian. *Hommes et Migrations*, pp. 130-131.

## 1.13 INDEX

### *FIGURES AND STILLS*

Figure 1: Sun Graph, Copenhagen, 2020. Source: Timeanddate.com.....	15
Figure 2: Sun Graph, Marseille, 2020. Source: Timeanddate.com .....	15
Figure 3: Map of Europe.....	16
Figure 4: Judith and Holopherne (1599) - Caravage.....	26
Still 1: Scene 1 - Drømme i København - 15:05 min.....	31
Still 2: Scene 2 - Drømme i København - 34:59 min.....	33
Still 3: Scene 3 - Drømme i København - 62:05 min.....	35
Still 4: Scene 3 - Drømme i København - 63:05 min.....	36
Still 5: Scene 3 - Drømme i København - 63:29 min.....	36
Still 6: Scene 1 - La ville est tranquille - 26:51 min .....	43
Still 7: Scene 1- La ville est tranquille – 27:21 min.....	43
Still 8: Scene 2 - La ville est tranquille - 99:13 min .....	46
Still 9: Scene 3 - La ville est tranquille - 106:57 min .....	48
Still 10: Scene 3 - La ville est tranquille - 107:30 min .....	48
Still 11: Scene 3 - La ville est tranquille - 107:36 min.....	48

### *FILMS REFERENCED THROUGHOUT THE THESIS*

Rear Window by Alfred Hitchcock (1954) - American

La ville est tranquille by Robert Guédiguian (2000) - French

Drømme i København by Max Kestner (2009) - Danish

Le Cinématographe by The Lumière brothers (1895) - French

The Danish girl by Tom Hoopers' film (2015) -

Murder in the dark by Dan Turèll (1986) -

Nyhavns glade gutter by Folmer Rubæk (1967) -

A Royal Affair by Mads Mikkelsen (2012)

The French Connection by William Friedkin 1971)

La French by Cédric Jimenez (2014) - French

Le comte de Monte-Cristo by Robert Vernay (1954) - French

Justin de Marseille by Maurice Tourneur (1935) - French