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# **The Time-Critical Sequel: An exploration of time through sequels' temporal intertextuality.**

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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# Abstract

Film sequels have usually been looked down upon by fans and film critics alike, as well as overlooked by most film theorists. However, sequels provide a rich layering of intertextuality that create all kinds of new meanings worth looking into more closely. This dissertation investigates the type of sequels in which the passing of time, both inside and outside of the story, becomes a key feature of the films themselves. I focus on sequels that acknowledge, incorporate, and specifically reflect on the duration between one film and the other often with ten, twenty or even over thirty years passing between instalments. My research focuses on their use of temporality, developing the vocabulary to speak about them and how they convey the passage of time. I primarily analyse the character development and the long-term gaps, which, even if inconspicuous and until now ignored, play an essential part in the intertextuality of the films. When we look at these sequels in depth, we discover they provide a new way to look at narrative time closely related to real-life time. This intersection of the two allows for a new way to think about time and its effects in the long term, both regarding character development and the social contexts around them. This study provides a new perspective to look at sequels and the temporal intertextuality between them. My purpose is to define this type of sequel as a 'time-critical sequel' and show how they operate by enhancing an old story while telling a new one.

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## Statement of Originality

I certify that the thesis presented here for examination for a PhD degree of the University of Glasgow is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it) and that the thesis has not been edited by a third party beyond what is permitted by the University's PGR Code of Practice.

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I declare that the thesis does not include work forming part of a thesis presented successfully for another degree [unless explicitly identified and as noted below].

I declare that this thesis has been produced in accordance with the University of Glasgow's Code of Good Practice in Research.

I acknowledge that if any issues are raised regarding good research practice based on review of the thesis, the examination may be postponed pending the outcome of any investigation of the issues.

**Name:** Mariana Pintado Zurita

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** ..... 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 .....

I believe if there's any kind of God it wouldn't be in any of us,  
not you or me, but just this little space in between.

- Céline, Before Sunrise -

# Introduction

When Richard Linklater's *Before Midnight* was released in 2013, I could not wait to find out what had happened to Céline and Jesse's relationship after I last saw them nine years before. I had already watched the previous instalments, *Before Sunrise* (1995) and *Before Sunset* (2004); and I knew their serendipitous love story, its insightful dialogue, its nine-year cliff-hanger, and its unexpected plot-twist at the end of the previous film. I bought the first available ticket to attend a screening at a time my job then would allow me to attend. On a stormy evening, I had to leave work as early as possible to drive across Mexico City at peak hour – just when all office workers usually begin to head home – before making it to my nearest *Cinépolis* movie theatre in the West End of the city. There, I sat by myself, in an almost empty room, eager for the film to begin. Nine years before this, my attendance at a screening of *Before Sunset* had not been as complicated. Back then, I was sixteen-year-old high school student, I went with my mom, dad, and sister along with our family friends on a Friday evening after school. We went to a cinema near our home in the South, and all I had to worry about was homework for the following Monday. Similarly, thinking about the original film of the series, *Before Sunrise* (1995), I realised I had been only seven years old when it came out, and I was not even old enough to attend the screenings, so I missed its release and had to watch it some years after on DVD.

A lot had happened and changed in my life from one release to the other. The same was the case for Céline and Jesse. Reflecting on this got me thinking about the multiple selves that had watched (or failed to watch) Céline and Jesse's story. The child who only cared about Disney films, the teenager in high school with her family and friends, and the working adult driving alone at night. Which one of these multiplicities of people defined who I am? I realised

that not one of them exclusively defined me. All of them together are the same person who has gone through a transformation process in time. As Liz Stanley argues, we are all "a multiplicity of other people throughout [our] lives. No person is an island complete of itself" (Stanley, 1993: 10), and we should understand the autobiographical past as "peopled by a succession of selves as the writer grows, develops and changes" (Stanley, 1993:61). Similarly, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's opening of *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari, 2008) suggests that: "Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd", so was the case of the films. How did this translate to the story of the films? Furthermore, how did this continuity in time work for the characters? In a nutshell: how does time work to tell stories in these kind of sequels?

As I will develop in my literature review, the meaning of 'sequel' is an elusive one; it has been hard for theorists to agree on a definitive definition of what are the sufficient and necessary conditions for a film to be a 'sequel'. For this reason, in this work, I will adhere to the most basic definition of what sequel is, namely: "works that continue and develop the theme of the earlier one" and "something that takes place as a result of an earlier event (Oxford English Dictionary, no date b). Following this, even as part of what is commonly known as a 'trilogy' *Before Midnight* is a sequel to *Before Sunset* and this in turn is a sequel to *Before Sunrise*. Film sequels have a history of being looked down upon by fans and film critics alike; I used to agree with the common saying that: "sequels are never as good as the original", and there are many instances in which this holds true. However there is more to sequels than those which fail to live up to their predecessors. Commonly, the critique of films sequels from public and critics has focused on the lack of originality in the production and as a "repetition of the same" to commercially exploit a successful story. However, what if instead of fighting the unavoidably repetitive nature of sequels, it became an asset and tool for the storytelling? The

narrative of these sequels like *Before Sunset* or *Before Midnight* are very similar to their predecessors, but it is this similarity that brings out their differences and that enables their critical meditations on the passing of time. *Before Sunrise* was made in 1995, the story told also takes place in that year. Nine years later, when the second film was released in 2004, the fictional narrative is also set in 2004 and features the same characters nine years older. Therefore, the story told in *Before Sunset* continues the narrative from *Before Sunrise*, acknowledging and incorporating the nine years between one film and the other in its diegesis. This format was replicated in *Before Midnight*, which takes place in 2013. In other words, by faithfully following the temporality of their release, the characters of these films grow and age accordingly. The passing of time inside and outside of the story becomes a feature of the films. Reencountering the characters of these films is like speaking to old friends who we had not met in many years and catching up with what their lives have been like since we last saw them.

Since the relation between film and time already intrigued me, I wanted to explore more about how it worked in the long-term of the production and storytelling of these films; those which I call time-critical sequels. Sequels have long been a feature of Hollywood filmmaking. However, they did not typically incorporate a long-term time of production into their storytelling as seamlessly and purposefully as time-critical sequels do. Sometimes, the natural passing of time even works against them. For example, when the actors age faster than characters in the films or vice versa. In this case, makeup, prosthetics, or digital alterations are necessary to modify the perception of time. For example, in the *Harry Potter* series (2001 - 2011), the actors aged faster than their characters required them to – Daniel Radcliffe was 22 when his character was supposed to be 17 – or not fast enough, like for the final scene where the actors had to wear prosthetics and make up to look like middle-aged adults. Sometimes, sequels do not even continue the original film's story but repeat the formula of the original film

with different characters, like in *Grease 2* (1982) which is equally set in Rydell high school, but the only returning character is Frenchie. As I started focusing my attention on the temporality of these stories, I noticed a new trend in the mainstream sequels released during the late 2010s onwards. These films were revisiting prominent stories from decades before, and one of their features was the return of their stars as the same, but aged, characters. This revisiting was the case in films such as *Star Wars (Episodes VII-IX)* (2015-2019), *T2 Trainspotting* (2017), *Blade Runner 2049* (2017), *Logan* (2017), *Mamma Mia! Here we go again* (2018), *Halloween* (2018), *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm* (2020), *Bill & Ted Face the Music* (2020), *Coming 2 America* (2021), *Top Gun: Maverick* (2022), and others. The parent films of these sequels were significantly famous and (most of them) culturally significant at the time of their release. As such, they became a significant landmark in the history of cinema in their era, and the release of their sequels a note-worthy event for all cinephiles and critics.

Time-critical sequels are self-aware and use the real long-term time since the original in their story (some more accurately than others). Usually, the term 'real time' is used for those in which the film's running time is equal to the running time of the events depicted in them, for example: *12 Angry Men* (1957), *Tape* (2001), *Phone Booth* (2002) or *1917* (2019). However, the 'long-term real time' that I refer to is that which mirrors the real time that passes between the production of the original film and the production of the sequel which is reflected in the continuation of the story. In sequels such as these, the main characters return having aged the ten, twenty or even over thirty years after they first appeared on screen, and their stories address those years in their narrative. Not only do the actors change, but also the world around them (fictional and real). These sequels embrace this change and put it upfront in their storytelling. For example, Leia returns in *Star Wars*, played again by Carrie Fisher, now as an older general who leads the resistance. She is separated from Han, role reprised by Harrison

Ford, while they both struggle with the fact that their son has turned to the dark side. Jamie Lee Curtis returns as Laurie Strode in *Halloween* (1978 and 2018), now as a midlife adult, having lived through forty years of trauma, which she has passed on to her daughter, after escaping from Michael Myers. In *Logan* (2017), former X-Man Wolverine is confronted by old age, which has hindered his self-healing ability while caring for Professor X, who suffers from senile dementia. *Bill and Ted* (1989 and 2020), reprised by Keanu Reeves and Alex Winter, have tried, and failed for thirty years to write the song that will unite the world and now need their daughters' help to keep the universe from collapsing on itself. These films, even as part of a larger series, have the distinctive quality of specifically reflecting on ageing and its associated emotions (such as trauma, regret, debt, inheritance, growth, or decay), which makes them stand apart by taking advantage of the sequel *as a sequel*.

From this starting point, my research will investigate these types of sequels focusing on how they reflect on the passing of time in their narrative parallel to the time of their production. I will also develop the vocabulary to speak about them and what they do. I primarily investigate the character arcs that are informed by and reflect upon the time gaps between films, which, even if inconspicuous and until now ignored, play an essential part in the intertextuality of the films. When we look at these sequels deeply, we discover that they provide a new way to investigate narrative time closely related to real-life time. This intersection of the two allows for a new way to think about time in cinema and its effects in the long term, both regarding character development and the society surrounding them. This study is significant because it provides a new perspective to look at sequels and the temporal intertextuality between them. My purpose is to define this type of sequels as a 'time-critical sequel' and show how they operate by enhancing an old story while simultaneously telling a new one.



## Rationale

The backbone of my theoretical framework for this dissertation is Gilles Deleuze's philosophy. Most discussions around film and time are framed by Deleuze's work in *Cinema I* (Deleuze, 2018) and *Cinema II* (Deleuze, 2013). However, the conceptualisation of time in Deleuze's larger philosophical project illuminates key aspects for exploring film, particularly the sequel. Even though I employ some of the concepts developed in these books and others including *Proust and Signs* (Deleuze, 2003) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (2008), co-authored with Guattari, Deleuze's work in *Difference and Repetition* (2014) provides the conducting thread of my analysis. This is Deleuze's most ambitious and transcendental project in which he develops his 'philosophy of difference'. Prior to this work, the western philosophical tradition that Deleuze revises, was a philosophy of 'generality' which "expresses a point of view according to which one term may be exchanged or substituted for another" (Deleuze, 2014: 1). This is to say that it was a philosophy focused on the "general" ontologies of objects and phenomena in themselves, looking for the essence as the constants of these objects. However, what Deleuze proposes is a philosophy focusing on the relations of difference between the objects: "Difference must become the element, the ultimate unity; it must therefore refer to other differences which never identify it but rather differentiate it" (Deleuze, 2014:71). For him, this relational difference, is the first philosophical criteria of existence; this is what defines beings, rather than the generality of the objects themselves. Following this philosophy, Deleuze explores the concepts of difference and repetition in themselves and how the two are closely intertwined. This interaction between difference and repetition is something at the core of any sequel; sequels are a "repetition" of a previous story that, at the same time, bring something new or different to this repeated story. What I explore in this dissertation is the difference in between films which defines their relations as sequels. In parallel, this dissertation explores the

use of time in the storytelling of sequels. In his work, Deleuze conceptualises time based on his reflections on how the repetition of difference produces change. For him, the repetition of difference is what enables the phenomenon of *change in time*. The emergence of change in time due to repetition is one of the focuses of this thesis. It becomes the tool with which to measure the becoming in time of the characters and story-worlds. Even similarity in repetition in themselves becomes a crucial matter in my analysis of the sequels as these are stories that repeat elements, worlds, and characters from previous stories while incorporating difference. The degrees of one or the other become telling in how the story moves forward and generates meaning concerning its subject matter.

Deleuze's work on difference and repetition has been used to address change and becoming not only in images and cinema but also in the self and various aspects of socio-political life (Patton, 2000; Widder, 2012; Heron, 2020). In this thesis, I explore both the films as art objects (in their form and production) and the intricate relation between formal techniques and the stories they tell. For this, the flexibility of Deleuze's theory to be applied to social aspects becomes crucial. Even as Deleuze's work on *Difference and Repetition* becomes the basis of my theoretical framework, as my analysis moves along, it becomes guided by the subject matters of each film. To choose the adequate social theories to examine the sequels, I have allowed my case studies to lead the way. I follow the main themes in the films' narrative and put their ideology in dialogue with their use of temporality. For example, chapter one on *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* is guided by the main character's life journey and ageing; chapter two, on *The Before Trilogy* is guided by the romantic relationship between the protagonists; chapter three on *Trainspotting* follows the temporal effects in relation to socio-economical identities, and chapter four on *Blade Runner* is guided by the futuristic nostalgia of its dystopic narrative. I examine these concrete subjects drawing from contemporary social

theories of time that speak to the issues addressed in the films. such as Gilleard and Higgs's *Ageing, Corporeality and Embodiment* (2013), Rita Felski's *Doing time: feminist theory and postmodern culture* (2000), Barbara Adam's 'Time' (2006) and Svetlana Boym's *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001), among others, complementing *Difference and Repetition*'s transcendental empiricism and exploring how these issues are affected by time in the long-term.

For this dissertation, my main interest is to analyse how time is incorporated in the storytelling of sequels. The methodology I chose for this task is a close textual analysis of films that met the following criteria: a) they had to be two or more films that continued the same story with the same actors; b) the production of the films had to be several years apart from one another; c) the films were required to incorporate that separation of time into their diegesis. Textual analysis was necessary to examine how the form and content of the films incorporate and manifest real-time in and through their intertextuality. Textual analysis provided the tools to break down the components of the films and distil the elements of their temporality to show and explore how the films use and manifest time through their formal techniques and storytelling. This discussion would combine the formal representation of time with critical theory of what is being represented.

## Case Studies

The first section following this introduction is a literature review of the currently limited theories about sequels, followed by history and theory of television serials, and finally literature on repetition and Deleuze's philosophy of *Difference and Repetition* (2014). Subsequently, the main discussion of this dissertation is divided into four chapters, each analysing a case study of a series of films. I explore the case studies of four separate sets of

film sequels and analyse their specific content following the films' central theme. These are *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* (1959-1979), *The Before Trilogy* (1995-2013), *Trainspotting* (1996) and its sequel *T2 Trainspotting* (2017) and, finally, *Blade Runner* (1982) with its sequel *Blade Runner 2049* (2017). In each chapter, I analyse each group of films alongside contemporary social theories of time relevant to the series' central topic. However, this also provides the grounds to analyse and dissect the characteristics and potentiality of the time-critical sequel. The case studies I use are from various decades and periods, and their macro-fabulas encompass several years across different decades. I have also selected films from different nationalities, providing various historic-geographical perspectives. The final group of films gathers productions from France, America and Scotland covering all decades from the late 1950s to the late 2010s. Moreover, the subject matter of the films allow the chapters to build on each other, from the particular to the general, going from an individual character (Antoine Doinel) to a heterosexual couple (Céline and Jesse), to societal structures (*Trainspotting*), and finally, a global future (*Blade Runner*).

The first chapter investigates the collection of films from *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* (1959-1979). The parent film of this series is director François Truffaut's autobiographical first feature. As one of the founders of the French New Wave, Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (1959) is one of the movement's films to break many classical conventions and lead the way into a new form of filmmaking. It is historically important since its commercial and critical success contributed to launch this cinematic movement, making it one of its hallmark films (Trier, 2007; Fabe, 2014; Pfeiffer, no date). Similarly, the instalments that succeeded *The 400 Blows* created a new kind of film series (Monaco, 2003). They follow the main character from his early teenage years until his life as an adult. For Truffaut, the chronicles of his alter-ego were a way to "write in film" his autobiography. For this dissertation, *The Adventures of*

*Antoine Doinel* is the first fictional series to follow the ageing and growth of a character over a long-term setting the foundations for the time-critical sequels. This chapter is an analysis of this series. The biographical perspective of the series allowed the films to focus on the development and growth of their main character incorporating the effects of time. Similarly, by looking at the temporal foundations of the series' making, this chapter also becomes a blueprint for the chapters to come.

The chapter's main theoretical framework is Deleuze's philosophical project in *Difference and Repetition* (2014) and its three syntheses of time. With Deleuze's first synthesis of time, I explain how the parent film of a series introduces a new character. I focus on the duality of the actor and character as analysed by Ted Nannicelli in 'Seeing and Hearing Screen Characters' (Nannicelli, 2019), alongside Chris Gilleard and Paul Higgs's concepts of corporeality and embodiment. In *Ageing, Corporeality and Embodiment* (2013), the authors reflect upon the somatic turn taken by society in the 1960s and distinguish between corporeality and embodiment by separating the body's functions in which the individual has agency from those in which she does not. With Deleuze's second synthesis of time, I develop the characteristics of the time-critical sequel. I explain how the ageing duality of the actor/character becomes significant for the narrative by visualising the past in the present through the ageing body. Following Deleuze's third synthesis of time, I explain the unity of the films and the gaps between each instalment to form a continuum of growth and testament of the passage of time. Finally, I explain the sequels' characteristic of realism in their use of 'real time' following Robert Hopkins's *Tiers of Cinematic Representation* (2016). The following chapters will build on this foundation to develop it further as well as examine the next case studies' themes and particular use of time.

Chapter two is based on the case study of the *Before Trilogy* (1995-2013), a series widely known for its exploration of time. Writer and director Richard Linklater is also known to have been influenced by François Truffaut's work in the French New Wave and the Antoine Doinel series (Rich, 2014) for his use of time. Looking at the *Before Trilogy*, I build on my previous analysis of *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* and explore further the use of time and the ageing of the characters. For this, I base my analysis on Rita Felski's (2000) levels of temporality: everyday time and life time. In the first section of the chapter, I look at the films' representation of physical and psychological time, drawing from the social study by Maciej Stolarski, Katarzyna Wojtkowska, Małgorzata Kwiecińska's (2016) about the different time perspectives in heterosexual relationships. When examining physical time, I look at the parallel the films make between the character's movement in space with their movement through time. In terms of psychological time, I explore the characters' different time perspectives in each film according to the stage they are at in their relationship. The moment in time that each film captures will play a part in the films' narrative and intertextuality as a unity.

In the following section, I scrutinise the temporal gaps between the instances by using Christine Geraghty's (1981) concept of the unrecorded existence, as well as Deleuze's ideas of the transversal and the out-of-field, along with Sura M. Khrais work on 'Reader Response Theory' (2017). Furthermore, I look at the trilogy from the perspective of 'the whole', analysing how the three films together create a unified story of evolution and change. From this, the temporal level of the 'life time' allows me to see characters' journey throughout time, bringing out their identities and personal life struggles. An essential aim of this dissertation is to explore the specifics of how temporal intertextuality between films enhances the storytelling. Therefore, throughout this chapter, I look at the theme of romantic love of the heterosexual couple along with social studies of time and relationships. This approach to the heterosexual

romantic relationship inevitably leads my discussion into the gendered experience of time and ageing, for which I turn to Lynne Segal's *Out of Time* (2014) and other social and cultural gerontology studies.

In chapter three, I continue to build on the work done in the previous chapters on the play of difference and repetition, the ageing of the actor/character's body, the gaps between instalments and the parallels between movement and time. However, contrary to the characters in the *Before Trilogy*, this chapter explores how the temporality of the time-critical sequel can also accentuate stagnation and immobility. The lead for this chapter are the characters from *Trainspotting* (1996) and *T2 Trainspotting* (2017), who become stuck in a cycle of eternal relapse due to their marginalisation, addictions, and negated futures. In its constant relapses and repetitions, I analyse how the sequel enhances *Trainspotting's* original themes and meanings, alongside Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, although this time focusing on the cycle of repetition without difference. I also use social studies of time, such as Barbara Adam's social theory in 'Time' (2006), Mary Ann Doane's *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* (2002), Sara Sharma's concept of recalibration (2011) and Inka Stock's *Time, Migration and Forced Immobility* (2020) to look at the characters' disjointed state from standardised time. Similarly, I will analyse how this break from time is reflected through its depictions of power structures, national identity, colonialism, and bio-politics. This examination then leads me to analyse more closely the collective role of time in societal and power structures for which I draw from Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things* (2002) and *The History of Madness* (2006), Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger* (2003) and Byron Ellsworth Hamann's concept of chronological dirt (2008) to show the dehumanisation of those left behind in time. The chapter ends with the idea of the characters' reconciliation with the past showing how the sequel folds into its parent film to create new meanings for the future.

Finally, chapter four continues to explore the idea of negated futures by analysing the temporalities of *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Blade Runner 2049* (2017). This chapter investigates how the parent film and sequel's intertextuality creates a tension between past and future. I do this by looking at the conspicuous use of nostalgia in this science fiction film. To define the tension and interactions between past and future, I draw from Svetlana Boym's work in which she defines nostalgia and progress as "two sides of the same coin" (Boym, 2001). Nevertheless, there are different ways in which the *Blade Runner* films utilise nostalgia. To better address the nuances between these differences, I draw from Paul Grainge's (2000) distinctions of nostalgia as a mode and nostalgia as a mood. This distinction allows me to investigate the tensions of past and future. Firstly, from the perspective of the characters' experience in the story told; secondly, from the perspective of stylistic choices in the film, which also allows me to highlight the temporal tensions in the production of a time-critical sequel. I also explore the different takes on the controversial use of nostalgia in the media, looking at texts such as Katharina Niemeyer's *Media and Nostalgia* (2014), Michael Pickering and Emily Keightley (2006), and Laurajane Smith and Gary Campbell (2017). With Christine Sprengler's *Screening Nostalgia* (2009), I analyse how the same production elements (actor, props, sets, et al.) can be used to evoke nostalgia, and from Pierre Nora's *Lieux de Mémoire* (Nora, 1989) I analyse the film's use of memory and the archive. Finally, I develop how the ageing body serves as a *lieux de mémoire* itself to signify time in different ways.

Through this collection of sequels and series, I will provide a new way to look at the temporal intertextuality between films and show how this relation between them helps to reveal the effects and affects of time. This dissertation will begin to fill a significant gap in cinema studies concerning the analysis of sequelisation; one which, despite the existence of the sequel since the beginning of cinema, still has much ground to cover, as I will proceed to develop in my literature review.



# Literature Review

When thinking about the cinematic landscape of the 21st Century, one might believe that the filmmaking industry has developed what J. Hoberman coined as “sequelitis” (Henderson, 2014:2). Many of the films that screen at contemporary theatres have a number “2” next to their titles (even a 3 or 4). Just in 2021, the list of sequels released included: *Coming 2 America*, *Suicide Squad*, *A Quiet Place II*, *Don’t Breathe 2*, *The Adams Family 2*, *Hotel Transylvania: Transformania*, *No Time to Die*, *Halloween Kills*, *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, *Sing 2*, *Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway* and others. Nevertheless, sequels seem to be quite neglected in film studies. Little is explicitly written about this type of film that explores their characteristics or key issues affecting their production. This lack of engagement is evident when reviewing texts like Kristin Thompson’s *Story Telling in the New Hollywood* (1999) where she barely touches upon the subject in her analyses of film narrative. On the other hand, most of the literature on sequels combines the research with studies about remakes, spin-offs, reboots, cycles, trilogies, prequels, and series (Thompson, 1999). In the introduction to their anthology, Amanda Ann Klein and R. Barton Palmer assign the name of ‘multiplicities’ to these types of film, namely, “texts that make meaning when read together” (2016:19). The examples of multiplicities mentioned above share several similar characteristics and principles, for which it is appropriate to group them as Klein and Palmer do. However, there is much more to say about the particularities of each multiplicity. As I mentioned in the introduction, this thesis will focus on the 'sequel' parting from the definition of sequel as: a film that continues the theme of the earlier one and takes place as a result of an earlier event (Oxford English Dictionary, no date b). Because of this, some of the 'sequels' that I use can also be classified as part of a series or a trilogy (although, more correctly threequel). The first part of this literature review will focus on the existing literature about sequels which will show how theorists have

found difficulty in defining the sequel among other multiplicities. For the most part, this section will cover an overview of the sequel's position in film studies' general landscape, which is what the scholarship of sequels has covered so far. The following part will look into the literature about television serials to inform the way in which long-term storytelling has been developed and studied. Next, I will introduce the concept of 'intertextuality' beginning with its origins in linguistics and progressing to its use in film studies, finishing with an overview of time and intertextuality. Finally, the last part of this review will give a theoretical landscape of the studies of time within film theory that will inform my research focusing on Deleuze's philosophical project in *Difference and Repetition* (2014).

## The Film Sequel

Contrary to the implications of arguments like Hoberman's diagnosis of "sequelitis", sequels have been part of the narrative landscape for a very long time. As Stuart Henderson discusses (2014), sequels have been present from the very beginning of cinema and constantly produced in film studios since then. Examples of this are Georges Méliès's *Le voyage à travers l'impossible* (1904), sequel to his *Le voyage dans la lune* (1902) or Thomas Dixon Jr.'s *The Fall of a Nation* (1916), a sequel to D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), both parent films well known examples from the beginnings of cinema history. Tracking the sequel all the way to the beginnings of cinema clearly shows how the development of this particular multiplicity is deeply intertwined with its commercialisation (Henderson, 2014). The production of sequels has always responded to the market's demands and profitability opportunities; in other words, the reasons to make a sequel have been primarily about continuing to exploit the profitability of a story. Henderson tracks the development of the sequel from the early 1910s signalling the different market and studio forces that were important factors in the constant production of the sequels. Primarily, they have been a way in

which studios are able to keep up with high demand for low risk and cost. The risk of a sequel is frequently lower both for the studios and the audiences. For the former, to produce, since it requires significantly less investment and effort to produce a film with the same actors, settings, and intellectual rights; for the latter, to invest the time and ticket cost on a story already known to be successful and entertaining.

The possibility of exploiting an already successful story came in handy for many key moments throughout film history, where the production volume needed to keep up with the high demand for content. Examples of these moments are the double feature era in the early 1930s or the direct to TV, Videotape and DVD tendencies from the late 1980s to the early 2000s. Contrariwise, the production of sequels dropped significantly during the 1950s and 1960s due to cinema's new competitor: television. The cinema industry needed to differentiate their content from the ones available in the television owner's living room (Henderson, 2014). For instance, the productions made for the big screen were designed to be "bigger" in every way: from their screen format to their budget and marketing, while a lower-budget episodic production was destined for television audiences. However, from the late 1970s onwards, sequels have flourished in different ways, mainly due to the rise of the blockbuster and franchises such as *Star Wars* (1977 - 1983), *Alien* (1979 - 1997), *Superman* (1978 - 1980), Tim Burton's *Batman* (1989 - 1995) and Christopher Nolan's *Batman Begins* (2005 - 2012), *Harry Potter* (2001 - 2011), *The Hunger Games*<sup>1</sup> (2012 - 2015). Henderson attributes the opportunity for the production of sequels to three main areas: the studios, the talent (not only actors, but directors, screenwriters, cinematographers, and other members of the crew), and the generic trends or genre cycles, which have benefitted by the production of these films.

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<sup>1</sup> This brings out an interesting point about the crossover with the publishing industry and the appetite for multiplicities within literature studies. I will explore this further in this literature review.

The sequel has always been an important product sustaining the film industry, but their place in film studies is not proportionate to this history. It could be argued that one noteworthy reason is due to an underestimation of this type of film's artistic value. In several academic texts, the commercialisation of multiplicities is the main part of the argument. They usually focus on the franchises' economical *raison d'être* which seems to take away the sequels' legitimacy as an object of study. Carolyn Jess-Cooke (Jess-Cooke, 2009) elaborates how George Méliès developed a sequel for his famous *Le Voyage Dans la Lune* (1902), *Le Voyage à Travers l'impossible* (1904) to combat the pirating of his work when, following the great success of the first movie, several film companies attempted to reproduce his work, sometimes earning more than Méliès's own film (Jess-Cooke, 2009). This bears witness to how the commercial character of the film sequel does have a strong bearing to it, and this has offered a central line of inquiry for film scholars. Klein and Palmer dedicate a significant part of their introduction to argue how the use of multiplicities in filmmaking has always been an essential practice for the industry's economy (Klein and Palmer, 2016:6). Jess-Cooke also dedicates a chapter in her book (Jess-Cooke, 2009) to defend the standing of sequels despite their commercialisation within the industry. It would seem that to start a conversation about sequels one needs to first defend their validity "beyond the profit principle" (as Jess-Cooke puts it in her introductory chapter). In consequence, most available journal articles about sequels focus mainly on their box-office performance and reception. Sequels have been regarded as a way for the film industry to keep profiting from the same story, a practice that, for all of its flaws, seems to work. Some examples of this are studies like Sanjay Sood and Xavier Dreze's on Consumer Research (Sood and Dreze, 2006), focused on evaluating the reception of sequels concerning their naming, analysing whether sequels which used numbering in their title (e.g. *Deadpool 2*) would "depend more upon perceived similarity to the original movie than sequels using naming title strategy", and which would receive a better rating. Similarly, Tirtha Dhar,

Guanghai Sun, Charles B. Weinberg's 'The long-term box office performance of sequel movies' (Dhar, Sun and Weinberg, 2012) focused on comparing the supply and demand effect of the sequel versus their original instances and their commercial strategy's change over time. Like these, most studies of sequels centre on commercial aspects rather than their content, something that has undermined other critical discourses about them.

While the literature on sequels is not extensive, there are three books dedicated to the analysis of sequels: Carolyn Jess-Cooke's book *Film Sequels: Theory and Practice from Hollywood to Bollywood* (2009), her collaboration with Constantine Verevis in *Second Takes: Critical Approaches to the Film Sequel* and Stuart Henderson's *The Hollywood Sequel: History & Form, 1911-2010* (2014). These texts offer an overview of the landscape in which sequels have developed. In *Film Sequels* (2009) Jess-Cooke offers a brief history of the invention of the cinematic sequel. She looks at this multiplicity before and after the blockbuster era, when, she claims, the sequel "became increasingly synonymous with spectacle" (Jess-Cook, 2009:47). In her second chapter, she analyses sequels from the perspective of a specific genre. Namely, horror films, and how this genre is a fertile ground for sequelisation. She states this is the case since they "operate in conjunction [with sequels] to achieve common goals of exploitation, spectatorial interaction and expectation, and narrative formulas" pointing out how the repetitious return of "un-killable killers" is central to the genre of the slasher movie (Jess-Cooke, 2009:54). In her following chapters, the analysis of the sequel turns to their economic significance in independent and global productions, as well as new marketing devices that have been incorporated with the formal structure of many films such as fanfiction and online strategies enabling audiences to "continue, interact with and re-experience a film". Finally, her last chapter is dedicated to exploring how sequels use what Dominick LaCapra has named 'secondary memory' using Steven Spielberg's *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*. (2009:130).

Secondary memory is a term that LaCapra originally used to describe “second-hand” memories and experiences; Jess-Cooke explains it as “a form of cultural remembering that negotiates and mediates the past through inherited memories” which for her is a way of understanding the production of the sequel<sup>2</sup>.

Jess-Cooke addresses a thought-provoking case about the commercialisation of sequels and their perceived artistic validity when evaluated within the framing of independent productions. Namely, if the sequel really is meant to be a commercial strategy, what does it mean for it to be used in independent productions which are assumed to be less driven by market forces? She focuses on the economies that link Hollywood and independent films claiming that the sequel within this context functions “in a marketplace that is underlined by tensions between commerciality and creativity”. She states that:

The stakes here are that the sequel may well serve to compromise the artisanal registers of independent film production, or in fact to reflect the independent industry's mainstream inclinations, but on the other hand may translate as something much more polemical, transgressive, or ‘original’ in this context. [...] The sequel provides a way in which an independent filmmaker can overcome the barriers posed by lack of studio finance and publicity, at the same time as it enables a number of creative goals to be achieved. (Jess-Cooke, 2009:95)

In this quote, Jess-Cooke implies that the sequel has more artistic value within independent cinema since independent productions are more preoccupied with creative rather than economic goals. This keeps suggesting that the only way to discuss sequels is regarding their commercial aspects. There are some individual sequels like *The Godfather Part II* (1974) (Berliner, 2001), *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991) (Greven, 2008) or *The Matrix films* (1999-2003) (Leigh, 2021), which have been the subject of thorough study. However, while some of what has been said about these individual films is enlightening for discussing the

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<sup>2</sup> However, the analysis of Spielberg's *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* for this matter seems somewhat odd as this film is not a sequel itself. Instead, Jess-Cooke uses the plot of the film to illustrate how second memory works.

sequel, there is still much ground to cover regarding the making of this multiplicity. There are plenty of theoretical issues surrounding sequels which have not been expanded upon by theorists. This neglect constitutes a significant gap in film studies.

Jess-Cooke continues her argument by comparing the sequel's standing to the trilogy's. She makes a distinction between Hollywood and independent trilogies explaining how trilogies have become prolific among independent filmmakers. This discussion resonates with Claire Perkins's essay 'Remaking and the Film Trilogy' (Perkins, 2008) about how trilogies have become a useful tool for filmmakers to unify their work and create a sense of 'auteurism'. Jess-Cooke claims that, within Hollywood studios, the trilogy adheres more to conventional styles of storytelling to secure a commercial status in the box office; namely, a narrative progression of one story across three instalments. Meanwhile, the trilogy in the independent landscape acts instead as "a unifying structure by which to articulate and associate a series of themes" without necessarily following one same narrative. Jess-Cooke alleges that this strategy serves the purpose of creating a balance between the commercial and the authorial for the independent filmmakers, aiding to secure the revenue and reception of the movies while granting them creative freedom. This seems to suggest that by making the set of three films a conceptual whole rather than a "threequel", the films have more artistic value in comparison to a Hollywood production of three films continuing one story. In this thesis I will highlight the value of precisely a continuous story between instalments, and for this reason, I use the umbrella term of 'sequel' also to refer to the films in a series (*The Adventures of Antoine Doinel*) or a trilogy (the *Before* trilogy – which, according to Jess-Cooke would be more accurately named a 'threequel'), given that these films are not simply a conceptual whole but they continue the story from one film to the next.

Another significant text focused on sequels is Stuart Henderson's *The Hollywood sequel: history and form, 1911-2010* (2014). As its name indicates, it focuses on the history and form of the mainstream film sequel. In the first section of the book, he gives a detailed account of the history of this cinematic form, to which I have already referred above. Secondly, he explores different elements that intervene in the formulation of sequels. Broadly speaking, Henderson's section on *Form* is divided into three parts. The first deals with the narrative form of the sequel (Henderson, 2014: 105) where he considers how sequels have developed devices to balance their narrative through a micro-fabula and a macro-fabula. Micro-fabula refers to the narrative held within a single movie of the franchise, one which needs to satisfy the principles of a beginning, a climax, and a resolution on its own. The macro-fabula also follows these principles, but this is achieved through putting together the different instalments of the franchise<sup>3</sup>. To maintain this balance, the filmmakers' resort to devices that will make the film accessible to new viewers while also appealing to those who are familiar with the previous narrative. For this, Henderson looks at how the beginnings and endings of film sequels are tailored to achieve continuity of the story. He then outlines the two main Hollywood tendencies to do so. The first one is recommencing the events immediately after the end of the previous movie; in other words, it begins exactly where the last film ended. The second inserts a time gap between the two films of weeks, months or years that will later be referred to justifying the events of the new film. Although Henderson mentions this gap, he does not analyse its significance in depth, which is something I will address in detail in the upcoming chapters.

While Henderson is more interested in the relationship between part and whole, my study of the sequel is underpinned by examination of the intertextual relations between the

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<sup>3</sup> A common practice in the making of TV series and serials, on which I will elaborate in the following section of this literature review.



films following Deleuze's philosophy of difference and repetition. Henderson considers how the stories motivate the action with devices such as the arrival of a new character, or the departure of an old one, the relocation of the events, the emergence of new missions, or the reencounter of old characters. He also analyses how the causality between the films can vary from close-knit narratives, like that of *The Lord of the Rings saga* (2001-2003) where the events in each film are a direct cause and effect of each other, or those more loosely related where the link between them may only be of a recurring character or event, like the stories from *Grease* (1978) and *Grease 2* (1982) where the connection between them is the return of Didi Conn's character, Frenchy, and that they both take place at Rydell High School.

In the second part of Henderson's book, he explores the sequels' intertextuality focusing on the stars and their characters (Henderson, 2014: 129). He discusses how the development of the sequel is intertwined with the star's career or public persona. For example, Arnold Schwarzenegger's character from *The Terminator* (1984) changes significantly in *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (1991). He transitions from being the antagonist of the first to becoming the hero of the second. Henderson alleges this is due to the image Schwarzenegger wanted to portray outside the movies as he started his political career and needed to give the impression of a "good guy" (Henderson, 2014:135). He alleges the casting of Schwarzenegger in more comedy roles supports this claim. Another case study he examines is the evolution of Sigourney Weaver in the *Alien* franchise (1979–1997), where her character evolved along with Weaver's needs as an actor to show her capabilities as a long-range performer. In other words, for Henderson, the making of sequels is also a means through which actors can boost their careers expanding the limits of a character already known to them. This is not to say the casting of such stars is not also influenced by their commercial value for the studio, as the reappearance of a known celebrity is beneficial for the film. Henderson also considers the challenges faced

by actors who portray a pre-existing character like those in comic books or previously made films. In this case, Henderson argues that the actor's role involves "some combination of both impersonation and interpretation" (Henderson, 2014:141). They would have to adopt the traits and mannerisms of a known character, while also providing their own interpretation of the role; all of which becomes appealing for both audiences and performers.

Finally, the third part of Henderson's exploration of the sequel's form focuses on how both the formula of the genre and the formula of the individual film from a group of sequels are intertwined (Henderson, 2014:144). He argues that:

Sequelisation is itself governed by a historically fluid set of conventions or compositional norms which may influence, or indeed be influenced by, the construction of any given instance of the form; and that these norms are subject to developments and trends which cut across all genres and subgenres of Hollywood filmmaking. (Henderson, 2014:158).

Henderson posits that sequels have been historically adaptable and developed fluid rules for their narrative. He continues saying that a group of sequels from the same story will develop its own genre-like conventions and qualities while also maintaining the characteristics of their genre. For example, the *Die Hard* (1988-2013) films comply with the formulas of the action genre, but they have also created a formula to be repeated within the franchise. These are signature actions such as situating the plot during Christmas, placing John McClane in an elevator duct or his maverick personality and witty remarks, amongst the following up of different gags created in previous movies like Holly confronting the intrusive journalist, Richard Thornberg. In this way, when watching a film belonging to that franchise, the spectators have an idea of the kind of story they will see.

Henderson's and the rest of the books reviewed above provide a good foundation to begin thinking about sequels. However, there is still much ground to cover. After studying the

limited theory around them, it becomes clear that even defining what a sequel is becomes a difficult task. Most studies about sequels have grouped them together with series, prequels, cycles, spin-offs, remakes, trilogies, and reboots. For this reason, the definition of the sequel has been left somewhat ambiguous, frequently overlapping with other multiplicities. Of those mentioned above, the common characteristic is that they are all related to another text, frequently an original or earlier one. However, the way in which they relate to each other may vary and this generates the differences between them. Diverse factors like their characters, continuity, chronology, and repetition interfere in their taxonomy. In the introduction to her book, Jess-Cooke begins by giving *Variety*'s definition of the sequel as a story that "repeats the characters of another film, taking up the action where it left off; the characters' history in the earlier film is mentioned, understood or otherwise significant in the later one"; she then labels this definition as "lacking scope and precision" (Jess-Cooke, 2009:4) After analysing some examples of serials and series, the conclusion to which she arrives is that: "whereas seriality and series defy change, the sequel champions difference, progress and excess" (Jess-Cooke, 2009:5).

Conversely, Henderson notes a lack of clarity in Jess-Cooke's definition of the sequel. He elaborates on how this has proven to be a challenging task to undertake in film studies. To shed some light on the matter, he turns to the definitions of the comparable genre in literature offered by Umberto Eco (Henderson, 2014:3). Henderson determines that the sequel is a film with the "defining characteristic of its acknowledgement of a chronological narrative relationship with a previous instalment" emphasising that the "acknowledged chronology" is what distinguishes the sequel from a serial; the first with a stronger "commitment to maintain narrative continuity from one instalment to the next" (Henderson, 2014:4). Henderson then proceeds to mark the difference between serials and sequels by focusing on how they are

distributed. He establishes that serials are those regularly supplied in short episodes, while sequels are longer and appear “months or years” apart from each other carrying more importance to them within the narrative. It is significant to understand how the time of reception of the work makes an important difference in the narrative’s consumption and the viewing experience.

The blurry borders between sequels and other multiplicities is also addressed in Claire Perkins’s 'Remaking and the Film Trilogy: Whit Stillman's Authorial Triptych' (2008). In this text the author compares the sequel to the remake and the trilogy. She begins by quoting Thomas Leitch’s mentioning that:

The audience for sequels wants to find out more, to spend more time with characters they are interested in and to find out what happened to them after their story was over. The audience for remakes does not expect to find out anything new in this sense: they want the same story again, though not exactly the same. (Perkins, 2008:15).

Later in her work, she poses the idea that, while one sequel on its own “lacks the effort to understand the type as itself a form of remaking [...] the film trilogy provides a more interesting example of sequelisation and its possibilities” (Perkins, 2008:16). She argues that “the trilogy is an area in which sequelisation is thought in more interpretive terms and in which the conditions of remaking that ground all sequels are made explicit”, but she goes on to analyse the relationship between trilogies and authorship (which is her main topic), and she does not expand on the matter of these conditions. One of the main claims of her argument is “the way in which the trilogy also exists as a discursive category”. For this, she groups films like Lars Von Trier’s *Dogville* (2003), *Breaking the Waves* (1996) and *Dancer in the Dark* (2000) pointing out how these could be thought of as a conceptual trilogy of the author, rather than three parts of the same story (Perkins, 2008: 17). Perkins’s argument about the trilogy as authorial is a very interesting and valid point to make. However, I would like to turn the

attention to what this argument supposes to sequelisation. Namely, the distinction between the trilogy as conceptual and as chronological or invested in finding out more and spending more time with the same characters of a particular story. Jess-Cooke addresses this difference between the conceptual and the chronological and notes: “there is also the matter of separating sequels from the series and trilogies when a third filmic instalment is released” drawing from the ‘mid-way’ term of the threequel, namely, a sequel to a sequel (2009:5). This distinction is one that I believe to be of big importance to understanding the multiplicities. It is crucial to differentiate a group of films linked together only by a concept from those united by one same on-going narrative in order to explore the different narrative and aesthetic devices that take part in their making and reception.

Similarly, in 'Vicious cycle: Jaws and revenge-of-nature films of 1970s' (2016), Constantine Verevis considers the relationship among what he designates “sets of films” to define 'remakes' (*Jaws/Creature from the Black Lagoon*), 'sequels' (*Jaws/Jaws 2*), 'series' (*Jaws-Jaws 4*), 'cycles' (the revenge-of-nature cycle) and 'genres'. Verevis points out that the way in which a film is “sequelised” is when the events of the first film are acknowledged in the second one. Further on, he points out that: “the process of continuation (sequelisation) is always also one of repetition: of characters and actors, plots and scenarios, themes, and styles, and, importantly, title terms” (Verevis in Klein and Palmer, 2016:97). As I have developed above, it has been hard for theorists to agree on a clear definition of 'sequel'. For this reason, my research will use this umbrella term for films that could also fall under the term of series and trilogies alongside pairs of films. The unifying characteristic will be this process of continuation and repetition Verevis mentions, and an “acknowledgement of a chronological narrative relationship with a prior instalment” which Henderson claims is the defining characteristic of the sequel. The chronology and temporality of the films is an aspect that

appears continuously in the attempts to define the sequel and to distinguish them from other multiplicities. Nonetheless, the relation between sequels and temporality has been under-analysed. My research aims to analyse the characteristics of a specific kind of sequels that have intentionally incorporated time into their storytelling and done so self-aware of their own temporality. However, a variation of this use of time is something that has long been present in television series and serials, to studies of which I will now turn.

## Long-term narratives in Television

As it is easy to see, most film productions can work as stand-alone texts. This is to say that one can watch most films without needing to have seen any additional texts in order to understand what that film is about. Not only that, but filmmakers of a multiplicity would often ensure it has the necessary attributes for it to work on its own, even if an audience member is not familiar with the other film (or films) to which it is related. They would make sure to include enough expository dialogue from the characters to inform audiences of past events that might be relevant to the plot. For example, the first few minutes of *Terminator 2* explain what happened in the first film to remind or catch up the viewer with a voice-over. Conversely, the multiplicity may also concern a whole new story that develops from start to finish only tangentially linking it to the other films in a series. For instance, films about the individual superheroes of the Marvel Cinematic Universe which, although related to the other films, concern only the story of the one character the film focuses on (Iron man, Ant-man, Captain Marvel, etc.). There are several mechanisms at play in the relation between multiplicities that are not as straight forward and require more work to make a seamless transition from one to the other, but while this is predominantly the case for feature films, the contrary applies to television serials.

Television productions are first and foremost “multiplicities”, meaning that what is usually watched on the small screen are texts that necessarily relate to others, and watching multiple episodes is typically necessary for understanding television series. We can see how that works for a series that follows a story from one episode to the next in serial narratives. For this reason, the relationship between texts, or between part and whole, has been broadly analysed by television scholars, and insights from the study of television programmes that follow this practice are useful to inform an exploration on multiplicities in feature films. Scholarship on television studies provides useful insights into long-running stories such as the serial. It is also helpful for analysing the screenwriters’ tools for creating long-term narratives and the different elements at play in their construction and audience engagement.

Similar to the sequel, television’s storytelling is one that extends beyond one text and continues in following instalments. To understand this modality, it is important to address how this way of storytelling began. Robert Allen’s ‘Perpetually beginning until the end of the fair: The paratextual poetics of serialised novels’ (Allen, 2010) addresses the origins of the serial form, focusing on the poetic characteristics of serialised novels from the Victorian era<sup>4</sup>. Although the media to tell serialised stories have changed through time (from the written serialised novel to radio serials, to television and cinema) what has remained since then is how audiences receive and consume the story. Namely, consuming the story one part at a time and progressively completing it before getting a full picture of the events. Allen analyses how this form of distribution is key to the poetics of the story and the way in which the reader experiences and understands it. For this, Allen uses Genette’s idea of the paratext, and illustrates how the serialisation of the novel, mainly the time of its distribution, is in itself paratextual. Allen suggests that the border between the text and the paratext is much blurrier

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<sup>4</sup> This type of distribution became popularised largely because of the era’s commercial requirements.

than Genette claims and proposes a diachronic approach to understanding the significance of this practice. For Allen, the “significantly charged duration” of the reader’s consumption of the novel *is* the paratext (Allen, 2010:184). By utilising this duration, the notion of time in the development of the serialised novel is “filled with significance”, and transforms this notion of *Chronos* into *Kairos*, i.e. “from what was ‘simply successive’ to something intimately concerned with past and future” (Allen, 2010:183). These ideas will be key in my following analysis of the sequel; how the time of distribution becomes paratextual and fills with significance the text in itself. Allen also tackles different devices that the writers of these novels used to engage the audience of a serial, such as the cliff-hanger and the postponement of closure, which were crucial to keeping the public both entertained with what they were reading and eager for the next part of the story to come. These mechanisms of storytelling have been and will be present persistently in serialised narratives no matter the media in which they are told, and, in turn, they will continue to shape the story in which they are used. Allen also claims that this way of storytelling not only shaped the story, but it also “created the kinds of socialised reading experience and bond between authors and readers which were explicitly reflected in serial novels” (Allen, 2010:185). This kind of social experience is something that television viewers often participate in regarding television series and long-running narrative which is crucial to the pleasures they are able to provide.

Regarding this social experience and its relation to the serial form, Umberto Eco provides illuminating insights regarding the nature of seriality in his book *The Limits of Interpretation* (Eco, 1994). One of the chapters of this book is dedicated to exploring the issues of repetition in the modern era of serials as well as the modern way of understanding highbrow art. Eco makes a thorough case for how repetition is seen against the over-praising of innovation in modern times, claiming that this idea of complete originality in a work of art is a



concept that society has only recently acquired as a crucial criterion for art. However, what is relevant about Eco's work for this research is his analysis of the poetics of repetition in today's television series and their relationship with viewers. Firstly, Eco brings attention to the confusion between the ideas of repetition and a series (Eco, 1994:84). While repetition in a current dictionary means to say or do something a second time, a series is a continued succession of similar things. Through the analysis of modern concepts such as the retake, the remake, the series, the saga and intertextuality, Eco elaborates on how modern audiences actually find pleasure in the apparent repetition on themes. He claims that in fact they speak to the audience's ability to recognise the variables of the same theme constructed in a different way, and to a common knowledge in modern society that is constructed within these variables. It is this interweaving of common knowledge that allows the critical spectator to appreciate the nuances of a serial or series, and as I will argue closely in the upcoming chapters, the sequel.

Eco begins defining the series as working "upon a fixed situation" with a "restricted number of pivotal characters" (Eco, 1994:85). A series can be criticised as trying to give the impression of novelty when, in fact, the narrative scheme does not change. But in what Eco posits as the moderated or "modern" conception of aesthetic value (Eco, 1994:91), he appeals for these different modes of "repetition" showing how they establish a dialectic between innovation and repetition allowing the critical or second-level reader to appreciate the nuances of this dialectic. In the example of the series, Eco points out how a critical reader is able to enjoy and appreciate it, "not so much for the return of the same thing, but for the strategy of the variations" and stresses how "in this sense seriality and repetition are not opposed to innovation" (Eco, 1994:93) and how when "we fail to find the innovation in the serial" it is because of our cultural habits rather than the structures of the text themselves (Eco, 1994). Eco claims that while modern views of art usually value complete originality of a single theme,

there is also a pleasure to be found in “the reiteration of a single and constant truth” (Eco, 1994:99) and the different forms in which it can be portrayed. Eco’s claim resonates strongly, not only with the common arguments for and against the sequel, but also with what will be the main conducting thread of my analysis: Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition*, which I will discuss below.

Michael Z. Newman’s ‘From Beats to Arcs: Toward a Poetics of Television Narrative’ (2006) is a comprehensive exploration of the powerful mode that Prime-Time Serial television has developed to tell stories. For Newman, the commercial needs of television have not been an obstacle in the medium’s artistic pursuit, but much to the contrary, a facilitator. He describes how television has had to develop ways to suit the timetables of the media. Namely, to tell a story that suits the necessary commercial breaks of US network television without losing momentum in the forty-two minutes of a television episode. Not to mention, keeping the audiences’ attention when a variety of alternative options are just one click away. Newman mainly breaks his analysis in the following three levels: micro level or beats, middle level or episodes, and macro level or arcs. The first of these levels, the beats, are television’s smallest node of a narrative. Beats are the smallest unit television writers use to move the story forward. In television, Newman explains, these beats are commonly an average of two minutes long, suited for the demands of the medium and its audience. Newman believes that this forces the narrative to be clear and efficient; “no moment is without a dramatic function, no scene is redundant with other scenes” (Newman, 2006:17). The accumulation of beats formulates the storyline (or lines) that we see in an episode, which is the second or middle level.

An episode is a unit of television storytelling with which anyone who has followed a television programme is very familiar. Each episode from the prime-time serial is clearly

separated from the others and they are usually delivered one week at a time. Newman focuses on the nature of closure and resolution in an episode, as he disputes the idea of the serial's open-endedness arguing that: "an emphasis on openness misses much of what is interesting about television's evening serials" (Newman, 2006:20). He points out two kinds of closure in an episode's storyline, which are the resolution of a narrative cause-effect chain and the "unification of themes and motifs into an orderly integrated whole" (Newman, 2006:20). He classifies narrative questions in an episode as highly focused and less focused questions. The highly focused questions are those which the episode poses and answers promptly, either in the same episode, or sometimes deferred by a cliff-hanger only to be answered during the first few minutes of the next. This establishes a "balance between episodic closure and serial deferment" (Newman, 2006:20), which Newman claims is standard in many forms of serial storytelling. *Game of Thrones*' (2011-2019) overarching intrigue of who would win the Iron Throne was a clear example of a less focused question. This was constantly looming in the background of any action in the show, but viewers knew that they would not get the answer until the end of the series. This, however, does not become an obstacle for the narrative or for other questions to be developed during the show. An example of a highly focused question would be the 'death' of Jon Snow, stabbed by the men from the Night's Watch the audience was left wondering if he was really gone forever. Serving as the central cliff-hanger in between seasons five and six, the question was eventually answered in the second episode of the sixth season when Jon was brought back to life.

On the third level of Newman's exploration of the serial's poetics, he develops the function of character arcs. He explains how for the primetime serial, the investment in the characters is equally important to the investment in the plot. The character's development in many ways is what informs and defines the plot of the show throughout the series' running

time and vice versa. For this reason, the relationship that the audiences develop with a long-running programme's character is significant and complex. As Newman puts it, "an arc is a character's journey from A through B, C, and D to E" (Newman, 2006:23). Throughout this journey, characters undergo significant life events and changes that the viewers witness alongside them; all of which is part of the experience the narrative offers to them. Newman also mentions the demanding investment of time that this requires from the viewer, and how the reward of it is a fuller experience of the character. The characters' journey and the viewer's experience of them are an important part of the storytelling units that Newman analyses. Newman's analysis of the parts of the serial is illuminating to understand the interaction of parts and whole of a story told in different instances; how they stand on their own, but also how they can complete a 'macro-narrative' through their intertextuality as sequels equally do.

In their edited collection, *How to Watch Television* (2013), Jason Mittell and Ethan Thompson gather a collection of essays that seek to explore different facets of what watching television means. In their introduction Mittell and Thompson note the specificity of television viewing practices: "some types of television require particular viewing practices to really understand them, such as the long-term viewing of serials and series, or the contextualised viewings of remakes or historically nostalgic programming". These "particular viewing practices" and especially "long-term viewing" is what this research is concerned with as I will bring attention to how the long term production of the time-critical sequel becomes crucial in the telling of its story. In this case, Mittell and Thompson shed light on television practices, they highlight the fact that the long-term viewing is charged with a different way of experiencing television. One particular genre in television that has been well-known and analysed because of its long-term narrative process is the soap opera.

The soap opera is a genre that for a long time has had to withstand academic criticism and disapproval as a legitimate mode of storytelling. However, several television scholars, like Robert Allen, Christine Geraghty, C. Lee Harrington, and Abigail de Kosnik have taken on the task of writing about the soap opera pointing out and analysing how this genre has developed a complex way of engaging with its audiences and building long-term narratives. Each of these authors provide different perspectives from which to appreciate the soap opera, but they also converge on many key points such as the significance of character development and its interdependency with a plot, the complexity of the soap's tension between narrative continuity and episodic resolution, and their engagement with the viewers. To better understand the standing point from which their analysis on these issues departs, I will proceed to provide a brief summary of their main arguments.

Before the intervention of feminist scholars in the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was a significant gap in the study of the soap opera's possibilities as an aesthetic object worthy of study, particularly within academia<sup>5</sup>. Feminist scholars wanted to have a serious exploration of feminine pleasures, which made academia begin to devote time to the study of this type of narratives. One of these scholars was Robert Allen. In his book *Speaking of Soap Operas* (Allen, 1985), Allen provides a thorough analysis of the poetics and narrative devices of the soap opera. In this examination, he elaborates different aspects of this type of narrative, from the meaning of this genre to its current state of knowledge and its institutional history. While

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<sup>5</sup> See 'Soap Operas and Artistic Legitimation' (Harrington *et al.*, 2015). This text focused on how this genre has been critically received, and the process of legitimation, or lack thereof, that it has undergone through critical commentary. The critical reception of soap operas has always been hesitant to accept them as a legitimate form of art. Some of the reasons behind this are the association of the soap opera to femininity and female values (2015: 615), that the articles about the shows were aimed at the audiences of the programme rather than at the contents of the programme itself, usually made in a negative tone (Harrington *et al.*, 2015: 623), the belief that criticism of these narratives was not necessary since it already had a devoted base of spectators (Harrington *et al.*, 2015: 616), and a significant bias of the reviewers due to their own viewing practices and the fact that many times they did not even watch the soaps themselves (Harrington *et al.*, 2015: 619). Not only compromising their credibility (Harrington *et al.*, 2015: 625), but also, lacking the acquaintance to the necessary narrative codes in order to appreciate the complexities of this form of storytelling.

his analysis on this subject is extensive, I would like to focus on his chapter ‘A Reader-Oriented Poetics of the Soap Opera’ (Allen, 1985:61). This section of Allen’s book aims to analyse the soap opera as an aesthetic object by focusing on its “distinctive features rather than individual episodes” through the lens of literary poetics. Allen begins this section by looking at the visual and auditory style of the soap, proceeding to elaborate on its narrative structure, he then questions its status as a closed or open text, finally listing the various codes that intervene in the reading of the soap opera and why its relation to a female reader is effective to the understanding and status of the text.

In this text, rather than legitimising the soap opera, Allen expands on the potential and the possibilities that this way of storytelling is able to provide as a narrative medium and the particular way it engages with its devoted viewers. When Allen examines the soap opera from the perspective of literary poetics, he allows to understand it as a text that needs to be read in a specific way in order to appreciate its pleasures and potential. One of the important points that Allen makes is how soap opera viewers, or *readers*, construct the meaning of the text based on their own reading experience of said text. Many particular aspects of the soap opera participate in this process constructing and sharing a reading code for the viewer through its formal properties (Allen, 1985:63), with which the reader familiarises throughout the development of the narrative. An important analysis that Allen develops is the comparison of the visual and auditory style of the soap opera to those conventional to Hollywood films (Allen, 1985:64). In this section, he emphasises how the economy, transparency and accessibility of Hollywood’s style is replicated in a more austere form by the soap opera. This comparison is useful to understand the ways in which this narrative style makes do of its limited resources to tell a story. Most importantly, it is Allen’s analysis of the distinctive narrative structure of the soap opera that is relevant for this research. For example, Allen refers to the elongating plot lines,

the absence of narrative closure, and its large community of interrelated characters. The elongating plot lines usually make the narrative of a soap opera seem “static” or that “nothing happens”, this is because the same events *take a long time to move forward* (Allen, 1985:69). However, Allen suggests it is necessary to contemplate these plotlines from what Roland Barthes denominates a paradigmatic approach (Allen, 1985:69).

According to Barthes, there are two ways to look at a word, syntagmatically and paradigmatically. Syntagmatically considers the unique combination of a use of words to produce meaning, for example, using the words ‘the’, ‘dog’ and ‘jumps’ to create the unique meaning of “the dog jumps”; looking at how these words are combined and relate to each other to create a specific meaning is to look at them syntagmatically. On the other hand, a paradigm is to understand each of these words as units of a set, ‘the’ is part of the paradigm of articles, ‘dog’ is part of the paradigm of nouns, and ‘jumps’ of the paradigm of verbs, to look at these words paradigmatically is to associate them in a group of words that are similar in a specific way. Allen utilises these concepts to understand the way to appreciate the developments in soap operas’ narrative. For Allen, to read a soap opera syntagmatically is to consider the specific way in which singular parts of different sets of characters and situations are being combined in a particular point of the narrative to generate meaning, usually during one episode. He points out that “one of the distinctive syntagmatic features of the soap opera is its absence of ultimate narrative closure” (Allen, 1985:69), but the soap opera’s “paradigmatic complexity” is frequently overlooked. In other words, the complexity and maybe even the whole narrative of the soap opera cannot be appreciated in a single episode. Instead, Allen explains that to fully understand the soap operas’ world, one should look at it from its associative axis (Allen, 1985:69). In other words, this means to look at the story holistically, considering the complex network of characters, their past and developing events to fully

understand what is happening at a specific time in the present narrative. In the following chapters I will also argue, as Allen does, that the associations between elements of a film and its sequel(s) create complex networks of meanings. In this way, the analysis of this soap opera's practice proves illuminating to understand how serialised audio-visual texts can create meaning between each other.

Because of this practice, the soap operas' storytellers need to constantly achieve a balance between the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic, stretching the plots long enough not to run out of relevant material throughout the years of broadcasting, while also making it move along at a tolerable pace for the viewer not to get bored. This way of storytelling is very different from the one of classical Hollywood narratives. Feature films are usually restricted to a limited number of plot lines and characters, simply to make sense and tell a coherent story during a limited amount of time. For example, while the television mini-series of *Pride and Prejudice* (1995) had six episodes, which amounted to over 300 minutes to tell the story, the film *Pride and Prejudice* (2003) had to do it in under 130 minutes. By contrast, soap operas are able to expand their narrative around a large community of characters, each with their own and interrelated plotlines. It is at this point that the soap opera's relationship to their viewers/readers becomes crucial. When a viewer is familiar with the soap opera's long-running story and the entire community of characters, they have a "more paradigmatic take" on it, and this enables them to see more signifying possibilities. For a knowledgeable viewer, an event in a character's life will be read against the background of that event's history, as Allen explains, "the text provides the reference, but the reader provides the context" (Allen, 1985:72). Because of this, Allen draws on Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan's work on the temporality of fiction (Allen, 1985:72) in which the author explains two types of duration in a narrative work: the story duration and the text duration. However, Allen adds to this theory a third type of duration that



Rimmon-Kenen does not consider in this work, which is the reading duration, i.e. “not just text time but reading time as well, since it has literally taken thirty years for the viewer to “read” the text of *Guiding Light* up to that point” (Allen, 1985:72). This is a difference in duration which, as Allen points out, is very different between reading a novel, watching a film, following a soap opera or bingeing on a television series. While one reads a novel, one is able to put it down and pause the developments of a story and it varies from reader to reader. This is not the case when watching a movie in the cinema where the reading time is unavoidably the same as the running time of the text and one cannot perceive the totality of the text all at once.

Due to this temporal dynamic, the relationship of the soap opera text with its reader becomes a significantly charged one; “The reader’s own extratextual horizons might change during the course of reading a narrative text” (Allen, 1985:73). In other words, as the fictional narrative of the soap opera moves along, so does the life of the reader. In this way, the memory of both the past of the story and the past of the reader become participants in the interaction with the current events. Similar to my own experience (recounted above) of the films in *The Before Trilogy*, it is both the text and the reader who have changed during the development of the story. Hence, the reader can relate the events of the story with the events in her own life, generating connections between the two which are themselves also ever-changing. This makes the relation of the reader with the text more complex than just assigning a certain demographic to the practice of watching a soap opera, as Allen notes “usually readers are set into age groups, but a text that might have been begun by a reader in adolescence, thirty years later is still being read by the same reader, who is now a mother of adolescent children.” (Allen, 1985:73)

Moving on, Allen explores the way in which the soap opera story is delivered, and how this dynamic audience becomes a part of the poetics of the narrative. As he expresses, “the text

is constantly constructed by the reader” (Allen, 1985:76) when he or she creates new connections with their own story, but also in the exercise of consuming the story itself across so many years. The telling of such a story is constantly interrupted with time gaps in between episodes. These pauses position the readers in between the past and future of the story, allowing them to “fill the gaps” in part with their own speculations and frames of reference of the story; “the reality of the reader confronts the pseudo-reality of the fictive text” (Allen, 1985:78). For this argument, Allen turns to Iser’s notion of narrative anticipation and how “the reader is forced by the pauses imposed upon him to imagine more than he could if his reading were continuous” (Allen, 1985:79). In other words, having to wait for the continuation of a story makes the reader think about it more than if said story was uninterrupted. This is something that we see especially in today’s media culture where the community of viewers of a show are constantly sharing theories of where the shows might be going<sup>6</sup>. For example, when the viewers of *Game of Thrones* (2011-2019) think about what may happen at the end of the series, there are numerous plausible outcomes; what would happen if Cersei won the Throne? Or if Jon Snow wins the Throne? If Daenerys does? It is also possible for no one to do so as the white walkers may kill everybody, among many other options. The audience can ponder on all the ways in which the long journey with these characters may end, but only one of these possible outcomes will be realised. This is an example of what Iser points out about the way in which “readers in the nineteenth century found serialised novels read in instalments more enjoyable than the same text published as a whole” (Allen, 1985:79). Similarly, Allen points out how a soap opera, not governed by an ultimate telos, opens up many interpretative possibilities. A text can have different levels and possibilities of interpretation, though the number of possible interpretations is never infinite. A knowledgeable reader of the codes that govern a certain text

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<sup>6</sup> This is also evident in women’s magazines and entertainment guides which often lead with cover stories about sensational new soap storylines. Although *Game of Thrones* is built around central unfocused question whereas soap operas’ questions are posed every day and continuously.

is more adept to interpret such a text correctly, hence an experienced viewer of a soap opera is more adept to read such soap opera as they are familiarised with the codes that rule the narrative<sup>7</sup> (Allen, 1985:82). In this way, Allen suggests how the reading experience of a long-term narrative text such as the soap opera becomes significantly charged in relation with its viewers. Similarly, I will argue how the long-term production and experience of the time-critical sequel contributes to a significantly charged mode of storytelling in relation to its time of consumption.

In Christine Geraghty's 'The Continuous Serial — A Definition' (Geraghty, 1981), the author unpacks the complex construction that television serials or soap operas like *Coronation Street* (1960 -) require. She lays out the narrative tools that this kind of long-running stories put into play to generate the pleasures they offer to their audiences. She divides her essay into three main parts; the first pointing out the three key characteristics of the serial, which are the organisation of time, the sense of a future and the interweaving of stories. Secondly, she outlines the management of narrative and characterisation, explaining the different archetypal characters that help to move the story forward, or, as she names them, serial types. Finally, she elaborates on the role of gossip both within and outside the soap opera explaining how this is a mechanism that the makers utilise to keep the audiences informed about the relevant events of previous episodes providing different perspective on the action, while also generating "a feeling of day-to-dayness" and pleasure on commentary for the viewer. What most pertains to this research from Geraghty's study, are the observations within these sections made about the soap opera's use of time. She points out how the audience is made aware of the time that goes by between each episode and how, because of this, the passage of time of the continuous serial

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<sup>7</sup> Further in the reading, Allen goes into more depth about the different type of codes that interact with the reading of a soap opera text, such as stylistic codes, generic codes, textual codes, intertextual codes, and ideological codes. (Allen, 1985: 84)

is distinguished from the regular television series. It is significant for the audience's experience because "there is an appeal here to the audience's experience of time in the real world" (Geraghty, 1981:10). To achieve this way of engagement for an audience, the soap opera needs to achieve a balance between continuity and innovation that keeps the plot together. Formal devices like the cliff-hanger help to maintain this balance and the attention of the spectator long enough to wait for the next episode, and as Geraghty points out "The cliff-hanger formally differentiates the serial from the complete novel or film". (Geraghty, 1981:13).

For a narrative form like the soap opera, that can continue to run for decades, the construction of the plot is a challenge, not only for the makers but also for the spectator. This is something that Geraghty mentions in her observation about how "characterisation and plot in a serial interlock in a way which provides a familiar base for the viewer, but which generates enough surprises to prevent tedium" (Geraghty, 1981:13). This interlocking of character and plot is also explored by Abigail de Kosnik in her essay 'One Life to Live. Soap Opera Storytelling' (De Kosnik, 2020:355). Here the author focuses on the long-term viewer and lifelong stories of characters in soap operas, such as Viki from the soap *One Life to Live* (1968-2013). Outlining how Viki dealt with the repressed memories of her father's abuse while having a double personality disorder, de Kosnik highlights the complex narrative development that characters of long-running television serials undergo and the relationship with their viewers. De Kosnik mainly discusses how the character's construction and the spectator's viewing experience are interweaved. This is noted in several ways; for example, when one of the characters of the show starts as a child or a teenager, the character and actor grow within the plot making the viewers feel as if they've witnessed them grow-up into adults; or, vice versa, if the spectators have followed the show for a long time since they themselves were children or teenagers, they feel that they have grown too alongside the characters (De Kosnik,

2020:356). This also opens the possibility for different generations of soap opera viewers to relate to the different stages of the characters in them.

De Kosnik also analyses how the long-term nature of this narrative allows for a powerful development of a character's arc. This has an effect both on the story and the viewer. A long-time investment, of years or even decades, in the development of a character, allows the story to show a detailed and gradual evolution of someone who undergoes intense psychological transformations or life-altering events. As de Kosnik points out, such treatment is closer to emulating what real people would have to go through in real life under this type of circumstances (De Kosnik, 2020:362). Having lived through a significant transformation alongside them, de Kosnik points out how the viewer can develop a strong bond of familiarity with the characters (De Kosnik, 2020:362). In terms of plot, she also analyses how the long-term narrative of the soap opera allows for the build-up of satisfying reveals and storyline culminations after years of narrative development (De Kosnik, 2020:358). For example, in *One Life to Live*, the character of Viki had to live through years of her personality disorder before learning that this was caused by the abuse inflicted on her by her father during her childhood. Before the writers finally reveal this piece of information, a lot of work had gone into building the character and letting some hints of this be known throughout the narrative. For faithful viewers of the show, de Kosnik says, this revelation comes as a satisfying reward after years of suspicion that some dark secret was behind Viki's behaviour. And they were right, as the author points out: "the reveal must accord with viewers' recollection of characters' histories in order to ring true" (De Kosnik, 2020:360).

This dynamic between story, characters and viewers demonstrates a powerful way in which soap operas are able to exploit the potentialities of a long-running narrative, something

that is not commonly seen in other genres. De Kosnik also writes how this use of time becomes meaningful due to its parallelism with reality explaining:

One reason that soap's long-arc storyline [...] can affect soap viewers deeply is that "soap time" approximates "real time". Unlike the compressed temporalities of a two-hour film or a one-hour weekly series that runs for only a few years, soap opera events unfold in a timeline that mirrors viewers' lived time closely. [...] so, viewers have the sense that they live their lives alongside, or in tandem with, soap opera characters. [...] the parallel between soap time and real time gives soap operas a certain ongoing realism that other forms of drama rarely match. (De Kosnik, 2020:361).

From this observation and drawing upon the work of Geraghty, one can note how the passage of time plays a fundamental part in the modes of engagement that these stories can create. Indeed, time is an aspect of soap operas and other television serials which several scholars have pointed out. As already mentioned in the introduction, this dissertation will be first and foremost focused analysing time in the sequel and how it becomes a crucial element of its storytelling. Geraghty's and De Kosnik's observations about the importance of time in the soap operas' narratives and character arcs help illuminate how time aids in the long-term narrative's engagement with its viewers. However, before discussing time, repetition, and the moving image, I will address how texts such as series, serials, and sequels create meaning together. As mentioned above, Klein and Palmer give the name 'multiplicities' to the type of films (texts) that make meaning when read together (2016:19). The action of texts referring to each other and creating meaning together has been understood by scholars as 'intertextuality' which I will now discuss.

## Intertextuality

Intertextuality has a long history, even if it was not given a name until the twentieth century. From this period onwards, modern theorists see both literary and non-literary texts as intertextual; namely, as entities in constant dialogue and "as lacking in any kind of independent

meaning" (Allen, 2022:1). Graham Allen's book *Intertextuality* (2011) and María Jesús Martínez-Alfaro's 'Intertextuality: Origins and Development of the Concept' (1996) give a comprehensive history of intertextuality as a fluid and adaptable concept. As Martínez-Alfaro claims, texts have been 'intertextual' since texts have existed (1996:269). However, the concept of intertextuality was coined by post-modernists who wanted to "disrupt notions of stable meaning and objective interpretation" (Allen, 2022:3). Like modern cultural and literary theory, intertextuality has its origins in twentieth-century linguistics from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, which established the relational nature of language (Allen, 2022:2). However, as linguistic theory developed, it also got concerned with the "existence of language within specific social situations" and how it reflects "visions of society and human relations" (Allen, 2022:2-5).

Two pioneers of intertextual theory are Mikhail Bakhtin and Julia Kristeva. The latter, influenced by Bakhtin, first coined the term 'intertextuality'. For both, the text "is conceived as composed of discourse, as a signifying system, a text understood in a dynamic sense" (Martínez-Alfaro, 1996:271). Bakhtin's project focused on a view of language within a social and historical frame where the 'self' is dialogic and "lives in a relation of simultaneity with the 'other'" (Martínez-Alfaro, 1996:272-273). For Bakhtin, "meaning is always established in a dialogue" (Cutchins, 2017:78). He discourages us from understanding words as "seamless wholes" but instead as fragmented parts that "seek each other out" (1981:377). Similarly, an essential feature in Bakhtin's work is the notion of simultaneity and recognising that something can be two or more things at the same time. Simultaneity allows us to see how texts contain different meanings, readings, and interpretations within themselves (Cutchins, 2017:72). Notably, 'simultaneity' is a temporal concept. Therefore, Bakhtin opens the door to understanding the creation of meaning as imbued with temporality. For Bakhtin, it is necessary

to see different concepts and binary oppositions as working together rather than mutually exclusive; he encourages the reader to see "both things and the relations between them—one cannot be understood without the other. The resulting simultaneity is not a private *either/or*, but an inclusive *also/and*. In other words, the logic of Bakhtin's simultaneity is—dialogic" (Holquist, 1990:xxiii). To understand how texts and contexts work together is to enter an ever-changing web of meaning and interdetermination.

Julia Kristeva draws from Bakhtin's work on linguistics and applies it to literature introducing the idea of the text into his theory. Kristeva characterises the "'literary world' as an *intersection of textual surfaces* rather than a *point* (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings" (Kristeva, 1980:65). She states how any text is the absorption and transformation of another. She uses the notion of "absorption" to illustrate how texts contain other texts, common places, folk wisdom, clichés and anonymous ideas that have created a network of meaning "mak[ing] up the background of one's life" (Martínez-Alfaro, 1996:278). As the notion of intertextuality expanded, the idea that the text is dynamic, without a fixed meaning and in continuous dialogue became prevalent. Roland Barthes famously challenged the role of the author as the sole establisher of meaning, posing how the reader brings into the text a network of meanings from the 'background of their life' (Allen, 2022:3). As Allen highlights, Barthes reminds us [that] the original meaning of word 'text' is 'a tissue, a woven fabric' (Barthes, 1977). Therefore, the concept of 'text' comes from creating a web of meaning "woven from the threads of the 'already written'" (Allen, 2022:5). With this new perspective, readers and authors became aware of how the creation of meaning extends beyond the single text. As Allen explains:

The act of reading, theorists claim, plunges us into a network of textual relations. To interpret a text, to discover its meaning or meanings is to trace those relations. Reading thus becomes a process of moving between texts. Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all the other



texts to which it refers and relates, moving from the independent text into a network of textual relations. The text becomes inter text. (2022:1).

Namely, texts obtain meaning from their relation to other texts, but more importantly, the reader traces these relations to discover it. The text's borders become open and promote a new vision of meaning foregrounding "notions of relationality, interconnectedness and interdependence" (Allen, 2022:5-6). The traces between texts become "differential and historical, as traces and tracings of otherness, since they are shaped by the repetition and transformation of other textual structures" (Martínez-Alfaro, 1996:268). With the above in mind, we can say that the act of reading any text becomes an action no longer linear but comparative (Martínez-Alfaro, 1996:279).

Gérard Genette writes on intertextuality, claiming that the term was insufficient to explain the different ways texts relate to other texts. Therefore, he proposes the use of 'transtextuality' as an umbrella term giving five subcategories: Intertextuality – referring to the effective presence of one or more texts in another – and adding paratextuality, metatextuality, archtextuality, and hypertextuality (Martínez-Alfaro, 1996:281). Genette's concepts help to flesh out the nuances of a text's network of relations, the notion of intertextuality, the relations between its parts, other texts or even things that never were – for which Martínez-Alfaro refers to Borges' pseudo-textuality and notes: "all those relations can be said to exist as far as they are perceived by the reader" (1996:281). This quote circles back to the reader bringing a "horizon of expectations" and "networks of meaning", as addressed by Hans Robert Jauss. Jauss' work also adds a historical dimension to the notion of intertextuality when he traces how the readers' horizons diverge over time (1996:282). However, before going further into the relationship between intertextuality and time, I would like to turn to intertextuality in film studies.

Scholars of both literary and non-literary art forms have adopted intertextuality. Ultimately, "non-literary texts are "languages" which involve productions of complex patterns of encoding, re-encoding, allusion, echo, transposing of previous systems and codes" (Allen, 2022:169). The work of art is commonly regarded as a system based on relations between texts, images, sounds, contexts, and others (Martínez-Alfaro, 1996:270). For example, contemporary paintings constantly rely on recognisable images, and modern music repeatedly samples other pieces (Allen, 2022:5). Allen points out how film has an intertextual relation at its core regarding the tensions between film and screenplay (Allen, 2022:175). It is also present in the concept of the film star relying "on correspondences of similarity and difference from one film to the next, and sometimes too on supposed resemblances between on- and off-screen personae" (Reader, 1990 cited in Allen, 2022:170). Furthermore, "intertextuality as a theory and an interpretive practice has played a significant role in [...] adaptation studies" as it originates in the study of the intertextual relation between films and literature (Allen, 2022:204-205).

Dennis Cutchins discusses the origins of intertextuality and its applications in adaptation studies stating that "an adaptation approach requires that we focus attention on the relationships every text has with other texts" and "adaptation is a way of looking at texts through interdeterminations with other texts" (Cutchins, 2017:71). Although the case could be made that sequels are a kind of adaptation, this discussion falls outside the scope of this dissertation. However, many of the insights Cutchins provides are valuable for understanding intertextuality in any multiplicity. He first reminds us about Bakhtin's theory and how all texts are constantly in dialogue, "negotiat[ing] complex webs of intended and unintended meanings" (Cutchins, 2017:74-75). However, adaptations' and sequels' relations to other texts are more overt and purposeful. Cutchin writes:

These influences are always reciprocal, but there is no question that some texts are weightier than others, and thus their influence is more easily felt. It might be useful in this context to imagine this co-influence or interdetermination as a question of gravity or mass. The “mass” of any given text is not absolute, however, but rather determined by personal experience, by priority, and likely by the text’s cultural pervasiveness. (2017:75)

It follows that the influence of sequels' and adaptations' previous text is more easily felt than in other instances. Also, one text's pervasiveness over another depends on its cultural standing and the reader's personal experience. Cutchins highlights how these negotiations of meaning are constantly changing, meaning that how texts relate to and dominate each other is not static. Therefore, Cutchins says, the most one can expect to find in an adaptation/multiplicity are points of intersection where they "seek each other out" and the reader's understanding of the earlier text coincides with the current (Cutchins, 2017:76); the reader becomes a 'knowing participant' in the text or 'elite viewer' (Cutchins, 2017:73). Cutchins equates this to a sport's crowd where the knowledgeable viewer can notice the strategy of the plays; meanwhile, an uninformed spectator would only see chaotic action (Cutchins, 2017:76). Consequently, an adaptation/multiplicity becomes a type of reading rather than a type of text: "what is being adapted in any particular case cannot be the text alone, nor the essence of the text, but rather a particular understanding of the text that is dialogized, or constantly negotiated along its boundaries" (Cutchins, 2017:79). Like adaptations, sequels can be recognised by a particular degree of intertextuality with another text and by perceived intentionality, as "texts that share significant boundaries with specific antecedent texts" and some of the pleasures of these texts are recognising the interplay between them (Cutchins, 2017:81-83).

Concerning sequels, Jess-Cooke addresses how “the sequel has developed into a major intertextual framework” (Jess-Cooke, 2009:1), but she notes how, although there exists a good amount of scholarship on remakes, intertextuality and adaptations, there is little on

sequelisation. For her work, she draws from Genette's theory of transtextuality, particularly paratextuality, yet stating: "it is not entirely possible to define every sequel according to such neat categories of intertextuality" (Jess-Cooke, 2009:6). She notes how, along with sequels, "intertextuality and reflexivity were an important part of early cinema culture" (Jess-Cooke, 2009:21). Following her discussion, one can conclude that from early to contemporary cinema, intertextuality has been a way of addressing audiences that are immersed in cinema culture (Jess-Cooke, 2009:21). She notes how when audiences became highly literate in film viewing cinema relied on its intertextual, repetitive and self-reflexive medium to engage and re-engage audiences (Jess-Cooke, 2009:18). Jess-Cooke's following discussion continues to use the concept of intertextuality as a tool to address the interrelations of the sequels as well as other multiplicities such as trilogies and prequels.

Thomas Leitch also discusses adaptations' intertextuality, writing that "to adapt is to move that same entity into a new environment", and it undergoes modification "in its efforts to accommodate itself to its new environment" (Leitch, 2012:97). I would like to suggest that a time-critical sequel's intertextuality accommodates it to a new *temporal* environment. Martínez-Alfaro gives other takes on time working within intertextuality, noting that reception theory has looked at how a text's intertextuality changes over time and how the novel has intricate relations with past, present and future, which affects its boundaries (Martínez-Alfaro, 1996:275, 282). Bakhtin also states how: "The living utterance, *having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment*, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness and around the given object of an utterance" (Bakhtin, 1981:276, my emphasis). The influence of a previous text in adaptations and sequels implies that earlier texts will affect a later one (Cutchins, 2017:75), and that their temporal context plays a part in interpreting their meanings.

Similarly, when writing the past, "history is only available to the contemporary historian through a network of prior texts", and all historical texts have been infused by their dialogue with other texts (Allen, 2022:186). "History exists in a vast web of subjective texts, the new historical account being one more author's struggle to negotiate a way through an intertextual network of previous forms and representations" (Allen, 2022:186). Thus, the relationship of a present text with a past text is deeply intertextual; they enter into dialogue with each other and their historical network of meanings. As Linda Hutcheon states:

If the past is only known to us today through its textualized traces [...], the writing of both history and historiographic metafiction becomes a form of complex intertextual cross-referencing [...] this is writing that raises basic questions about possibilities and limits of meaning in the representation of the past (Hutcheon, 1989 cited in Allen, 2022:186).

In other words, "To write about the past [...] means that the author enters an intertextual environment of things already written and already said" (Allen, 2022:190). Following Umberto Eco's take on historical writing, Allen states how "in a historically oriented text the principal problem is intertextual: the 'already written' and 'already said' threaten to turn one's narrative and narrative voice into a mere repetition of previous utterances and previous texts" (Allen, 2022:189). I have already developed Eco's take on the poetics of repetition, but now I will turn to repetition concerning time and the moving image.

## Time and Repetition in the Moving Image

Until now, this review has focused on the literature addressing and the history and form of sequels and television series, but has not addressed theories of time in itself. In all its forms, the moving image has an intimate relationship with time. Some even call time "film's primary dimension" (Heath, 1981:165). Because of this, the literature on time and film is immensely vast. This research draws on this tradition, but the focus of this section of the literature review

will be on time and repetition in their relation to cinema. A plethora of texts address repetition in cinema and its role in the construction of film and narrative from many different perspectives. It would seem like repetition has a fluidity that makes it operate in endless ways within the aesthetics of the moving image. Looking at some of the texts about this, one finds authors examining this concept as a foundation for the construction of film narrative (Auerbach, 2000), as a lens through which to consider specific works or a particular auteur (Heath, 1981; Noys, 2004; Cassegard, 2005; Mulvey, 2013) or as a tool to investigate relationships between individual films (Plasse, 1996; Lancashire, 2000).

It is worthwhile turning to Bruce F. Kawin's *Telling it again and again: repetition in literature and film* (1972) to begin looking at repetition in narrative. Kawin scrutinises the ontology of repetition to understand its function within film and literature. Kawin's text brings out many substantial aspects of repetition in itself, not to mention Kawin's argument of how "repetition is fundamental to human experience" (Kawin, 1972:5). We see this in how the author explains the encounters with repetition in our day-to-day life and how it affects our responses to them; from why we might find a "once in a lifetime" event fascinating, to how routine can become monotonous and boring to us *because of* its constant repetition. From this, Kawin develops further the idea of repetition as an aesthetic device. However, to approach repetition both aesthetically and ontologically, it is necessary to look at its relationship to time and narrative. Kawin explains there are "two sorts of narrative time: one that builds and one that continues". The first of these emphasises occurrences in time and build on the memory of what repeats. Kawin claims that this repetition is meant to "keep the audience in a continually new present tense" (Kawin, 1972:6). Contrastingly, he describes the second by saying: "The aesthetics of this second narrative time depend on repetition and point out the tendency in repetition itself to lead us not simply into the present but into the timeless" (Kawin, 1972:7).

Kawin talks about two different types of repetition and their relationship to time. One that maintains audiences in a perpetual present and another which aspires to the obliteration of time. Even as he acknowledges that: “The aesthetics of repetition cannot really be separated from the aesthetics of change” (Kawin, 1972:7), the main focus of his text is on repetition as a “vehicle to timelessness” (Kawin, 1972:69). However, further in, he illustrates one of his ideas of timeless repetition through film sequels stating that: “some of the aesthetic problems of sequels [...] are relevant in helping us make the transition from considerations of building time to those of continuing time” (Kawin, 1972:71). Kawin concerns himself with works that live at the border between continuity and timelessness. Thinking of repetition as a narrative time in continuity is of crucial importance for this research. The very purpose of the sequel I mean to explore is to continue a narrative for which the aesthetics of repetition are inseparable.

Repetition plays a crucial role in achieving continuity. Firstly, through the repeated images on each frame. Even if the image is not repeated identically, most of its content must be in order to achieve the illusion of movement (a return of difference). Furthermore, the construction of the narrative and our understanding of it also requires repetition. In Jonathan Auerbach’s ‘Chasing Film Narrative: Repetition, Recursion, and the Body in Early Cinema’ (Auerbach, 2000) the author means to examine different modes of repetition in early cinema, specifically in chase films from the early 1900s (Auerbach, 2000:798). He discusses how in these early stages of film, one of the main concerns was about questions of continuity and spatio-temporal coherence within the diegesis. At first, filmmakers achieved this by keeping the same dynamic of a theatre play. Namely, keeping all the action in one scene without any cuts to prevent it from losing the unity and coherence of the narrative. Auerbach claims that this way to maintain spatial coherence came at the expense of representations of time, and it limited the possibilities of portraying interrelated and simultaneous events (Auerbach,

2000:799). However, at some point, there was a jump from this mode of cinematic narrative to the one we are familiar with today, one which “takes for granted temporal ellipsis/simultaneity and spatial separation” (Auerbach, 2000:800). In other words, there was a change to film narratives that trust the spectator to understand the spatial and temporal dynamics of the story in continuity, without the need to portray this unity in one single shot. Gilles Deleuze famously traced the aforementioned shift to the time-image in his *Cinema* books, beginning with the introduction of sound.

To illustrate this transition in his analysis, Auerbach turns to the early films which feature a cinematic chase, focusing on these films’ repetition patterns and claiming that: “the cinematic chase reveals much about how film could function to sustain narrative” (Auerbach, 2000:802). A continuously repeated action is what constructs the narrative of these films, i.e. the pursued and pursuers running in the screen from one side to the other. Auerbach points out how this constant repetition might seem redundant but is the very repetition which builds up the meaning of the narrative; “the information conveyed by the cinematic chase resides primarily in repeating motion itself” and “allows the viewer to establish relations between prior and present action” (Auerbach, 2000:803-804). At first glance, the constant repetition of action could seem to have been overly redundant, but as Auerbach explains, this was what sustained the continuity of the narrative, and there was just enough difference to move it forward<sup>8</sup>. He claims that: “too much change might risk the loss of continuity” (Auerbach, 2000:804). In this sense, the repetition carried out within these films is more a process of transition than of reiteration, which, I argue, is also the case in the construction of sequels that look to make a transition from the parent movie to the following one. In turn, this brings us to a different form

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<sup>8</sup> As Auerbach points out in one of his footnotes, there are several authors who tackle on the concept of repetition and whose work is relevant for the ongoing discussion. Some of these authors are Sigmund Freud in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (Freud, 1961), Nietzsche’s concept of eternal return, and Deleuze, who in turn looks at both Freud’s and Nietzsche’s work in his *Difference and Repetition* (2014:804) and to which I will turn to below.



of repetition Auerbach focuses on, namely, the repetition between films.

Although not looking at sequels, Auerbach explores chase films that emerged during the early 1900s which at first sight seem mere copies and remakes of one another. As he points out, “this [was] a striking succession of remakes” in an “effort to figure out and then duplicate what the public most wanted to see” (Auerbach, 2000:812). Critics of today’s sequels continuously resort to this same argument (Cox, 2019; Kirby, 2019; Montgomery, 2019) and Auerbach himself makes a note about how this is a constant practice of the Hollywood sequel today (Auerbach, 2000:812). Nonetheless, the author makes a point to examine how both the repetition and difference between the films he examines are significant in themselves. He uses the example of several chase films, ones where the police are chasing a criminal, and others in which a group of women chases a bachelor. The actions in these movies seem to be the same, a group of people chasing one person. However, in comparing the crime chase films to the marriage chase films, it is evident that the plots of these films are different and convey different emotions. Equally, the audience’s focus shifts in different ways; the emotional response to the bachelor trying to escape the group of women is not the same response to the criminal trying to escape the police. In one, we might be more wary of the ingenious ways the robber evades the law, while in the other, the compelling group of women is what steals the show. More so, even within films with the same plot, like those of the marriage pursuit, subtle differences change the meaning of what otherwise could have been virtually the same film<sup>9</sup>.

Auerbach argues for repetition as a process of transition and establishing continuity, not only within the narrative of one movie alone but also as a process in cinema’s history to

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<sup>9</sup> For example, at the end of the marriage chase film *Personal* (1904), several of the women fall over allowing the front runner to “win” the bachelor. Whereas in Edison’s remake *How a French Nobleman Got a Wife through the "New York Herald" Personal Column* (1904) a brave woman wades through the water leaving the timid ones behind (Auerbach, 2000: 815). While in the first the woman won her man because of a matter of arbitrary luck, the latter was due to the winner’s character.

move forward in its ways of storytelling. Equally, he maintains how the repetition between films and their nuanced differences brings a discussion of the relation of meaning between the parts and the whole. The following chapters will look to expand on this idea of Auerbach looking at series of sequelised films and how the repetition and the nuanced differences in them are what moves their narrative and history forwards in time. However, this is not the only way repetition works within films. Giorgio Agamben's analysis of Guy Debord's film *Howlings in Favour of De Sade* (Agamben in Noys, 2004) illustrates a different way in which to think about repetition. This film does not have a conventional narrative. Instead, for sixty-four minutes, the screen shows no other images but the change from solid black to solid white repeatedly. When the screen is white, we can hear a voice-over narrating different texts, but when the screen is black, the film is silent. Through this work, Agamben goes into an analysis of montage claiming that "there are two transcendental conditions of montage: repetition and stoppage" (Agamben, 2004:315). Agamben denies that repetition is merely the same that returns but believes that it "restores the possibility of what was" making it different from memory (Agamben, 2004:316). In other words, for Agamben, the difference between memory and repetition is that, unlike the former, the latter causes the image "to cease being an accomplished fact and to become possible again" (Agamben, 2004:316). Both the return of what was, and memory are also essential players in sequels, as well as Agamben's claim of how repetition restores possibilities for creating something new. A new instalment of what was.

Following this, Agamben mentions how repetition plays another role in montage, which is that, with stoppage, it brings cinema closer to poetry rather than prose (i.e. a narrative), a "prolonged hesitation between image and meaning" (Agamben, 2004:317). With Debord's film as exemplification, Agamben alludes that, in its very essence, cinema can be reduced to repetition and stoppage; through these means, it is "something that can be repeated and yet is

also unique" (Agamben, 2004:318). In a very similar fashion to this, Stephen Heath explores the direct relationship between time and repetition of a "structural/materialist film" (Heath, 1981). Heath acknowledges the different temporalities that operate in a film; between the shooting time, the reading time, the duration of the event that took place before the camera and the duration of the representation of that event in the film (Heath, 1981:165). In structural/materialist films narration (or prose) is not of primary concern. However, these times are still at play, along with "a specific strategy for the tension of duration set up by 'structural/materialist film' [which] is that of repetition, at its simplest in the use of loops" (Heath, 1981:168). This idea resonates with both what Agamben looks at in Debord's continuous "loop" of black and white screens, and the construction of the chase films that Auerbach examines with the running figures of the persecution.

Heath concludes that repetition collaborates in the "economy of maintenance", it is not subsumed by narrative and creates a process of intensification. A process of "pre-construction, construction (or reconstruction) and passage" which produces and re-produces meaning (Heath, 1981:173). In the pre-construction stage, meanings are ready-made, from codes of language to conventions of colour, and genres. The (re)construction is the repetition and appropriation of those meanings to create something new, and finally, the passage is the performance of the film. In other words, for Heath, the central practice of a film is that of creating meaning through processes of reconstruction which intensify these new meanings, one of these processes to re-construct meaning is that of the repetition. It is easy to see how this perspective of repetition also plays in the construction of sequels. In the pre-construction of the new instalment, the filmmakers have the ready-made meanings and codes from the first film. Secondly, the (re)construction of the sequel transforms these codes to something new for the audience to receive in a new "passage", i.e. the new meanings created by the new film.

In the above texts, the authors have looked at repetition in more general or abstract terms. However, in many others, it is when filmmakers and films use repetition that it becomes a tool through which to convey meaning. Several analyses of films and auteurs show this use of repetition. Examples of these are: Daniel J. Crumbo's 'Repetition, Compulsion, and Matrimony in *Groundhog Day*, *Matchstick Men*, and *What About Bob?*' (2019), Patricia Keller's 'Buñuel's Phantoms' (2018), Laura Mulvey's 'Love, History, and Max Ophuls. Repetition and Difference in Three Films of Doomed Romance' (2013), Carl Cassegard's 'Ghosts, Angels and Repetition in the Films of Wong Kar-Wai' (2005), Slavoj Žižek's 'Chance and Repetition in Kieslowski's Films' (2001), and Anne Lancashire's 'The Phantom Menace: Repetition, Variation, Integration' (2000). The analysis of each of these films and auteurs is not of interest to this research. However, they serve to provide insights on how repetition serves filmmakers and stories, and how it is inextricably entangled with the transition of time. For example, when analysing Buñuel, Patricia Keller explores cinematic time and its different manifestations such as delay, repetition, prolongation, and extension. She notes how Buñuel uses repetition as a monotonous transition into the truth of his characters. However, she points out how: "Repetition in Buñuel is never only repeating the same, but always the act of presenting the repeated thing as similar to what preceded it while notably, if even subtly, allowing its difference to announce itself over time" (Keller, 2018:363). This idea of repetition goes back to the formal properties of film; namely, the frames that are repeated with a subtle difference to achieve the illusion of movement. Furthermore, in this way Buñuel achieves what Keller identifies as "intricate meditations on time", and repetition becomes the "driving force of the film rather than a supplementary feature" (Keller, 2018:354,362). In a very similar fashion to Keller's analysis of Buñuel, Laura Mulvey explores Max Ophuls's take on love and death through his use of repetition. Mulvey shows how, through the recurrent themes in the director's works, Ophuls brings forward his politics on sexuality. It also allows him to continue

his exploration of the opposition between desire and death (Mulvey, 2013:12, 21). Mulvey asserts the importance of repetition in Ophuls work as a trope, a theme in its own right and even a 'late style' (Mulvey, 2013:12). Both authors, then, recognise the significance of repetition in the directors' works both in its own right and as a tool to convey meaning.

Furthermore, in films such as *Groundhog Day* (1993), repetition becomes the story in itself. In this film, Bill Murray's character, Phil Connor, is forced to repeat the same day, meet the same people, and do the same things repeatedly, on a journey towards enlightenment and to become a better person. In such a case, it is impossible to look at the narrative ignoring the importance of repetition, as Daniel J. Crumbo demonstrates in his analysis of the film. Other examples of this are Kieslowski's works, *The Double Life of Veronique* (1991) and *Three Colours* (1993-1994). These explore the same situations taking place in alternative realities. Slavoj Žižek illustrates how both characters and filmmakers use repetition as a second chance to make things better. Žižek draws from other works like *Run Lola Run* (1998) to exemplify repetition as a form of accumulation of mistakes that provide the base for future successful actions (Žižek, 2001:36). Through this analysis, he shows how repetition becomes a theme of redemption in itself.

While this is not the main subject of this research, the matter of repetition is also intimately related to another type of film multiplicity, namely, the remake. In the same way as the sequel, the remake derives from a previous "original" text. Authors such as Daniel Varndell in his *Hollywood Remakes, Deleuze and the grandfather paradox* (2014) and Leonardo Quaresima in 'Loving Texts Two at a Time: The Film Remake' (2002), have addressed this multiplicity and its relation to repetition. In these analyses, one can see how the exploration of the remake also raises several topics on repetition related to those of the sequel. Both

multiplicities face similar issues, such as text plurality or seriality, the ideas of novelty, uniqueness and authenticity, their intertextuality and interpretation, the notion of the old and the new, among others (Quaresima, 2002). However, the relation between sequels and remakes goes beyond the scope of this research. All the various examples which relate to repetition serve to illustrate the variety of ways in which it can function. Repetition can serve to create emphasis, to establish a routine and as a mode of transition, to maintain coherence, to establish motifs, or as a 'second chance' to make things better. It generates accumulation and serialisation of parts which are part of a whole. But most importantly, repetition is what allows to bring out the relations of difference between entities, and these relations of difference are what Gilles Deleuze explores as the main constitutional forces of being.

## Deleuze's Difference and Repetition

Gilles Deleuze's books *Cinema I* (Deleuze, 2018) and *Cinema II* (Deleuze, 2013) have become significant texts in the study of film. These trace his idea of the movement-image and the time-image in film and have become a touchstone in the theoretical discussion about time and the moving image. Most theorists believe Deleuze's reading of Bergson is the foundation for his *Cinema* books (Patton, 1996; Rodowick, 1997, 2009; Herzog, 2000; Bogue, 2003). However, James Williams brings attention to the importance of Deleuze's work on *Difference and Repetition* (2014) as part of the groundwork for his cinema books. In his critical introduction to this text, Williams states: "*Difference and Repetition* is not only significant for the development of the history of philosophy. It is also the keystone for Deleuze's work as a whole" and "It is also important for a full understanding of the two important books on cinema" (Williams, 2003:2-3). This perspective provides us with a new way to think about Deleuze's *Cinema*. Such comes up especially in Williams's analysis of Deleuze's *Syntheses of Time*, when he writes about the Second Synthesis saying "Deleuze uses this work on the

passive synthesis of time to great effect in his *Cinema-1* and *Cinema-2* books since cinema is able to enact the work of the syntheses in ways that make them more vivid". (Williams, 2003:97). However, the reasons for turning to Deleuze's work on *Difference and Repetition* are not limited to its role as the foundation for his *Cinema* books. It is also because, as developed above, repetition is a concept that has been crucial in itself for thinking about film, playing a vital role in thinking about multiplicities in time. Furthermore, this research would like to show how films, and in particular, sequels, are able to reveal the effects, affects and processes of time through the difference in their repetition, as conceptualised by Deleuze's syntheses, "in ways that makes them more vivid".

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze's project is to develop the possibilities for a new method of thought which focuses on the differential relations between objects rather than the objects themselves. This way of thinking is based on the ideas of difference and repetition, which are the main conducting threads of his book. As he explains:

Two lines of research lie at the origin of this book: one concerns a concept of difference without negation, precisely because unless it is subordinated to the identical, difference would not extend or "would not have to extend" as far as opposition and contradiction; the other concerns the concept of repetition in which physical, mechanical or bare repetitions (repetition of the Same) would find their *raison d'être* in the more profound structures of a hidden repetition in which a "differential" is disguised and displaced. (Deleuze, 2014:xvi)

Deleuze develops a new way to think about the world, by the understanding of difference in itself and repetition for itself. His work scrutinises these concepts in order to understand their bearing in the conceptualisation of the world, since, as he puts it, "the meeting between these two concepts can no longer be assumed" (Deleuze, 2014:32). While the complexity of these concepts and his in-depth scrutiny of the "meeting between them" extend beyond the scope of this research, the one thing to bear in mind about Deleuze's philosophy is that neither difference nor repetition can exist without the other, and it is their interconnection which defines them.

This worldview will permeate throughout this research and the analyses of my cases of study. However, for now, I would like to focus on specific aspects of Deleuze's work that will be significant frameworks for this research on temporality.

One meaningful aspect to begin thinking about Deleuze's philosophy is that he denies the possibility of such a thing as an "identity". He claims that we are all made of a series of actualised virtualities, and it is through repetition and difference that we acquire what we think of as an identity. This, in turn, is a variation of intensities and processes of becomings. In other words, beings should not be thought of as fixed; neither should we think of differences as "X is different from Y", which would establish X and Y as fixed identities. Instead, we should look at the difference between them to define them in their relation to each other: "the difference between X and Y is... ". Williams describes such difference "as a reserve of shifting relations of pliable moods and passions we embody at different degrees of intensity" (Williams, 2012: 38). Williams also brings attention to what he labels as "another difficult claim", which is that "series of repetitions occur in pairs, where difference is released across series" and that:

Paired differences explain the relation between two series as processes of transformation. It also explains why difference appears in a series at all. This is because no series of repetitions is unique. It is in a dynamic relation to all other actual and virtual series " (Williams, 2012:38)

With this insight, Williams provides a foundation for the importance of sequels as exemplifications of relational difference and the value of looking at them through the lens of Deleuze's work since, by definition, sequels are required to come (at least) in pairs.

Deleuze's philosophy of difference was ground breaking for modern thought as it changes the focus from thinking about "the thing in itself" to thinking about the *difference* between one thing and another as what defines them. For this difference to be accessible and 'define' things, it is necessary for 'things' to be thought about in relation to each other. Meaning,



there always has to be more than one thing to be defined in order to bring about each other's "definition". This dissertation will use this method to bring about what defines sequels in relation to each other and distil the meanings that this produces. Further chapters will develop how the pairing of sequels with their parent movies will enable these aspects of difference and repetition to emerge. For now, I would like to move on to another relevant aspect of Deleuze's philosophy.

Alongside developing his ideas on difference and repetition in themselves, Deleuze also proposes a new way of understanding time through them. Namely, his three syntheses of time. The three syntheses provide a different way to think about past, present and future, along with the organisation of time as a whole. In a nutshell, these are three levels of our comprehension of time. The first synthesis of time, also referred to as the synthesis of habit, occurs in the continuous living present. This synthesis can be understood in relation to Hume's example of expectancy and repetition, where, after a series of repetition of a couple of events AB, we learn to expect for B to follow A (Deleuze, 2014:93). In other words, our understanding of the present and the future learns to keep repeating what has been repeated in the past. This way, our comprehension of events *synthesises* past experiences *into* what we expect in the future. This way, Deleuze explains that concepts form through repeated encounters with a series of repeated individuations of what forms the concept. Ideas of each of these events, beings, concepts, or objects, are synthesised to understand them as a unity. It is in time that we encounter or experience these things repeatedly, and we can establish what they are and what they mean to us. "Because the mind has a memory or acquires habits, it is capable of forming concepts in general and of drawing something new, of subtracting something new from the repetition that it contemplates" (Deleuze, 2014:17). This can be explained as "the property of passively acquiring an unconscious relation to the future", or "the condition for the lived present is the

passive synthesis of time where the past is synthesised in the present as a behaviour towards the future” (Williams, 2003:87). In other words, from our passive acquisition of knowledge in the past, we can project our expectations to the future. Equally, this way of thinking brought to us by past repetition becomes a condition of the living present. It is also through this passive act of synthesising that independent things become a unit and that we learn to make sense of what happens around us expecting to maintain certain degree of consistency. For example, all of our past repeated experiences of "a chair" synthesise to become the unit of what we define as “chair”. However, it is important to note how these repetitions of objects denominated “chairs” come from encounters with *different* “chairs”: wood chairs, plastic chairs, metal chairs, tall, short, square, circular, blue, black, tartan, shaped like a hand, and other infinite possibilities of what a 'chair' can be. Still, this repetition and difference synthesises our experiences of “chairs” into a conceptual unit for our expectations of a future encounter with a chair.

The second synthesis of time also takes place on the living present in relation to the past, or as Thompson and Cook put it, within “multiple presents” (2014:707). This synthesis operates under the same principle of the first one but in higher complexity. While the first synthesis describes the unification of one series of repetitions into one concept or unity, the second synthesis collapses every single one of these individual unifications of the past into the living present. In other words, the past remains collapsed at the moment we are currently living as we go on living it. “All of past coexists in the new present” (Williams, 2003:95) in a plane of immanence. Williams explains how this synthesis is against the prevailing experiences of memory and remembrance, and the intuition that: “if there is no remembering there is no memory” (Williams, 2003: 94). Even if we do not actively remember all of our past individual synthesis, they are part of our passive (or virtual) synthesis of time. Even if we do not remember

every chair we have ever sat on, we are able to identify a chair. This synthesis, then, works with the idea of having a “pure past” that includes all of the events there have ever been, including those which we may not remember and are “independent from human activity and the limitation of physical records” (Williams, 2003) like a recording, a writing, or a photograph. As time passes, the current present we are living dissolves into this synthesis of “pure past”, “all past events are what the present passes into” (Williams, 2003:95). This plane of immanence remains virtually informing the present, accessible when actualised and becomes active when remembered in the present. The passive and active synthesis of time happens when the past is (re)presented in the present through signs of the past.

Finally, the third synthesis of time encompasses a holistic vision of time, past, present, and future condensed onto each other. This contraction includes the first and second synthesis that now move into a new level of complexity. It encompasses several ideas from different philosophers like Nietzsche, Kant and Freud and their work with repetition and time. This synthesis means to illustrate how time is divided between past and future by the present but, in this dynamic, there is an “eternal return of the different” that keeps everything connected (Deleuze, 2014:72). In this level, the synthesising of time does not only operate with the present but provides a way to understand all of time incorporating the function of the previous syntheses as they become a “collapsed” unity along with open possibilities for the future (Deleuze, 2014:117). This synthesis means to prompt the new. The present cuts the flow of time between the repetition of what has already been and the expectancy of an undetermined future. With this cut, the present synthesises and assembles all of time in that one moment. In other words: “An event breaks time in two unequal parts: the past before the event and the future ahead of it. Yet we decode the past and the future through this event, which is therefore adequate to the whole of time. The split in time is therefore also its assembly” (Williams,

2012:35). It is in the conceptualisation of this synthesis that Deleuze draws from the Nietzschean philosophy of the 'eternal return' making the case that it is difference what returns. That in reality, it is 'the eternal return of difference'. Throughout his arguments, Deleuze states that eternal return is "at once both production of repetition on the basis of difference and selection of difference in the basis of repetition" (Deleuze, 2014:53). With this, Deleuze develops a philosophy that explains how the inevitability of repetition is what creates the conditions for the new and for processes of becoming. "The subject of the eternal return is not the same but the different, not the similar but the dissimilar, not the one but the many, not necessity but chance" (Deleuze, 2014:160). In this way, the third synthesis shows how time is not only a linear flow, nor entirely circular. Instead, it is a combination of both. There is linearity of the present moving into the past and expecting the future. But also, the circularity of an eternal return of difference from the repetitions of the past.

There is more to say about Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, and the nuances of his synthesis of time are many and complex. The following chapters will return to it in more detail since the aim of this research is to explore how time operates in sequels and how Deleuze's three syntheses are closely linked to time in this type of multiplicity. Deleuze's theory will underpin a great deal of the discussion in the following chapters. However, this discussion will also draw from different contemporary social theories of time according to the themes of each chapter's case study. For now, however, this literature review means to illustrate the previous ways in which the intricate connection between time, seriality, difference, repetition, and film have been explored and set the foundation for this research to move forward.

# Chapter 1

## **The ageing body tells a story: *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel***

*The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* (1959-1979) is a collection of films by François Truffaut which intermittently follow the life of their eponymous protagonist for twenty years. By doing this, the story of Antoine Doinel is told throughout five films while both the character and the actor who portrays him (Jean-Pierre Léaud) age, grow and change from film to film. In this process, real time and its effects become an essential part of the narrative. Each film tells a self-contained micro-fabula of a different stage in Antoine's life, but their macro-fabula forms a continuum of growth and a testament to the passage of time. With the ageing of the character/actor, the passing of time is captured by the camera, serving not just as a story-telling device but as a significant subject of the films itself.

The series about Antoine Doinel is one of the first and most prominent collections of fictional narratives that track the life of their character through *real time*. As such, they become a template with which to look at time-critical serialisation in fiction films. In this chapter, I explore how real time becomes part of the narrative through Jean-Pierre Léaud's natural ageing. I will focus on how time is reflected in the twofoldness of actor and character through their corporeality and embodiment, and how time itself becomes a part of the storytelling. Through my analysis of these films I will introduce key themes and concepts that are interwoven throughout the subsequent chapters where I will continue to analyse other time-focused sequels. These are films that employ the passage of time, the performers' ageing, and the films' intertextuality as key elements of their storytelling. My analysis of the series' formal construction will suggest how the films condense their temporalities onto each other to create

a temporal continuum in which the intermittent gaps do not separate each text but work to link them together. This connection, I argue, is sustained by how the films that complete the storyline reach beyond the confines of their text to draw connective and intertextual lines between each other across the temporal gaps intercepting them. In making this argument, I draw upon Gilles Deleuze's work on *Difference and Repetition* (2014), works of character studies from Ted Nannicelli (Nannicelli, 2019), and different social theories on ageing such as Gilleard and Higgs's *Ageing, Corporeality and Embodiment* (Gilleard and Higgs, 2013).

After Deleuze and his widespread take-up in film-philosophy, most discussions around film and time are framed by the concepts developed in his books *Cinema I* (2018) and *Cinema II* (2013). However, Deleuze's philosophy of time goes beyond these two texts. Time as conceptualised in his larger philosophical project can meaningfully illustrate questions of temporality in film, particularly where the sequel is concerned. Theorists like Anna Powell and David Martin-Jones discuss how the time-image "provides a more metaphysical experience of duration" (Powell, 2007:146) and either "blocks the flow of the present by the past" or "facilitates the present into future" (Martin-Jones and Brown, 2012:63) two phenomena I will look into. However, I will explore how Deleuze's theory of *Difference and Repetition* provides a different way to look at films, particularly sequenced films, facilitating a diachronic view of time by merging past, present and future. I will also explore how this framework illuminates differently the process of change and becoming in a long-term narrative like *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* (1959-1979). Through this discussion, I will explore how Deleuze's theory enables a thematic exploration of time in the development of sequels. I will show how Deleuze's concept of becoming is realised in these films by adhering to his three syntheses of time, which are the processes that propel this becoming (Deleuze, 2014).

To think about both the character's and the performer's ageing, I will follow Gilleard and Higgs's definitions of corporeality and embodiment. In *Ageing, Corporeality and Embodiment* (2013), the authors explore the "importance given by society to the 'embodiment' of identities" (Gilleard and Higgs, 2013:ix) showing how "new forms of 'embodiment' emerged whose social distinctions were presaged upon aspects of the corporeal" (Gilleard and Higgs, 2013:viii). On the one hand, the authors use the term 'corporeality' to refer to "the relatively unmediated materiality of the body" describing the material actions and reactions of the body "realised socially but without recourse to concepts of agency or intent" (Gilleard and Higgs, 2013:ix). In other words, corporeality refers to those material actions and aspects of the body that happen without the control or intention of the person. For example, one's height, the shape of one's nose and face, or the appearance of body and face, hair, wrinkles, and skin colour, or even its reactions like the body's degree of flexibility or growing hair. Gilleard and Higgs look at this agency-less materiality of the body concerning its ageing. For them, the 'corporeality of ageing' refers to "those relatively unmediated bodily changes which occur within individual lifetimes" (Gilleard and Higgs, 2013:ix).

These bodily changes can be linked to Deleuze's ideas in *Difference and Repetition* as the process of ageing shows natural signs that serve as signs of time. The authors go on to discuss how the corporeality of ageing "provides critical context for age's embodiment" (Gilleard and Higgs, 2013:ix). 'Embodiment', on the other hand, is the term they use to refer to "the body as a vehicle or medium of social agency" encompassing all those actions performed by, on and through the body that are oriented toward society. These social interactions of the body are "made salient by the reciprocal actions and expectations of the self and others", and the body is made "socially meaningful" (Gilleard and Higgs, 2013: ix). According to Gilleard and Higgs, ageing's corporeality provides critical context for the

embodiment of age, namely, the practices and narratives that either explicitly or implicitly operate in the social through the "expression or denial of ageing and agedness" (Gilleard and Higgs, 2013:ix). This 'socially meaningful embodiment' also resonates with Deleuze's understanding of the face since, according to him:

“Ordinarily, three roles of the face are recognisable: it is individuating (it distinguishes or characterises each person); it is socialising (it manifests a social role); it is relational or communicating (it ensures not only communication between two people but also a single person, the internal agreement between his character and his role)” (Deleuze, 2018:110).

The first two characteristics Deleuze mentions here are what relates to Gilleard and Higgs definitions of corporeality and embodiment. Corporeality refers to the unmediated characteristics of the face and body that *individuates* each person. Conversely, the embodiment is the socialising part of the body which manifests a social role of the person, which for Deleuze is also divided in a third characteristic that communicates between the person and others, but also the internal agreement of the person with this role.

My analysis of *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* will be first and foremost informed by the films' being a series of sequels. As I have developed in the literature review, there is much confusion surrounding the sequel's definition and a lack of clarity of what are its fundamental characteristics. For this analysis, the main distinction to make is between the parent film and its sequel or sequels. The parent film is the first film of the series to be created and originates a story. The sequels to this parent film continue the story told in the first one but in a different instance. For time-critical sequels, the moment in time they capture when created is crucial to the story. This moment in time is mostly reflected in the actors' body and corporeality captured in the recording. The progression of the moment in time that each film of the series captures will play a part in the films' narrative and intertextuality.

In this chapter, I will begin by defining the parent film and the sequels as a starting



point from which to explain the temporal phenomena that take place in the intertextual dynamic between one film and the other. I will proceed to focus on the nuances of the role that the character's ageing plays in this series informed by Deleuze's concept of the eternal return of difference, followed by how this concept also informs the understanding of the sequelised series as an intermittent continuum. Finally, I will explain how the different concepts addressed in the previous sections of the chapter work together to create the temporal realism of the time-critical sequels. With this analysis I will lay out my first case study of this thesis which will begin to introduce the case of the time-critical sequel as one of cinema's tools to represent and explore the effects and passage of time. It will also introduce and define some of the key concepts that will aid in the upcoming analyses of my next case studies, such as the parent film and the time-critical sequel.

## The Parent Film

*The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* is a collection of films by director François Truffaut; they include: *The 400 Blows* (1959), *Antoine and Colette* (1962), *Stolen Kisses* (1968), *Bed And Board* (1970) and *Love On The Run* (1979). These five films portray the trials and tribulations of the same and ever-changing Antoine Doinel (Jean-Pierre Léaud) as he navigates his life in France from his early teens – battling school and family – to adulthood, going through romantic affairs, marriage, parenthood, and divorce. The parent film of the series is *The 400 Blows* (1959). As such, it is the beginning of the series, and it provides the foundation to the story. As a parent film, it has distinctive characteristics that make it significant. The fact that it is a 'beginning' makes it different from following sequels. The first film of a series is where the characters and the world that comprise the story are introduced. *The 400 Blows* introduces a thirteen-year-old Antoine Doinel, played by the actor Jean-Pierre Léaud (who was fifteen years old) during his time as an elementary school student. The representation of the character of

Antoine is constructed through the corporeality of performer Jean-Pierre Léaud whose job becomes to embody Antoine's identity. In this context, the "embodied identity" refers to identity and lifestyle based around the physical distinctions of how a particular body acts, looks or both (Gilleard and Higgs, 2013:ix). Jean-Pierre Léaud's embodied identity, however, is required to change in order to become Antoine Doinel's, but the two share the same corporeality. The uncontrolled parts of Jean-Pierre Léaud's body (like his bone structure, height, skin colour, skin marks, and others) are also Antoine Doinel's corporeality. This shared corporeality, and its natural changes play a part in how Léaud embodies Antoine in the sequels and how his body becomes a window on the moment in time captured by each film.

In 'Seeing and Hearing Screen Characters', Ted Nannicelli addresses the tensions of the twofoldness of performers and characters<sup>10</sup>. The author uses the term 'twofoldness' drawing from Nanay's and Wollheim's definition as "the simultaneous visual awareness of two different entities (the surface and the represented object)" (Nannicelli, 2019:22). Nannicelli writes about how this twofoldness works in the representational and presentational properties of an actor's performance (Nannicelli, 2019:20). He discusses how, in this dual tension, there is on the one hand, the 'representational' property, which refers to the portrayal of the *character* appearing on screen. And on the other hand, the 'presentational' property refers to the extra-fictional star persona of the performer, which is not part of the fiction but nonetheless informs the viewing experience (Nannicelli, 2019:22). From this, we understand that, in the presence of an actor representing a character, there is both the representation of an object on a screen (the construction and embodiment of a character) and the surface on which it is being represented (the body of the performer). From this dissection, what is most relevant to this discussion is

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<sup>10</sup> There are different issues surrounding this dichotomy of actor and character such as how the knowledge of the actor's persona affects the viewer's appreciation of the character or the nuances of the twofoldness that Nannicelli addresses. However, these matters fall beyond the scope of this thesis. For now, I must bring the attention to the surface of this representation, namely, the body and corporeality of the actor.

the part about the presentational property of the performer identified as separated from the representational but being the surface *on which* it is represented.

Leaving promotional material and other extra-textual objects aside, in most cases, a spectator's first acquaintance with a character will be through sensorial perception; one sees or hears the characters as the actor portrays them, namely, the surface of the twofoldness. The perception of the actor's body becomes the first way that the viewer understands and makes sense of the character. In the case of *The 400 Blows*, the viewer is encountering for the first time the character of 'Antoine Doinel'. It is a new form of life within a new narrative; as such, this encounter becomes a learning and deciphering process to understand this new entity. An important part of this is the actor's corporeality, through which the viewer receives the visual cues for how to understand the character, and the body's age is an inseparable part of it. The age of a body, particularly of a film's character, provides valuable information for how to understand the character and their relation to their surroundings, especially a character to whom one has just been introduced. As Gilleard and Higgs point out, the body becomes a source of social identity (Gilleard and Higgs, 2013:4). Because of these predetermined social identities, the encounter and deciphering process of a new character does not occur in a vacuum. It is aided by already formed concepts that are repeated and can be related to this new object of encounter. Therefore, when the viewer gets a first glimpse of Antoine, she sees a teenage boy in a classroom surrounded by his peers. At this point, the viewer knows nothing about this character, but what is visible. Therefore, she draws from familiar concepts such as "boy," "teenager", "school", "class" or even "movie character" as pieces of the puzzle and begin making sense of this new object of encounter. In particular, the corporeality of his body is what informs the viewer Antoine is "a boy" and "a student" instead of "an adult" or the teacher", which also informs her about the social role he plays in that environment (see figure 1).



Figure 1 First appearance of Antoine Doinel in *The 400 Blows* (dir. François Truffaut prod. Les Films du Carrosse, Sédif Productions, France, 1959)

In his work on *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze explains this process of encountering and deciphering a new object when he introduces his three syntheses of time. The first of these syntheses explains the creation of habit derived from the introduction to a new object or concept. He names this the "passive synthesis of habit" (Deleuze, 2014:94). As mentioned before, the mind acquires habits through repetition and, in consequence, forms concepts through the encounter with these repetitions. For Deleuze, empiricism is the creation of concepts when the concept is the "object of an encounter, as a here-and-now" (Deleuze, 2014:xvii), but the empiric experience does not stop there, it remains and continues to inform the present making it *transcendental* empiricism (Baugh, 1992; Bell, 2005; Allen, 2021). Watching a parent film, the encounter with a new character becomes the experience of encountering this new object in the here and now. While the encounter requires a repetition of familiar concepts to understand it, it also includes the difference of the new. Deleuze describes this by saying:

Difference, therefore, appears to abandon its first figure of generality and to be distributed in the repeating particular, but in such a way as to give rise to new living generalities. [...] Repetition finds itself enclosed in the "case", reduced to the pair while a new infinity opens up in the form of the repetition of the cases themselves. (Deleuze, 2014:96)

In other words, the viewer draws from the generality of the familiar, such as the concept of "boy" or "student", and others that are recognisable in the new object, to make sense of it. However, this generality becomes particular in the new object of encounter, in this case, the particular boy Antoine Doinel, and new possibilities open for this particular, which in turn will become the character's generality.

At the beginning of the parent film, the character is just at the first point of encounter, when the possibilities are open, but not yet realised. What will be repeated from now on is the encounter with this particular object, encompassing the similarities and differences of that which Deleuze refers to as 'general'. The repetitions of the particular 'Antoine' will give rise to new generalities of who Antoine is, and it opens up the possibilities of an infinity of new cases or encounters with this particular, creating Antoine's story. As the film moves forward, it will actualise some of these possibilities, and they will become part of who Antoine is. This process is informed through the narrative of his actions and interactions with the environment that surrounds him, his embodiment. What follows the introduction of this new character are the ongoing encounters with him that continue to build on and synthesise with each other. With this, the character's repetitions (in this case, Antoine) keep actualising and contracting themselves from the past into the present and informing the future.

This synthesis contracts the successive independent instants into one another, thereby constituting the lived or living, present. It is in this present that time is deployed. To it belong both the past and the future: the past in so far as the preceding instants are retained in the contraction; the future because its expectation is anticipated in this same contraction. (Deleuze, 2014:94)

In other words, for Deleuze, what we encounter in the living present is constituted by a series of syntheses or contractions that originate from past repetitions of instants. Because of these repetitions, the present is permeated with past and future, the past retained in the present contraction, and future in its expectations and possibilities, bringing out the significance of the event (Badiou, 2007). Each present retains the contractions of its past and anticipates the future.

In *The 400 Blows*, the viewer builds her knowledge and understanding of Antoine from this synthesis of the character's repetitions as he navigates the trials and tribulations of adolescent life. Even if at the beginning of the film, Antoine's introduction comes from a general understanding of the concept of "adolescent boy", as the story unfolds, the film shows the particulars of his life. In other words, the viewer gets more familiarised with who Antoine is as an individual rather than just any other adolescent boy. The film shows how he is singled out from among his group of peers and grounded over the recess, marginalising him from the rest in the first scene, and how he struggles with family life and societal rules. These events contribute to the viewer's understanding of this particular 'Antoine' and will inform the future encounters with him. The repetitions that the viewer keeps encountering are of Antoine's corporeality, namely, the surface of the representation; but the differences in the repetitions of this encounter are the actions and embodiments of the character that keep adding to the viewer's understanding of who Antoine is as an individual and that will subsequently inform his future. This twofoldness of the actor/character dichotomy also creates complex temporal relations that relate to the different levels of representation that each signify.

In his theory about film realism, Robert Hopkins proposes that screen fictions have distinct levels of representation (Hopkins, 2016:77). Firstly the photographic representations (*mise-en-scène*) which he calls the 'Events Filmed'. This refers to the things or events that the camera captures without considering the meaning the story gives them. For example, thinking of the set of the film *as a set* and not as a school, or thinking of the people acting the scene as Jean-Pierre Léaud and Guy Decomble playing a role and not as Antoine being punished by his French teacher. Secondly, the representations of a fiction are the level of the 'Story Told'. This is when all those events captured by the camera acquire the meaning that the fiction intends them to through suspension of disbelief. Therefore we understand that, in the story, Antoine

Doinel is being punished by his teacher and keeping him from recess with his peers. The distinct levels of representation also create and are governed by distinct levels of temporality. Each of the realism levels create their own timelines. The timeline of the events filmed is about the extra-fictional creation of the story. It is formed when creating the events to be captured by the camera and then shown on screen. Conversely, the time in the story told is always created, moulded, and manipulated by the filmmakers to serve the narrative which can extend beyond the limits of the screening; the chronological timeline of the story told often includes virtual events that may not appear on the screen.

In *Poetics of Cinema* (2008), David Bordwell analyses the taxonomy of the story told by defining three dimensions of film narrative. Among them, he makes the distinction between *story world* and *plot structure*. For Bordwell, the *story* or *fabula* refers to “spatio-temporal realm in which the action unfolds in chronological order” (Bordwell, 2008:27) and the plot consists of “the arrangement of the parts of the narrative as we have it” (Bordwell, 2008:6). In other words, the plot is how the events of the story are arranged to be told on the screen that do not necessarily adhere to a cause-effect or chronological order. Meanwhile, the story may contain events that are not shown in the plot but still affect its development and characters. In *The 400 Blows* the narrative follows a linear chronological structure from the moment Antoine is introduced as a student with just a few ellipses that condense the action. But there are several events consequential to the story that are not part of the plot: most importantly to my argument, all of Antoine’s past before his introduction at school. In a parent film, the past is virtual<sup>11</sup>. In other words, it is not actualised on the screen, but it is usually inferable. Even as Antoine is introduced as a teenager in school living with his mother and stepfather. It is implicit that this

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<sup>11</sup> A prequel can become an actualisation of this virtual past. However, the discussion of a prequel and its implications for the time-critical sequel fall beyond this thesis's scope.

is not where his life began, there are events of the past that can be inferred either by the situation itself or cues from the dialogue. For example, Antoine's mother's marriage to his stepfather, his birth, and years as a baby, then as a toddler, all up to the moment of his adolescence. For Deleuze, the past ontologically exists in a virtual plane of immanence from which it is available to be recollected and "become useful in negotiations with the present" (Barker, 2012:64). In this way, Antoine's diegetic past, even if never actualised, still exists in a plane of immanence and is retrievable to negotiate the meanings of the present. When the parent film finishes, it in turn becomes the past of its sequel and part of the negotiations of the sequel's present.

## The Time-Critical Sequel

A sequel will be different from a parent film due to its actualised past. The sequel is both an old and a new story at the same time. This duality can be conceptualised through devices of the second synthesis of time and a more general idea of Deleuze's philosophy of difference and repetition. A sequel will not introduce an entirely new world, a completely new story, or completely new characters. When a sequel begins, it is a story that already has a virtual past that was once actualised in the parent film and that will inform the sequel. Time-critical sequels actively create a story that acknowledges and is connected to this past in a way that aligns the time that has passed and its effects in the real world with the story. Going back to the twofoldness of the actor and character, each of these parts relate to a distinct level of representation and therefore, a distinct temporality. The actor's persona is part of the events filmed, while the character is part of the story told. Actor and character experience and are affected by time in different ways. However, time-critical sequels align both experiences of ageing to serve the narrative. While watching the sequel, the reproduction of the events filmed in the moving images becomes the empirical present with its corresponding part of the story told. The parent film then becomes the past that is informing that experience. This is the case



of the following film in *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel*, released three years later, *Antoine and Colette* (1962). The film opens with a quick cameo of Paris's streets, stopping in one of the buildings and then cutting to the interior of one of the apartments where an alarm clock wakes a now seventeen-year-old Antoine.

Contrary to the parent film, the sequel is informed by a pre-existing concept of the object of encounter 'Antoine' from which to draw. This concept already formed by the previous film, includes the synthesis of all the repetitions of the previous encounters with Antoine. However, this new encounter also includes a specific difference. In the three years that have passed between the filming of *The 400 Blows* and the filming of *Antoine and Colette*, the real-life Jean-Pierre Léaud has aged and grown. His corporeality, namely, the surface over which Antoine will be embodied, has changed. Because of this, the new encounter with Antoine is one of repetition – it is the same actor and character from the parent film – but also of difference: the character/actor has changed. The most evident change, but by no means the only one, is Antoine's physical appearance, which also reflects how much he has changed internally. Although the internal changes are revealed gradually as the film moves forward, the physical changes are instantly recognisable. Antoine is no longer a thirteen-year-old schoolboy, but a seventeen-year-old that lives by himself and is self-sufficient. The film specifically addresses this change to inform the viewer about the difference in the present. At the beginning of the film, a voice-over introduces the story explaining:

Antoine Doinel is 17 years old. He belongs to that group of adolescents who never had a real childhood. He escaped from a juvenile rehabilitation work camp but was then entrusted to a newer and more secure centre. A psychiatrist was able to get him probation. Antoine lives a solitary and independent life. He has a passion for music and works in a recording industry plant. He has achieved his dream and depends only on himself. (see figure 2)



*Figure 2 Antoine Doinel's morning routine at the beginning of Antoine and Colette (dir. François Truffaut prod. Ulysse Productions, Unitec Films, France, 1962)*

It is only through the plane of immanence created by the serialisation of these films and the gaps between them that this difference becomes, not just visible, but one of their key features. Difference is put at the centre of our attention in a way that it usually is not. For Deleuze, difference is determinative, and its determinability “must be conceived as pointing towards a principle of reciprocal determination” (Deleuze, 2014:230). This reciprocal determination is how difference itself between two (or more) things determines them. This is what Deleuze calls “the reciprocal synthesis of differential relations” (Deleuze, 2014:230). He continues to write:

A triple genesis follows from this: that of qualities, produced in the form of difference between real objects of knowledge; that of space and *time* in the form of *conditions for the knowledge of differences*; that of concepts in the form of conditions for the difference or the distinction between knowledge themselves. (Deleuze, 2014:230, my emphasis)

The first of these geneses is that which determines the qualities of the objects of knowledge; this relates to what I have developed above about how the differences in the repetitions determine the particular. Namely, how the various encounters with Antoine after meeting him for the first time determine him as a unique individual. It is the second and third of these geneses I want to highlight. The second is the genesis of “space and time in the form of conditions for the knowledge of differences” (Deleuze, 2014). In other words, what Deleuze argues, is that the reciprocal determination made by difference, produces time as a condition that allows us to understand the difference that is presented to us. So, for example, when one perceives the difference between Antoine in *The 400 Blows* and Antoine in *Antoine and Colette*, one can analyse the repetition and the difference. The repetition is that he is the same entity that one has encountered, but there is difference; what emerges from this difference is time *as* the condition through which difference can be understood. The third element of the differential relation is “that of pure potentiality.” Deleuze explains how “Power is the form or reciprocal determination according to which variable magnitudes are taken to be functions of

one another” (Deleuze, 2014: 231). In other words, “The differential is indeed pure power, just as the differential relation is a pure element of potentiality” (Deleuze, 2014:232). This difference produces the potential for infinite possibilities, some of which will be actualised as the narrative moves forward in the film’s narrative or in any possible upcoming sequel, as this series will do in the following instances.

In the introduction to *Antoine and Colette*, the narrator refers back to Antoine’s childhood in *The 400 Blows* through the line: “He belongs to that group of adolescents who never had a real childhood. He escaped from a juvenile rehabilitation work camp.” This is informed by the past from the previous film which is imminently present (e.g. his lonely chores at home, his confrontations with his mother and stepfather, being put in jail after stealing a typewriter and finally going into and escaping the rehabilitation camp). The voice-over then reveals what happened between the parent film's last scene and the sequel connecting the dots between them; from the thirteen-year-old Antoine we see in the former to the seventeen-year-old opening the latter. From this moment on, the sequel will be permeated by the past of its parent film with which it will maintain a temporal intertextuality either passively or actively. This idea of passive or active intertextuality comes from Deleuze's second synthesis of time, which he divides as either a passive synthesis of memory or an active synthesis of memory. For this process, Deleuze develops the concepts of pure past, former present and present. The pure past refers to all the past in general, which, as already mentioned exists in a virtual plane of immanence. It is also important to note that the former present and the present are not two successive instants in time, but they reflect and represent each other. The former present happens when the synthesis of memory is active. The active synthesis of memory occurs when focusing upon a specific part of the pure past (Deleuze, 2014:105). Via this reflection of the past in the present, the former present becomes a present present, either in the form of a memory

or a material sign. According to Deleuze, this reproduction of past in the present is "determined by variable relations of resemblance and contiguity known as forms of association" (Deleuze, 2014: 105). In other words, in these forms of association, where the present represents the former present, the two resemble each other.

In Deleuze's second synthesis of time, the resemblance between the former present and present present can happen through two different forms of representation using two types of signs. The first type is natural signs for the passive synthesis of memory. These signs (re)present the past in the present but are not created purposefully to do so like a recording, a photograph, or even a memory. Deleuze explains them with the example of a scar, which is "the sign not of a past wound but 'the present fact of having been wounded'" (Deleuze, 2014:102). With this example, what he wants to point out is the difference and the link between the past event of the wound and the present event of the scar. The wound and the scar resemble each other; they are in the same place, they have a similar shape, but they are not the same thing and they do not exist in the same moment in time. However, they are linked by the immanence of the past wound in the present scar where the past is implied. Other examples of natural signs (keeping in line with the theme of the body) are those such as wrinkles, which are the present fact of past smiles, frowns or other expressions, a tan, as a present fact of having been in the sun, or a present muscle of past sessions at the gym.

The second type is the artificial signs, which generate the active synthesis of memory, namely, "the passage from spontaneous imagination to the active faculties of reflective representation, memory and intelligence" (Deleuze, 2014:102). These signs, both natural and artificial, are ways that the present may resemble the former present. In *Antoine and Colette*, we can see both types of signs shortly after the film begins, when Antoine meets René (Patrick

Auffay) in a diner. The two friends are chatting, and reminiscing about their childhood. They remember when Antoine slept over at René's home, and the two were drinking, smoking, and playing checkers when René's father nearly caught them in the act. While the two are talking about this, the shot shrinks framing Antoine as he drinks from a bottle of soda and then cuts to an image from *The 400 Blows* showing a younger Antoine also drinking but from a bottle of wine. The iris of the framing opens, and the scene of the two young friends plays just as it was narrated (see figure 3).



Figure 3 Flashbacks of Antoine and René in *Antoine and Colette* (dir. François Truffaut prod. Ulysse Productions, Unitec Films, France, 1962)

Firstly, this flashback is an example of how the film uses the active synthesis of memory. A specific part of the past is focused upon and brought through memory into the present as a flashback, namely, the episode of two friends as young teenagers in *The 400 Blows*. Here, a representation of this former present *becomes* a present present, in the form of a

memory and as a material sign in the reproduction of the images from the recordings of the past. This use of footage then becomes an artificial sign of memory in both Hopkins's levels of screened fictions. It is a recorded sign of the past of the events filmed and a memory in the story told. The relationship between this former present and a present present is crucial in the constitution of this second synthesis of time as the active synthesis of memory. The former present is reproduced in memory, which creates a representation of it in the present present, causing it to go from something general (the pure past) to a particular (the former present represented in the present present). This representation is done by reproducing a past in a memory (Deleuze, 2014: 105). However, this reproduction of presents is double-folded and follows a direction towards the past: "[...] the present one necessarily contains an extra dimension in which it represents the former *and* represents itself. The present present is treated not as the future object of memory but as that which reflects itself at the same time as it forms the memory of the former present" (Deleuze, 2014:106). This twofoldness of time is similar to the twofoldness of the actor/character dichotomy in which the actor represents themselves but also the character they are portraying. In terms of past and present, this is the case with the flashback in *Antoine and Colette*, which is double folded as a present present of a memory and a representation of a former present at the moment of being reproduced. Additionally, the link of a former present to the present present makes a connection between the first film and the sequel; one which maintains the logic, coherence and continuity of the story from one to the other, even if the films are not instantly contiguous.

Secondly, the passive synthesis of memory is also present in this sequence but in a less conspicuous way. "The passive synthesis of memory constitutes the pure past in time and makes the former and the present present (thus the present in reproduction and the future reflection) two asymmetrical elements of this past as such" (Deleuze, 2014:106). In other

words, the passive synthesis of time refers to the "pure past". As I have mentioned above, the pure past for Deleuze constitutes all the past existing in a plane of immanence. However, this synthesis contracts the pure past in the present present through the former present. The passive version of this synthesis happens through natural signs (as opposed to the artificial signs), which, as mentioned above, are those such as the scar, that are implicit manifestations of the past in the present resembling one another. In the body's case, these signs are the effects of the natural process of ageing, unavoidably caused by the natural passage of time, visible in Jean-Pierre Léaud/Antoine Doinel's corporeality. The two corporealities that resemble one another but incorporate the difference of the time passed. Therefore, this passive synthesis of memory happens just as the corporeality of the present, older Antoine in *Antoine and Colette* is a natural sign of the former present, namely, the corporeality of the past, younger Antoine from *The 400 Blows* (see figure 4). In this way, the actor/character's corporeality becomes yet again significant in telling the story, but in that it is a representation of the former present from the parent film in the present present of the sequel. Antoine's corporeality now shows his growth and change from one film to another. It embodies the effects of time.



Figure 4 Juxtaposition of younger Antoine and older Antoine in *Antoine and Colette* (dir. François Truffaut prod. Ulysse Productions, Unitec Films, France, 1962)



## The Face of Ageing

In the following films of the series, this process is repeated creating an accumulation of past and change. With the time difference in the long term between each instalment, Jean-Pierre Léaud and Antoine Doinel keep ageing and reproducing this process of repetition and difference in their physicality. All of Antoine's physicality changes during this time: he becomes taller, leaner, his hair grows, his voice changes, and he grows a beard. All of Antoine's body helps to communicate in one way or another who he is and his place in society. However, the close-up to the face is a particularly prominent tool used by cinema to communicate multitudes, as Deleuze develops.

Discussing the close-up and the affect-image in *Cinema I*, Deleuze writes about the communicative power of the face. He explains how the face has, ordinarily, three recognisable roles: Individuating, socialising, and relational or communicating<sup>12</sup> (Deleuze, 2018:110). As discussed above, when the viewer is first introduced to Antoine, a big part of what identifies him as a unique individual is his face. The person is inseparable from his face, and it is "what characterises him as subject at this time" (Rushton, 2002:222) and as the viewer's particular object of encounter. After this first encounter, the individuating, socialising, and relational aspects of the face become more complex. The cinematic technique that aids in this task is the close-up, as it makes the face and its details more prominent. Deleuze develops the relation between the face and the affection image arguing that: "the affection-image is the close-up, and the close-up is the face" (Deleuze, 2018:97). In a nutshell, for Deleuze, a close-up of the face not only communicates but it becomes the affect itself while adding to the narrative. For

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<sup>12</sup> "It is individuating (it distinguishes or characterises each person); it is socialising (it manifests a social role); it is relational or communicating (it ensures not only communication between two people, but also in a single person, the internal agreement between his character and his role)" (Deleuze, 2014: 110)

example, figure 5 below shows the close ups of Christine (Claude Jade) and Collette (Marie-France Pisier) during their conversation in *Love on the Run*. Here, Christine talks about the revealing moment she realised she did not love Antoine anymore and Collette talks about the death of her daughter. The close up to their faces becomes the way in which the film shows the affection that these stories have on their characters.



Figure 5 Above: Close up of Claude Jade as Christine in *Love on the Run*. Below: Close up of Marie-France Pisier as Collette in *Love on the Run* (dir. François Truffaut prod. Les Films du Carrosse, France, 1979)

With the micro-movements of the face (smile, grin, frown, grimace, wink, sneer, etc.) “the moving body has lost its movement of extension, and movement has become movement of

expression, the face becomes a unity of intense expressive movements which constitutes the affect” (Deleuze, 2018:98). With these micro-movements, the face becomes, creates, and communicates meaning. However, as Deleuze elaborates, even as the face can communicate *intentional* meanings, it “does not need to be actively or intentionally marked or expressed in a certain way so as to give rise to meaning” and it “can represent or signify automatically, without the intention of the person upon whose face the markings arise” (Rushton, 2002: 219 & 220). The face is not just a medium through which a message (or meaning) is communicated, but the face *in itself* is the message.

This is Deleuze's move: the face is no longer to be perceived as an entity that expresses another feeling or idea. Rather, the face incorporates as part of itself the very feeling or idea: the face is not the material representative of immaterial motivations; the face is not the external effect of an interior cause (Rushton, 2002:224)

This is also the case in *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel*. Antoine's face, as with any other, becomes a producer of meaning and meaning in itself as he navigates the narrative. However, in this collection of films, his is a face that changes conspicuously from one to the other as he ages and grows. In the first film, the viewer is introduced to a thirteen-year-old. He is short, has a childish, circular face, short hair, soft features, and smooth skin (see figure 1.5). This changes in the next films as Antoine gets older; in *Antoine and Colette* he is taller, his hair has grown, his face gets leaner making his cheekbones begin to protrude (see figure 1.6). Then, in *Stolen Kisses*, his corporeality keeps changing as his body and face are thinner, his cheekbones more pronounced, his hair has grown more, his nose has become longer and pointier (see figure 1.7). And as he gets older in *Bed & Board* (see figure 1.8) and *Love on the Run* (see figure 1.9) his face gets a more squared shape, his bone structure more prominent, he has darker rings under his eyes, and grows a stubble. However, these physical changes *as changes* are only visible in the films *because* of their seriality. As Deleuze continues to write about the affect-image and the face, he discusses the close-ups of faces in *Battleship Potemkin*

(1925) and how these faces become more meaningful because they were organised in a unified series through the montage of the film. He points out how this montage “brings together very different states of the face” (Deleuze, 2018:99) Deleuze continues:

Where, therefore, is the criterion of distinction? In fact, we find ourselves before an intensive face each time that the traits break free from the online, begin to work on their own account, and form an autonomous series which tends toward a limit or crosses a threshold: ascending series of anger<sup>13</sup> [...] This is why this serial aspect is best embodied by several simultaneous or successive faces, although a single face can suffice if it puts its different organs or features into series. Here, the intensive series discloses its function, which is to pass from one quality to another, to emerge on to a new quality. To produce a new quality, to carry out a qualitative leap. (Deleuze, 2018:100)

In other words, what Deleuze points out is that, even as one single face can produce a qualitative meaning, a collection of faces as a series creates a different quality in that meaning: a “qualitative leap.” As the series of faces in *Battleship Potemkin* create the qualitative leap of an “ascending series of anger,” Antoine Doinel’s face as a series creates the qualitative leap of temporality, of ageing, change and growth (see collection of figures 6 to 10).



Figure 6 Antoine Doinel aged thirteen in *The 400 Blows* (dir. François Truffaut prod. Les Films du Carrosse, Sédif Productions, France, 1959)

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<sup>13</sup> Or any quality.





*Figure 7* Antoine Doinel age seventeen in *Antoine and Colette* (dir. François Truffaut prod. Ulysse Productions, Unitec Films, France, 1962)



*Figure 8* Antoine Doinel aged twenty-three in *Stolen Kisses* (dir. François Truffaut prod. Les Films du Carrosse, Les Productions Artistes Associés, France, 1968)



Figure 9 Antoine Doinel aged twenty-five in *Bed & Board* (dir. Fran  ois Truffaut prod. Les Films du Carrosse, Valoria Films, France, 1970)



Figure 10 Antoine Doinel aged thirty-four in *Love on the Run* (dir. Fran  ois Truffaut prod. Les Films du Carrosse, France, 1979)

In the sections above, I have briefly discussed the importance of the actor and the character's body and corporeality. The body does not only "house selfhood and define individuality" (Gilleard and Higgs, 2013:21), but it is also central "to the 'interaction order' of face-to-face social encounters" (Goffman in Gilleard and Higgs, 2013:8). In a social and physical world, there is an inseparable relationship between the body "being of the observer

and the world that s/he observes" (Merleau-Ponty in Gilleard and Higgs, 2013:7). However, the body is changeable, it can be thought of "as a series of 'events that are continually in the process of becoming – as multiplicities that are never just found but are made and remade'" (Budgeon cited in Pilcher and Martin, 2020: 700) which agrees with the notion of Deleuze's qualitative leap described above. One clear aspect of these changes in the body is its ageing. As Gilleard and Higgs explored, ageing is an 'embodied' process of constant change (Gilleard and Higgs, 2013:4). "Bodies age, and with age the materiality of the body changes. While we are 'aged by culture', we are also aged by our bodies" (Twigg, 2004 in Pilcher and Martin, 2020:700). With these changes in the body, there are also sociocultural meanings attached to the changes. "visible signs of ageing are used as a means of assigning social value, resources and opportunities based on actual and perceived chronological age" (Hurd Clarke et al. in Pilcher and Martin, 2020:700). In each of the films, Antoine's corporeality changes along with his embodiment as his place in society changes as well. From a schoolboy to a girl-chasing young adult, to a husband, father, and divorcee.

For his third synthesis of time, Deleuze takes Kant's definition of time as a 'form of interiority' and a pure empty form which "is the most radical form of change, but the form of change does not change" (Deleuze, 2014:116). As the most radical form of change, Deleuze derives how "undetermined existence can be determined only *within time* as the existence of a phenomenon, of a passive, receptive phenomenal subject appearing *within time*" (Deleuze, 2014:112 original emphasis). In other words, Deleuze takes from Kant the idea that time is a pure and empty form of change, one which determines an undetermined existence within itself. Linking what I described above with this understanding of time, it follows how real time<sup>14</sup> as a pure and empty form of change is reflected in the corporeality and the processes of the ageing

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<sup>14</sup> As opposed to fictional time within a story.

body. The camera captures these visible signs of ageing in each film of *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel*. As Jean-Pierre Léaud's body changes from film to film, so does Antoine's and hence his relationship with his cultural environment and his embodiment's sociocultural meanings. When the time-critical sequels capture the changes of the character/performer's body's corporeality and the relationship of this body to its environment, they become comparable to this "empty form" that "determines an undetermined existence" within itself. In other words, the time-critical sequel becomes a vessel that captures and contains the changes that also occur *within time*.

## The Eternal Return of Difference

The most substantial part of Deleuze's third synthesis of time is the eternal return of difference. For Deleuze, the eternal return is a belief in the future, where "eternal return affects only the new, what is produced under the condition of default and by the intermediary of metamorphosis" (Deleuze, 2014:117). A crucial characteristic of Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche's eternal return is that this is not an eternal return of the same but of difference. This is an interior difference of that which returns and endows it with uniqueness. It is also what makes this return something new and allows a projection towards the future. The third synthesis of time illuminates how *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* become a unity in and through time while generating a process of change.

In the series, Antoine is the main subject of becoming, a becoming happening within time, which the series reveals through his corporeality, embodiment, and relationship with his environment. In each of the films (and notably *Love on the Run*), there is a return of former present through either natural or artificial signs that link the films together and show Antoine's process of change. Deleuze's eternal return as an eternal return of difference shows how



repetition opens the subject to the possibility of change. In each instalment, there is a constant repetition of themes, patterns, and conflicts. For example, in every film of the series Antoine has to navigate constant trouble with the women in his life, has problems with authority, and struggles in his working place. However, these themes are always repeated with difference: In *The 400 Blows* his problematic relationship is with his mother, in *Antoine and Colette* with his first unrequited crush Colette, in *Stolen Kisses* chasing after Christine, in *Bed and Board* his marriage is ruined because of his affair with Mademoiselle Hiroko (Hiroko Berghauer), and finally, in *Love on the Run* he needs to make peace with his past before being able achieve a fulfilling relationship with Sabine (Dorothee). The repetition of these themes creates the connection to Antoine's past in the previous films, but the difference is what generates the change and opens his possibilities for the future. In a series such as this, which stretches over an extended period of time the changes become more evident. However, it is important to look at the films, not as separate instalments, but as a unity in a temporal continuum.

At first sight, this idea of the films as a continuum may seem counterintuitive precisely because the story is interrupted and divided. However, Deleuze's third synthesis of time becomes illuminating for this matter. Due to the direction of the arrow of time an order in time means there will be a qualitative before and a qualitative after for the subject in time (Deleuze, 2014:94). This divide produces a fracture in the experience of time. To address this fracture, Deleuze turns to Hölderlin's concept of caesura and Dedekind's method of cuts. Hölderlin's caesura represents an "internal difference in the subject, which occurs through the disruptive introduction of a caesura or cut" (Voss, 2013:197). Beyond this caesura affecting a subject, this concept of a disruptive cut also changes the conception of time. Namely, this caesura both splits the self and is a break in time. According to Daniela Voss in her analysis of the third synthesis, the internal difference in the subject is the pure present, one with which former presents (i.e.,

the past) do not converge, this, on the one hand, determines past and present. Deleuze explains how:

The caesura, of whatever kind, must be determined in the image of a unique and tremendous event, an act which is adequate to time as a whole. This image itself is divided torn into two unequal parts. Nevertheless, it thereby draws together the totality of time. (Deleuze, 2014:116)

In other words, the caesura or fraction in time is determined by a significant event which divides time and the subject into a before and after. Time falls into place around this caesura where the significant event divides time into "two unequal parts", where the time before the caesura is the past, the after the caesura is the future, and the caesura itself is the present. The caesura produces an order of time that by determining past, present, and future also brings them together. Deleuze draws from this idea as part of the static synthesis of time (the third synthesis), arguing that time is constituted by a caesura or cut.

Additionally, Deleuze integrates Dedekind's mathematical method of cuts to explain the continuum of time in spite of this cut: "Modern mathematics then specifies the nature of this universal of number as consisting in the "cut" (in the sense of Dedekind): in this sense, it is the cut which constitutes the next genus of number, the ideal cause of continuity or the pure element of quantifiability." (Deleuze, 2014:115). Dedekind's method of cuts<sup>15</sup>, conceptualises the idea of continuity in a fragmented continuum as "'static and purely ideal' conception of continuity" (Voss, 2013:200). While this is a broader mathematical method (the nature of which goes beyond the scope of this thesis) what is relevant to the ongoing discussion is how Deleuze applies this conception of continuity and cuts to the static synthesis of time. According

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<sup>15</sup> In a nutshell, Dedekind's method of cuts is as follows. It begins with a straight line of rational numbers, and, on this line, an arbitrary cut is made, and there are two different options: one is when the cut falls neatly on a rational number. The other when the cut falls on an undetermined gap between the rational numbers which fills the gap. Dedekind claims that when this happens, the cut must fall on an irrational number. This way, Dedekind's cut provides continuity between rational numbers by defining the gaps in the straight line as irrational numbers (Voss, 2013: 200).

to Voss, "Deleuze uses Dedekind's ideas in order to construct a time that is not empirically defined through our intuition of a dynamic flux of events, but one that is determined a priori and designates a *static state of affairs*" (Voss, 2013:204). In other words, the continuum of time is analogous to Dedekind's line of rational and irrational numbers where in spite of the qualitative difference between these numbers, they maintain a continuum in the infinite. Alternatively, Deleuze writes: "The straight line of rational points is but 'a false infinity, a simple indefinite that includes an infinity of lacunae; that is why the continuous is a labyrinth that cannot be represented by a straight line'" (Deleuze, 2014:17). When Deleuze takes the previous ideas of time as a straight line, this is one perforated by gaps or lacunae. Therefore, it is not merely a straight line, but a continuum of which gaps are components. In turn, these gaps of lacunae create a difference of intensity in this straight line of time and "they symbolise the irruption of the virtual event within the empirical continuum of space and the chronological succession of instants" (Voss, 2013:206). It is also important to note how these gaps made by the interruption of virtual events also signify an interruption in the *empirical* continuation of space and time, events that are not experienced, such as the intermittent gaps in between each of the series' films.

In the time-critical series such as *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* the temporal gaps between instalments are prominent. In this series, even if the films are interrupted by the time gaps in-between them, this – actual-virtual-actual – continuum is complete; the storyline purposefully shows the various stages of Antoine's life and development one after the other. In the case of this series, the most straight forward way to notice this continuum in time is through the corporeality of Jean-Pierre Léaud/Antoine Doinel, which produces noticeable physical changes in him as elaborated above. It is precisely the practice of having intermittent gaps between the films that bring about the difference rather than the repetition in this continuum,

and, in turn, it highlights Antoine's process of becoming. This is because, when looking back at Antoine's past during any of the sequels, the immediate past moments are "virtual," and the most available references of his past are those from the previous films. This procures a jump in the continuity of the actualised repetitions from one instant to the other making the difference between one and the other more evident. Furthermore, filling the gaps between the films and maintaining the continuum must be rationalised or imagined, facilitating thought about the nature of time and how it opens different possibilities. For example, the third film of the series, *Stolen Kisses*, shows twenty-two-year-old Antoine during some of his failed jobs and love affairs, among them his pursuit of Christine. Near the end, serendipitously, Antoine is called to fix Christine's television which brings them back together. The final scene of the film shows them together sitting on a bench when a mysterious man, who had been following Christine throughout the film, approaches them and declares his love:

Mademoiselle, I know I'm not unknown to you. For a long time, I watched you in secret. But now I've stopped hiding. I know that the time has come. Before you, I'd never been in love. I hate the temporary. I know all about life. I know that everyone betrays everyone. But you and I will be different. We'll never leave each other, nor for a single hour. I have no work I have no obligations in life. You will be my sole preoccupation. I understand. I realise this is all too sudden for you to say yes at once, that you must first separate from temporary people. I am definitive. I am very happy.

When the man leaves, Antoine and Christine stand up and walk away holding arms. Two years later, *Bed and Board* opens with a ground level shot showing a woman's legs as she walks from one side to the other of the street to a fruit vendor. As the vendor says: "Here you are, mademoiselle." The woman corrects her saying: "Not mademoiselle — madame!". Indicating that this woman is married. The camera starts tracking the woman's legs as she moves from the fruit vendor towards a magazine post and the shot widens to a full shot as she walks away. It then cuts to the magazines' seller's point of view to reveal Christine's face as the married woman (see figure 11). This opening scene plays with its continuity from the last scene of *Stolen Kisses* by taking its time to reveal that married woman in the film is Christine. When

her identity is revealed, it is still not clear who she might be married to, Antoine, the man from the ending, or a completely different person. In the next sequence, Christine is going up the stairs to an apartment from which Antoine comes out and receives her with a kiss, revealing that it is indeed he who she married.



Figure 11 Claude Jade as Christine at the opening of *Bed & Board* (dir. François Truffaut prod. Les Films du Carouses, Valoria Films, France, 1970)

However, the mysterious man's predictions become true in this and the following instalments. In *Bed and Board*, Antoine betrays Christine in his affair with Mademoiselle Hiroko and from

the beginning *Love on the Run* reveals that Christine and Antoine are separated and getting a divorce. *Love on the Run* as the last instalment opens the unrealised possibility of the rest of the man's predictions coming true and getting together with Christine after she is separated from Antoine.

Taking Deleuze's use of Dedekind's method of cuts, this storyline is an example of how the series is analogous to Dedekind's continuous line, where instead of rational and irrational numbers there are actual and virtual events in the time continuum. The actual events are the events filmed, but the continuum is perforated by lacunae of virtual events, which are not actualised but are still part of the story told. Namely, those events from the story that happened in between the films which are not visible but possible. In the case of Christine's story with Antoine, in *Stolen Kisses*, Antoine and she go through a period of their friendship growing into love. In the next set of actualised events Antoine and Christine are already married. However, there are virtual events that happened in between the films like the ceremony. In the same way in which a 'cut' can be made in Dedekind's line choosing either a rational or irrational, in the time continuum of the series, the cut could fall on either a virtual or an actual event. This process is repeated throughout the series' different gaps, creating an interrupted continuum from *The 400 Blows* in 1959 to *Love on the Run* in 1979. The idea and complexities of this continuum will be developed further in the next chapter. For now, I would like to return the attention to the concept of 'real time' and the realism of the time-critical sequel.

## The 'Real Time' of the Time-Critical Sequel

Through this chapter, I have repeated how the sequel uses the passing of 'real time' to construct our understanding and interpretation of the narrative. This mode of real time is different from the one usually referred to in narratives such as *Run Lola Run* (1998), *Rope*

(1948), *My Dinner with Andre* (1981) or *Gravity* (2013). While in these examples 'real time' refers to the fidelity between the duration of the film and the events depicted in it, the 'real time' to which I refer is one focused on time in the long term as it extends beyond the screening of the film. This different perspective on real time allows for its long-term effects and affects to be a more realistic part of the narrative. To understand this concept of 'realism' in the time-critical sequels I will be using the definition of 'realism' as: "the quality or fact of representing a person or thing in a way that is accurate and true to life" (Oxford English Dictionary, no date a) and I will return to Robert Hopkins.

Along with the 'events filmed' and the 'story told,' there is a third level in Hopkins's theory of representation, namely, the Moving Images. Together, the three form Hopkins's Tiers of cinematic representation. With these tiers of representation and analysing five distinct kinds of realism (accuracy and precision, recessive form, illusion, transparency, and collapse), Hopkins explains the ontology of realism. From the five kinds of realism that Hopkins describes, I want to turn the attention to transparency and collapse. Hopkins describes 'transparency' stating: "a (visual, photographic) representation is realistic when (directly) seeing the representation is (indirectly) seeing what it represents" (Hopkins, 2016:81). This property of film is inherited from photography, which is transparent because it has a contrafactual dependence to its object, namely, photography "depends in a special way on their objects" (Hopkins, 2016:81); the representation of the object in a photograph depends on the object in itself. There is also a visual condition in which looking at a photograph (or film) is like looking at the object in the flesh. It "requires for our interactions with the transparent representations model in particular ways our interactions with objects seen directly" (Walton in Hopkins, 2016:82). What this means, is that when looking at an object in photography or film, the experience of seeing the represented object is like seeing it directly in real life. The

level of representation is just between the image in the photography and the events photographed. However, a crucial aspect to point out is the significant difference in this transparency between photography and film: the moving image. A photograph can only capture one instant; it will depend entirely on the time that the object is captured, and this time will be cemented in the image. After being captured, if the object changes, the photograph will not change. The moving image is capable of capturing change – like the change in position with movement, or a change of colour in a sunset – and it is transparent to these processes. This is where the difference between the real time of a stand-alone film and the real time of a time-critical sequel comes in. In the real time of a stand-alone film, we experience the transparency to time and its short-term effects, but this time is constrained by the duration of the film. The time-critical sequel can keep the transparency to time in the longer term. For this, another kind of realism comes in: collapse.

For Hopkins, collapsed realism is when “one of the two tiers of representation has disappeared from our experience” (Hopkins, 2016:83). In a fictional film, this happens when we see the moving images as “the photographic record not of the Events Filmed but of the events that make up the Story Told” (Hopkins, 2016:84). For example, in a documentary, the events filmed are much closer to the story told than in a fiction film. However, in a fictional film, the more collapsed these levels are, the more realistic it is. For example, *David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet* (2020) is a documentary about the experiences of David Attenborough as a natural historian. The screen shows Attenborough telling his life story and how he has witnessed the degradation of Earth due to climate change. The events filmed – Attenborough, the natural landscapes, animals, plants – are equal to the story told. Conversely, in a film like *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014) filmed events such as Chris Pratt, Dave Bautista and Zoe Saldana in heavy makeup, prosthetics, and costumes in front of a green screen tell the



story of a group of intergalactic criminals trying to save the universe. In the first example, the two levels of realism, events filmed and story told, are collapsed on each other; they are virtually the same from one another. Meanwhile in *Guardians of the Galaxy*, the events filmed, and the story told are completely different from each other making it a less realistic story.

What I have developed in this chapter, has touched upon the events filmed and the story told of *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* exemplified by the captured physicality of Antoine Doinel and its changes. The character of Antoine Doinel conjoins several levels of tension which collapse. On the one hand, there are the complexities of the twofoldness of actor (part of the events filmed) and character (part of the story told), and with this, the tension between the corporeality and embodiment of this duality. Jean-Pierre Léaud's corporeality, such as the face, is individuating (Deleuze, 2018:110), but it is the face of both character and actor. And corporeality is that on which the actor has no agency<sup>16</sup>; they are things like their factions, bone structure, the shape and size of their nose, eyes or ears, his height, the colour of his skin and any of the minute details that comprise the biology of his body. This corporeality is naturally affected by time in real life, and it is these processes and changes which are captured by the film, through its transparency, and collapse the tier between events filmed and story told as they are the same in both. In other words, the time and ageing of the character in the story told 'collapses' (or is the same) as the time and the ageing of the actor in the events filmed; both the events filmed, and the story told share the same temporality creating a realistic sense of time. This collapse of time is how long-term real time becomes not only a compositional technique, but subject of the films. Allowing the filmmaker to explore the different stories within the complexities of time.

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<sup>16</sup> One could argue that there is certain agency when the actor is applied makeup, plastic surgery, prosthetics, modifies his body through exercise or digital alterations. But for now I am not considering these things as I am developing the realism of the films. These would be forms of representation about which Hopkins writes: "The less prominent it is, the more realistic the representation" (Hopkins, 2016: 79-80)

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed the series of films from *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* as an example of the time-critical sequel using Deleuze's theory of *Difference and Repetition* and his three syntheses of time. First, to develop the idea of the time-critical sequel, I explained the difference between the parent film as a beginning of a series, using Deleuze's first synthesis of time to show how a parent film introduces the characters, and concept of a new story. I then used the second synthesis of time to develop the characteristics of the time-critical sequel. In this section, I explain how the character's ageing becomes a significant part of the narrative and how the corporeality of the actor and character, becomes the surface in which the processes of change and ageing take place to become a feature of the films. I continue to unify these concepts with Deleuze's third synthesis of time, which provides a way to understand the series and its intermittent gaps as a unity in time. Finally I develop how the time-critical sequel achieves realism in its use of long-term temporality according to Hopkin's levels of realism. My contribution in this chapter is to explain the basis of the time-critical sequel's formal aspects by focusing on the process of ageing and the accumulation of the time passed. This analysis has also provided some key ideas that will aid in the upcoming analyses of other time-critical sequels, such as the temporal intertextuality between the parent film and time-critical sequel, the ageing of the characters as a signifying part of the films, and the realism of the time-critical sequels. The upcoming chapters will build upon these ideas and explore other features of the time-critical sequels through themes specific to their case studies.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Passing through: Movements in time and space in the *Before Trilogy***

Similar to *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel*, the *Before Trilogy* is a time-critical series of sequels which chronicle the relationship between Céline (Julie Delpy) and Jesse (Ethan Hawke). The films, *Before Sunrise* (1995), *Before Sunset* (2004) and *Before Midnight* (2013), span from the moment when the characters serendipitously meet on a train to Vienna as idealistic young adults, all the way to their lives as a middle-aged couple. In this chapter, I will build on the ideas in the previous one to develop further how the temporal intertextuality of the films represents a new sense of cinematic duration, which, in turn, delivers a new way to think about time in cinematic narrative. To do this, I will divide my argument into three different sections based on two of Rita Felski's categorisations of time—every day and life time—along with Christine Geraghty's concept of unrecorded existence. The first section, everyday time, will explore the films individually and compare them to each other. This section will focus on the recorded existence of the characters and what we can learn about them from those recorded moments, and how they bring out the differences between each film more prominently to highlight the passing of time.

Conversely, the second section will explore the gaps between films through Geraghty's unrecorded existence and Deleuze's idea of the out-of-field. This section will focus on the unrecorded time of the character's lives, namely the years from the story that do not appear in the plot, and how the *Before Trilogy* makes them significant for the narrative and characterisation. Finally, the third section life time, will explore how the micro-fabula of the films with the unrecorded existence of the temporal gaps comprise an integrated whole as a macro-fabula connected by their transversality. All three sections of the chapter will explore

the issues of temporal context, ageing, physical and psychological time around the relationship of the characters, but each section will explore them from a distinct temporal level to reveal different insights about the story.

The temporal levels that I will use to guide my discussion derive from Rita Felski's analysis of the gendered experience of time (2000). Felski proposes three different temporal levels from which to dissect each tier of experience and understand the distinct ways in which individuals experience and understand time. Her conception of time is divided into three different perspectives:

In thinking about how gender affects the experience of time, I want to propose a tentative distinction between three temporal levels: everyday time, life time, and large-scale time (history and myth). Such a distinction is largely heuristic: in our lives these levels constantly intermingle and merge together. (Felski, 2000:17)<sup>17</sup>

In a nutshell, Felski's work explores the complexities around modern and postmodern history arguing that placing women's experience of time at the forefront changes the way we think about it. Therefore, Felski's temporal levels provide a useful model to understand the different scopes and qualities of temporality. Felski makes a distinction between everyday time: "the way we experience time on a day-to-day basis"; life time: "the process of understanding one's life as a project that encompasses and connects the random segments of daily experience" and large-scale time: "the ways we think about the long-term processes of time that transcend the limits of our personal existence" (Felski, 2000:18). This distinction becomes helpful to address the different temporal levels at play in the *Before Trilogy*. While the chapter separates the

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<sup>17</sup> Here, Felski is referring to a segment from Barbara Adam that she had quoted before: "Time is multifaceted: it is involved in physical processes and social conventions, in the abstract relations of mathematics and concrete relations between people. We measure it in clock-time units and by celestial motion, with the aid of recurrent events and through changes in our bodies. We utilize it as a medium of exchange for goods, services, or payment. We use it as a resource of nature, of society, of people and of institutions . . . time for us is clearly not exhausted by the clock-time measure" (Adam, 2006:20).

discussion in terms of 'everyday time' and 'life time' to analyse the trilogy, it is still important to keep in mind how these levels constantly intermingle, overlap and merge together. The first two sections of this chapter explore the films' overall representation of time in Céline and Jesse's shared experience; for this reason, I will not focus on the gendered experience of time. However, in the third section, I will analyse the characters' personal experience of time, which will lead me to address issues surrounding Céline and Jesse's individual, private and gendered experiences.

Besides telling the story of Céline and Jesse's relationship as their conducting thread, the films in the trilogy show an important focus on time itself. This focus on time by the trilogy has also been explored by several critics and scholars (Wood, 1996; Taubin, 2004; Cutler, 2013; Filippo, 2015; Lurie, 2015; MacDowell, 2017; Kilburn, 2018; Illing, 2019). Each of the films is related in one way or another to issues of time; in *Before Sunrise*, by loving against time (approaching), in *Before Sunset*, by loving despite (lost) time, and in *Before Midnight*, by loving because of time (past) (Ribeiro, 2019). Furthermore, the nine years in between each of the trilogy's instances allows for a significant development in the couple's relationship while also exploring issues of age and identity. Additionally, the films' temporality provides a more evident exposure of the effects of time in itself. This is how the films represent time within themselves through methods such as the long take and real-time narrative, but also through the unrecorded existence between the sequels.

The *Before Trilogy* builds a temporal continuum that accumulates the layers of time into one another as a plane of immanence (as addressed in the previous chapter while discussing Deleuze's syntheses of time). From the first film released in 1995 to the last one (so far) in 2013, the story is a continuous one, but we only see the moments captured by the events filmed

(see figure 12). However, the instances also create links between each other through memories (sometimes foresights) and repetition of what has been actualised in the films. These links follow what Deleuze states as: “The present and the former presents are not, therefore, like two successive instants on the line of time; rather, the present one necessarily contains an extra dimension in which it represents the former and also represents itself” (Deleuze, 2014:106). But what makes them not “successive instants” are the gaps in between the films, which are acknowledged at the level of the events filmed and plot as well as the story told during the unrecorded years. On many occasions, events that happened during unrecorded time have important bearing on the events from the recorded moments. This causality between recorded and unrecorded events creates the intermittent continuum of the trilogy.

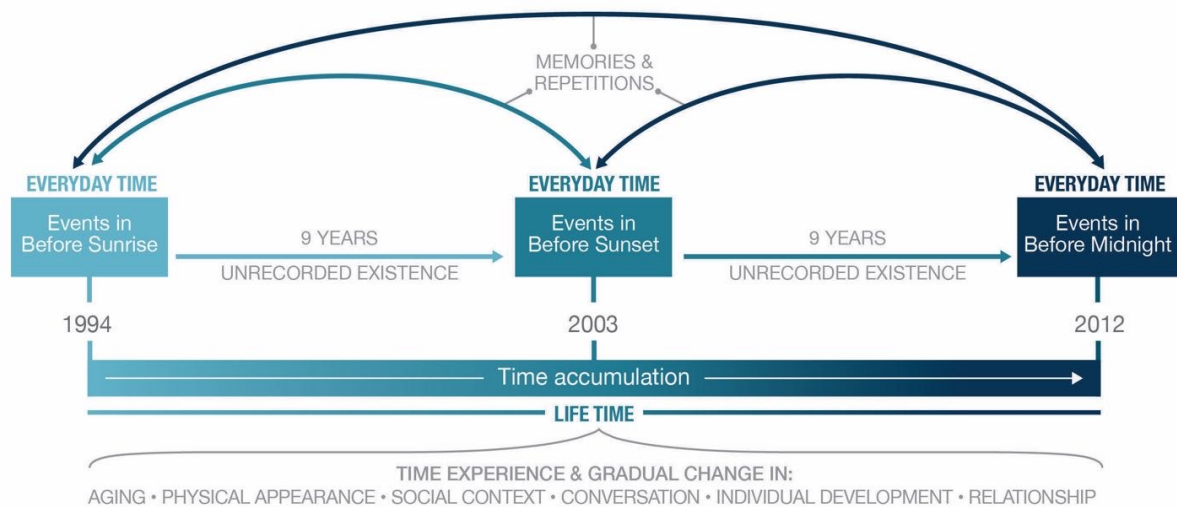


Figure 12 *Before Trilogy* time diagram.

## Everyday Time & Recorded Existence

The undeniable conducting thread of the *Before Trilogy* is the romantic relationship between Céline and Jesse. However, another crucial aspect of the narrative is the couple’s relationship to time and how it affects them. In many ways, this relationship to time provides

the foundation for this chapter's analysis and the lens through which it explores the characters' narrative arc. This section is concerned with the *recorded* aspects of said arc, as opposed to the next section, which will examine the characters' *unrecorded existence*. In other words, those moments of the characters' lives seen on the screen. To do this, my analysis will follow Felski's temporal level of *everyday time*, which she explains:

... the realm of everyday time, or the phenomenological sense of time [...] is the way we experience time on a day-to-day basis. Do we perceive time to be passing quickly or slowly, moving in fits and starts or according to the regular rhythm of the clock? Is our daily sense of time most strongly influenced by the relentless, impersonal regularities of clocks and timetables, by the frenzied, flickering pace of television and media culture, or by the subterranean flow of natural bodily rhythms? How are these experiences affected by our existence as embodied and sexed subjects with differing social roles? Do we feel ourselves to be controlled by time or controlling time, does time flow in a certain direction or does it seem repetitive and cyclical? (Felski, 2000:17)

There are two key aspects in the above. The first regards a quantitative perspective through which to look at time, and the second regards a qualitative perspective. Quantitatively, Felski provides different "units" of time with which to measure it: everyday time, life time, and large-scale time. The 'large-scale time' encompasses various 'life times;' and a 'life time' encompasses various 'everyday times.' At the level of the everyday, time is explored through the lens of the smallest unit of Felski's perspectives. Conversely, the qualitative aspect of this level focuses on *how* we experience this unit of time. Everyday time is the most *immediate* experience we have of it. Felski stresses how this encounter with the day-to-day can vary and be experienced in different ways by different individuals; evidenced, for example, by the perception of time as passing quickly or slowly, because of impersonal regularities of clocks or the flow of natural bodily rhythms, whether time is affected by our social roles and if we are controlling time or does time control us.

My analysis of the *Before Trilogy* relates to how everyday time works on these two different levels. On the one hand, it works on a structural level; the individual films are the

smallest units in the trilogy's construction of time. They represent only one day of the characters' lives, while the trilogy as a whole represents their "life time". The 'life time' of the characters is represented through the temporal ordering of *Before Sunrise*, *Before Sunset* and *Before Midnight*, in the same way that the temporal ordering of a person's day to day life comprises their life experience. On the other hand, each of the stories contained within these films are indeed meant to take place within the scope of one day, they follow a representation of time either close to or exactly of 'real-time'. Namely, one in which the duration of the film lasts the same amount of time as the story told. Therefore, contained within one day, the temporal level of the everyday time is experienced in two different dimensions: the events filmed and the story told.

Since Céline and Jesse's relationship with time is crucial in the story, distinct aspects about how time affects relationships come into play. In a study about time perspectives and heterosexual romantic relationships, Stolarski, Wojtkowska and Kwiecinska (2016) explore the influence that time perspectives have in the satisfaction and success of a heterosexual romantic couple. In it, the authors argue that: "to create a stable, satisfactory interpersonal relationship, partners need to meet each other not only in the *physical time* but also in various dimensions of *psychological time*" (Stolarski *et al.*, 2016:553 my emphasis). From this idea, what is important to note is the difference in physical and psychological time of the couple's encounter. Physical time refers to the actual moment in time when things happen. Regarding the above quote, physical time is about *when* the couple meets or are together physically. For Céline and Jesse, that physical time is the 16th of June 1994 in the afternoon. We could also relate the physical time to the spatial dimension, as for them to meet (in person) they would have to be at the same place at the same time (more on this later). Meanwhile, the psychological time refers to how the person experiences time cognitively. The authors explain psychological



time as “a dynamical cognitive process that enables to structure individual and social experiences, referring to past experiences, present situation, and expected future events” (Stolarski *et al.*, 2016:554). To manage these perspectives, the authors use a model by Zimbardo and Boyd which encompasses six different perspectives towards the past, present or future, each either in a negative or a positive light (Zimbardo and Boyd, 1999)<sup>18</sup>. However, this psychological experience of time can also be related to Felski’s discussion about the experience of day-to-day time. After all, the perception of time as going quickly or slowly, in fits and starts, rhythmically, controlling of us, or controlled by us, has to do with our cognitive processes and understanding of time. Each film of the *Before Trilogy* pays close attention in building the representation of both the physical and the psychological time that the characters experience, and they both have a consequential role in their relationship.

A clear example of the juxtaposition of physical and psychological time in the trilogy, is a sequence near the beginning of *Before Sunset*. The film begins at the last stop of Jesse’s tour for promoting his book *This Time*, where he wrote about the night Céline and he spent together after meeting in the train to Vienna. Making Jesse an author in itself is a helpful device to offer access points into the previous film through its retelling in a new context, either to introduce new viewers to the previous events, or to refresh the memory of those already familiar with them. Here, Jesse is in the middle of a Q&A session at Shakespeare and Company. Throughout it, the camera switches in a shot-reverse-shot style from Jesse and the attendees as the questions and answers go back and forth. These shots are occasionally intercepted by

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<sup>18</sup> Past-negative, related to a generally negative, aversive view of the past. Past-positive, which reflects a warm, sentimental attitude toward the past. Present hedonistic, related to a hedonistic, risk taking, and pleasure-oriented attitude toward life, with high impulsivity and little concern for future consequences of one’s actions. Present-fatalistic, which reveals a belief of hard-determinism where the present must be endured with resignation because the future is uninfluenced by individual action. Future-positive, related to a generally positive future orientation, with behaviour dominated by striving for future goals and rewards. Future-negative, which reflects a predominantly pessimistic future orientation, dominated by future anxiety and avoidant behaviours. (Stolarski *et al.*, 2016: 555).

flashbacks from *Before Sunrise* parallel to Jesse's commentary on his book. For example, when he is talking about wanting "to capture what it was like to meet somebody," the shot cuts to a flashback from *Before Sunrise* at the moment when he met Céline. While the physical time of the film is first established at that time and space of the Q&A session in *Before Sunset*, the representation of Jesse's psychological time is set to his past in *Before Sunrise*. This scene juxtaposes the image of Ethan Hawke playing Jesse at twenty-three years old, with the current image of Jesse at thirty-two years old contrasting his past and current corporeality.

Near the end of the Q&A, one of the attendees asks about his next book, and Jesse narrates his idea of it taking place within the space of one pop song. Throughout the length of the song, a man is looking at his five-year old daughter dancing on a table when he suddenly finds himself as a sixteen-year-old-again; making a parallel between the moment he was living as a father and a moment he remembered from his teenage years. While Jesse is telling this story, there is another flashback from *Before Sunrise* that mirrors what he is saying by creating a montage between his current living experience and his younger self then. The voice over is still thirty-two-year-old Jesse, but the images are from a moment in *Before Sunrise* when he asked Céline to stand still so he could "take a picture of her and this moment" to remember it forever, which he is doing at the moment. This juxtaposition of audio and image creates a rich superimposition of moments. Firstly, there is the moment in the past when this was happening in *Before Sunrise*, and secondly the moment in *Before Sunset* when the images of that former present are replayed *as a memory*. Furthermore, Jesse makes a meta-commentary about this scene by saying: "He (the character) knows he is not *remembering* this dance. He is there in both moments simultaneously. And just, like for an instant, all his life is just folding in on itself", which is what time in the film is doing . While Jesse is saying this, the image of twenty-three-year-old Céline in the flashback cuts to thirty-two-year-old Céline in the book shop,

which is the first time she appears in the film. Similarly, for the first time, the camera switches position from the shot-reverse-shot between Jesse and the attendees to the side of the shop where Céline is. This change of shot points out how, while Jesse was having that conversation other events were developing simultaneously on the side (Céline arriving at the book store). While Jesse says: “it is obvious to him that time is a lie” the camera cuts back to Jesse from Céline’s point of view to see him noticing her for the first time. He stutters in surprise, and finishes saying: “That it’s all happening all the time and inside every moment is another moment, all happening simultaneously.”

This sequence shows a clear divide, juxtaposition, and interplay between the physical and the psychological time of the characters (see figure 13), which is not an uncommon practice in film<sup>19</sup>. However, the peculiarity here is the temporal intertextuality between the film and its sequel. The representation of Jesse’s physical time in *Before Sunset* is juxtaposed with the representation of his psychological time from *Before Sunrise* (which was once his physical time). For example, when Jesse talks about the girlfriend in his book dancing, the audio of the dialogue is juxtaposed with the image of Céline dancing in *Before Sunrise*, creating a parallel of the two in his mind. Similarly, when he says how the protagonist remembering the girlfriend “looks down and all of a sudden, he’s 16”, the camera cuts from the shot of Céline to a shot of him in *Before Sunrise* looking younger, and back to him at thirty-two. Correspondingly, the shot returns to Céline at twenty-three in *Before Sunrise* and cuts to reveal Céline at thirty-two in *Before Sunset*, creating a juxtaposition of her at different ages (see figure 13).

The juxtaposition of images (both Céline’s and Jesse’s) creates an aesthetic parallel

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<sup>19</sup> This is usually the case of flashbacks prominently featured in films like: *Rashomon* (1950), *Titanic* (1997), *Eternal Sunshine of a Spotless Mind* (2004), *Ratatouille* (2007), *The Social Network* (2010), *Pain and Glory* (2019) and many others.

between the present in *Before Sunset* and the past in *Before Sunrise*. There is a match in the framing of the actors, their position, and eye-lines, with Jesse turning slightly to the left and Céline slightly to the right. While in the images of *Before Sunrise* they were in front of and staring at each other, in *Before Sunset* Céline is not even in Jesse's periphery until he turns around. Yet, they are framed to create the same composition in both shots. The similarity in their portrayal emphasises how their corporeality has changed over time from one film to the other: Ethan Hawke with shorter hair, more wrinkles on his face and looking gaunter, and Julie Delpy having lost her baby fat and a more mature appearance. Furthermore, there is a sense of self-referentiality of the film; as Jesse finishes saying: "inside every moment is another moment" the film constructs "a moment inside another moment" with this editing. The cuts of this sequence frame the event in a way that holds the memory of *Before Sunrise* within the events in *Before Sunset* having the narration of Jesse as the "container" of the memory; not to mention that the moment when he notices Céline for the first time since 1994 is also contained within those other moments.

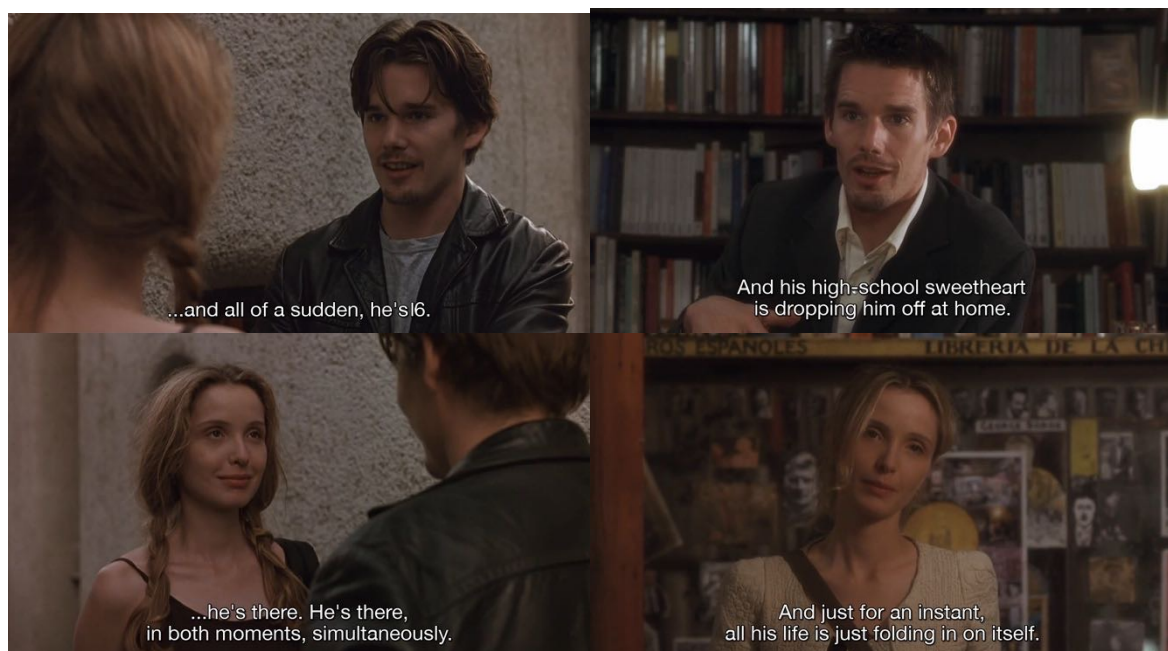




Figure 13 Céline and Jesse see each other again in *Before Sunset* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Warner Independent Pictures, USA, 2004)

Although this is the only time in the trilogy that uses flashbacks, psychological time remains an important part of the characters' interactions. As Stolarski *et al.* state: "each relationship, even a recently formed one, has its own past, present, and future: in this aspect, relationships and time are inseparable." (Stolarski *et al.*, 2016:553). This idea about how "relationships and time are inseparable" is crucial for the *Before Trilogy* and it is something the films constantly show: how time changes and affects Céline and Jesse's relationship. What I will continue to analyse is how each film of the trilogy creates a parallel of physical and psychological time according to the couple's relationship.

### *Physical Time*

To analyse the use of physical time in the trilogy, I will explore two aspects of it: the physical movement used during the films and the ageing of the characters. I will begin with movement. One thing to note about the *Before* films is the stylistic choice of the filmmakers to follow a naturalistic style in which the camera tracks the couple as they walk through the streets of Vienna, Paris and the Peloponnese coast having a conversation. From the beginning of the story, Céline and Jesse are in constant movement and/or in modes of transportation. In *Before Sunrise* they meet and begin their relationship in a moving train and, from there, the camera keeps following the two as they walk around the streets of Vienna, changing from one scenario to the other. This is repeated in *Before Sunset* and *Before Midnight* albeit with few variations

according to the couple's circumstances. The repeated movement across space and time act as what Deleuze names transversality. He states how "Time is precisely the transversal of all possible spaces, including the space of time." (Deleuze, 2003:130) Furthermore, he explains his understanding of time stating:

And this is precisely what time signifies: that system of nonspatial distances, that distance proper to the contiguous or to the continuous, distances without intervals. In this regard, lost time, which introduces distances between contiguous things, and time regained, which on the contrary establishes a contiguity of distant things. (Deleuze, 2003:129)

In this quote, Deleuze uses the spatial concept of "distances" to explain time as "nonspatial distances". In a nutshell, *spatial distances* are those through which an object experiences the dimension of space. Spatial distances are understood with the relation of one point in space in reference to another. For example, I can walk the spatial distance from my front door to my neighbour's door and that spatial distance would be of 30 feet. Deleuze suggests that, to think about time, is to translate this reasoning to temporal terms taking out the spatiality. This would be the distance between two points not in space, but in time without a separation. Instead of saying: I spatially move *from* my front door *to* my neighbour's, the measure of time is *from* one point in time or moment *to* the other without movement. For example, from the moment when a film begins at 8:00 pm. to the moment it ends 10:00 pm. This creates a *temporal* 'distance' but with no separations; the past is still in the present and anticipating the future. This temporal distance between one moment and the other becomes dependent on the points of reference and the relation between them. Furthermore, what is between these points of reference is a "distance without intervals" which means it is never interrupted or stopped. Time is always passing, it is continuous, and Deleuze brings up this definition of time in *Proust and Signs* (2003) discussing the interpretation of signs. He states that time is the ultimate interpreter (Deleuze, 2003:129) and "interpreting has no other unity than a transversal one" (Deleuze, 2003:128). This interpretation comes from the dynamic and relation between the points of reference through which time is measured. In other words, their transversality; how we can

interpret the distances between contiguous things as time lost, or the contiguity of distant things as time regained.

Therefore, in the films, the constant movement through distances in space becomes an analogy or metaphor of nonspatial distances in time. Where we are able to see a physical transition of spatial distances, there is also a transition of temporal distances. Writing about the movement-image, Deleuze mentions: “Movement is a translation in space. Now each time there is a translation of parts in space, there is also a qualitative change in a whole” (Deleuze, 2013:9). Throughout the three films Céline and Jesse are in constant movement, be it by train, by foot, by car, or by boat. In this way, the film creates an analogy between the movement of the couple in physical space and their transition in physical time; every step they take moving away from the place *where* they met, is also time away from *when* they met. The constant movement and the walking through the different spaces of the city juxtaposes the transition in space with the transition in time, but they are not, by any means, the same. Space just becomes a tool to interpret the differences in time, so to think, for example, about the qualitative aspects of *when* they were at the bridge versus *when* they were at the restaurant or *when* they were in Vienna versus *when* they were in Greece. In this movement, there is a transition in space, a transition in time and a qualitative transition of their relationship as a couple.

This dynamic between space, time and their relationship can be illustrated with their physical interactions and movements from the beginning to the end of *Before Sunrise*. Céline and Jesse’s story together begins inside a moving train, creating both spatial and nonspatial distances (as explained above). A middle-aged couple is arguing in German next to Céline’s seat while she is trying to read, when they get louder, she decides to change seats to a free one next to Jesse. The camera changes from Céline to Jesse sitting next to the window on the right

side of the moving train. In this position, when the camera shoots Jesse, it looks like the train is moving towards the left side of the shot; hence, when Jesse is sitting straight, he is facing that direction in accordance with the moving train. The same happens with Céline, but the other way around. On her side of the train, from the point of view of the camera, the train she moves toward the right side of the shot. Therefore, at this point when they are still strangers, her sitting straight position seems to be moving in an opposite direction to Jesse, as if they were moving away from each other (see figure 14). A few seconds later, the middle-aged couple storms out of the train cart and passes between them. Both Céline and Jesse turn to watch them walk away, which makes them turn towards each other and make eye contact, they are now aware of each other's gazes. The camera cuts from one to the other as it moves for a close up until their faces are in a tighter frame. This way, we see much less of the moving window next to them, the movement outside the train's windows is no longer as obvious as before, and the focus is on their expressions as they turn towards each other (see figure 15). Jesse invites Céline to join him in the lounge car. They pick a table and sit now face to face, which becomes a more natural and comfortable position to continue the conversation (see figure 16). This gesture of changing positions from the parallel seats in the train to then facing each other at the table also represents a change in their relationship. They go from accidental acquaintances to an intentional interaction, from sitting in opposing seats heading in different directions to merging their paths and sitting on the same table looking each other.

When the train reaches its destination, it seems like Céline and Jesse's time together is over, but Jesse persuades Céline to get off the train with him and spend the day together until the next morning, when he needs to catch his plane back to the U.S. It is as if they get off the "train of time" to make a quick stop in a moment outside time along the way. It is a nonspatial interval that both produces and is produced by the sense of "spending time" or "losing time"



while waiting for the moment when Jesse needs to catch his plane. Still, the couple spends the day talking and in constant movement around the streets of Vienna. A big part of the film shows them walking side by side during long takes discussing different issues between one place and the other, and even some of these stops take place in vehicles like a moving tram or a boat. It is a constant reminder of the transition and interstices of time (see figure 17) or analogies to stop it. After spending the past hours walking side by side, the final sequences of the film show each of them, back in the positions where they started at in the train. They finish the film looking at the window towards left and right, once again framed as moving away from one another in the same position as in their first encounter (see figure 18), except this time, they are indeed heading in different directions. This creates the representation of the cyclical nature of time where, in a certain way, the couple gets back to where they began, yet they have internally changed since then, establishing contiguity of distant things. Equally, the formula of watching the couple walking and chatting side by side is one that will be revisited in the following films, supporting the principle of marking the transition of physical time.



Figure 14 Left: Ethan Hawke as Jesse sitting on the train to Vienna. Right: Julie Delpy as Céline sitting on the train to Vienna. Both in *Before Sunrise* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Castle Rock Entertainment, USA, 1995)



Figure 15 Left: Close up of Jesse as he turns to talk to Céline. Right: Close up of Céline as she turns to talk to Jesse. Both in *Before Sunrise* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Castle Rock Entertainment, USA, 1995)



Figure 16 Jesse and Céline sitting face to face in the lounge car of the train in *Before Sunrise* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Castle Rock Entertainment, USA, 1995)



Figure 17 Left: Céline and Jesse sitting in a moving tram. Right: Céline and Jesse walking down the streets of Vienna in *Before Sunrise* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Castle Rock Entertainment, USA, 1995)



Figure 18 Left: Jesse on his way to the airport. Right: Céline on her way to Paris. Both in *Before Sunrise* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Castle Rock Entertainment, USA, 1995)

Another manifestation of the physical time in the films is the one embodied by the characters themselves in relation to their age. As I have already mentioned, each of the *Before* films are a unit of “everyday time,” but the days they show are not consecutive. Because of the time in between the making of one film and the other, each has a different temporal nature. The recorded existence of the characters captures a specific moment of physical time, which includes the actor’s age at the time of filming. This is the same process described in chapter one about Jean-Pierre Léaud ageing as Antoine Doinel, where the aging body of the

character/actor creates meaning. While *Before Sunrise* tells a story of two young adults who meet in the middle of their twenties, *Before Sunset* tells the story of two full grown adults in their mid-thirties, and, finally, *Before Midnight* is about a day in the life of a middle-aged couple in their forties. The films' preoccupation with age is established from the very first few lines exchanged between Céline and Jesse. When, the arguing couple storms out of their train coach, Jesse asks Céline if she understood what they were arguing about. Céline replies she does not, but continues the conversation by adding: "Have you ever heard that, as couples get older, they lose their ability to hear each other? [...] Well, supposedly, men lose their ability to hear higher pitched sounds and women eventually lose hearing on the low end. I guess they sort of nullify each other." Jesse replies, "I guess is nature's way of allowing couples to grow old together without killing each other." Not only does their conversation begin by bringing up the theme of 'ageing' as a consistent concern in the film, but it also creates a link to their own ageing process as it foreshadows the development of their own relationship.

Age and its physicality plays an important role in the story enhancing the passage of time. Elements of the film such as the narrative, the context, and even the physical appearance of the actors are affected by it in each film of the trilogy. To begin with, the ageing of the actors in itself functions as an aesthetic and intertextual element between the films. The nine years that passed between one film and the other have unavoidably made Julie Delpy and Ethan Hawke older, which changes their corporeality. This means that in filming each of the films at different points in their life, they have captured and preserved how the actors were at that moment in time. This brings to our attention how time has changed them – and hence the characters. Similarly to how I analysed Antoine Doinel's change in time in the previous chapter, through Jesse and Céline's corporeality the films communicate the moment in time when they are captured, and how they change from one film to the other. As a result, the films

show the differences that time has produced. “It is difference which, by enveloping itself, produces the identity of the quality which constitutes the resemblance between the series. Identity and resemblance are therefore once again the result of a differentiator” (Deleuze, 2014:155). In other words, difference is what reveals the characters’ becomings. For example, the images from figures 19, 20 and 21, from the three films repeat the people that appear in them, but they still look different from each other. We can see how wrinkles have appeared on their faces, their shapes have changed, grey hairs on Ethan Hawke’s beard appear, a different texture of Julie Delpy’s hair, or even when we hear them, their voices are different from one film to the other sounding more mature. All these constantly new physical attributes can also be understood as ‘natural signs,’ present manifestations of the past in the present.



Figure 19 Julie Delpy as Céline and Ethan Hawke as Jesse in *Before Sunrise* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Castle Rock Entertainment, USA, 1995)





Figure 20 Julie Delpy as Céline and Ethan Hawke as Jesse in *Before Sunset* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Warner Independent Pictures, USA, 2004)



Figure 21 Julie Delpy as Céline and Ethan Hawke as Jesse in *Before Midnight* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Faliero House Productions, USA, 2013)

Both in *Before Sunset* and *Before Midnight* are moments in which the film brings attention towards these natural signs through close ups to the characters' faces. When the couple is getting coffee in Paris, Céline asks Jesse if she looks any different from when they first met in Vienna nine years before that. She takes her hair down to better resemble the way

she looked then and bring out the differences. With this scene, Céline highlights the significance of the face and its power to communicate (as developed in Chapter one), in this case, the years that have passed since their first encounter. After denying any difference for a few seconds, Jesse mentions she looks skinnier and asks Céline the same question to which she also replies after denying it: “actually yeah you have this line ... it’s like a scar!”. Pointing out 'a scar' echoes Deleuze’s mention of them when he explains natural signs. As developed in chapter one, Deleuze explains the natural signs of his second synthesis of time pointing out that “a scar is the sign not of a past wound but 'the present fact of having been wounded’”. The scar is the present sign of the past<sup>20</sup>, not the wound that happened in the past. Yet, the contemplation of the wound, contracts all the multiple instants that separate this past wound into a living present scar (Deleuze, 2014:102). Similarly, Jesse’s wrinkle (almost quite literally) contracts all the instants which separate the moment when his skin was smooth from the living present at that Parisian café. This is the case with all other physical signs of the couple’s ageing. Furthermore, this attention to the physical differences that the characters have overcome is yet again emphasised in *Before Midnight*, when Céline asks Jesse if they were meeting for the first time that day on a train, would he find her attractive. She even emphasises how he should not think of her in the way she looked then (in *Before Sunrise*), but how she looks now. Kidding (and not) she says: “[...] the fact is, you would not pick me up on a train. You wouldn’t even notice me, a fat-assed, middle-aged mom, losing her hair.” With this exchange, the film highlights the difference of physical time between one film and the other, and how it has changed their bodies and lives. The characters’ physical appearance becomes a sign of former presents from the previous films and are carrying with them the meanings of a specific moment in time which cognitively links them together.

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<sup>20</sup> Deleuze proposes an understanding of the sign where “signs do not merely tell us about what they signify but directly impinge on thought, force thought into a constructive act of interpretation that changes the form that thought itself takes” (Campbell, 2019: 354). Therefore, the natural signs of the past force an act of interpretation about the events in the past that create the signs in the present.

The complexities of age and ageing have been addressed by Lynne Segal in her book *Out of Time* (2014), where she points out how “What is significant about ageing [...] [is] that it changes our relation to time. For as we age, the weight of the past must be measured and valued in comparison with the increasing flimsiness of any certainties about our future” (Segal, 2014:77). The first part of this quote mentions how ageing changes our relationship to time, which is something the films in the trilogy address. As the characters’ age changes, so do their relationships with time, themselves, and each other. For instance, narrative-wise, the struggles that the characters face in each film differ from one another according to their age. In *Before Sunrise* both Jesse and Céline are in college. Céline talks about struggling to decide on a major and the hopes she has for her future career. At the same time, Jesse is dealing with heartbreak over his ex-girlfriend, who he had travelled to see during his summer holidays. Nine years later, in *Before Sunset*, the two are in vastly different situations. Jesse is now married and has child, while professionally, his career as a writer is beginning to take off. What he struggles with now is balancing the disconnection he feels from his wife with the love he has for his son. Meanwhile, Céline is committed to her job in an environmental organisation, while going through a series of unfulfilling romantic relationships. Finally, *Before Midnight* tells the story of the two as parents and professionals with much more cemented careers, navigating the responsibilities and compromises that this demands of them while trying to keep their relationship afloat. Each film addressing what would be conventionally considered “age appropriate” struggles for their white, middle-class, cis-gender, heterosexual, gen X protagonists.

The second part of Segal’s quote addresses how, as we age, we must measure and compare “the weight of the past” to “the increasing flimsiness of any certainties about the future”. This encompasses two different aspects of time that are always present for us but

become qualitative and even quantitatively different as a person ages: the past and the future. When we are younger the amount and qualitative aspects of our future has a bigger bearing on us than our past, but at an older age, this is inverted. The older we are the heavier our past weights on us and the flimsier our future seems. This makes an individual's relationship to time itself change with ageing. The way we relate with past, present, and future is different for a toddler, from an adult or an elder. However, this relationship concerns psychological time rather than physical.

### *Psychological Time (or Time Perspectives)*

As seen in Jesse's Q&A from *Before Sunset*, the films not only pursue a representation of the physical time, but also of a psychological time of the story and the characters. The representation of psychological time contributes to the storytelling by presenting a time perspective and rhythm. These time perspectives and rhythms are intimately linked with Céline and Jesse's relationship and the time they have together. As Stolarski, Wojtkowska and Kwiecinska explain, a relationship is deeply affected by the time perspectives of its members and these time perspectives and experiences of time vary according to the moment in time of that relationship. This is also the case across the *Before Trilogy*, as each of the films reflects a different psychological time and time perspective in accordance with Céline and Jesse's relationship. *Before Sunrise* shows the time perspective of a couple who have just met and are focused on enjoying the present moment, *Before Sunset* presents Céline and Jesse in a new set of circumstances where their past weighs greatly on their current circumstances, and *Before Midnight* shows a couple who have a long history together negotiating the conflicts between past and future. As I will continue to explore, the story, mood, and stylistic choices of the films reflects this negotiation.



Firstly, *Before Sunrise* shows a time perspective focused on the present moment. As David T. Johnson notes “*Before Sunrise* immerses us in the present moment, even as they discuss their past” (Johnson, 2012:37). According to Stolarski, Wojtkowska and Kwiecinska, the beginning of a relationship is by nature ‘present oriented’, the couple is predominantly focused on their *joint* presents. They are mainly focused “on the here-and-now, as if the rest of the world could have not existed” (Stolarski *et al.*, 2016:553). This is, in great part, because at this point of the relationship they do not share any joint past experiences nor future goals. It is only over time that they gain a common past and are then able to construct “more or less far-reaching plans for the future” (Stolarski *et al.*, 2016:557). In several ways, we can see how *Before Sunrise* does this for Céline and Jesse’s relationship.

From the beginning, Céline and Jesse’s time together was limited. At first, it was meant to finish when the train reached Jesse’s destination. However, he proposes to extend that moment and spend the next 24 hours together. To convince Céline, Jesse invites her to make a time traveling thought experiment:

Think of it like this. Jump ahead ten, twenty years. And you are married. Only your marriage doesn’t have the same energy that it used to have. You start to blame your husband. You start to think of all those guys you’ve met in your life and what might have happened if you picked up with one of them, right? Well, I’m one of those guys, that’s me. So, think of it as time traveling, *from then to now*, to find out what you are missing out. And see, what this really could be is a gigantic favour to both you and your future husband to find out that you’re not missing out on anything. I’m just as big a loser as he is, totally unmotivated, totally boring and you made the right choice, and you are really happy. (Jesse in *Before Sunrise*, 1995 my emphasis).

This is an important moment that will also connect to *Before Midnight*, but I will address that below. For now, what is important about this speech is that: a) it is a mental time-travelling exercise about the future, and b) it stresses the importance of *the now*, of “seizing the moment.” As Jesse phrases it, the time travelling is “from *then to now*” as opposed to from now to the future, bringing back the attention to the present and how it will affect their future. This focus

on the present moment helps to build the relationship in time that the two have individually and as a couple, as they build their intimacy together<sup>21</sup>.

The couple discuss the finitude of their night together during a moment that emphasises the present-hedonistic focus of the film. Céline and Jesse had been walking around Vienna and exploring different locations for a while when they sit in a restaurant boat<sup>22</sup> for a moment. They discuss:

**Jesse:** ... everything is so finite, but don't you think that's what makes our time and specific moments so important?

**Céline:** Yeah, I know. It's the same for us tonight though. After tomorrow morning we're probably never gonna see each other again. Right?

[...]

**Céline:** Let's just be rational adults about this. Maybe we should try something different. Maybe it's not so bad if tonight is our only night, right? People always exchange phone numbers, addresses, they end up writing once, calling each other once or twice ...

[...]

**Jesse:** Do you think tonight's it? Tonight's our only night?

**Céline:** It's the only way, no?

**Jesse:** Alright let's do it. No delusions. No projections. We'll just make tonight great.

**Céline:** Ok, let's do that.

The camera shows this conversation in a shot-reverse shot and close-ups of their faces leaning towards each other, this frames their expressions throughout the exchange and leaves out the rest of their surroundings (see figure 22). These close-up shots reinforce the idea of bringing the attention to the *now* represented in the actors' face and corporeality corresponding to that moment in time. They do not have to worry about the past or the future, all that matters is the now. Even as to forget about the next day, they agree to say goodbye to each other right then and there so they "don't have to worry about it in the morning." This decision is one that, as

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<sup>21</sup> This particular passage also collaborates in the transversal reading of the trilogy, which I will address in a following section of this chapter discussing the trilogy as a whole.

<sup>22</sup> It is significant that the place where they pause to have the following conversation is still in a mode of transportation, even if this is not moving, which reinforces the aim to "stop time" and live the moment without thinking about past or future.

the present-hedonistic model discussed by Zimbardo and Boyd states, reveals little concern for the future in service of the present enjoyment. With the use of the close-up, the film here reinforces what Deleuze describes by saying: “The insertion of the close-up in this sense does not merely involve the enlargement of a detail, but produces the miniaturisation of the set, a reduction of the scene [...] And, more generally, by showing the way in which the characters live the scene of which they form part, the close-up endows the objective set with a subjectivity which equals or even surpasses it” (Deleuze, 2013:35). Here, Deleuze is thinking of the close up for spatial dimensions, the idea can be extrapolated in terms of temporality. What this means is an ‘enlargement’ of the present and a ‘miniaturisation’ of past and future. Furthermore, this close-up endows the “objective set” with the character’s subjectivity, which is one that prioritises the present moment over the objectively unstoppable passing of time.



Figure 22 Left: Close up of Céline. Right: Close up of Jesse. Both in *Before Sunrise* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Castle Rock Entertainment, USA, 1995)

However, the future is unavoidable. After a few other stops, the morning after comes, and they reach the end of their time together. It is not until this moment that they allow themselves to think about “more or less far-reaching plans for the future” (Stolarski *et al.*, 2016:557). Not wanting to say goodbye, they agree to meet six months from that day, on December 16th, 1994, at that same train station. Céline gets into the train that will take her to Paris, and Jesse walks away to catch his plane. The screen then cuts to show, in a chronological order, each of the places they were at the night before. Once containing the couple and vibrant scenes of Vienna’s night life, these spaces are now empty showing the morning’s early hours.

During *Before Sunset*’s opening credits, the film repeats what the previous film did by

showing images of empty places. However, this time they appear at the beginning instead of showing spaces where Céline and Jesse *had been*, it shows empty places where they *will be*. This repeats the practice of the previous film but creates a different temporal dynamic. Similarly, the narrative creates a sense of urgency from a time limitation the couple faces. At the beginning of the film, a sign outside the book store places the beginning of Jesse's Q&A at 5:30 pm, and knowing that he aimed to be at the airport at 7:30 pm establishes the time frame of the story within less than two hours and imposes a temporal constraint to the couple's time together. Yet again, Jesse has a plane to catch, and the clock is ticking. This duration plays at the level of the story told and of the moving images. In the story told, it impacts Céline and Jesse's meeting by imposing a short deadline to their encounter and adding pressure to their time together. But also, the duration of the film is the same as the story's. Namely, the hour and twenty minutes that the couple is together is the hour and twenty minutes of the film's duration. This returns to the formula from *Before Sunrise*, as sequels do, albeit with a twist that brings up new aspects of the time constraint the couple face.

In the same way as its predecessor, the characters in *Before Sunset* walk the streets of Paris having a conversation, but this time their conversation and interaction are different. They are like two old friends who are catching up with each other's lives, instead of getting to know each other for the first time. Their conversation is mostly focused on their pasts, telling each other what they have been doing those nine years since they last said goodbye. Similarly, the rhythm of their interaction is different. In Vienna, they were mostly wandering and killing time while waiting for Jesse's plane. Any character or place they encountered (like the palm reader, the poet, the belly dancer, the vinyl shop, bar, etc.) seemed like a good excuse to stop and have something new to talk about. This time, however, it is not possible; they are on the clock. Therefore, the time perspective is set towards the past and with an impending end forcing them

to make the most of each minute. For example, as the characters board a tourist boat on the Seine, both sit at the bow during its journey, and for most of the conversation, they look backwards, opposed to the boat's movement (see figure 23). During the boat ride, the shots of Céline and Jesse change from a shot-reverse shot of them talking, to a two shot. These two shots resembles their walks, except they are moving in the opposite direction. They face the road they have already travelled instead of what lies ahead, looking towards the past rather than the future. During this boat ride they open up about their feelings and how their separation affected them. Céline talks about the difficulty of getting over her past relationships, and Jesse confesses he is unhappy in his marriage and that he kept thinking about Céline during the months before his wedding day. The two of them feel disappointed with their pasts and believe their lives would have been different had they met in Vienna again.



Figure 23 Céline and Jesse go boating, looking back at Notre Dame in *Before Sunset* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Warner Independent Pictures, USA, 2004)

When they reach the dock, the day is nearing its end as the sun sets, filling the atmosphere with a sense of impending end. The shadows on the floor are long and steep, and the sunlight reflects on the Seine bouncing back at them creating a surrounding glow (see figure 24). The end of the day announces the end of their time together. Jesse's driver is waiting to take him to the airport, Céline begins to say goodbye, but Jesse does not want the conversation to stop so he offers to drive her home so they can keep talking (again on a moving vehicle). Jesse fights against time to make the most out of the meeting with Céline. In this encounter, the two are breaking with the usual routine of their unfulfilling lives and the clock pushes Jesse to make a choice between his old life and a new beginning with Céline. This is emphasised at

the end when, in the last minute, Jesse accepts and embraces the fact that he will miss his plane to fly back home.



Figure 24 The sunset reflects on the Seine as Céline and Jesse talk to Philippe in *Before Sunset* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Warner Independent Pictures, USA, 2004)

Nine years later, in *Before Midnight* the couple's new every-day is established in the first few scenes. After leaving his son at the airport, Jesse meets with Céline and their twin daughters revealing their new status as parents. During this car ride from the airport<sup>23</sup>, we follow the family for a thirteen-minute-long-take of the four of them. We get to see Céline and Jesse in their new normal, day-to-day life as parents. Through small details, and mannerisms, Hawke's and Delpy's performances show an air of familiarity, reliability, and confidence between them. For example, as Céline hangs up the phone, all she had to tell Jesse about it is "they voted against it" to which he replies, "I thought it was a done deal" showing they are well informed about each other's lives. Similarly, their non-verbal communication reflects their ease around each other, which was not the case in the previous two films. In *Before Sunrise* they were at an infatuation phase constantly kissing and hugging while in *Before Sunset*, they

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<sup>23</sup> It is worth noting the parallel between the car ride in *Before Sunrise* and the car ride in *Before Midnight*, where the differences between them emphasises the differences in their lives. For example, one is a car the other a family van, in one they are in the back seat, driven by someone else, in the other they are in the front seat, controlling the vehicle and where they go, etc.

were in a constant stand-off hesitating about each move. In *Before Midnight*, they are simultaneously “not bothered” and confident enough with each other’s presence to playfully pick and tease.

Similarly, their conversation during the car ride reveals the challenges and concerns of their lives as parents. For example, they choose to skip the ruins their daughters wanted to see but tell them they were closed; making Céline feel guilty about them as parents. This element of their new lives also reveals a time perspective into the future as they now evaluate their actions in terms of how they will affect their daughters. When Jesse eats Ella’s apple Céline takes her phone and records him while saying: “Ella, this is evidence of your father stealing food from you, if you become bulimic or anorexic it is not my fault, don’t blame it all on your mother.” This scene shows that Céline is wary of the impact and consequences their present actions can have on their daughters’ future. Similarly, her use of the phone is significant as a device on which to record and preserve<sup>24</sup> what was happening in the present for the future. (see figure 25). Most importantly, it is the concern for the impact on their children’s lives what will spark the main conflict between Céline and Jesse. Jesse talks about the difficulty of leaving Hank at the airport and the conversation veers toward the guilt that he feels about missing his son’s life. He points out that Hank is growing, and he is running out of time to be involved in his son’s life. Céline falls silent and believes this is Jesse’s way to ask her to move to Chicago. Her reaction is to make the mental calculations of what this will mean for their relationship pointing out their own expiring date:

Oh my god, this is where it ends. This is how people start breaking up. I’m marking this, this is the day you light the ticking bomb that will destroy our lives. This is how it happens. You’re unhappy, you blame it on the other person, resentment grows, everything slowly rots, and you break up.

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<sup>24</sup> Which can also be related to the way in which their past is recorded in the previous films and can be accessed to cross reference with each other. (Which, incidentally, is what I am doing in this thesis)



Through this expression, Céline imposes again a temporal condition to their conflict, expressing a foresight of their future as a couple.



Figure 25 Céline, Jesse, and their daughters in *Before Midnight* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Faliero House Productions, USA, 2013)

However, *Before Midnight* does not only set a perspective towards the future. It also shows how their lives have become a constant negotiation between the immanence of the past and the expectation of the future. When Céline and Jesse are gifted a night alone at a hotel, they can finally spend some quality time together. To get there, they find themselves in the familiar situation of walking side by side down the streets of a foreign city. This time, they are not surrounded by Vienna's lavish buildings or Paris's romantic gardens, but by the worn-out ruins in the Peloponnese coast (see figure, 26). Céline talks about how this situation is uncommon in their new life. Now that they have children, it is difficult for them to find time as a couple while caught in their everyday life as parents. Falling into a weariness and routine is a particular risk for long-lasting relationships "as the earlier experienced passion and mutual fascination often robustly decrease" (Sternberg in Stolarski *et al.*, 2016:553). The ruins that surround them become an analogy of the relationship they once had, and the risk of letting it wither. Both Céline and Jesse address this risk directly and indirectly during their conversation.



They talk about romanticising the prospect of dying together and Céline tells Jesse: “If you had asked me eighteen years ago, I might have said yes, but now, no, I wanna live!”. Similarly, Jesse expresses: “I just wish it was a little easier [...] to maintain a certain level of passion. It used to come so naturally”.



Figure 26 Céline and Jesse walking past ruins in Greece in *Before Midnight* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Faliero House Productions, USA, 2013)

The negotiation between the couple’s past and future becomes unavoidable to maintain their relationship afloat. As time passes, it becomes less clear that Céline and Jesse’s paths are compatible. The tensions and consequences that had been building for several years have begun to burst onto the surface. In an intense argument at the hotel, both Céline and Jesse voice their concerns for the future and the resentments from the past currently affecting their relationship. The argument constantly loops back to past events that are still affecting them, particularly the consequences of Jesse’s actions in *Before Sunset*. Similarly, the routines and rhythms of their everyday life have taken a toll on them. Céline expresses the fears and frustrations of her unceasing role as a mother taking care of their daughters and picking up after her family. The climax of the film is this discussion as it reveals the constant negotiation of past and present to define the future of the couple. Reaching the end, Céline storms out of the room declaring to

Jesse the bottom line: she does not love him anymore.

The final scene takes place at night, in an outside take on a terrace where Céline is sitting by herself next to the sea with a sad expression. Jesse arrives a few seconds later role-playing an oblivious stranger that wants to join her. Céline replies by saying she does not talk to strangers, Jesse tells her “That’s the thing, I’m not a stranger, we’ve met before. Summer of ’94” referencing the events in *Before Sunrise*. They then begin a whole new conversation that explores a different side of their time perspectives, where Jesse reminds Céline of when they fell in love eighteen years ago in that train and how they made each other feel. Then, in the same way he convinced Céline to get off the train with him that day, he tells her a time travelling story into the future:

I’m not trying to pick you up you misunderstood me. I’m only here as a messenger. I’ve just travelled all the way from the future. I was just with your 82-year-old self who gave me a letter to read to you. [...] I am sending you this young man. Yes, young - and he will be your escort. God knows, he has many problems and has struggled his whole life connecting and being present even with those he loves the most. And for that he is deeply sorry, but you are his only hope. Céline, my advice to you is this: you are entering the best years of your life. Looking back from where I sit now these middle years are only a little bit more difficult than when you were twelve and Mathieu and Vanessa danced all night to the Bee Gee’s “How deep is your love.” Céline, you will be fine. Your girls will grow up to become examples and icons of feminism.

Similarly, to what he did when he first asked her to get off the train with him, he uses a time-travelling thought experiment from the future toward the present as a way to gain a distinct perspective about the moment at hand. Through this last conversation, the film not only creates a connection with the past events from the previous film, but it also makes a reflection of the constant flux and interplay of past, present, and future. In the same way that the films have been repeating their past formulas and styles to create their patterns, with the various differences to move the story forward, Jesse’s speech provides a foresight towards a future that will do the same.

At first, Céline resists Jesse's efforts to make her laugh and asks him to stop playing around. When he lets her know, he is trying to make things better, but he will not keep doing it forever. The camera stays on them as they stay silent, looking away from each other with heartbroken expressions (see figure 27). Céline then sighs and asks: "Well, what about this time machine?" and they begin to talk again in their role-playing personas. The camera starts slowly moving away to a long shot as if releasing the tension of the fight to a moment when they get back to being free and comfortable around each other (see figure 28). Segal mentions how "Varieties of playing, uses of illusion, can thus be seen as the threads of continuity that enable us to differentiate and recapitulate past experiences as we negotiate the crises of middle and old age" (Segal, 2014:25). By asking Céline to imagine herself as an eighty-two-year-old looking back at her middle age years, Jesse is making use of illusions and play to re-evaluate their temporal experiences under a different light and modulate their crises. Céline expresses this juxtaposition of temporalities with the last quote of the film as she says: "It must have been one hell of a night we're about to have."



*Figure 27* Medium shot of Jesse and Céline after their fight in *Before Midnight* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Faliero House Productions, USA, 2013)



*Figure 28* Long shot of Jesse and Céline reconciling in *Before Midnight* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Faliero House Productions, USA, 2013)

## Unrecorded Existence

As I have elaborated above, each film of the *Before Trilogy* marks a particular moment in the lives of the characters, with its specific physical and psychological time, which affects the way they relate to each other, to themselves and to time. When the films are put together, the differences between them are illuminated, and the question becomes how did they get from one place to the other? From one state to the other? From point A to point B to point C? This is when we need to turn our gaze towards the nine years in between each of the instances and “fill the gaps” that separate the character’s recorded existence. Asking these questions, and thinking about the ways to fill these gaps, reveals the continuous processes of change that the characters go through from one film to the other.

Sura M. Khrais’s text on 'Reader Response Theory' (2017), brings attention to how the gaps in a literary text contribute to create meaning through the connections made by the reader within the text. Khrais argues that gaps in the literary text are the main reason for going back to a text and revisiting it. She follows Wolfgang Iser’s idea that “once a gap is identified as a gap, it ceases to be a gap” and, as such, they become open for interpretation and have power over the reader to control her (Khrais, 2017:28). In other words, the gaps in the literary text forced the reader to re-evaluate the text by filling these gaps with her interpretations. As Khrais notes: “the reader manages to create connections and rearrange details in the correct chronological order” (Khrais, 2017:30). Furthermore, she explains the reader fills these gaps because there is a sense of the text as a unified entity, which prompts them to keep this unity and consistency. She expresses how “these two purposes do not lie within the text, rather they exist somewhere between the text and the consciousness of the reader” (Khrais, 2017:29) These gaps, become guidelines from the author to the reader on how to engage with the text.

Khrais's argument can also be related to Christine Geraghty's idea of the 'unrecorded existence' in the radio and television serial. Through reference to the radio soap *The Archers*, she describes this stating:

Significantly, *The Archers*, on the other hand, is announced as 'the *everyday* story of country folk' even though it is only every weekday. There is an appeal here to the audience's experience of time in the real world, as if we get through our own personal events during a day and then tune in to discover what has happened in Ambridge that day. This feeling is usefully described, in terms of the novel, by Carl Grabo as being the convention of 'unchronicled growth.' 'In the novel,' he argues, 'when the story shifts from one sub-plot to another, the characters abandoned pursue an unrecorded existence' (Grabo, 1978, p. 67). The characters in a serial, when abandoned at the end of an episode, pursue an 'unrecorded existence' until the next one begins. In other words, we are aware that day-to-day life has continued in our absence even though the problem we left at the end of the previous episode has still to be resolved. (Geraghty, 1981:10)

What the idea of this unrecorded existence enables is the continuation of the characters' lives in a virtual reality beyond their actualised selves on screen. In the case of the continuous serial that Geraghty describes, it aligns the time of the character's 'existence' to the day-to-day life of the audience. In the *Before Trilogy*, the nine years that passed between the production of one film and the other in real life are also represented in the characters' lives, even if unrecorded. As I have described above, Jesse and Céline's recorded existence is one that takes place in the everyday as a unit of time, but it also shows how this day-to-day life continues even if not recorded. Their unrecorded lives take place in a virtual plane of existence different from the actualised version that is shown on the screen. As discussed in the previous chapter, through Dedekind's method of cuts Deleuze theorises the continuum of time despite the coexistence of virtual and actual events. However, I will now focus more closely on what occurs within the virtual segments of the continuum. This plane of existence can be explained through Deleuze's idea of the out-of-field.

For Deleuze, "the visual image has a legible function beyond its visible function" (Deleuze, 2013:19). Namely, one can 'read' and infer more information about the image beyond

what is merely seen. In this case, Deleuze uses the concept of the out-of-field in a spatial way regarding the function of the set, the frame, and the shot. He even calls the shot “a uniquely spatial determination, indicating a ‘slice of space’” (Deleuze, 2013:28). In other words, the function of the frame is to establish the shot by selecting the parts of the set that it wants to reveal. He also states that: “the frame works like a mobile mask according to which every set is extended into a larger homogeneous set with which it communicates, and sometimes it works as a pictorial frame which isolates a system and neutralises its environment” (Deleuze, 2013:19). In other words, out of a whole of the set, the frames select what parts of that set or whole to include in the shot that will be shown at a certain point of the film. The out-of-field is what is left outside of the frame but is still part of the set and the whole. The out-of-field for Deleuze “refers to what is neither seen nor understood but is nevertheless perfectly present” (Deleuze, 2013:19). For Deleuze, “all framing determines an out-of-field” (Deleuze, 2013:19). This means that every time a part of the whole is selected by the frame, other parts of that whole have been necessarily left out:

This is the first sense of what we call the out-of-field: when a set is framed, therefore seen, there is always a larger set, or another set with which the first forms a larger one, and which can in turn be seen, on condition that it gives rise to a new out-of-field, etc. The set of all these sets forms a homogeneous continuity, a universe, or a plane of genuinely unlimited content. (Deleuze, 2013:20)

Therefore, sometimes what is left beyond the frame enables an interaction with what is within it, space, and action [can] go beyond the limits of the frame (Deleuze, 2013:19), either by moving the camera towards what had been left out, or through the interaction of the framed elements with those outside of it. For example, a conversation between two people of which only one is on screen and the other is heard, or the spatial continuations of a set outside the frame. In this sense, Deleuze appoints two qualitatively distinct aspects to the out-of-field. On the one hand: “a relative aspect by means of which a closed system refers in space to a set which is not seen, and which can in turn be seen, even if this gives rise to a new unseen set, on

to infinity” (Deleuze, 2013:20). In this case, the out-of-field “designates that which exists elsewhere” (Deleuze, 2013:21) that which can be taking place next to what is framed, or around the corner of the shot. On the other hand, there is “an absolute aspect by which the closed system opens on to a duration which is immanent to the whole universe, which is no longer a set and does not belong to the order of the visible” (Deleuze, 2013:20) In this case, “the out-of-field testifies to a more disturbing presence, one which cannot even be said to exist, but rather ‘insist’ or ‘subsist’, a more radical Elsewhere, outside homogeneous space and time” (Deleuze, 2013:21). Therefore, there will always be two parts of the out-of-field, “the actualisable relation with the sets, and the virtual relation with the whole” (Deleuze, 2013:21). This later aspect of the out-of-field, however, turns it into a mental image, “open on to a play of relations which are purely thought, and which weave a whole” (Deleuze, 2013:21). These spatial conditions of the out-of-field can also be extrapolated to the temporalities of the *Before Trilogy* to reveal the play of relations that weave the films together.

In the same way that Deleuze refers to the shot as ‘slice of space,’ each of the films in the trilogy are a ‘slice of time’ (which we are more used to calling a “moment” in time). The framing at play is not a part of a set, but a moment in time. As I have developed above, each of the films in the trilogy frames a specific moment in the lives and relationship of Céline and Jesse, *Before Sunrise* frames the time when they were twenty-three and had just met, along with the specific aspects of this temporality; *Before Sunset* frames the moment when they are thirty-two and find each other again in Paris; and *Before Midnight* frames the moment in time when they are forty-one and they face a crux between their old life and their new one. However, as Deleuze states, all framing determines an out-of-field. Consequently, this framing of time leaves out a temporal out-of-field. In the case of the films in the *Before Trilogy* what is left out in terms of time is what happened before, what happened after, and, what happened



simultaneously. But what is more importantly brought to our attention in terms of temporality, are the nine-year gaps in between the instances. These gaps, aligned to Khrais' theory, become guidelines for how to engage with the text and, most importantly, once they are identified as gaps, they cease to be a gap. They become ways to re-evaluate and engage with the texts by filling them with our interpretations and the character's unrecorded existence in line with Geraghty's writing on the continuous serial. Similarly, filling these gaps becomes a way to keep the text's unity and homogeneous consistency within the whole turning it into 'a play of relations which are pure thought.' Following Deleuze, the imagined content for these temporal gaps comes from "a plane [*plan*] of genuinely unlimited content", yet there are elements within the framed moments that interact with out-of-field moments creating connections and relations that narrow the unlimited content of that plane. Jean Wyatt identifies "a common-sense account of temporal sequence" where "the author writes a progression that sets up a pattern, and the patterning invites certain inferences from a reader" (Wyatt, 2018:113). Therefore, through the interactions of the in-frame and the out-of-field, as well as the patterns that the films of the trilogy establishes (such as the characters' conversations, their histories, interests, beliefs, and identities), it is possible to infer the relevant contents of the temporal out-of-frame.

Many events take place in the virtual plane between the films. These are prominently revealed through the character's conversation. Even if unrecorded, these events still inform the narrative. For example, same as Jesse, we find out that Céline was living in the U.S. from 1996 to 1999 as she studied at NYU. Even without a direct effect on the recorded events, this event emphasises the importance of chance, serendipity, and fate that the films constantly play with. Furthermore, there are other unrecorded events that directly affect the narrative and the direction that the relationship takes. One of the main and most conspicuous unrecorded events is the couple's promised meeting on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1994. After Céline and Jesse promise to

meet each other six months later, the ending of *Before Sunrise* only shows the two riding away from each other before the credits start to roll. The film leaves an open question about whether they meet or not. Had this been the only film made about their story this question would never had been answered. However, the sequel was released, and it became a cliff-hanger similar those in serials, where “the cliff-hanger formally differentiates the serial from the complete novel or film.” (Geraghty, 1981:13) thereby connecting the two stories by this open question: Did they or didn’t they meet six months later? The parent film poses the question, and the sequel provides the answer.

The significance of this question is addressed in *Before Sunset* right away. During the scene of Jesse’s Q&A at Shakespeare and Company, an attendee asks Jesse about the ambiguous ending of the book: “We don’t know, do you think they get back together in six months? Like they promised each other.” As the attendee asks these questions, there are flashbacks to *Before Sunrise* when Céline and Jesse are saying goodbye and making this promise. Jesse’s answers: “it’s a good test, right? If you are a romantic or a cynic” and then refuses to give a definite answer. From this exchange we know that Jesse’s book ends in the same way as *Before Sunrise* did, without an answer about their promised meeting, which reveals the films’ self-awareness. Both in the parent film as in Jesse’s book, the question of whether they meet becomes an enigma through which the audience engages with the texts. As a complete text, the question would have functioned in the way Jesse proposes: a “good test” of what the spectator’s personal conjectures and inclinations might be. But as Geraghty explains, the audience is left with questions and the different directions the story could take are frozen until the next episode (Geraghty, 1981:14). The difference here, however, is that, after nine years, when the next instalment of the trilogy was released, the direction that the story took was not frozen. The characters moved on with their lives after the ending of the film. This

maintains the films' similarity to the continuous serial by employing an episodic format that emphasises its continuity, although their use of time all the more poignant. To learn the answer to the question, the attention is turned towards the unrecorded years. Furthermore, in this way, a cliff-hanger whose function would have seemed to engage the audience through the solving the mystery, becomes one that encourages involvement with the characters, even during unrecorded times.

The revelation of what happened is also significant to the patterns for reading the films. After Jesse sees Céline in the bookstore, she asks: "Before we go anywhere, I have to ask you ... did you show up in Vienna that December?" This line immediately prompts several inferences. It reveals that Céline did not make it to their date, so the meeting did not happen, but it is still unclear if Jesse showed up. After Céline asks the question, he waits a moment and then asks: "did you?" Céline explains that she did not make it because her grandmother passed, the same grandmother she had gone to visit to Budapest the time she met Jesse, and the reason she was on the train. This is another event that took place in the temporal out-of-field of the film. However, as they continue to talk about it, Céline realises that, if Jesse was not there either, he "better have a good reason"; she also wonders about Jesse's simultaneous unrecorded life. After Céline asks this, Jesse is framed awkwardly looking to the side and back staring at her in silence with a conflicted expression on his face. After a few seconds, we see Céline's face turn into an expression of realisation and remorse. She understands simply from Jesse's silence what really happened that day. She reads Jesse's expression and fills the gaps between the events that she is aware of. The images and the choreography of the montage changing from Céline's to Jesse's expressions provide a visual way in which the narrative of the story reveals how these unspoken events played out, completing the overall plot<sup>25</sup> (see figure 29).

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<sup>25</sup> David Bordwell addresses more of the nuances between story world, plot structure and narrative in his *Poetics*



Figure 29 Céline inferring that Jesse did show up to their meeting in *Before Sunset* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Warner Independent Pictures, USA, 2004)

Similarly, it is possible to infer many other developments of the unrecorded years by examining their repercussions during the recorded ones. The films provide some of the pieces to make a mental image of those events that are missing. For example, the film reveals Jesse made it to the train station on December 16th, 1994, he was in Vienna a couple of days, went back to the train station and put up signs of his phone number. *Before Sunrise* also provides some of the pieces to make a mental image of this event. It gives the image of Vienna's train station (see figure 30) and of Jesse six months before that happened (see figure 31). Tailoring these to better fit that moment, one can construct the mental image of Jesse placing the signs of his phone number. One could think about how, since it was December, he may have worn a winter coat instead of a T-shirt and leather jacket, and maybe he stood there and looked around trying to find Céline. One could even think about a cinematic montage showing how the hours passed as he waited. Throughout *Before Sunset*, there are many moments like these that are exposed as part of what happened during the unrecorded years; Jesse got married and had a

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of Cinema (2008) where he explains: "... the story world is similar to the semantic dimension of language, the plot structure is comparable to grammatical or syntactic structure, and narration is comparable to the verbal style, as governed by pragmatic context." (Bordwell, 2008: 90).

son, Céline began dating her boyfriend, Jesse wrote the book that brought them together, Céline wrote the song she sings to Jesse. All these events become part of the accumulation of events that form their lives, and they invite the spectator to create these mental images that become mental images of time, pure thought.



*Figure 30 Vienna Train station in Before Sunrise (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Castle Rock Entertainment, USA, 1995)*



*Figure 31 Jesse at the train station in Before Sunrise (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Castle Rock Entertainment, USA, 1995)*

Because of the continuity of the story during the unrecorded years, the characters are not only confronted with answers to questions posed by the film's cliff-hangers, but also with

the ramifications and consequences of those answers accumulating upon each other. Geraghty explains how the continual postponement of a final resolution gives the serial “the sense of a future” (Geraghty, 1981:11), rather than offering a satisfactory closure all events create new circumstances and ramifications<sup>26</sup>. This becomes particularly crucial for the plot of *Before Midnight* as it directly opens with the consequences and ramifications of the couple’s actions from the previous films. Jesse did miss his plane, stayed with Céline, and the two live in Paris; this means that he left his now ex-wife and his son, Hank, behind to do it. The first scene of *Before Midnight* begins with a teenage Hank and a much older Jesse dropping him off for his flight back to the U.S. where he lives with his mother. The scene goes on to show a constant miscommunication between Jesse and Hank, as Jesse keeps making unsuccessful efforts to have a conversation with his adolescent son.

The lack of communication between Jesse and his son shows a disconnect between them. One can infer this disconnection is caused by the distance and Jesse’s absence from his son’s life since Hank is now a teenager. Either way, nine years separate the four-year-old toddler that lived with his father and the now thirteen-year-old Hank boarding the plane by himself. Moreover, the exchange between them reveals several obstacles, directly caused by Jesse’s actions on the previous film, that intervene in Jesse’s ability to connect with his son, such as his divorce and moving to a different country (see figure 32). This first scene sets the foundation of the challenges permeating the story from that moment on.

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<sup>26</sup> In the continuous serial, events such as a wedding, which would offer a suitable ending in other forms of narration, usually open up new narrative circumstances to extend the character’s storyline beyond it. (Geraghty, 1981:11)



Figure 32 Jesse looking at his son as he leaves the airport in *Before Midnight* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Faliero House Productions, USA, 2013)

Similarly, right after, there is another significant moment revealing what happened during the unrecorded years that is carefully choreographed as such. Jesse takes one last look at Hank, then turns around tracked by the camera as he heads toward the exit. When he crosses the door, the score ups its tempo into a more cheerful melody; signifying the two distinct aspects of his life: the sadness of having to let Hank go, and the joy of his life with Céline and their daughters (see figure 33). Jesse's new family is revealed in the fifty seconds that this scene takes place<sup>27</sup>, time in which the film gives a lot of information about what happened after Jesse missed his plane (see image 34). He stayed with Céline, they built a life together, and they are not only a couple, but parents of twin girls. Additionally, the corporeality of the twins shows they are grown up children, meaning they became parents shortly after the events in *Before Sunset*. The approximate age of their daughters gives us information about the circumstances of their relationship; their situation as a family is not something recent, they have had to deal with the challenges posed by having children for years.

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<sup>27</sup> David Bordwell writes about this in relation to classical Hollywood narrative and the great economy of its storytelling through his inferential model of narration. (Bordwell, 2008:93)





Figure 33 Céline is revealed outside the airport in *Before Midnight* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Faliero House Productions, USA, 2013)



Figure 34 The camera pausing at Nina and Ella sleeping in the car in *Before Midnight* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Faliero House Productions, USA, 2013)

As the film moves forward, the information of their unrecorded existence keeps adding up. The information about the couple's past becomes a crucial component with which to interpret their present and future. Without the temporal gap between *Before Sunrise* and *Before Midnight*, it is strange to think of the couple they *were* in 2003 turning into the couple they *are* in 2012. Different processes and events must have taken place to result in this transformation; from missing their second meeting at Vienna, Jesse getting married and then leaving his wife



and son after he is reunited with Céline, the family they form together after that. All these unrecorded events create the situation they are facing in *Before Midnight*. But furthermore, it is the accumulation of events that began since 1994 that allows for an understanding of the character's development and their relationship. In this way, by putting together the different films, and filling the gaps in their temporal out-of-field, we can create the bigger picture of the trilogy as one and the same whole and the *time* it has taken to come into being. Or as Deleuze states, by unifying “the actualisable relation with the sets, and the virtual relation with the whole.” (Deleuze, 2013:21)

To summarise, following Khrais's theory on literary gaps, Geraghty's idea of the unrecorded existence and Deleuze's concept of the out-of-field, in this section I have elaborated how the temporal gaps are still addressed by the films and become an important part of the macro-fabula. The out of field shows how the gaps become a way to connect the parts and create a continuum that forms the whole. Similarly, Geraghty's unrecorded existence helps to understand how these gaps become filled with the virtual existence of the characters as they move through time. Looking at the films and their narrative in their entirety we get the scope of this continuity and how they create meaning diachronically. I will now continue to explore how, by putting together both recorded and unrecorded events, the trilogy becomes a unity showing that the whole is bigger than the sum of its parts.

## Life Time & the Whole

The first part of this chapter discusses how looking at the films individually, means looking at them from a perspective of the day-to-day life. However, the films' awareness of time is not only about the character as isolated entities, but also how the characters' age influences their place within a temporal context. This is illustrated when Céline and Jesse join

their Greek hosts for dinner on their last night as guests in *Before Midnight*. When couples from different generations gather around the table their looks, ideas, experiences, and relationships are juxtaposed and encompassed by the same temporal frame. These are all heterosexual couples, highlighting the heteronormative narrative of the trilogy, but it also brings attention to their temporal rather than gendered differences. There is the young couple, Anna, and Achilleas; the middle agers Ariadni and Stefanos, as well as Céline and Jesse; and the widowers, Patrick, and Natalia (see figure 2.23 and 2.24). Both visually and through their conversation, this sequence shows how the couples relate to the moment in life they are living. For example, Anna and Achilleas have just been together for a year, they talk romantically about the time they met and how they keep in touch with each other via Skype. The experience of this young couple and how they exist in this slice of time highlights the generational differences amongst the other dinner guests. For example, comparing how things could have played out for Céline and Jesse had they met in the digital era when there are so many ways keep in touch and/or find someone even from the other side of the world. Contrastingly, Céline and Jesse, alongside Stefanos and Ariadni, talk about the difficulties of a mature marriage in a more cynical way, sometimes with passive-aggressive remarks about each other. Meanwhile, Patrick and Natalia share their experiences of losing a partner; the older guests framed individually (see figure 35) while the three couples are framed in a two shot (see figure 36) highlighting the absence of their better half taken away by time.

The coexistence of the different couples aligns with Ernst Bloch's idea of synchronous nonsynchronicity (*ungleichzeitige Gleichzeitigkeit*) as mentioned in Rita Felski's *Doing Time*, which "acknowledges that we inhabit both the same time and different times: individuals coexist at the same historical moment, yet often make sense of this moment in strikingly disparate ways" (Felski, 2000:3). In this scene, the different couples coexist at the same

historical moment, namely, that afternoon of 2012. However, each of them makes sense of that moment in diverse ways. For the younger couple, this event happens nearer to the beginning of their lives and have a broader future before them. Meanwhile for the older widowers, the weight of their pasts is heavier than their future's. There are several cues in the conversation among the guests that highlights how they all experience their present differently. For example, young Achilles pointing out that his grandfather has let him sit at “the grown-ups’ table” inferring this is something new to him. Or, when they consider the possibility of a computer “writing a better novel than *War and Peace*” older Patrick jumps to say that “It’ll never happen” as his grandson corrects him “it is more a question of *when* it’ll happen” showing how they have different views of the possibilities of the future. While this dinner highlights the differences of these coexisting couples, the trilogy shows that these are only impermanent states. Céline and Jesse’s relationship once was where Anna and Achilles’s is; it has evolved and developed in multiple ways throughout time and could very well be where Patrick’s and Natalia’s are in the future. This moment is only a slice of the continuum, same as the other films of the trilogy.



Figure 35 Xenia Kalogeropoulou as Natalia and Walter Lassally as Patrick framed in individual shots in *Before Midnight* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Faliero House Productions, USA, 2013)



Figure 36 Different generations at the table in *Before Midnight* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Faliro House Productions, USA, 2013)

Understanding the parts and their connection allows us to understand the whole. After developing the different parts of the trilogy in the above sections – both the recorded and the unrecorded – it is possible to see the films under the light of ‘the Whole.’ Looking at the films from an ‘everyday time’ with their specific time perspectives (physical and psychological) shows the specific challenges that the characters face at a certain age and their social meanings, but their transition from one part to the other shows their becoming. To look at the films as one, it is necessary to change the perspective of time into Felski’s second temporal level: the life time. Felski describes this level as:

The way we make sense of our identities by endowing them with a temporal Gestalt. It is the process of understanding one’s life as a project that encompasses and connects the random segments of daily experience. It is the creation of oneself as an autobiographical subject and the act of reflecting on one’s existence and finitude. This aspect of the culture of time has received considerable attention from feminist scholars of autobiography, who have explored the different ways women and men have imbued their lives with shape and meaning. (Felski, 2000:17)

What is most relevant about this definition is the notion of how this temporal level “encompasses and connects the random segments of daily experience.” For the *Before Trilogy*, this means to create a notion of unity that encompasses and connects the different segments that have been given. Although Felski discusses “random” segments, it is significant to note

that in the *Before Trilogy* we are presented with carefully crafted key moments in the lives of Céline and Jesse. These become milestones that in great part define their life time even more so than other random events.

Following this process requires a mental exercise of thinking about the whole composed by these elements. For this, Deleuze's notion of the whole becomes useful, as he states:

The Whole can only be thought, because it is the indirect representation of time which follows from movement. It does not follow like a logical effect, analytically, but synthetically as the dynamic effect of images 'on the whole cortex.' Thus, it relies on montage, although it follows from the image: it is not a sum, but a 'product', a unity of a higher order. The whole is the organic totality which presents itself by opposing and overcoming its own parts, and which is constructed like the great Spiral in accordance with the laws of dialectic. (Deleuze, 2013:163).

Deleuze states that: "if one had to define the whole, it would be defined by relation" (Deleuze, 2003: 11). In other words, the unity of the whole is produced by the relations between its near and distant parts (Deleuze, 2003:31) A way to think about these relations between the parts is through Deleuze's concept of transversality. This concept is born with Deleuze's reading of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (1913–1927) (Deleuze, 2003) as he also conceptualises the relations between the characters and worlds of Proust's work (Proust, 2002). He describes that his work:

... consists in establishing transversals that cause us to leap from one of Albertine's profiles to the other, from one Albertine to another, from one world to another, from one word to another without ever reducing the many to the One without ever gathering up the multiple into a whole, but affirming the original unity of precisely that multiplicity, affirming without uniting all these irreducible fragments. (Deleuze, 2003:126)

These leaps from one profile to the other, and one world to the other derive from a passage in Proust where he describes looking through the windows of a moving train. In one of them he saw a pink sky, then moved to another and caught the glimpse this time of a red sky. The narrator describes running from one window to another "to relate, to remount the intermittent and opposite fragments [...] to gain a total view of it, a continuous picture." For Deleuze, this

passage invokes a continuity of the coloured sky of which the narrator can only apprehend but fragments, yet the essential point is that its totality is elaborated “neither in the viewpoint nor in the thing seen, but in the transversal, from one window to the other” (Deleuze, 2003:185)

In the *Before Trilogy* the story of Céline and Jesse begins in a moving train, and in a similar way to Proust’s narrator, each film gives a different viewpoint of physical and psychological times. Therefore, the films move us from one window to another in a transversal whole. Similarly, the way in which the narrator spatially changes from one window to the other, is extrapolated by Deleuze in temporal terms, explaining how time signifies a “system of non-spatial distances [...] distances without intervals.” In which lost time “introduces distances between contiguous things” and time regained “establishes contiguity of distant things” (Deleuze, 2003:129). The *Before Trilogy* creates its totality through the transversal of physical and psychological times, from one of the couple’s profiles to the other, in which time is the transversal that affirms their differences (Deleuze, 2003:126). Through these relations, “the whole is transformed or changes qualitatively” (Deleuze, 2013:11). Thinking of the whole becomes a way to prevent the sets to close in on themselves (Deleuze, 2013:20), or in terms of the *Before Trilogy*, thinking about the whole is how to think of the films, not as closed sets in themselves, but as parts of a bigger picture. This whole for Deleuze is weaved together through the mental images and play of the relation between the parts that are “purely thought” (Deleuze, 2013:21). This means that, through the transversality of the parts the *Before Trilogy* provides, one is capable of weaving together the open whole to which they belong. Weaving these parts together becomes a way of transversal reading from one timeline to the other, and one place to the other connecting times, characters, and worlds in the way Deleuze’s Proust brings out the essence of the story.

This approach does not cease to include the recorded and unrecorded parts of the films. Following Deleuze's claim: "Jealousy is the transversal of love's multiplicity; travel, the transversal of the multiplicity of places; sleep, the transversal of the multiplicity of moments" (Deleuze, 2003:126), in the *Before Trilogy*, the out-of-field is the transversal of the films' multiplicity. In this case, the unrecorded parts of the out-of-field become what Deleuze calls false continuities. False continuities for Deleuze are the "breaks and ruptures" that are always present even if continuity is re-established after these ruptures (like Hölderlein's caesura and Dedekind's cuts discussed in Chapter 1). They are what show that "the whole is not here." However, he explains how the whole is not reducible to either continuities or ruptures. For him, "far from breaking up the whole, false continuities are the act of the whole" (Deleuze, 2013:32). Deleuze also explains that "the whole is not here" *because* "the whole is not givable" because it is the Open, and because its nature is to change constantly" (Deleuze, 2013:10). To express this constant change of the whole, he uses an example first given by Bergson where he puts sugar in a glass of water and then waits for the sugar to dissolve. This dissolution makes the water *transform* into sugary water, changing what it *is*. For Deleuze this means a qualitative transformation given by the relations of the parts, sugar + water, and the waiting to be transformed, the duration; "my waiting, whatever it be, expresses a duration as mental, spiritual reality" (Deleuze, 2013:10). Furthermore, he adds, "each time we find ourselves confronted with a duration, or in duration, we may conclude that there exists somewhere a whole which is changing" (Deleuze, 2013:10). It is through duration and through waiting that the whole changes. In the *Before Trilogy*, the nine years in between the films become prominently how waiting and duration qualitatively transform the whole and its parts. This is the temporal equivalent of what Deleuze says about how "travel does not connect places, but affirms only their difference" (Deleuze, 2003:126).

Seeing each film as a framed moment in time allows to think of them as “no longer the object of geometric divisions, but of physical gradations” (Deleuze, 2013:18) albeit as *temporal* gradations. Looking at the films this way, shows the character’s process of ageing and growth, where each film is part of the temporal gradation. In the same way as Proust’s narrator sees the pink and red of the sky through different windows, we see twenty-three-, thirty-two- and forty-one-year-old Céline and Jesse through these frames (see figures 37 and 38): as moments of transversality in a continuum. Therefore, experiencing the different ages of the characters allows to grasp more closely the process of ageing *as a process* rather than a fixed state. In ‘The Challenge of Cultural Gerontology’, Julia Twigg and Wendy Martin argue: “Integrating age into debates around identity also provokes an understanding of ageing as a process rather than a state, a structuring principle that operates throughout the life course” (Twigg and Martin, 2015:355). In other words, understanding the *process* of ageing as part of people’s identity helps to see said identity also as a process in itself, a becoming rather than a fixed state. Similarly, in her analysis of the process of ageing, Segal writes:

As we age, changing year on year, we also retain, in one manifestation or another, traces of all the selves we have been, creating a type of temporal vertigo and rendering us psychically, in one sense, all ages and no age. [...] Thus, the older we are the more we encounter the world through a complex layering of identity, attempting to negotiate the shifting present while grappling with the disconcerting images of the old thrust so intrusively upon us. (Segal, 2014:4)

Namely, we becomes an accumulation of all the various instants we have lived, rather than just a change of state; it is a form of difference and repetition where, as we get older, we retain all we have been plus all the new and different layers we keep adding to our existence in time. It brings out the essence of the individual as described by Deleuze as an “individuating viewpoint [surmounting] the entire chain of individual association” reminding us of “the self that has experience the entire chain” (Deleuze, 2003:119). When we see the characters of Céline and Jesse, they are in a constant becoming, and by the time we get to *Before Midnight*, they have become the product of all their layers of existence.





Figure 37 Julie Delpy as Céline in *Before Sunrise*, *Before Sunset* and *Before Midnight*



Figure 38 Ethan Hawke as Jesse in *Before Sunrise*, *Before Sunset* and *Before Midnight*

These individual processes show each character's changing relationship to time and the difficulties that it poses. The analysis of the everyday time in Céline and Jesse's relationship shows how, from this perspective, they have had similar physical and psychological times as a couple. However, analysing their journey from a life time perspective shows how each of them relates to time differently as individuals. Since *Before Sunrise*, Céline tells Jesse: "I always have this strange feeling that I am this very old woman lying down about to die, you know? That my life is just memories or something". Conversely, Jesse replies: "That's wild, I always think that I am still this thirteen-year-old boy who doesn't really know how to be an adult. Pretending to live my life, taking notes for when I really have to do it", and in reference to their first kiss Céline adds: "That's funny, then up there in the Ferris wheel was this very old woman

kissing this very young boy.” The image of the two kissing in that Ferris wheel (see figure 39) shows two people of the same age, yet Céline brings up a mental image of an old lady kissing an old boy that juxtaposes their physical time and momentary psychological time to their lifetime perspectives.



Figure 39 Céline and Jesse kissing in *Before Sunrise* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Castle Rock Entertainment, USA, 1995)

As the story of a heterosexual couple and their romantic relationship in the long-term, the films bring up the juxtaposition of the two distinct gender experiences of time between a cis man and a cis woman. This brings up a discussion about how individuals relate to time and how self-identity affects this relationship. Firstly, there are multiple feminist matters that are raised in Céline’s journey throughout the films. In each of them, Céline reveals how her career and professional development are a priority in her life. In *Before Sunrise* she discusses her studies in La Sorbonne, and the conversations she had with her parents about her career prospects; in *Before Sunset* she talks about her work at the environmental organisation and how passionate she feels about it, and finally in *Before Midnight* her job offer is central in her conflict with Jesse. Céline’s career is significant to her, but this also clashes with her desire for love, a romantic relationship, and her social and personal role as a mother.

This clash between her professional and personal life is also a constant theme in the trilogy regardless of her age. In *Before Sunrise* she expresses her concern about “the pressure of being a strong and independent icon of womanhood” and the difficulties that this poses for balancing a romantic relationship; in *Before Sunset* how she insists she is an independent person in her professional life and does not need a man to feed her, but she still needs a man to love her and that she can love. Then in *Before Midnight*, at an emotional moment of her discussion with Jesse, she says to him: “Very few people realise what is like for an active and passionate woman to have a child [...] You know what my secret fear is with every man? It is that they all want to turn me into a submissive housewife.” Each film shows a different stage in how Céline navigates the complexities of her professional aspirations and her emotional life, even as we see how the challenges are different at each age for her, the struggle she faces throughout her life time has been consistent.

Similarly, Céline’s vision of herself as an older woman looking at her life like in a dream, or a memory relates to the complex issues between women and old age. Lynne Segal argues how even if “Ageing affects us all, and affects us all differently, [...] it is women who have often reported a very specific horror of ageing. It is associated, of course, with the place of the body, and fertility, in women’s lives.” (Segal, 2014:13). Segal elaborates on how ageing for women is both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, as women age, they lose many of the things for which they are valued in society like their good looks, body, and fertility. This in turn makes them invisible, neglected or sometimes even dreaded (Segal, 2014:13). However, there is also the other side of the coin where some insist that “women should celebrate older age as a time when we are ‘free at last,’ free from the shackles of sexuality.” (Segal, 2014:91) As Many women who report a renewed life after the menopause and beyond, when they can establish new, vibrant connections in and with life. Segal also talks about the stance of ageing

around feminist issues from its beginnings, and for this she uses Simone de Beauvoir's writings on the matter, for whom "'old age' is an Other which lives within everyone, whatever our age" (Segal, 2014:10). This relates directly to Céline's image of herself as an older woman. But furthermore, Segal writes about a dream that both Céline and Beauvoir said to have had about their age:

Beauvoir recognised her ageing self, and yet, simultaneously, she repudiated it. She dreamed, in her case quite literally of escaping old age: 'often in my sleep I dream that in a dream I'm fifty-four [which at the time she is], I awake and find I'm only thirty. "What a terrible nightmare I had," says the woman who thinks she's awake.' And then she finally wakes up. Sometimes, she added, just before I come back to reality, a giant beast settles on my breast: "It's true" It's my nightmare of being more than fifty that's come true!" (Segal, 2014:10)

Céline tells this same dream to Jesse in a café in Paris, except in it she dreams that she is twenty-three and wakes up to her being thirty-two; yet this creates a clear relation between Beauvoir and Céline in their complex feelings about old age. This also comes up in terms of her professional life, and how different it is between men and women in terms of age and professional success:

Young men have this thing about comparing themselves all the time. They have all these signposts they judge themselves by. You used to do that all the time. With like, Rimbaud read this by seventeen, Fitzgerald did this by thirty [...] Most women who achieve anything in life, the first time you hear about them, they're in their 50's, because it was so hard for them to get any recognition before then. They struggle for 30 years, or they raise kids and were stranded at home before they could finally do what they want. (Céline in *Before Midnight*, 2013)

Therefore, Céline's personal processes and relation to time in a unified way show from its beginnings in 1994 to her midlife struggles in 2013 a sense of her individual journey as a woman throughout these years. Meanwhile, Jesse's life time journey is different. He talks about always feeling like a teenager not yet beginning real life. Jesse's psychological time is at the other extreme of the age spectrum. We see his immature attitudes in things like him sliding on the hand rails of the stairs (see figure 40) or his ill fitted T-shirts (see figure 41) also noted by



Cutler (2013) as he points out Jesse’s attempts to “present himself as being younger and looser than he is” (Cutler, 2013:25).



*Figure 40* Jesse sliding on the handrail in *Before Sunset* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Warner Independent Pictures, USA, 2004)



*Figure 41* Jesse wearing an ill fitted T-shirt in *Before Midnight* (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Faliero House Productions, USA, 2013)

Segal also talks about the preoccupation around ageing for men, drawing from Elliot Jaques who coined the term ‘mid-life crisis’ as a way to describe the anxieties of ageing men. Jaques points out how “researchers had begun highlighting all the difficulties men face in trying

to establish and maintain their identities as ‘men’, when notions of ‘masculinity’ are supposed to ensure they emerge as the socially dominant, tougher sex” (Segal, 2014:79). According to Segal, a predominant aspect around the anxieties of ageing men are the loss of the sexual abilities of their youth, symbolised in the functioning penis. She points out how this anxiety is reflected in the extraordinary levels of medications for aiding the sexuality of men in old age such as the Viagra (Segal, 2014: 80). From an analysis on literary texts about men’s old age, Segal also points out that: “no male writer ever seems to suggest that men lose their longing for sexual encounters as they age, even as their erectile capacities falter but quite the opposite” and how this aligns with all empirical studies of sex in old age. Older men are twice as likely as women to say they are still extremely interested in sex (Segal, 104:89).

The films of the trilogy also show the importance sexuality has for Jesse in his older years. In *Before Sunset*, when Céline jokes about if therapy helped “his sex problems” he is quick to point out how they “didn’t have any problems that night.” Similarly, he points out the lack of sexual intimacy with his then wife as one of the main problems in his marriage. This is even more conspicuous in Jesse’s attitudes as he gets older in *Before Midnight*. For Example, during their conversation in the car, Céline points out how, similar to his teenage son, “all he thinks about is women” and “never stops ogling girls”, Jesse then jokingly replies in a “Greek or Spanish lover” voice: “I don’t ogle girls, I make love to them with my eyes” and Céline claims: “I’m stuck with an American teenager”, this later highlighted in the film as the middle-age men ogle young Anna walking away in her bikini. Similarly, during dinner with their hosts, Céline tells the story of how they met and got together. She mentions how the first time they had sex without a condom she got pregnant with twins; Jesse proudly boasts “Yeah, one pitch, one home run. Boom!” with the gesture of handling a baseball bat (see figure 42). Showing how establishing his sexual vitality to the rest of the guests gives him pride.



*Figure 42 Jesse boasting in Before Midnight (dir. Richard Linklater, prod. Faliero House Productions, USA, 2013)*

As mentioned in Céline’s quote above, it is also significant how the characters’ respective national identities are also part of their identity as individuals and creates a difference in their life experiences. Their nationalities are often brought up when they point out how the culture in which each of them grew up affects how they think, their values and their personalities. Considering this, a life time perspective highlights how each member of the couple has developed and built their individual realities and identities during those years. Yet, through their relationship in the films, they also build a joint reality and identity in which their two biographies are combined in a “cohesive and mutually relate common memory” (Berger and Kellner, 1964:20) in which the “re-constructed present and re-interpreted past are perceived as a continuum, extending forwards into a commonly projected future” (Berger and Kellner, 1964:16).

## Conclusion

The films of the *Before Trilogy* can be approached through different time perspectives which give us different insights about the trilogy's use of time. Following Rita Felski's model, an everyday time perspective has helped to examine the films individually, looking at the couple's experiences of time during specific encounters. I have elaborated how exploring the films this way situates the characters at a specific moment in physical and psychological time. Exploring them in this way brings out the differences in each of them and allows us to scrutinise the specificity of that time-slice to see how the couple's time perspectives change according to their age and moment in time. I have also elaborated how each of these moments is separated by nine years of unrecorded existence taking place in what Deleuze calls the out-of-field. This separation allows for the change in physical and psychological time to occur on the recorded instances and be more prominent, but it also shows how these unrecorded times have an important bearing on what is represented within the films. Conversely, a life time perspective consists of seeing the trilogy as a whole illuminating the character's individual journeys and identities in the long term. This time perspective puts together both recorded and unrecorded times through a transversal reading of the parts and reveals the *Before Trilogy* as a continuous process of becoming. This allows us to see the characters' journey of transformation throughout time, bringing out their individual identities and personal life struggles.

In chapter one, I developed how time-critical sequels become a way to create a story in which the ageing body communicates a transition in time, and how the formal qualities of the series create a temporal continuum. In this chapter, I build from that basis on the difference between the physical and psychological time of ageing, I look closer at the intermittent gap based on Geraghty's concept of unrecorded existence and Deleuze's out-of-field and transversal reading. These two sections then allow me to think of the trilogy as a whole in the



temporal continuum that reveals the character's life time. As done with the previous chapter, this second one will provide new ideas and concepts to keep building on the possibilities of the time-critical sequel as a medium of temporal storytelling in the following chapters.

# **Chapter 3**

## **Going nowhere: Temporal and social immobility in *Trainspotting* and *T2 Trainspotting***

*Hello, Mark. So, what you been up to? For twenty years?*

This is the line which opens the trailer for *T2 Trainspotting*. With this line the audiences are introduced to the sequel which will follow its parent film twenty years later. This line captures within it the question that the film will answer: What have these beloved film characters been up to in the past twenty years? The film *Trainspotting* (1996)<sup>28</sup> follows Mark "Rent boy" Renton and his close group of friends, Daniel "Spud" Murphy, Simon "Sick Boy" Williamson, Frank "Franco" Begbie, and Tommy as they struggle with a society that continually excludes and alienates them. *T2: Trainspotting* (2017) shows how this alienation translates into a sense of disconnection from society's times and rhythms. In the previous chapter, I explored how the use of time in the *Before Trilogy* shows the characters change and evolve from one film to the other. The interval between the films helps to show how Jesse and Céline are transformed from naive university students to working adults and then middle-aged parents. They grow and mature, both internally and externally as they are expected to in a middle-class, neoliberal society. Contrastingly, in this chapter I want to discuss how the time between *Trainspotting* and its sequel *T2* shows the character's immobility within and alienation from society's time. Whereas Jesse and Céline's change and grow, as emphasised in the representation of movement and travel in the films, in *Trainspotting* and *T2* the characters seem

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<sup>28</sup> With a film based on a book as significant as *Trainspotting* by Irvine Welsh, it is important to point out that this chapter will be strictly based on the films' stories and characters, as this thesis is interested in the broader scope of sequels' temporality rather than the relation between films and their literary sources. For more information about *Trainspotting* adaptation see: (Cardullo, 1997)

to be stuck in one moment and in one place, showed by the representation of repetition, loops, circular movements and missed opportunities. *Trainspotting*<sup>29</sup>, in great part, explores the social circumstances of the working-class Scottish male that hinders his mobility.

*Trainspotting* is a film by Danny Boyle based on the eponymous novel by Irvine Welsh. The story follows the aforementioned characters as young adults living at the fringe of Edinburgh's late 1980s and early 1990s. Immersed in the Scottish drug scene, Renton and his friends struggle with heroin addiction, searching for sobriety, girlfriends, partying, job stability, simply existing as working-class Scottish males, and toxic friendships they do not seem able to escape. When an opportunity to sell £16,000 of heroin comes along, the group works together to carry out the deal. Realising he has a way out; Renton takes the money and leaves Edinburgh also leaving behind his friend and the life he has known in pursuit of a better future. *T2 Trainspotting* tells the story of these same characters twenty years later when Renton returns to Edinburgh to confront the past and the friends that he had left behind. In *Trainspotting's* macro-fabula the characters' identity has a strong bearing on their paths and struggles, which also translate into an entrapment in a time of repetition rather than a time of growth. This temporal entrapment becomes more notable with the production of the second film twenty years after the original's release as it accentuates the characters' inability to grow and adapt to the changes around them during the two decades of its diegesis. This chapter is particularly significant for my thesis as it will show how the narrative time used by time-critical sequels does not only serve to tell a story of seamless flow, growth, and progress. Instead, it can also show a completely different engagement where time is not an ally, but a threat.

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<sup>29</sup> It is unclear what year exactly the film is set in. IMBD mentions: "Trainspotting can be set anywhere between 1987 and 1993 (the year the novel was released)" listing different elements in the film (soundtrack, quotations, references) that make it hard to place definitively on a specific year. ('Internet Movie Data Base', no date)

Firstly, I will explore the relationships between the characters and their socio-political context, with a specific focus on their collective social temporality. My argument here will be based on the claim that people divided across class and socio-economic status also results in a division across temporalities, relating particularly to ideas of repetition and circularity. For this, I will draw on Barbara Adam's 'Time' (2006), Mary-Ann Doane's *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* (2002), and Murray Smith's *Trainspotting* (2002). Secondly part of this chapter will explore the narrative and characterisation within the films using Sara Sharma's concept of recalibration (2011) and Keith Nainby & John B. Pea's 'Immobility in Mobility: Narratives of Social Class, Education, and Paralysis' (2003). Finally, I will look at the sociological consequences of the characters' immobility using Byron Ellsworth Hamann's concept of 'Chronological Pollution' (2008). This analysis will be aided by Inka Stock's *Time, Migration and Forced Immobility* (2020)13/01/2023 16:27:00, as well as some insights from studies on drug abuse and relapse by Dingle, Cruwys, and Frings (2015). As with previous chapters I will continue to use Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (2014) to aid my analysis of the sequel.

## Train-spotters vs Passengers

The word 'trainspotting' means: "the practice of watching trains, particularly as a hobby, to note distinctive characteristics" (Merriam-webster, no date). In the film there is a clear connection between the metaphor of the trainspotter and drug addiction. Murray Smith (2002) writes, "A whole cluster of train-related metaphors have long existed within the drug culture" although this imagery had been "parallel with, but separate from, the classic image of the trainspotter – until the advent of *Trainspotting*, which conjoined them" (Smith, 2002:17). Furthermore, he states: "To be a trainspotter – in the literal sense – is to stand for hours, in the same place watching trains go by. To board a train is to go somewhere, to move on. To move on is to open oneself to change" (Smith, 2002:17). This movement and openness to change of

a train's passengers is what I explored in my previous chapter, where I elaborated on Céline and Jesse's journey and transitions as a white, middle-class, heterosexual couple, strolling through the streets of Europe. Smith links this conceptualisation of the trainspotter as static to Renton, as the one character who travels most often, and how the film tells his story of self-reinvention. As noted by Smith, there is a crucial difference between a trainspotter and a person who boards a train, a difference in movement, social mobility, and change. Nevertheless, what I want to consider is the differences between the observer and the passengers in terms of temporality<sup>30</sup>. *Trainspotting* establishes two opposing views in the story. That of Renton and his friends against that of the members of society who have seamlessly adapted to its rhythms and demands. The rest of society represents those who board the train. Meanwhile, Renton and the others are the trainspotters, standing still at the station as trains pass them by. In this section I will elaborate on how when time was standardised to accommodate the industrial rhythms of capitalism, a division of temporalities was made between those who adhered to those established rhythms and those who fell out of them. This temporal division, in turn, implied a social division, which is established in both opening scenes of *Trainspotting* and *T2*.

*Trainspotting* opens with Renton's iconic speech 'Choose Life' which creates a disjunction between "choosing" a neoliberal life and Renton's reality. Here, I am going to analyse Renton's character by focussing on the temporal disjunctions between the world of drugs and the world of the larger, mainstream society in which they are immersed. Iggy Pop's *Lust for Life* begins to play over the credits and the film cuts to Renton running down a commercial street of Edinburgh as he and Spud are being chased by security guards. Someone who could "choose life", as Renton describes it, would probably be carelessly strolling those

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<sup>30</sup> Curiously enough, there is a thought experiment by Albert Einstein where he uses the differences in the experience of speed between a passenger on a train and an observer standing on the railway to illustrate the relativity of time and simultaneity (Waldrop, 2017).

streets, entering its different shops and, indeed, choosing which television, washing machine or electrical tin opener to buy instead of being chased. However, Renton and Spud have no chance to stop by and enjoy life's commercial offer. This difference shows the disconnection between Renton and his environment. His tribe and the "human tribe" as two different groups of people. The human tribe being those who adhere to the neoliberal way of life (term by Ryan, McLoughlin and Keating, 2006:435).

Renton talks about life events which are usually measured on rhythms dictated by society. Failing to follow those rhythms is usually equated to "missing the train" to achieve those traditional milestones. Scholars such as Mary-Ann Doane (2002) and Barbara Adam (1992, 2016)<sup>31</sup> have theorised how, in the modern era, time has been standardised, commodified, and industrialised for capitalist purposes. According to Adams, "time reckoning, the getting to know temporal processes and rhythmic patterns, is also knowledge for practical use. It is know-how knowledge for the structuring, ordering, synchronizing, and regulating of social life" (Adam, 2006:121). This standardisation has imposed on society industrialised speeds and rhythms that affect the way people relate to time and the goals they want to achieve to 'go somewhere' and build a better life for themselves, such as the nine to five working hours, when to study, when to rest, when to have a family, and when to retire. It is understood that the passengers of the train in Smith's metaphor are those of the "human tribe", namely, people who adhere to these standards, 'go somewhere' and 'move on'. 'Going somewhere' becomes synonym of having a 'better life' in which one has a prestigious job, a successful career, a loving family, can afford material luxuries and to travel the world. To 'go somewhere' is to keep 'climbing the ladder' of success until the end of one's life in a linear time.

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<sup>31</sup> Mary Ann Doane's *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* (2002) and Barbara Adam's 'Time' (2006) and *Modern Times: The Technology Connection and its Implications for Social Theory* (Adam, 1992)

Sarah Sharma draws from Harold Adams Innis the notion that "balanced conceptions of space and time within culture, awareness of spatial and temporal dynamics, keep state and market power in check". She adds how this balance has a "micro-political element necessary to understanding one's place in the world and where one stands in relation to others (space) as well as how *one's experience of time is always tied to another's temporality*" (Sharma, 2013:314 my emphasis). One cannot determine one's temporality without an external point of reference. Furthermore, in this interaction between temporalities, there are also socio-political dynamics involved, as the awareness of these different experiences of time and space is what keeps power in check. In *Trainspotting's* opening scene, one can determine Renton's experience of time and place as tied and relative to external references of society, one deeply engraved in our collective imagery.

Renton begins the film by trying to run away from icons of power that are chasing him, those who threaten to lock him away and hinder his mobility as they do for Spud. In this chase the two run through the intricate alleys and stairs of the city when a car comes out of a hidden street blocking Renton's way and nearly running him over. As the film later develops, Renton's struggle is to get away from Edinburgh and his vicious cycle of addiction and stasis, but there are constant obstacles that keep frustrating his attempts; be it social and economic factors or his own friends and addiction. After the car hits him, Renton gets up realising what has happened, and in a moment of detachment from the unfolding situation, leans on the car's hood, and smiles at the camera. The image freezes for a moment, and the word "Renton" appears on the screen (see figure 43). This is how the film introduces Renton: frozen in time. The introduction then cuts to a different moment, with Renton alone in a drug house.



Figure 43 Ewan McGregor as Renton in *Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. Channel Four Films, Figment Films, The Noel Gay Motion Picture Company, UK, 1996)

After different intervals between the chase, the drug house and a football match with his friends, there is a moment when the opposite team from “the human tribe” kicks the ball and it flies directly to Renton's forehead, knocking him on his back. While he falls backwards, the film cuts from his downward motion in the football field to the wrecked room where a 'hit' of heroin makes him bend backwards slowly towards the floor (see figure 44). This matching action creates a parallel and an illusion of simultaneity between the two "hits" and movements as he reaches the floor twice finally lying on it immobile. In the parallel of the movement, the scene creates a parallel of time between the two events and folds them onto each other matching the meaning of one to the meaning of the other. The hit of the ball and the hit of heroin, being knocked out by one as well as the other, one in pleasure the other in pain. Furthermore, the editing of the sequence as a whole establishes a temporal disjunction. There is a mixture of temporalities amongst the different times and places shown. At first, the sequence shows Renton and Spud chased on the street, cutting to Renton alone in the drug house, the football game, and back to the drug house revealing he is not alone. In this editing, there is no precise



chronological time; it jumps from one event to the other. In particular, there is a sense of simultaneity among those events, which contain one within the other. Most evidently, the parallel of Renton falling between the knock-out at the match and the high contracts both events in one. In this montage, the sense of simultaneity is achieved in the way that Deleuze describes times as interval which: "infinitely dilated, the present would become the whole itself: infinitely contracted, the whole would happen in the interval" (Deleuze, 2013:36). From then on, the interval begins to widen as more time is spent with Sick boy, Allison, Swanney and Spud, but there is still a jump cut between scenes that creates this containment of crisscrossed moments even for the world beyond Renton's individual experience. The outer world is immediately presented as one of rejection and reprimand as Begbie, Tommy and his parents at different locations tell him off because of his drug habit.



Figure 44 Cross editing of Renton falling at the football field and the drug house in *Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. Channel Four Films, Figment Films, The Noel Gay Motion Picture Company, UK, 1996)

After this montage, *Lust for Life* fades and Renton abruptly gets up with his voice-over saying: "From time to time, even I have uttered the magic words". His voice changes to diegetic sound to tell Swanney he is quitting the "skag", he is determined to "get it sorted out, get off it for good". This line reveals that Renton had tried to quit drugs before and failed to do so. The film shows how in this decision – when the atemporal opening sequence ends, the title of *Trainspotting* appears, and the film begins – Renton re-joins 'life'. His attempt to quit heroin has several implications. Firstly, it is a way to say he wants to choose life and join the human tribe. Secondly, it means a change in lived temporalities, similar to the change in pace from juxtaposition to a linear narrative. For Renton, this is an attempt to stop the endless loop of addiction and move into a standardised temporality in which he can re-invent himself, even if it proves to be another 'false start'. From that moment, the film continues to show Renton's struggle to fully escape addiction and join the human tribe, which he only achieves after leaving Edinburgh with the £12,000 he steals from his friends. Twenty years later, the sequel folds back to the opening scene revealing how Mark's life had continued since then.

*T2 Trainspotting's* opening scene shows Renton running on a treadmill at an Amsterdam gym. This mirrors the opening scene of *Trainspotting* where he was running on the streets of Edinburgh. However, it is important to note that the act of running on a tread mill means using a lot of body-effort to 'keep up' without moving or going anywhere. Yet again the comparison of the repetitions between one film and the other helps to create a sense of time folding back into itself but revealing the changes and processes that the characters have overcome. As the film will later show, this is the point at which Renton is putting effort to keep up with the demands of the world. While he runs, the scene is intercut with images from Amsterdam establishing the location, but also with extracts from the last scene of *Trainspotting*, when Renton walks away with the money. The new film contains within itself

all of the previous events from the beginning to the end informing the new in their difference and repetition. At the end of *Trainspotting*, the scene of Renton leaving London, shows the image going from focused to blurry as he walks towards the camera. In this new opening scene, the recycled cuts are shown the other way around. The image of young Renton goes slowly from blurry to focused, moving backwards and away from the camera, establishing a change of direction and focus from one film to the other. This recycling of the footage creates a montage of young and older Renton showing the changes of his body and appearance. Just as young Renton was intercepted by a car while running, a symbol of neoliberal luxuries, older Renton is intercepted by a hidden condition in his own heart (revealed later in the film), which makes him suddenly collapse on the gym's floor. In the first film, he was able to get back up and "laugh it off". This time, the older Mark remains knocked down, as the people around him take notice of him. His body is not keeping up either.

The next time Mark appears, he is arriving at the airport. This sequence is carefully choreographed to show his arrival and mobility into a whole new Edinburgh after twenty years of being away and living on a different temporal plane (see figure 45). He is received as a foreigner in his hometown, no longer part of its times and rhythms, as he looks at all that has changed since he last walked away from the city. Conspicuous new name brands and shops like Starbucks and H&M, bear witness to how life has kept going and the city kept changing while he was away<sup>32</sup>. The editing of this sequence is short and fast-paced, creating a sense of speed around Mark, and as Sharma remarks, it is important to "constantly account for how

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<sup>32</sup> And, as Allen points out: "The reader's own extratextual horizons might change during the course of reading a narrative text" (Allen, 1985:73). It is both the text and the reader who have changed during the development of the story; hence the reader can relate the events of the story with the events in her own life, generating connections between the two which are themselves also ever-changing. This makes the relation of the reader with the text more complex than just assigning a certain demographic to the practice of watching a soap opera, as Allen notes "usually readers are set into age groups, but a text that might have been begun by a reader in adolescence, thirty years later is still being read by the same reader, who is now a mother of adolescent children." (Allen, 1985:73).

changes in technological pace also translate into entirely new social realities" (Sharma, 2013:313). Furthermore, on his arrival, the film shows Mark boarding several moving trains on his way from the airport to the inner city. In this sense, he is now a foreigner not only to his hometown but also to his previous way of life; he is no longer an immobile 'train-spotter' but one of the passengers on the train, being the first time the films show one of the characters inside a mode of transportation. This is reinforced with indicators of how Mark's life has changed, rather than being in a crack house, he checks into a hotel wears fashionable clothes, looks healthy and is surrounded by white, sterile-looking interior design marking a clear difference from the beginning of the parent film. Choosing to stay in a hotel also emphasises a readily mobile and uncommitted way for him to be in the city, where he had just planned on staying temporarily. He has changed and his position in the world has changed as well.



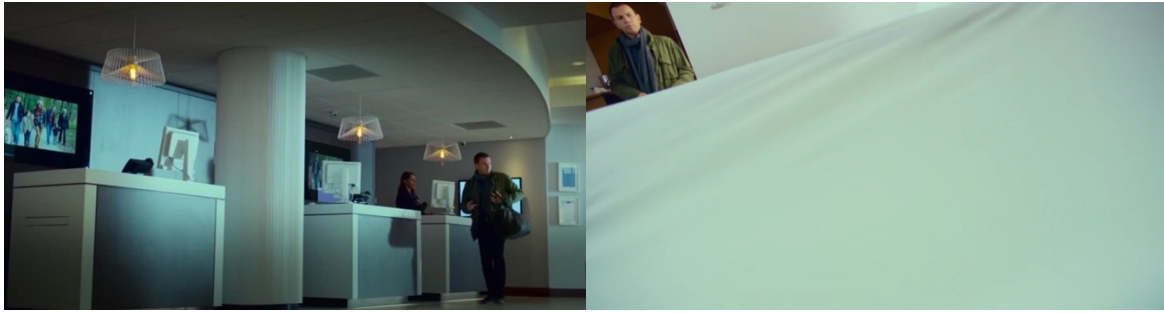


Figure 45 Mark arriving at Edinburgh in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

## Relapsing: Repetition and Alienation

In 'Time' (2006), Barbara Adam explains how the standardisation of time has always been linked to those in power wanting to impose their rhythms and temporalities on others. This imposition has been enhanced with the modern globalised interdependency of nations. For Adam, clock-time is not only used to standardise rhythms but also for colonising purposes, as it defines which groups are in and which are out of time, it distinguishes the 'developed' from the 'non-developed' world and determines which activities and ways of life are considered "productive" and which are a "waste of time" (Adam, 2006:119). This social ordering places marginalised groups, such as children, the elderly, the disabled and the unemployed under "the shadow of un- and undervalued time" as they are unable to contribute with the never-ending commodification of time (Adam, 2006:124) and immobilising them within this shadow. As working-class, unemployed addicts in *Trainspotting*, Renton, Spud, Sick Boy, Begbie, and Tommy, fall under this categorisation of undervalued time, unable to contribute to the capitalist way of life. After all, "time and money take the same breath", and "it is particularly in its association with money that clock-time has become the industrialisation and capitalist development [constituting] both promise and curse for non-industrialised societies which have different temporal principles" (Adam, 2006:123). The trade in time, imposing economic time values, has been globalised and imposed all over the world "irrespective of their suitability to specific contexts, local conditions and traditions" and any "cultural resistance to this norm is

equated with backwardness" (Adam, 2006:124). As Adam theorised, for those who fail to align to socialised time, the result is a temporal disjointedness between the society that surrounds them and themselves. This disconnection can produce a sense of immobility and relapsing into an increasingly outdated moment. The unsuccessful attempts to quit drugs and join the rest of society keeps Renton and the others in the same place they have always been, but the opening scene of *Trainspotting* establishes the more profound reasons for this drug addiction:

When you're on junk, you have only one worry: scoring. And when you're off it, you are suddenly obliged to worry about all sorts of other shite. Got no money: can't get pissed. Got money: drinking too much. Can't get a bird: no chance of a ride. Got a bird: too much hassle. You have to worry about bills, about food, about some football team that never fucking wins, about human relationships and all the things that really don't matter when you've got a sincere and truthful junk habit.

This speech clues us to the real issues behind Renton's "choice" of rejecting 'life', along with its written and unwritten rules. He is not "choosing heroin" instead of choosing 'life', he is choosing heroin to forget and disassociate himself from the worries of life. Underneath this illusion of choice, there is not much choice at all. Yet, he is still bound by the way of life he is alienated from in his endless attempt to incorporate himself to it. The disassociation between heroin and the "all sorts of other shite"<sup>33</sup> that Renton mentions also includes a disassociation from the temporal aspects of this society. Similarly, Inka Stock has briefly explored these issues around time commodification and its consequences in her investigation about the lives of migrants stuck in Morocco between their motherlands and their desired final destination<sup>34</sup>. Stock expresses how "[those] who cannot exchange their time against money [...] rather than benefiting from the structuring forces of clock time, are forcefully excluded from society by it. Their time is made useless" (Stock, 2020:84). Moreover, it also alters the view of their own value as people and affects their relationships. (Stock, 2020:93).

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<sup>33</sup> Curiously, before the infamous scene at "the worst toilet in Scotland", Renton mentions how "heroin makes you constipated", another example of being "stuck" and not allowing processes to happen.

<sup>34</sup> Stock describes being stuck in traffic for migrants as an "existential dilemma" (Stock, 2020: 83), one which brings out important matters of identity, and disassociation between the self and the external world.



Feeling stuck between a rock and a hard place, the characters' reaction is to erase that despair with the feeling of an ever-present experience while high, not having to worry about past or future. This is illustrated while Renton is on heroin and the temporalities of different moments are contracted in a montage which gives them a sense of simultaneity. The film jumps between different locations and moments as one hit of heroin is being prepared, showing a moment when/where Tommy asks him to give him a hit, other when/where Sick Boy talks about James Bond, and many others when/where he goes stealing from a retirement home, a car, and his own parent's home to support his habit. All these events are edited in an interrupted, crisscrossed montage, back and forth from one to the other with no sense of temporal order. There is a detachment between Mark being high and the temporal rhythms around him. While he is high, he is not able to connect with the outer world's temporality<sup>35</sup>; time seems to escape him instead of him being part of its events, speeds, and flows (see figure 46). It is also worth noting that during this disassociation, it is when Renton, incapable of measuring the consequences of his actions, gives Tommy his first heroin hit which leads him to addiction, HIV, and death.



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<sup>35</sup> Studies reveal that "addiction is not only something that people experience as an individual biological reality (as it has often been studied) but rather as a psychosocial phenomenon which in part reflects individuals' attempts to navigate their social world" (Dingle, Cruwys and Frings, 2015:9).







Figure 46 Montage of the different moments contained within Renton's high in *Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. Channel Four Films, Figment Films, The Noel Gay Motion Picture Company, UK, 1996)

After this sequence depicting the cyclical nature of being high, Renton wakes up to Allison screaming, and his voice-over says: "I think Allison had been screaming all day, but it hadn't registered before. She might have been screaming for a week for all I knew. It's been days since I've heard anyone speak, though surely someone must have said something in all that time". With this quote, Renton explicitly expresses the detachment from time he experiences while on heroin. As he and the group regain consciousness, they find baby Dawn dead in her crib, and all are shaken by this event. Inka Stock argues that people who are disconnected from their past and future, struggling with a meaningless present, experience existence as "out of time" which affects their capacity to make decisions, both short term and long term, making them unable to care for their relations with family "back home" (Stock, 2020:83). This event shows how, even as the drug addict's temporalities are detached from the events around them, these are still interconnected and affect each other. Allison's detachment from the world affected her capacity to care of her daughter.

The film had already established a vague dynamic of temporal loops with Mark falling back into addiction right after he had been determined to quit. However, it is after this scene of Renton's disassociated high, and finding baby Dawn dead, that the dynamic of endless relapses in time begins to be more notorious. Just after Renton's response to the baby's death is to cook up yet another heroin hit for himself and Allison, the scene cuts to Spud, Sick Boy and Renton entering an electronic store leading to the actions from the opening scene. The film loops back to the beginning as Renton's voice-over explains: "Our only response was to keep on going and fuck everything. Pile misery upon misery, heat it up on a spoon and dissolve it with a drop of bile, then squirt it into a stinking purulent vein *and do it all over again*". Here, Renton is expressing the endless loop he is caught in and its accumulation as the film replays the images of the beginning folding back both moments into one. According to Stock, "particular cultural practices aim to make time stand still through the repetition of cyclical rituals, [...] rhythmical activities and repetition" (Stock, 2020:85). Through Renton's constant repetitions in behaviour, rituals and cyclical activities, his time stands still. Following Deleuze, Renton and the others are stuck in a 'repetition of the same' rather than a 'repetition of difference'. The later difference brings forward change and renovation, the former, inability to progress (Deleuze, 2014).

This temporal disassociation between the drug addict and standard time, becomes much more evident in the sequel, when the lagging between one and the other is not just a few years but two decades. This is illustrated when *T2* re-introduces Spud during a meeting with addicts anonymous, where he explains his reasons to relapse into heroin addiction. In this scene, Spud tells his recovery group how at first, he had been doing well, he was keeping off skag, had a job and was spending time with his and Gail's son. But, because of 'daylight saving', he began turning up late to his appointments, costing him his job and access to his son:

**Spud:** Basically, I'm holding it together. Then, one morning, I gets to work and gets fired for being an hour late. And then, one hour late at the DSS to explain why I lost the job. And an hour late to

appeal against losing my benefits. And an hour late for my work-focused interview. An hour late for my supervised visit with wee Fergus. And late again to social services to explain why. Eventually, I let on to it. It was the clocks. Going forward one hour. British Summer Time, they call it. It wasn't even warm. I was still wearing a jumper. "Happens every year, Mr. Murphy." How was I supposed to know? I've been on skag for 15 years. You know how it is... Daylight isn't exactly high on your agenda when you got a habit. It's for farmers and that. Dudes who need to tend to the livestock. It's not for junkies who need to score.

**AA Leader:** And then you went back on the heroin.

This scene shows an awareness of the drug addict's disassociation from society's temporalities, and it tells us that Spud had been experiencing this disassociation for the past twenty years. On the one hand, it shows that he is unaware of the time standardisation around him, not knowing about the British Summer Time clock change and unable to be there for his family when he needs to. On the other hand, it also shows his constant relapse and repetitions during that time, and how this provokes his inability to keep up with the demands to fulfil his roles as citizen and parent (see figure 47).

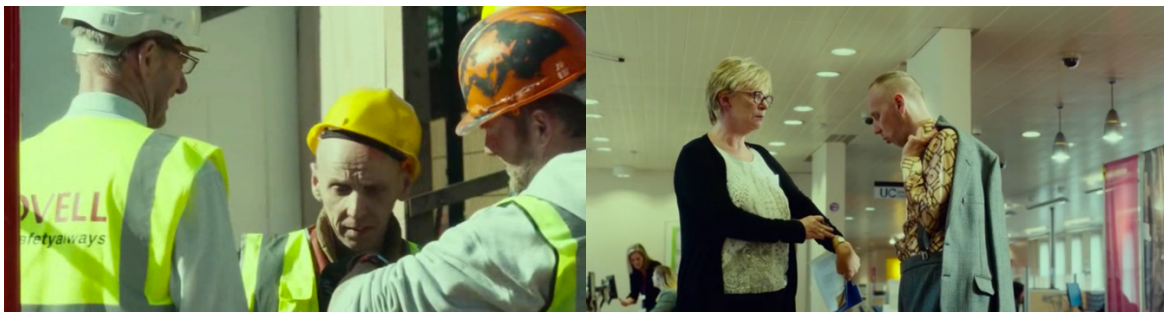


Figure 47 Spud arriving late to his meetings in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

The characters in the film are alienated from society's rhythms, but "one can only be alienated from something to which one has been and remains meaningfully related, but from which one at the same time has come to be separated" (Schacht, 1996:13). In other words, "in order for them to be alienated from mainstream society, they must have a pre-existing link with this society" (Senekal, 2010:26). Because of this, they are frequently in a limbo where they are not able to move forward nor live carelessly in their addict state, as Spud's situation illustrates. This is not tolerated in the world they live in and has consequences on their close relationships.

There is a constant struggle between this state of "out of time-ness" and the fight to incorporate themselves into the mainstream time-flow. This struggle is what pushes the characters into a pattern of constant forward movement and then relapse creating backwards and forward loops in time. In *Trainspotting*, the story folds back to the beginning after the death of baby Dawn and it takes up from where it left off at the opening scene. The car intercepts Renton once again, and the scene continues showing the guards tackling him a few seconds after the previous scene had cut away. Both Spud and Renton appear in court, Spud is sentenced to six months in prison while Renton's sentence is suspended with the condition that he continues in a rehabilitation program. For Stock, "'being stuck' is experienced as living in liminal times where one is neither part of processes that structure time as clock time, nor embedded in times of transcendence which would make life meaningful" (Stock, 2020:85). Furthermore, "the feeling of being part of the flow of life is replaced by the feeling of being outside time and place while being controlled by outside forces that govern their moving and staying" (Stock, 2020:95). For the group, it is outside forces that govern their "moving and staying", their addiction making them stay, and the law forcing them to, either recover for Renton or be locked away for Spud, with little to no free will in the matter.

The impact of outside forces is seen in relation to Scotland's history as the character's national identity is an important aspect within the narrative of *Trainspotting*. As Scottish men, the sense of imposition on their lives by others can be read as something engraved in their identity. They are members of a small nation colonised by its neighbour, who has imposed its rule over their way of life. Renton's discontent with his own identity is expressed in a scene near the middle of the first film. Tommy, the sober and healthy one of the group, was having a hard time since he broke up with his girlfriend and, to take his mind off of it, he takes Renton, Sick Boy, and Spud to do the very Scottish activity of going for a walk in the highlands. The

scene opens with the side of a moving train blocking all of the shot, then it moves to the left, and reveals the four men standing on the platform. Sick Boy cluelessly asks: "What now?" showing he has never done this before, to which Tommy replies: "We go for a walk!" The group is confused until Tommy points out: "There"; the shot switching to reveal a beautiful vast, green landscape of a hill in the distance (see figure 48). Sick boy replies incredulously: "Are you serious?", showing his dismay at the idea. The group reluctantly follows Tommy towards the hill, but they do not go much further, they are unable to fully enter the Scottish landscape, both literally and figuratively, as they never make it more than few feet away from the station.



Figure 48 Spud, Tommy, Renton, and Sick boy go for a walk in *Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. Channel Four Films, Figment Films, The Noel Gay Motion Picture Company, UK, 1996)

They cross a small wooden platform where Tommy begins pushing ahead, but Renton, Spud and Sick boy stop to rest and drink, and end up pulling him back instead (see figure 49). Tommy tries to encourage his friends for the hike by praising the fresh air and nature around them and finally asking them: "Doesn't it make you proud to be Scottish?" to which Renton famously replies:

It's shite being Scottish. We're the lowest of the low, the scum of the fucking earth, the most wretched, servile, miserable, pathetic trash that was ever shat into civilisation. Some people hate the English; I don't. They're just wankers. We, on the other hand, are colonised by wankers. We can't even find a decent culture to be colonised by. We are ruled by effete arseholes. It's a shite state of affairs to be in, Tommy, and all the fresh air in the world will not make any fucking difference.

The group's hiking trip was a reminder of historical trauma and deletion of their future, after



which they made the "healthy, informed and democratic decision to get back on heroin as soon as possible". This action can be read as a consequence of the despair felt and expressed when unable to feel at home in their own skin and nation.



Figure 49 Spud, Renton and Sick boy stop while Tommy walks ahead, then they turn back in *Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. Channel Four Films, Figment Films, The Noel Gay Motion Picture Company, UK, 1996)

Renton's monologue expresses conflict and disappointment with his own identity, but it also shows a sense of being in history, living in the aftermath of past events and their consequences. These consequences are not only economic. The extraction of resources perpetuates poverty in colonies, but they also carry a legacy of emotional damage onto the peoples who have been oppressed. In this sense, the past is still contained within the present. The past weighs on Renton making him unable to see and move towards a brighter future. In the sequel, the trip is recreated showing what that future was like and how it had been erased. In relation to which, Adam expresses how in the power dynamics of time, the disparities between successes and failures are "nowhere more visible than in approaches to the future, futures that are traversed in the dual sense of travelled and colonized on the one hand and negated, spoilt and polluted for successor generations on the other" (Adam, 2006:119). In other words, it is the futures of those who are either successful or unsuccessful in adapting to the

temporal regime which are affected. In the commodification of time, trade works by "[buying and selling] futures for the benefit of the present, for profit in the here and now" (Adam, 2006:125). It is in most of the cases that the colonised futures are traded for the benefit of the coloniser's present. When a person's future is uncertain, and their past has little meaning, the result is a feeling of temporal limbo and living as stuck 'in-between' times<sup>36</sup> (Stock, 2020:104).

This idea is also repeated and enhanced in the sequel when Spud, Simon, and Mark return to the same place they once went with Tommy. *Trainspotting* shows the characters staring at the prospect of a hopeless future, *T2* shows them living and facing that erased future (now present); which keeps bringing them back to the past. They re-visit the highlands and the scene of their arrival is also repeated similarly to how it was choreographed before; the train (with Scotrail's new brand image) moves to the right revealing the characters (see figure 50). Three middle-aged men stand on the platform instead of the four young adults. Similarly, they walk to the wooden bridge, but it is Spud who walks ahead, while Mark and Simon stay behind. The two then have a confrontation over the purpose of their trip, bringing up each other's deepest regrets (see figure 51):

**Mark:** We're here as an act of memorial.

**Simon:** Nostalgia. That's why you're here. You're a tourist in your own youth. Just 'cause you had a near-death experience, and now you're feeling all fuzzy and warm. What other moments will you be revisiting? Here's a good one. How about the time you sold Tommy his very first hit, leading him on to heroin addiction, HIV infection, and ultimately his death at the age of...? What was it, 22, 23? [...]

**Mark:** Aye, that's mine. How's yours? [...] She'd be a woman by now. Maybe kids of her own. But she never got that far, did she? Never got to lead her life. Because her father, someone who should have been looking after her, protecting his own infant, was too busy filling his own veins with heroin to check that she was breathing properly. How do you keep a lid on that one?

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<sup>36</sup> Stock writes: "As my contact with migrants evolved, I realized they fall into limbo not only because they feel in-between places, but also because they live 'in-between' times: their future was uncertain, their present was preoccupied with immediate survival, and their past had little meaning in their present situation" (Stock, 2020: 104)



Figure 50 Mark, Simon and Spud visit the highlands in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)



Figure 51 Mark and Simon's flashbacks in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

In this dialogue, Simon and Mark talk about their deepest regrets; their emotional triggers are being pulled in the same way they did before at that bridge. However, this time what distresses them is not the general history of their country as it did in *Trainspotting*, but their personal history. Dark music begins to play with the sound of drums that begin to increase their tempo, and the scene cuts to a recycled image from *Trainspotting* of heroin being prepared



on a spoon. This image plays with the anticipation of flashbacks as memories that *T2* has already established. A montage begins intercutting images from Mark and Simon in the highlands, the heroin spoon, and the images of Tommy and baby Dawn. The drums keep going faster every time, and new pitched sound appears and increases signalling the tension and stress that remembering is making them feel. The montage then cuts to the image of a train moving towards a corner of the screen where storm clouds have begun to gather. The next image is a hand placing a syringe on the ground revealing Mark and Simon getting high in the present<sup>37</sup>. The recycled images from the montage become both a memory and an omen, with both past and future meanings contracted in one (see figure 52).



Figure 52 Mark, Mark and Simon do heroin after a flashback in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, according to *Leonie Welberg*: “When recovered drug addicts encounter the environment in which they used to take drugs, there is a risk that they will relapse” (Welberg, 2011).

Additionally, Mark and Simon's dialogue in the highlands reveals the film's self-awareness of its nostalgia, something for which it received criticism. For example, reviewers of the sequel have referred to "its fetish for nostalgia is all that galvanises an otherwise hollow plot" (Ehrlich, 2017). Others write that: "an opportunity to wallow in grimy nostalgia seems to be its sole purpose" (Lemire, 2017), or that it "manages to get some mild comic mileage [...] but mostly it inspires nostalgia—for the much better film that many of the people involved made 21 years ago" (Vishnevetsky, 2017). However, the repetition of themes, images, and events that the film brings back are not there to serve the mere purpose of revisiting those moments. Rather, they serve the purpose of bringing forward new meanings revealed by the difference of these repetitions and what it means for these images to resonate as such. Looking at the film this way shows a different affective register of loss, grief, guilt, trauma, and the effects of ageing within a hostile society.

Furthermore, the film's self-awareness of its nostalgia is played in more significant ways beyond a mere revisiting of the 1990s. It is explored in its meaning as a storytelling device and a human emotion which is meant to be part of a character's psyche, knowledgeable of how things evolve and change over two decades. For example, after fighting with Simon, Mark gives him £4,000 to repay his debt from twenty years ago, showing a sign of remorse for his past action. This is something that has clearly stayed with him since Renton left him behind. Simon tells his girlfriend Veronika (Anjela Nedyalkova) about the drug deal and how he feels about what happened:

We did a deal back then. Twenty years ago. Couple of bags of H. Good quality stuff. We took it to London. Me, him, Begbie, Spud Murphy. Sold it. Not a bad price. £16,000, to be divided in four equal parts. He ran off with it. Took it all. And now what does he think I am, a whore? He can just pay me off? £4,000, *not even any interest*. What am I supposed to do with that? *Buy a fucking time machine? Live my life all over again?* Only this time without being robbed and betrayed by my best fucking friend! No, it doesn't work like that. (My emphasis)

Predictably, Simon would be infuriated at Renton for stealing the money. However, this dialogue points out how the action has had temporal consequences and paying him back the same amount does not cover the full implications of Mark's betrayal. Firstly, Simon points out that the money was paid without interest. Besides the fact that his expectation of interest from an informal and illegal deal makes for a good joke for the viewer, it also highlights how even the value of the money itself has depreciated after twenty years due to inflation. Most importantly, he talks about how that money would not make much difference now as it would have made in 1996, as well as having lived those twenty years robbed, angry and betrayed by his best friend. What was done was done, and time had already changed the meanings of the money and their lives. The next time Mark sees Simon, the latter was determined to "Make him pay" by "drawing him back as a friend" and then turning on him.

After being apart for so many years, there is little in the present that links Mark and Simon. Therefore, the only thing Simon could do to reignite his friendship with him was to remind him of their shared past. Simon attempts to make Mark nostalgic for their years together as lawless, careless teenagers. He brings up stories that play to his version of stereotypical sentimentality, like their first sexual encounter, when he gave Simon's name after he was caught shoplifting, or how one "warm day" and "sunny afternoon" they bought their very first hit off Swanney and shared a needle. The talk is intercut with flashback scenes of a younger Renton and Sick Boy acting out Simon's narrations. The actors appearing in these scenes are not Ewan McGregor and Johnny Lee Miller, but body doubles wearing almost identical outfits to those Renton and Sick boy wore in the first film (see figure 53). However, right after telling Mark: "Your blood runs in my veins" Simon's insincere reminiscence stops as he loses his patience at Mark's indifference. He slams the table angry at Mark being unaffected by his stories, and that his intentions to manipulate him were not being effective. This conversation serves as a

meta-commentary on the nostalgic spectacle of the film itself. Just as Simon is aiming to elicit nostalgic feelings from Mark, so does the film by taking the viewer back to the years when the first *Trainspotting* was made.



Figure 53 Flashback of Mark and Simon as teenagers in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

Furthermore, there is a parallel between the montage of the artificial flashbacks (meaning, the flashbacks that were fabricated anew contrary to those recycled from the original film), and Simon's intentions to provoke nostalgia from Mark. In the same way that Simon's narrations came from a manipulative intent rather than an honest sentiment for his shared past with Mark, these do not come from the real past film, they inform the viewer on matters about the narration, but they do not have with them the same qualitative temporality as those which were indeed filmed twenty years ago containing the original actors. Parallel to this, the film had been using and will continue to use footage from *Trainspotting* that could be read as more authentic objects of nostalgia and longing for those who share a past and are familiar with the times. With this, the film shows how the overarching story of *Trainspotting* and *T2* is one not only told through artificial construction, but also through the authentic ageing of the characters bodies which also take a forefront in the societal critique of the films.

## Good as new: Recalibration and the Body

From the beginning of *Trainspotting*, Renton is presented as a body alienated from the neoliberal and capitalist society he lives in, and his body needs to become productive in this

society to be incorporated into it and valued. However, "the experience of time becomes increasingly uneven and complicated by a range of social differences" as "inequitable investments are made along other lines, of class, race, gender, and sexuality" (Sharma, 2011:442). However, Sharma discusses how the disparities are not reducible to labour alone, as they are also related to "the maintenance of purity within populations" (Sharma, 2011: 442). As drug addicts, and in Tommy's case, HIV infected, the characters are part of the considered "impure" within society and relegated to the bottom of capitalist priorities. Within these capitalist priorities, the health and vitality of some bodies are more valued than others and, therefore, those bodies which are deemed more profitable will receive more investment than those who are not<sup>38</sup> (Sharma, 2011:441). In his withdrawal and constant attempts to quit heroin, Renton is trying to keep up with the demands of capitalism and be deemed a valuable part of it. And after that, the sequel shows how, once Mark joined the human tribe, he makes an important investment in keeping healthy and taking care of his body, showing him in the gym and later pushing Spud to do the same as they run up Arthur's seat. Sharma specifically draws attention to "the explicitly temporal aspects of this force of life" as she explains how: "It is after all about longevity, vitality, and health. In terms of capitalism, this force of life is not just the actual force of life but bodies and their productive capacity" (Sharma, 2011:441). This action of bodies trying to keep up is the "temporal component of biopower" that Sharma calls Recalibration (Sharma, 2011:442).

Recalibration, Sharma writes, "is the expectation of all good subjects under contemporary capitalism to recalibrate, to find ways to keep up" (Sharma, 2011: 442). For Sharma, to recalibrate is to "learn how to deal with time, be on top of one's time" (Sharma,

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<sup>38</sup> For Sharma, there is also the political class-division in terms of temporality, one which "divides the citizenry into a temporal binary. There are two temporal poles of chronopolitical life: fast classes and slow classes, [...] the time-rich/time-poor" (Sharma, 2013:313).

2011:442). This means the multiple ways in which individuals or even full social groups "synchronise their body clocks, their sense of the future or the present, to an exterior relation be it another person, a chronometer, an institution, or ideology" (Sharma, 2011:442). Recalibrating to the constantly changing forces of the people and institutions around you becomes a demand in economic encounters and arrangements; this includes cultural practices, constantly changing technologies, policies, plans, and any laws regulating the time of life. This recalibration and keeping up is expected of all "responsible self-governing citizens within late capitalism" (Sharma, 2011:442) yet social experience is wholly bound to the rhythms of power (Sharma, 2011:443).

Renton realises his need to recalibrate when Diane makes him aware of how time keeps passing and the world keeps changing despite his immobility: "You're not getting any younger, Mark. The world is changing; music is changing; even drugs are changing. You can't stay in here all day dreaming about heroin and Ziggy Pop [...] The point is, you've got to find something new." Stock mentions how, in many cases, it is this feeling of 'being stuck' which can be a trigger for contemplating migration (Stock, 2020:83), and that is what Renton does. Right after this conversation, he decides to move to London where he becomes a real estate agent and begins building a life for himself, "for the first time in [his] adult life [he] was almost content". Renton is now able to recalibrate and become part of the life and rhythms of the human tribe, now accepted and productive. From then on, he began his fight for recalibration and keeping up with what society demanded of him as a "responsible self-governing citizen", even if this meant to betray his friends, leave with the £12,000 he had acquired with them (leaving £4,000 for Spud) and emigrating to Amsterdam. When Renton begins recalibrating and stops being stuck in his cycle of immobility and relapse, he leaves his friends behind reasoning that they had "outgrown each other" to pointing out how he has moved on.

At first, the film constructs the idea that, since Mark left Edinburgh, his life had been going well on all fronts. He had a wife, children, a job, he looked healthy (he had not yet mentioned his heart failure), he pays Simon his share of the money, is able to help Spud fight addiction, and the aesthetics around him are ones of success and cleanliness. This plays into the preconception both of the happy ending of films, and even generally in life, that, once you get out of dire circumstances, everything is fixed and there's only smooth sailing left ahead. However, maintaining that status presents a constant biopolitical demand to recalibrate and synchronise to the demands of the world (Sharma, 2011). After Simon attempts to manipulate Mark into helping him with a new scam, in a last-minute decision, Mark skips his flight back to Amsterdam and goes back to Simon's flat. There, he confesses the truth: he is getting divorced and has no place to go as his soon to be ex-wife owns the apartment they had together. He also confesses to lying about having two children, which he does not and was a big problem in his relationship. The world he had built so far was falling apart:

It's all over, the marriage. Fifteen years. And then the company I work for, that's merging with another. There'll be no room for me. Not enough qualifications. I can see that coming. I don't need to wait for the fucking letter. And then three months ago, I suffered what I've been told was a... An episode of acute coronary insufficiency. Like a heart attack. They put a tube in here. And I've got a metal stent in my left coronary artery. Good as new, apparently. Good as new. Should last another 30 years, they said, but *they didn't say what to do with those 30 years. Two or three, fine, I'll take that. I can cope with that. I can think of enough things to do to piss away what remains. But 30?* What am I supposed to do with that? I'm 46, and I'm fucked! I've got no home. I've got nowhere that I think of as a home. I don't really know anyone (my emphasis)

This dialogue is intricately related to Mark's issues with time. On the one hand, it reveals what the past twenty years have been like for him. He did get married and got a job, but the journey has not been without its issues. On the other hand, it reveals his anxieties towards the future. What worries him is the instability he is now experiencing for the remainder of his life. He faces that future without a home, without financial security and loving relationships. This erasure of his future renders him yet again immobile and is what compelled him to go back to

Edinburgh. The return of Mark under these circumstances brings forward the issues faced, not only with class immobility, as seen in the first film, but also the issues that arise once mobility across class is attained. This is explored by sociologists, Keith Nainby & John B. Pea in 'Immobility in Mobility: Narratives of Social Class, Education, and Paralysis' (2003). The authors express some of the difficulties faced by working-class people who have moved on to become middle-class, which is what Mark did moving to Amsterdam. Most of these issues are brought up by the clash between their working-class roots and the new identities they acquire in the mobility from one class to the other. This mobility is faced with several obstacles that range from deciphering social codes, relationships, and insecurities resulting in "accounts of the confusing and complex paths of social mobility and immobility" (Nainby and Pea, 2003:20). For example, Mark mentions that he was not able to stay in his job because of his lack of qualifications, we know that this lack of qualifications is a vestige of his marginalised past, and it is a way in which his working-class background still prevents him from recalibrating and meeting the demands of his job to move forward where education is vital for mobility (Nainby, 2003:21).

Similarly, Mark mentions how he does not "really know anyone" to turn to and help him in his misfortunes. The construction of relationships is also an issue in mobility across social classes, as one is usually not equipped with the necessary social knowledge and cultural capital with which to navigate a new social environment (Nainby and Pea, 2003:22). As Pea mentions, there is a difficulty to form real friendships and alliances within a new social class as the foundation of communities and friendships are different from the ones one grows up knowing. Whereas the difference in socialisation from one class to the other, made him perceive a deep insincerity within the upper-class's interactions (one that he also relates to the aspiration and need for control), Pea questions if this perception is due to the difficulty to



identify the codes through which to judge these interactions and bonds amongst tribes along with his cultural capital, "codes that [he] can't recognize, and this leads [him] to believe they are class-based" (Pea, 2003:31). It is possible and even likely that this is what makes Mark go back to his friends and the codes and culture that he recognises since a person moving across class encounters a plethora of cognitive dissonances. This is a difficult emotional transition for the person as she struggles to adapt into, not only a new environment but a new sense of identity. When the person is not successful in doing so, this reinforces a regression into old, familiar ways or, again, immobility. "Social mobility carries with it a sense of loss. To be socially mobile is to move from one place, economically, culturally, personally, to another. One consequence of that loss, sometimes, is immobility — a paralysis brought on by the violent, forceful, uncertain rush of social mobility itself" (Pea, 2003:35). This brings us back to the opening scene of *T2* in which, even as he makes the effort, Mark runs on the treadmill without moving. At this point, Mark is facing again the unattainability of that kind of life. Even more so, he is facing the crumbling of the life he had fought to get.

Meanwhile, an example of a successful recalibration is Diane. Mark had met Diane in *Trainspotting* at a night club when he was coming off heroin and his libido, which had been dormant since then, "came back with a vengeance". He was looking for a girl to sleep with, and Diane caught his eye. As he approached her, Diane responded with a confident come back that established her dominance over him right away. The next morning Diane appears in her high school uniform, revealing she is, in fact, an underage girl (see figure 54). Contrary to what first intuitions would be of this encounter, it is clear from the beginning of their interactions that Diane is the one holding the power in their relationship, not only because of her personal strength and character, but because of her socio-economic circumstances as a well-educated, middle-class woman. Furthermore, Diane is never in a position of immobility such as Renton's.

On the contrary, she is savvy beyond her years, and her path is open for growth and success. Because of her detachment from Mark's inner circle, she can offer an outside perspective and point out Renton's need to move on, which she does and becomes the reason why Mark finds a new life in London.



Figure 54 Kelly MacDonal as Diane in *Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. Channel Four Films, Figment Films, The Noel Gay Motion Picture Company, UK, 1996)

In *T2*, Diane only appears during a brief scene as Mark looks for legal counsel. Diane has evidently grown and developed in many ways since *Trainspotting*. She is now a lawyer, and she receives Mark and Veronika in her own big, fancy office – a sign of her accomplishments (see figure 55). Furthermore, she is a successful player at the capitalist game, earning an expensive hourly rate, which at first Mark mistakes for the total cost of her services<sup>39</sup>. This brief exchange during their appointment is telling of the different values ruling over Mark's and Diane's time. While Diane has reached a position at which she is able to exchange her time for capital, Mark is not even able to fully grasp the rates operating at this

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<sup>39</sup> Diane: This consultation is free. Should we go forward, here's the cost.  
Mark: Well, that's very reasonable.  
Diane: It's an hourly rate.  
Mark: [Pause] 'Course.

socio-economic level. One can infer that Diane's journey from 1996 to 2017 has been one of constant improvement and upward mobility. She has been able to recalibrate according to the world's demands and live a pleasant and valued lifestyle.



Figure 55 Kelly MacDonald as Diane in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

The continued harsh reality that Mark is forced to face upon his return to Edinburgh is clearly illustrated in the new iteration of the “Choose life” speech, but to fully grasp the significance of this new iteration, it is necessary to loop back and place it alongside its original version. In *Trainspotting*, Renton utters his manifesto of a nihilistic lifestyle as a twenty-six-year-old, working-class Scotsman within a neoliberal-capitalist society. Shortly after the opening credits, Renton's voice-over begins: "Choose life. Choose a job. Choose a career. Choose a family. Choose a fucking big television. Choose washing machines, cars, compact disc players and electrical tin openers." This now-iconic opening establishes much of the tone and themes of the film as well as Renton's story. Firstly, the sequence shows a conceptual contrast between the images displayed and what is said by Renton as the narrator. In this way, the voice-over serves a purpose beyond merely establishing the narrative scenario but creates a comparison between speech and reality, between Renton's psyche and his position in the

world. Renton talks about choosing life, a career, a family and his friends, abstract and profound things; but then changes to more mundane commodities like a big television, washing machines, an electrical tin opener, his tone becoming more ironic as he places these in the same group. These things together form a depiction of a "perfect", worry-less, superficial life; a neoliberal-capitalist life where commodities play a significant part in the display of success, comfort, leisure, and the individual's purchasing power. The delivery of the lines also emphasises the disjunction between speech and chase. Renton's ironic detachment from what he describes works as a critique of the culture, positioning him on the outside looking in.

Renton's monologue comes from an anti-drug campaign from 1980s, which was designed to motivate the youth of the time to 'choose life' instead of drugs. The slogan implies there is a difference between drug-use and 'life' itself. When Renton expands this slogan, he adds things that he suggests are equal to or part of what this "life" means, one that implies engagement with market consumption and the ideologies of capital. There is a disjunction between "life" and Renton's life. As a drug user, he is not part of this 'life' as they are incompatible according to the idea behind it. Similarly, this speech also reflects Renton's position in his own life as a young adult, where he is near the beginning of making his own choices and those choices lie ahead in his path. However, as the speech itself shows, there is a strong resistance by Renton to engage with these choices, to engage with "adult life," shown not only in his words but also in his appearance of personal neglect and outgrown clothes. Along with this, comes Renton's resistance to social norms, his social position and temporality.

The sequence shows a highlighted contrast between what is said by Renton and what is shown on the screen. The scene cuts from him running on the street to him alone in a drug house's wrecked room, smoking a cigarette in the middle of a high. Renton has a sickly, pale

appearance, with dark circles under his eyes, while the voice-over says: "Choose good health, low cholesterol, and dental insurance. Choose fixed-interest mortgage repayments." Continuing with: "Choose a starter home" just as the shot gets wider showing the desolated, broken room he is in (see figure 56). The film shows a disconnection between popular ideas of a 'perfect' life and what Renton's life is really like. However, even as the sequence does the job of establishing the present of Renton's life and the setting for the rest of the film, there is an underlying focus on the future with the idea of what "choose life" means. Yet, this is something that seems negated to Renton, also illustrated when playing football and one of the opposite team's players kicks the ball, flying directly to Renton's forehead as he says: "Choose your future. Choose life," as if it were life and his future which knocks him out. Renton lies on the floor, the camera moves around him, and the voice-over states: "But why would I want to do a thing like that? I choose not to choose life. And the reasons? There are no reasons. Who needs reasons when you've got heroin?". With this final statement, Renton makes clear his position of inability to engage with the future, but, as have elaborated above, it is an overall sense of temporality in *Trainspotting* with which he is unable to engage.



Figure 56 Ewan McGregor as Renton during the opening monologue in *Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. Channel Four Films, Figment Films, The Noel Gay Motion Picture Company, UK, 1996)

Similar to how the "choose life" speech of *Trainspotting* shows the internal conflict of the younger Renton, the reiteration of this speech in the sequel *T2*, also shows older Mark's internal fight. This new speech, however, is one designed for the 21st century and for the person Mark has become twenty years later showing his internal battle with time. The comparison between one speech and the other can be understood using the tools that Deleuze offers in *Difference and Repetition*: Deleuze gives an example by stating: "Take the example of the rhyme: it is indeed verbal repetition, but repetition which includes the difference between two words and inscribes that difference at the heart of a poetic idea" (Deleuze, 2014:25). The repetition of the two words of a rhyme unites them, but with the difference between them is what brings up each word's unique meaning. Then, it shows how these meanings, in their difference, relate to each other to create the poetic essence of their rhyme. Even if not a rhyme per se, this process can be revealed in Mark's reiteration of the "Choose life" speech, and in the same way that the first version established the themes and tones of the parent film, the qualitative changes of the second reveal the themes and tones of the sequel. In *T2* the most significant new character is Simon's girlfriend, Veronika. She is a young sex worker who immigrated to Edinburgh looking for a better life, but similar to the original characters, became stuck in the trenches of Scottish working class, even more so, as an immigrant. She begins an affair with Mark, who treats her with new clothes and fancy diners. Similar to Diane in *Trainspotting*, Veronika confronts Mark with his reality when he asks him what the meaning of "Choose life" is. Mark explains: "'Choose life' was a well-meaning slogan from a 1980s anti-drug campaign. And we used to add things to it. So, I might say, for example, choose ... Designer lingerie in the vain hope of kicking some life back into a dead relationship [...]. Choose an iPhone made in China by a woman who jumped out of a window [...]. Choose Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram and a thousand other ways to spew your bile across

people you've never met [...] choose updating your profile<sup>40</sup>". The new "choose life" speech is both similar and different from the original. For example, in the first speech, Mark talks about a big television, compact disc players and electrical tin-openers, while in the second he talks about an iPhone, Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram. These things are different, but that is what brings out their similarities as popular commodities that define the time of each film: the 1990s and the 2010s.

Furthermore, the new "choose life" strongly reveals Mark's struggle with recalibration from 1996 to 2017. In *Trainspotting*, Mark begins the "choose life" speech, with the more abstract concepts of life, family, career, and then he moves on to the mundane, material items of life. In *T2*, this is the other way around. He begins with the mundane, and then moves to the social issues that have increasingly circulated in global social media (Abortion, 9/11 antisemitism, "Human interaction reduced to nothing more than data"), and finally to his own personal concerns. This difference in the order of concepts shows a difference in his mindset, from thinking life is about the mundane things to how the mundane things are about life. For a while, the scene in *T2* only showed Mark monologuing in the restaurant with Veronika, but, as he goes into intimate issues of his life, new images appear matching and informing further what he says. The essence of the speech is no longer only about abstract notions of what Mark imagines life might be, but about realised authentic aspects of his own life. In a way, the "choose life" speech has changed to "a life already chosen," the life he has gone through:

"Choose a zero-hour contract and a two-hour journey to work, and choose the same for your kids, only worse. And maybe tell yourself it's better that they never happened. And then

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<sup>40</sup> Following her take on the change in culture and society, Sarah Sharma explains: "Contemporary "Speed" is the commanding by-product of a mutually reinforcing complex that includes global capital, real-time communication technologies, corporate productivity demands, military technologies, and scientific research on human bodies". (Sharma, 2013: 313) The new technologies that Mark mentions in this speech are one of these things contributing to the acceleration of life and temporalities with which he cannot keep up.



sit back and smother the pain with an unknown dose of an unknown drug made in somebody's fucking kitchen. Choose an unfulfilled promise and wishing you'd done it all differently" (see figure 57) Here, instead of uttering "choose a family" in the ironic detached mode he did before, the speech and image show Mark's distress for his already taken decision not to and/or his inability to have a family, which is a commitment that someone struggling to maintain his place in society would have a difficult time fulfilling.



*Figure 57* Intersecting image of choose life speech: Mark lying awake at night in an empty bed in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

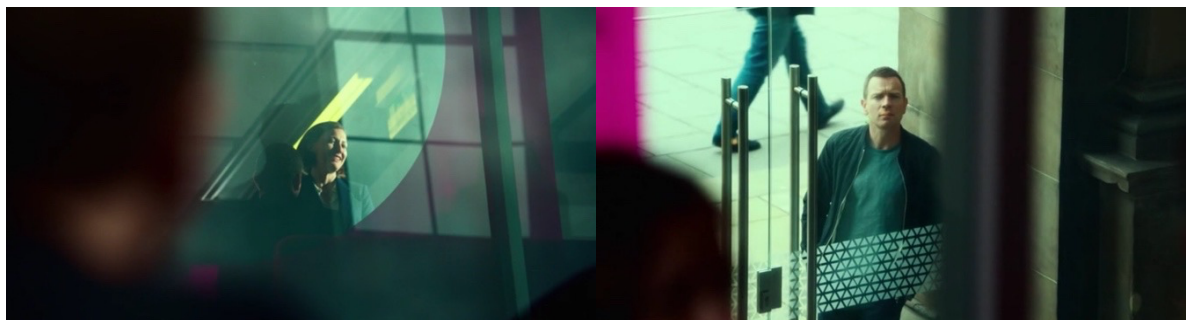
He continues: "Choose never learning from your own mistakes. Choose watching history repeat itself" (see figure 58), the images show Mark feeling his heart aching while running up Arthur's seat. This gesture, and his expression of realisation and fear, show his awareness of how this echoes the heart attack he had at the beginning of the film, hinting at the imminent return of his heart failing. Furthermore, the voice over links this to the cyclical nature of time and repetition with the line: "watching history repeat itself" as the failing of his heart compromises what has been his coping mechanism to control his addiction. Similarly, the line "choose never learning from your own mistakes" points to another sense of the recurrence of time. One which presupposes the agency of the subject to bring difference into the repetition



to escape the cycle. Both voice over and images reveal strikingly the repetition in the films and the difference embedded in it. "Choose the slow reconciliation towards what you can get rather than what you always hoped for. Settle for less and keep a brave face on it" (see figure 59). These sentences are a heart-breaking acceptance of Mark's inability to recalibrate and to reach the life that he had imagined for himself. They mark a clear difference between the apparent apathy with which younger Renton said he had "chosen not to choose life", and the sting of not having been able to have such life.



*Figure 58* Intersecting image of choose life speech: Mark feeling his heart during a run in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)



*Figure 59* Intersecting image of choose life speech: Mark staring at Diane from outside her office's window in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

"Choose disappointment. And choose losing the ones you loved. And as they fall from view, a piece of you dies with them. Until you can see that one day in the future, piece by piece, they will all be gone. And there'll be nothing left of you to call alive or dead. Choose your

future, Veronika. Choose life" (see figure 3.17). This last moment in the speech folds back to when Mark visits his father at the beginning of the film and reveals his mother had passed away during his absence. Mark is sitting at the table with his father and the shot is almost identical to the one from the first film, with Mark facing the wall, sitting next to his father, except this time, there is only a shadow occupying the space where she would have been. By replicating this image, the two moments from 1996 and 2017 are juxtaposed and highlight the differences and repetition from one time to the other. This juxtaposition emphasises his mother's absence and how time has changed him and the world around him. The repetition of "choose" life, shows a life where there are regrets, worries, and sadness that are not waiting to be "chosen" but a life that has already been. Like the children, he did not have, divorcing his wife, his heart failure, his past relationship with Diane, and the death of his mother. This use of difference and repetition is something replicated several times within the sequel. Scenes, images, sounds and concepts are replicated to highlight time's effect on the characters and their surroundings; the differences that indicate the passing of time, but also the repetitions that contrast with those differences to emphasise the characters' immobility and inability to keep up with the demands of the society they live in. Such immobility can enhance the alienation of the characters even more than in the previous film, as they seem to be, not only out of place, but also increasingly out of time.



Figure 60 Left: Mark at the table with his father in *T2 Trainspotting*. Right: Flashback from *Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

This situation of falling increasingly out of time is addressed by Sarah Sharma while talking about the biopolitics of the life force, she discusses that this is: "a relation of temporal power [that] takes on a specificity depending on where one is located within the biopolitical economy of time; between investment and disinvestment, let to live and let to die" (Sharma, 2011: 442). She states how it is through the lens of time that the biopolitical economy becomes clearer as an "always-already intersecting form of social difference" (Sharma, 2013:317). This because: "Time allows for an empathetic understanding of social difference because everyone knows that time is finite. It is critical thinking about how the time of their lives is bound to the inequitable biopolitical struggles of others - those less invested bodies or the divested bodies. Experiences of time are tied to inequitable horizons of political possibility" (Sharma, 2011:444). Here, Sharma discusses the relations among inequitable biopolitical struggles and how there are bodies that get invested and those that get divested. As most of the social, economic, and temporal capital gets invested on those bodies deemed more valuable, the bodies which are neglected and divested become increasingly unlikely to recalibrate and keep up with society's times and demands. This bears the question, what happens to the bodies unable to keep up as time keeps moving forward?

## Chronological Pollution

In *The Order of Things* (2002) and *The History of Madness* (2006), Michel Foucault describes how order is created in society, and how this society deals with those who fall out of that order. For example, he elaborates how places and institutions served as spaces in which to exclude and hide away the mad, homeless, or unemployed (Foucault, 2002:65). Furthermore, his main argument elaborates how such groups and in particular the mad were perceived as 'the other' and a threat to the social order:

The history of madness would be the history of the Other – of that which, for a given culture, is at once interior and foreign, therefore, to be excluded (so as to exorcize the interior danger) but by being shut away (in order to reduce its otherness); whereas the history of the order imposed on things would be the history of the Same – of that which, for a given culture, is both dispersed and related, therefore, to be distinguished by kinds and to be collected together into identities. (Foucault, 2002:xxvi).

Foucault shows the neglect and dehumanisation that some social groups can be victims of when perceived out of - or as a threat to - the social order; those who are out of place. In *Trainspotting*, a clear example of ‘putting away’ those who disrupt the social order is Francis Begbie; a violent, sadistic character who constantly terrorised his friends while pretending to hold the higher moral ground. *T2* soon reveals that he had been in jail during those twenty years between one film and the other, where he had been “hidden away” instead of being helped to improve. I will go back to elaborate on Begbie’s imprisonment, but what I want to highlight right now are the temporal aspects related to it.

The implications of the disruption of an established order, and the relative perception of that which falls out of order is something that has been addressed by Mary Douglas in her text *Purity and Danger* (2003). In it, Douglas re-evaluated the concept of dirt as something not inherently dirty, but as matter that is perceived to be out of place. This implies a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. For this reason, dirt is not an isolated event, since if there is dirt, there is a system to which it is not serving. What is perceived as dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering in so far as ordering involves rejecting elements which are deemed inappropriate to that order (Douglas, 2003:35). Following Foucault and Douglas, we can see how there is a similitude between an established order and that which threatens that order, be it dirt in the material sense or undesirable people in the social aspect. In either way, that which is thought of as “dirty” (I.e., disruptive of the established purity and order) is usually deemed invaluable and in need to hide away to maintain the illusion of order. The aesthetics in

*Trainspotting* reflect this showing a dirty environment around those who are relegated to the edges of society; for example, mother superior's drug house or Tommy's flat once he is infected with HIV are extremely "dirty" environments.

From Douglas's definition of dirt, Byron Ellsworth Hamann develops the concept of chronological pollution, arguing that dirt "in addition to being matter out of place, can be matter out of time as well. That is, it can be matter that violates the cultural ordering of temporality" (Hamann, 2008:804). He draws this concept from the Nahuatl term of *tlazolli*, which derives from a verb meaning "to grow old, wear out". During the process of colonisation, '*tlazolli*' was misinterpreted and defined by the Spanish as "rubbish" (Hamann, 2008:805). However, more than rubbish, the original meaning of the term was to name "something used up, which has lost its *original* order or structure" (Hamann, 2008:805). This term defined objects that were thrown out not because they had become useless or negligible in an observable material sense, but because "the temporal horizon in which they existed was about to change" (Hamann, 2008:806) a process which did not treat the worn-out items as useless, but as having changed their purpose. From his analysis on *tlazolli*, Hamman concludes that, in the same way that matter out of space is relative, "so too is matter out of time relative" (Hamann, 2008:823). What I propose by uniting these three theories is that, within the frame of capitalism's imposed order, the bodies that fail to recalibrate, and stop being productive as they age become "out of time" as if they are no longer valuable or 'useful'. However, this "out-of-time-ness" of 'chronological dirt' is relative, given that for it to be 'dirty' there must be a system which it is not serving. In this case, a neoliberal order that only includes young, productive bodies within that order.

Returning to Begbie, we can now see how he goes through the process of becoming "out of time" during his time in jail. In his case, it has been outside forces which have hindered

his mobility and recalibration. His anxieties of time passing are made evident during a meeting with his lawyer who lets him know his appeal was denied. Frank replies: "Five more years, eh? What do they think I am? They think I'm like one of those cunts in the Bible that live forever?". Here, Begbie shows an awareness of how the limited years of his life are running out. Moreover, with every year that passes, his body continues to grow old and degrade. This is something he has to face even after he breaks out of prison; he is no longer the young man in his twenties he used to be. He now has to face the toll that those years locked up have had on his body. For example, Begbie is a man who deeply valued his sexual vitality as a sign of manhood and virility, evidenced in his hook-ups or events such as his mistaken encounter with a trans woman, which infuriated him because he perceived it as putting his manhood in doubt. But, when he goes back to his wife after prison, he finds himself unable to have sex with her as he is now suffering from erectile dysfunction. This event reflects Begbie's loss of the youth and vitality that is valued in the capitalist world he lives in (which he has clearly internalised). Such loss is one that leads many people to feel and be perceived outside of the margins of value and fall into irrelevance (see figure 61).



Figure 61 Left: Begbie with a trans woman in *Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. Channel Four Films, Figment Films, The Noel Gay Motion Picture Company, UK, 1996) Right: Begbie unable to have sex with his wife in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar)

Going from *Trainspotting* to *T2*, the sequel clearly establishes how the "temporal horizon" in which the characters existed has gone through a big societal change; change that is illustrated at Mark's arrival in Edinburgh showing the new makeup of the city, his "choose life" speech referring to the new technologies that govern life and in Simon's reference to "the

great wave of gentrification”. But, as with gentrification, the objects and people contained within the initial temporal horizon who are not able to keep up with this change are pushed aside<sup>41</sup>, a process which placed them “out of time.” A conspicuous and straight forward example of this is when Mark goes into his old childhood bedroom. When he steps into the cube with trains all over the walls, it is as if he has stepped into a time capsule (see figure 62). The setting replicates the same room from *Trainspotting*, serving as memory of the moments spent in there. The room is filled with nostalgic items like posters, cut-outs enveloping the walls with the cultural icons in vogue during the late 1980s old football magazines, a hidden stash of weed, vinyl records and a turntable. All these items now look anachronistic while they did not in *Trainspotting*. This perceived anachronism is not something inherent to the items but is the by-product of the change of temporal horizon. Playing the 1996 film, Renton’s room creates an uneasy atmosphere of it being somewhat infantilising for the 20-something Renton and reinforcing his stuck-ness in time, but it still was a lived-in space that managed to convey functionality and purpose. In the 2017 film, this same room is a clearly out-dated space filled with what can be seen as rubbish, which creates a steeper contrast with the now clean and smart looking 40-year-old Renton. Everything remains the same it was before, but what has changed is time.



Figure 62 Mark enters his childhood room in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

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<sup>41</sup> Another example of this is how Spud’s livelihood was disrupted by new technology. At first, he was able to steal by falsifying people’s signatures, but this was no longer possible when Chips and PINs were introduced: “No room for an honest artisan like me anymore”.



This sequence also shows Mark's personal difficulties to engage with this past as he chooses one of the vinyl records, and carefully places it on the old turntable, but just as the first couple of notes from *Lust for Life* begin to play, he is fast to stop it. This song is deeply intertwined with *Trainspotting* and an anthem to the values he once preached but left behind after leaving Edinburgh. Stopping it from playing is also like stopping the memories from his past from playing. He does not fully dare to face it (see figure 63). When matter out of time is not welcomed, it comes with a strong psychological load to those who have move forward, at best it is an inconvenient memory; at worst, it is a hindering force of the past in the present that obstructs the subject's mobility (diagnosable as PTSD<sup>42</sup>). As such, this matter is usually dealt with as Foucault describes, by excluding it and hiding it away where its presence becomes imperceptible to the rest.



Figure 63 Mark stops *Lust for Life* from playing on his old turntable in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

This relative state of chronological pollution is something that can be translated to groups of people too, as illustrated in *T2*. Mark and Simon need to get money, so they rob a group of protestant loyalists at King William Arms pub, who gather to remember the Battle of the Boyne:

These are people who've been abandoned by their political class. But at least they have what we don't: A sense of identity. An identity encapsulated in four digits (1690). The Battle of the Boyne

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<sup>42</sup> “Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that develops from events that are interpreted as traumatic. It may be secondary to witnessing trauma to someone close, an event that threatens one’s life or childhood sexual trauma. Resultant feelings can be fear, helplessness, or horror. Thresholds at which traumatic events cause PTSD, the individual’s coping ability and support systems help determine occurrence and severity of symptoms”. (Seides, 2010).



was fought on the 11th of July 1690, between two rival claimants of the British and Irish thrones, James II, Catholic, and William of Orange, Protestant. The battle was decisive. The Protestants won. But 400 years later, the uncompromising and victorious loyalists now feel estranged from the modern, secular United Kingdom. The sectarian songs have been banned, but they still gather and remain loyal to the victory of 1690, and to a simpler, less tolerant time.

There are several points to highlight within this description and scene. Firstly, this is a group of people united and defined by a common past. However, it is a past even more distant from the present temporal landscape. This makes the people's sense of "living in the past" even more evident as Mark mentions how they "now feel estranged from the modern, secular United Kingdom". This shows their inability to recalibrate with the processes of their own country and falling out of the new social order, which is what has made them estranged and abandoned. From this perspective, they have become dehumanised into "chronological pollution" and hide away in the pub where they are free to chant their hymns. Secondly, it is this what makes them vulnerable to Mark, Simon and Veronika who can abuse their status as such. It is this status that clues them about what is their bank PIN is – 1690 – and how to rob them.

In contrast to Mark's recalibration, Simon, Begbie, and Spud, did not get the opportunity to emigrate from Edinburgh in search for a better life; they remained stuck. The group is first introduced in *Trainspotting* as a football team's line up, whose improvised sportswear contrast their opponents' tidy uniforms, establishing the division between them as misfits and the 'human tribe' (see figure 64). In *T2* they are re-introduced differently and similarly. The film cuts to the cast's credits which are shown over what looks like a home-made vintage recording of a group of children playing football. Over different children, the names of the cast appear (see figure 65). The theme of the football match is repeated to re-emphasise their link as a team, but the characters are presented as children. On the one hand, this presentation emphasises the role of the past in the film and how that past was continued over

time (They played football since they were children well into their twenties). On the other, it informs the audience of the underlying quality of the character's relationships. It creates the idea, that they have known each other since that early age, suggestive of a bond between them due to their shared history.

Even if the group has proven to have a complex and toxic dynamic, a common past unites them. This also suggests that their earlier story is similar to Renton's before leaving Edinburgh. The latter even mentions how: "the downside of coming off junk was that [he] knew [he] would need to mix with [his] friends again in a state of full consciousness" and "they reminded [him] so much of [himself] [he] could hardly bear to look at them". This speaks of Renton's awareness of a group dynamic that brings out each other's worst demons and similarities. In *Trainspotting*, it is not just heroin that Renton must escape; it is his environment, his triggers, his own friends, and sense of identity<sup>43</sup>. All this suggests that Mark's life could have been similar to his friends' had he not left Edinburgh, given that "our experience of time is shaped by our social, economic and political environment" (Adam, 1994 in Stock, 2020:83)



Figure 64 Contrasting Football teams at the introduction of *Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. Channel Four Films, Figment Films, The Noel Gay Motion Picture Company, UK, 1996)

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<sup>43</sup> As Dingle, Cruwys and Frings have documented, addiction and relapsing are closely related to an addict's sense of identity and how, in turn, this identity is related to the social factors around it. It is also widely considered that peer influence is the most consistent and influential factor in drug abuse (Newcomb and Bentler, 1989; Hodgins, el-Guebaly and Armstrong, 1995; Walton, Reischl and Ramanathan, 1995; Ary *et al.*, 1999; Zywiak *et al.*, 2006) and these social factors and peer influence can act as either motivation for or barriers to recovery (Dingle, Cruwys and Frings, 2015).



Figure 65 Children playing football for cast's credits in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

*T2* shows how the past twenty years have enhanced Simon's, Spud's, and Begbie's immobility, threatening them to fall away from social order and under the shadow of "chronological pollution". The group are what were once called 'schemies', which is defined by the housing schemes in Leith, historically, an area of deprivation in Edinburgh (Smith, 2002:7). As such, their situation in the broader scheme of the city is already one of economic disadvantage, where the scarce and restricted opportunities for recalibration obstructs their social mobility and equates them with backwardness. This in itself means a distinction between the "developed" and "undeveloped" parts of the city; Leith occupying a different temporality to the more "advanced" Edinburgh. Because of this, the group becomes part of those stuck under the shadow of unvalued time, under the control of time, rather than in control of it.

Leith's new temporal horizon and its own fight with gentrification is also represented when Mark and Simon apply for funding to renovate Simon's pub<sup>44</sup>. The pitch they give to the

<sup>44</sup> It is also worth noting that since *Trainspotting*, Leith has been gentrified during recent years. (Doucet, 2009; Taylor, 2018).

investors appeals primarily to the nostalgia of the place, presenting a black and white film from the pub's glory days, with the nostalgic music of bagpipes. They claim to want to take "an iconic Leith building", renovate and convert it to "occupy a central role, both physically and emotionally, at the heart of this new wave of regeneration in Leith", Simon closing with the label: "Leith 2.1". This is a pitch checking all the boxes of gentrification, which is more a threat than salvation for those unable to keep up. Similarly, in this pitch, they show the process that the pub had gone through of becoming chronological dirt, showing images to the investors of when it was vibrant and thriving then cutting non-diegetically to images of the deserted pub after the pitch (see figure 66).



*Figure 66* Port Sunshine in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

In many ways, the pub's struggle with gentrification, resembles Simon's struggle for recalibration. Just as he wants to refurbish and renovate the pub wishing to turn it into a brothel, Simon keeps dyeing his hair (see figure 67) and searching for his break-through moment, both ultimately frustrated. The new funds, which could have meant a new direction for the pub and Simon, were yet again taken away from him by Veronika, who takes the money for herself, after both Mark and Simon try to convince her to join them into betraying the other. They both cite their reasons from past betrayals they could not let go. Veronika once again represents the younger generation. She outsmarts those stuck in the past, just as Mark and Simon did to the protestant loyalists. In the end, Simon is yet again betrayed and loses his opportunity to renovate his life. His final scene shows him opening the pub, letting his one faithful customer in, and leaning his head down in acceptance of more unchanging years to come (see figure 68).





Figure 67 Simon dyeing his hair in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

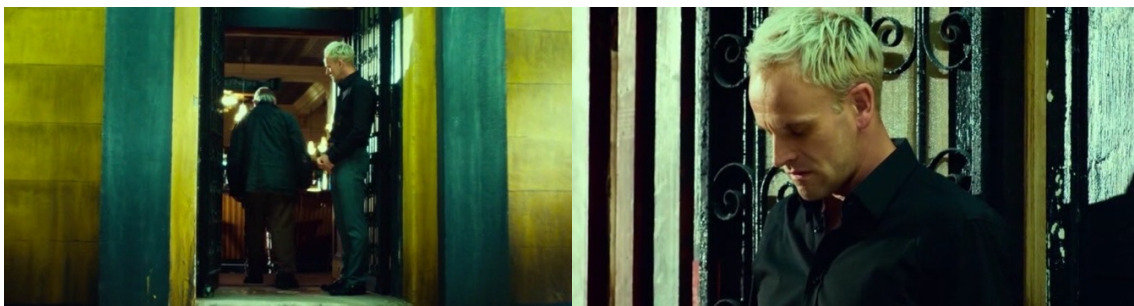


Figure 68 Simon's final scene in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

## Reconciliation

Even as Simon's and Begbie's stories end back where they began, *T2* issues a glimmer of hope into the tragedy of time with Spud's story of self-reconciliation. As I have elaborated, for all of the characters, the entrapment between an overbearing past and a negated future was hindering and harmful. However, it is also in that same relationship with past and future that reconciliation can be achieved. As Newbury writes:

To move beyond the past is first to recognize it. To do this, two elements are necessary. The first one is an acceptance of a common past (though not an equivalent past); such a vision acknowledges anger. The second element is acceptance of a common future; such a vision limits anger. Fully incorporating these two elements, then, is the first step to a future that differs from the past. (Newbury, 2004:431)

To move beyond the past is first to recognise it and accept a common future, which is what Spud works through in the film. After a long fight with his addiction, Spud had given up on his unsuccessful efforts to quit heroin and become a wholesome father to his child, so he decides to kill himself. He explicitly expresses a sense of inadequacy and failed attempts to recalibrate in the suicide note he would leave for Gail: “[...] I know that you and Fergus are living in a better world without all my chaos [...] You are so beautiful [...] And I only ever made this world ugly [...] I’ve tried and tried and tried for 20 years, and everything I try is another disaster”. With this, the film shows how Spud had internalised the sentiment of being a disruption in the order of his family, of being “chronological dirt”, something that needed to be removed to maintain the purity and order of his family. Luckily, Mark gets to his flat when he was about to asphyxiate and saves him.

Thereafter, Spud begins a path of renovation, but this path does not deny or resent his past; instead, he works with it to open his future. Sharing his own experience with addiction, Mark tells Spud: “It's not getting it out of your body that's the problem. It's getting it out of your mind. You are an addict. [...] So be addicted. But be addicted to something else. [...] You've got to channel it.” While trying different outlets for his addiction, Spud tries hobbies such as boxing and running. However, he later realises that the outlet he needed was a mental not a physical one: retelling his stories. When he steps out of the gym, he finds himself in the same location from the opening scene in *Trainspotting* where he and Mark were being chased. The film plays the scenes juxtaposed onto one another mixing the past and present in one same image showing Spud’s past (re)presentated in his existing present (see figure 69).



Figure 69 Spud reliving the police chase from *Trainspotting* in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

Immediately after, the scene cuts to Spud going to Gail's house who hands him a bag of old pictures<sup>45</sup>. Back in his flat, Spud begins organising and placing them on the walls, which literally alters the perspective from which he looks at them. He uses the pictures to guide his writing in a material representation of re-organizing his relationship with his own past (see figure 70). Earlier in the film, Spud had been telling his old adventures as a junkie to Veronika, who represents 'the new' in the film, and she suggested he should write down his stories. She offered a new perspective on what he had always known and began writing about his past. This becomes the new addiction into which he channels his emotions. In this way, Spud learns to engage with his past in a meaningful way. Instead of holding him back, he reconciles with it, re-interprets it, and it becomes what makes him move forward. This act also becoming a self-reflexive way of referencing the success of literary memoirs of addicts, which loops back to the very origins of *Trainspotting* as a novel.

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<sup>45</sup> This also echoes an experience of migrants interviewed by Stock who "had documented evidence of his past [and] could not accept that his past had become useless" (Stock, 2020: 97).



Figure 70 Spud writes the stories from his past in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

The film ultimately ends with this same note as Mark, after surviving an encounter with Begbie who almost killed him, returns to his father's home. Entering his childhood room, Mark puts the vinyl on the turn table this time allowing it to play, unlike at the beginning. The scene criss-crosses with images from the opening in *Trainspotting* when young Renton starts falling, and older Renton imitates this movement. But instead of falling, the music plays, and he dances along creating a new meaning for the idea behind the song, where the idea of a '*Lust for Life*<sup>46</sup>' exists within a new temporal context (see figure 71). This sequence yet again loops back to the very beginning of the story across films and summarises the process that Renton has gone through in both films contained within the intervals. Where he faces his past as that young addict collapsing on the floor but can now fully engage with it without falling but dancing along with it in his process of becoming.

<sup>46</sup> It is also telling that the song playing is not Iggy Pop's original version, but a new remix by The Prodigy.





Figure 71 Final scene in *T2 Trainspotting* (dir. Danny Boyle prod. TriStar Pictures, Film4, UK, 2017)

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored how the intertextuality between *Trainspotting* and *T2 Trainspotting* shows the characters' relationship to a fragmented time. Through the twenty years that separate one film from the other, the sequel enhances the themes and meaning of the parent film in their relation to temporalities. I showed this by deciphering the films' temporal forms which reveal the progress or stagnation in time of the characters and their context. Firstly, using Barbara Adam, Mary-Ann Doane, and Sarah Sharma, I elaborated on the social implications of the standardisation of time and how this is reflected in the film through its depictions of power structures, national identity, colonialism, and bio-politics. These implications show a division across temporalities as well as across, class, nation and identities resulting in temporal disjunction or stagnation. Secondly, I elaborated on the personal consequences of these structures for the characters that the film and sequel show, as they translate to the value, investment or divestment that is placed in some bodies over others. I highlight the process of recalibration through Mark's journey in between *Trainspotting* and *T2* to show his inability to keep up with the demands of the new life he looked for when he left Edinburgh. Following Byron Ellsworth Hamann I developed how the sequel to *Trainspotting* helps to inspect the neglect and dehumanisation that the divested bodies suffer when they fall out of an imposed order of time and are seen and forgotten as chronological pollution and dehumanisation. Finally, I elaborated how the films work together to create a way forward for those stuck in time by engaging with their past, re-organising it and envisioning the possibility of a future.

## Chapter 4

# Return to the future: Progress and nostalgia in *Blade Runner* and *Blade Runner 2049*

Much has been written about *Blade Runner* (1982), from its narrative (Brooker, 2009) and architectural achievements (Leus, 2004), to its philosophical themes (Dienstag, 2013; Kaylique, 2019), its critique of the politics of capitalism (Taşkale, 2020) and more. It also became a canonical cult film with its many different cuts<sup>47</sup> and has had a close following for years. The release of its sequel, thirty-five years later, did nothing less than add to its complexity. This chapter is concerned with the temporal interaction between the two films regarding both their thematic elements and the thirty-five-year interval between their respective productions.

*Blade Runner*, by itself, already explores complex issues about the implications of time. In 1982 it told the story of a dystopian future set in Los Angeles, November 2019. For thirty-five years after *Blade Runner* was released, it was analysed and studied, but November 2019 was getting closer, and we still did not have flying cars, off-world colonies, or human-like replicants. In 1982 *Blade Runner* was a film that spoke about a possible future, a future that, in terms of the calendar, eventually came. Even if the technologies that it depicted for the 21st Century were not what we have now, the anxieties that it addressed — like the fear of environmental destruction, the creation and commodification of artificial life, or the overtaking of capitalism — are still present, even if represented in different ways. *Blade Runner 2049* (2017) provided an opportunity to take the themes of futuristic projection and to expand on

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<sup>47</sup> Workprint prototype version (1982), San Diego sneak preview version (1982), US theatrical release (1982), International theatrical release (1982), US broadcast version (1986), The Director's Cut (1992), The Final Cut (2007)

them by reimagining their updated version thirty-five years later. However, the creation of this new updated future also implied a new updated past, one which was ever-present in the making and narrative of the sequel.

In both *Blade Runner* films, the interplay between past and future is prominent. It provides a vision of an imagined future rooted in contemporary society's most profound concerns; it addresses this future carefully in its possibilities, implications, fears, and dangers. Nevertheless, this vision of the future is endowed with a strong sense of nostalgia for a lost time by simultaneously turning its eyes to the past. In the previous chapters, I have built on the use of time within sequels to explore the revelations of the ageing body, and the transitions and stagnations in time. In this chapter, I will investigate the coexistence of past, present, and future in the complex temporal tensions that exist at the heart of the *Blade Runner* films. I will do this by exploring the interaction between nostalgia and the future in the parent film and sequel, and how these tensions are enhanced and built upon by the film's intertextuality with its sequel.

To do this, I begin by looking at the relationship between nostalgia and the future drawing from Svetlana's Boym theory of nostalgia as the inevitable companion to progress. I will proceed to analyse both *Blade Runner* films through the lens of nostalgia as a mood and nostalgia as a mode, concepts drawn from Paul Grainge's study of 'Nostalgia and Style in Retro America' (2000). I also explore the different perspectives and roles that nostalgia takes by looking at texts such as Katharina Niemeyer's *Media and Nostalgia* (2014), Michael Pickering and Emily Keightley (2006), Laurajane Smith and Gary Campbell (2017). These theorists widely divide the use of nostalgia between reactionary and progressive, based on how it can either promote a return to past practices or become an impulse for developing the future into something new. I will then look at the complex relations between history, memory and

nostalgia drawing from Pierre Nora (Nora, 1989), and Katharina Niemeyer (2014) and how these become complex loci of temporal tensions. Finally, I develop further how the time-critical sequel of *Blade Runner* uses these different devices to develop the plot and exploration of its complex themes of identity, time, memory, and social justice integrating past, present, and future.

## Integrating Nostalgia and the Future

The *Blade Runner* films are texts in which nostalgia and its interconnection with the future are closely linked together. This dynamic becomes increasingly complex through the temporal intertextuality between the parent film and the sequel. To approach the matter, it is necessary to address the broadly held view about the existence of various types of nostalgia and its different modes of engagement. The term nostalgia emerged in the 17th and 18th centuries as a medical disease for those experiencing acute sadness and physical symptoms due to being far away from home. The word comes from *nostos* - return home, and *algia* - longing. As Svetlana Boym defines it, it is a "longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed" (Boym, 2001:xv). In this regard, it is important to point out that Boym clearly identifies nostalgia with a real past home, but also stating it can be felt for a home that never existed or was never real. Since then, the understanding and use of nostalgia have evolved. Most importantly, although nostalgia was initially defined as a longing to go back home, it is now predominantly understood as related to issues of temporality rather than space; the longing to go back to a time when one felt at home. As Boym writes, "At first glance, nostalgia is a longing for a place, but actually it is a yearning for a different time [...]. In a broader sense, nostalgia is a rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress" (Boym, 2001:xv).

The relation between the future and nostalgia has been well documented (Boym, 2001; Bradbury, 2012; Barba, 2014; Niemeyer, 2014; Smith and Campbell, 2017), and there seems to be a consensus about the idea that nostalgia is not only concerned with going back to a better past, but also about a vision of the future. In fact, for Svetlana Boym, nostalgia is so interlinked with progress to the point where they are each other's "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" (Boym, 2001:xvi). Boym develops how nostalgia and progress go hand in hand, but there are two different ways to look at this relationship. On the one hand, this binary of progress and nostalgia, as Boym describes them, indicates that as we move forward alongside progress, we will need to mourn what we have left behind. It does not necessarily mean wanting to go back to the past, but it is the acknowledgement of something lost on the way. On the other hand, Laurajane Smith and Gary Campbell (2017), Katharina Niemeyer (2014), Jill Bradbury (2012), Michael Pickering and Emily Keightley (2006), have examined the alternative of seeing nostalgia as presentable in two distinct forms: either a reactionary longing for the past or as an impulse for the future. These two ways of looking at nostalgia can coexist, after all, "Nostalgia can incorporate both a strong sense of loss, while at the same time a sense of hope or longing for a better future" (Smith and Campbell, 2001:616). However, it is still necessary to understand them as two different ways in which nostalgia relates to the future. One, as an unavoidable outcome of progress, and the other as a choice of how to relate to this situation, a choice where nostalgia is "a way of negotiating the meaning of the past for the present" (Smith and Campbell, 2001:617) and, I would argue, the future.

At first, it might be counter intuitive to think of a science fiction film, like *Blade Runner*, as concerned with the past. However, the knowledge of the past is a crucial resource to imagine and articulate future possibilities, which is why there is a close relationship between history and science fiction. According to Janice Liedl (2015), science fiction can also be a

historical genre given that it follows historical patterns in its interpretation of the future; a projection of the future necessarily comes from an understanding of history. Liedl states that: "counterfactual history or alternate history takes the classic 'what if?' formulation to ask how history might have unfolded differently given a change in the past" (Liedl, 2015:291). In turn, science-fiction often takes a 'what-if' approach to the future. This "what-if" can take different forms, but it is usually informed by the past to maintain continuity and inform the story's cause-and-effect logic. In this interaction between the knowledge of the past and the imagination of the future, nostalgia can occupy a multi-layered and multi-dynamic role. Be it a longing for the past or unrealised dreams of the future, nostalgia requires contrast between two things creating several loops; as Boym explains, "A cinematic image of nostalgia is a double exposure, or a superimposition of two images of home and abroad, past and present, dream and everyday life" (Boym, 2001:xiv). In this sense, the existence of the two *Blade Runner* films provides the means for this superimposition in multiple ways, from the imposition of one and the other, to the imposition of the future times they depict against the present in which they are produced and watched; as Deleuze would suggest, for a philosophy of difference. Because of this, the sequel offers a revision or update considering new histories that were not past at the time when the parent film was released. *Blade Runner 2049* updates the temporal dynamics of its predecessor for a new temporal dimension, with a new foresight that also integrates a new past that integrates *Blade Runner*. As the sequel progresses, the film goes in a forward motion telling a new story, but it constantly loops back referencing and integrating the previous film. By doing this, it connects the events of one to the other, creating a superimposition of past and future, highlighting its similarities and differences in time.

In his 'Nostalgia Critique' (1995), Stuart Tannock argues that it is a necessity to understand the variety of ways in which nostalgia can operate. Firstly, he states that nostalgia

is a 'structure of feeling' which "invokes a positively evaluated past world in response to a deficient present world" (Tannock, 1995:454). However, he also brings attention to the need to separate "the critique of the content, the author, and audience of nostalgic narratives — *who is nostalgic for what* [...] — from the critique of the structure of nostalgia itself" (Tannock, 1995:456 my emphasis). Although Tannock mentions this primarily to develop the distinction between nostalgic media from the structure of nostalgia itself. It is also important to pay closer attention to the distinction between the nostalgia of the content, author, and audience of certain media and of the story told. This distinction produces different layers of nostalgia that raise divergent meanings for the relationship of the subject of nostalgia to what they are nostalgic for, even within the same text. Furthermore, Tannock's point about the difference between content, author and audience of a nostalgic text is particularly useful for this chapter's argument. The distinction is vital for approaching *Blade Runner* and to evaluate who is nostalgic for what in its different layers. It is necessary to distinguish between the nostalgia in the story told (diegesis) in the text and the nostalgia of the filmmakers and audiences of that text (non-diegesis). When analysed separately, it is possible to see each of them articulate different types of nostalgia according to Paul Grainge's two modalities of nostalgia as *mood* and *mode* (2000:29).

In 'Nostalgia and Style in Retro America: Moods, Modes, and Media Recycling' Paul Grainge differentiates between nostalgia as a mood and as a mode in media "not [as] a binary opposition but [to] distinguish the poles of a theoretical continuum" (Grainge, 2000:28). He explains that: "the nostalgia *mood* articulates a concept of experience. [...] As a form of idealized remembrance, the nostalgia mood emerges from, and is made to relate to, a grounding concept of longing or loss" (Grainge, 2000:28). Contrastingly, "the nostalgia *mode* represents a stylistic hyper-realization of the past in a time when [...] the past has become fundamentally



estranged" (Grainge, 2000:29). What Grainge suggests is to understand the two different ways in which nostalgia can present itself in modern times, the mood, and the mode. This understanding of nostalgia helps to separate the experience of nostalgia from its commodified and stylistic use. Furthermore, Grainge makes a point to emphasise how the two are not necessarily linked together, nor do they exist as a binary, specifying how "Nostalgia modes are not, by necessity, generated by nostalgic moods, or vice versa. Reducing sentiment and style to a fixed and causal relation can underestimate the way that, as a cultural style, nostalgia has become divorced from a necessary concept of loss" (Grainge, 2000:28). This understanding of nostalgia provides a way to approach the events within the *Blade Runner's* story (what the characters might be experiencing) as a manifestation of a nostalgic mood, while simultaneous, but separately, analysing the stylistic choices of the film (like the set, costume design, or *mise-en-scène*) and the *form* of its storytelling as a nostalgic mode.

This distinction is also similarly held by Michael Pickering and Emily Keightley in their discussion of the modalities of nostalgia. They accept these terms that differentiate "between nostalgia as a structure of feeling or affective and experiential discourse, and nostalgia as a commodified style or commodified set of practices" a mood and a mode (Pickering and Keightley, 2006:932). Robert Hopkins' tiers of cinematic representation (as developed in chapter one) are once again helpful to understand how these different types of nostalgia operate in film, separating the events filmed from the story told. On the one hand, within the story told, the experience of the characters and the nostalgia they feel make this a question of nostalgia as a *mood*, given its use as an affective and experiential discourse<sup>48</sup>. On the other hand, the production of the films, namely, the production and design of the events

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<sup>48</sup> There are also interesting things to say about the nostalgic affect and experience (i.e., nostalgia mood) that these films can have on their audience. However, this falls outside the scope of this dissertation. For this reason, I will only be discussing the nostalgia mood in terms of the characters' experiences.

filmed, relates to nostalgia as a *mode*, which directly speaks to the use of nostalgia as a commodified style or commodified set of practices.

Within plot and production, there are further subdivisions of nostalgia given the interaction between the original film and its sequel. Most evidently, the plot of the films is divided between the 1982 film and the one from 2017. They each constitute one micro-fabula that deals individually with narratives related to nostalgia, but there is also the macro-fabula that encompasses and connects both films. In this connection, the dynamic between nostalgia and the future is layered and rich. Meanwhile, the same division exists in terms of the independent production of each film and the connection made between the two through their design. This needs to be understood both in terms of their aesthetic elements like set, props, costume design, casting, marketing, promotion, and their reception. The reception of the films is significant given the dynamics involved with the moment(s) in time that these texts were produced and released. The time in which each film was released, hence temporarily contextualised for their reception and reading is very significant for how audiences<sup>49</sup> make sense of the temporal issues in the story. It also provides a different perspective for both the story told and the events filmed. All these elements operate in the tensions and negotiations of meaning between past, present, and future that exist in the dynamic of the parent movie and its sequel (see Figure 72).

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<sup>49</sup> Audiences may encounter the texts at different moments but the temporal context of their production and release will still inform the reader on how to approach it as this is when it was introduced into the culture.

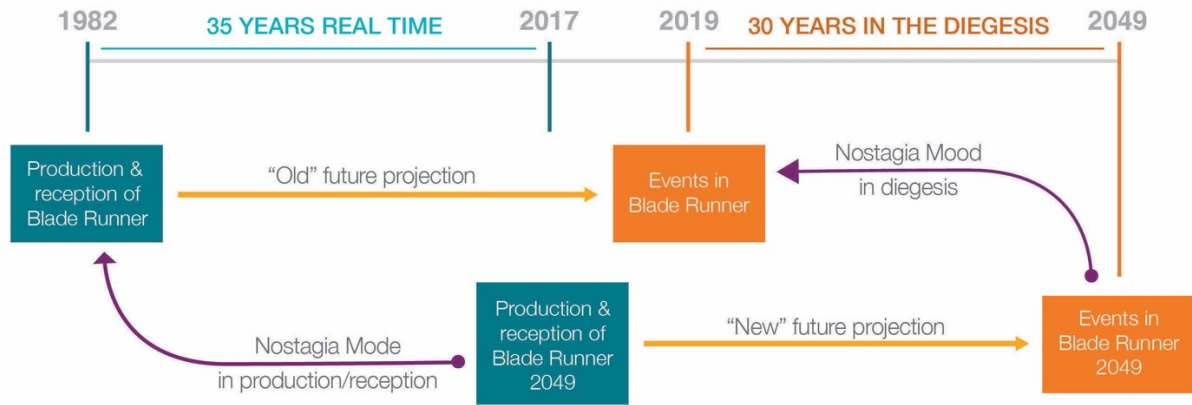


Figure 72 *Blade Runner* and *Blade Runner 2049* diagram.

## The Nuances of Futuristic Nostalgia

*Blade Runner* explores the ‘what ifs’ of progress; and as Boym has described, this progress is necessarily accompanied by nostalgia. As mentioned above, nostalgia as a mood refers to both an experience and a discourse, which helps to explore the emotional relationships within the content of the films. *Blade Runner* tells a tale of what the future could be like, shown in the form of extraordinary technological developments and God-like creations, but it is also a tale of what was left behind in the process. It is a tale of longing for humanity's former home as it takes place in a dystopic Los Angeles in 2019 when much of what humanity once had has been lost. This feeling of what could be lost in the future is present in different themes and moments of the film. To begin with, the setting design shows a gloomy world which permeates the story; Earth is overpopulated, other planets have been colonised, and those with the means to do so have left the decaying planet behind, most of the natural world has disappeared, replaced by artificial animals, and corporations have taken over society. What this metropolis shows is the progression of time from when *Blade Runner* was introduced into the culture in 1982 and what was lost in the fictional trajectory into a future 2019. The film does not show a happy scenario; the skies are dark and polluted, the cities are crowded, everybody seems unhappy, and there is no real nature to be found for comfort. All this already makes for a

significant sense of loss resulting in collective nostalgia, even if beneath the surface. This is the first situation in which nostalgia appears in its most primary definition, the loss of humanity's home, of the home that the audiences from 1982 lived in while watching.

For Tannock, there are three key ideas in the rhetoric of nostalgia: “first, that of a prelapsarian world; second, that of a 'lapse'; and third, that of the present, postlapsarian world.” (Tannock, 1995:456). This idea of the postlapsarian brings to mind the Christian narration of “the fall of man”. Namely, the event which brought ruin to human kind making them fall from “the grace of God” into the earthly world of pain, from a state of bliss to a state of suffering. The 'lapse' or the 'cutting', represents a catastrophic event which separates the blissful past from the torturous present. For nostalgia, this translates to the idea of the separation between a better past and an unfulfilling present by an event separating “then” from “now”. This structure of nostalgia is very similar to Deleuze’s use of Dedekind’s method of cuts from his third synthesis of time, indicating a cut in the temporal continuum that still maintains its continuity<sup>50</sup>. Tannock describes this cut as a lapse that divides a continuous timeline into a before and after this lapse. In alignment with Deleuze, Tannock also discusses how this is what makes nostalgia a "periodising emotion" that creates a sense of past and present, of "that was then, and this is now”. As such, nostalgia functions as a search for continuity (Tannock, 1995:456). Nostalgia asserts continuity through the look of the nostalgic subject into the past to "read a historical continuity of struggle, identity and community", but, as Tannock mentions, this applies to the continuity of any present condition. In the analysis of the contrast between what was then and what is now, the distorted view of nostalgic subject looks into the past to trace the path towards the situation in the present and to look for a sense of causality, or determination. How did the past situation A change into present B? For example, if a nostalgic subject is in the present

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<sup>50</sup> For a more detailed explanation of Dedekind’s method of cuts see Chapter 1.

somebody who struggles with their economic situation, with overwhelming responsibilities and longs for a past when they were affluent, and could enjoy their daily life without worrying about losing their home or livelihood; they can trace the moments in between A and B, which might be initially not evident and fill the in-between with causal events – the election of detrimental political actors, unregulated loans, corruption in the financial institutions, an economic crisis, an accumulation of debt, devaluation of assets, and all the continued events that little by little transformed A into B, allowing to make sense of the transition. Contrastingly, "the positing of discontinuity" is another "production or movement of nostalgia" when it acts as displacing certain "voices, places or cultural institutions" of the past as having no place in the present (Tannock, 1995:459). Tannock explains this in terms of social issues like posing discontinuity of marginalised groups such as the indigenous communities or cultural institutions that, when are thought of nostalgically as part of a past which is no longer present, it affects the construction of a future that does not include them. This creates a discontinuity between the past of these peoples or institutions and their place in the present, but most importantly, their place or lack thereof in the future.

When the sequel to *Blade Runner* came along, a new transversality was created. *Blade Runner* became point A and *Blade Runner 2049* was the new point B; the nostalgia of the 35 years between one point in time and the other connected them. *Blade Runner 2049* introduces its story with inter-titles similar to *Blade Runner's* catching the viewer up with what has happened in the story world during the unrecorded existence of the story world. Each of the events that happened during this time has an important relation to the main themes of both films. What they show is how these themes and issues have developed and evolved during those three decades and how the passing of time has affected them (see Figure 73)

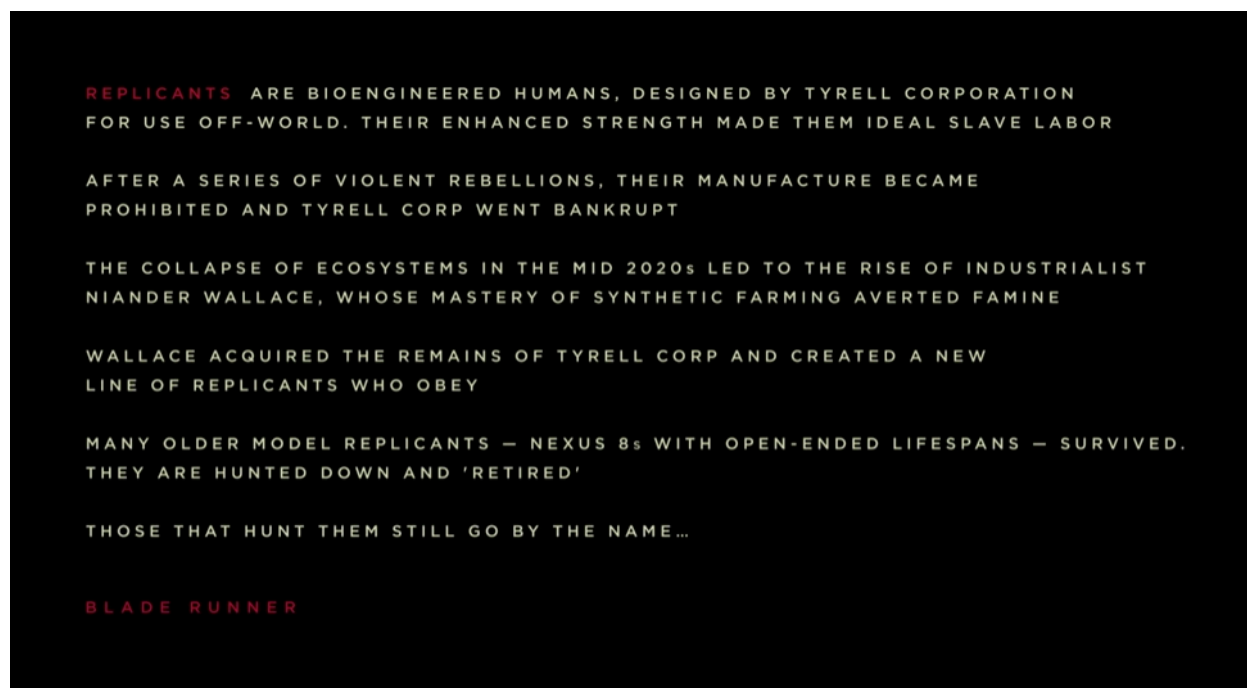


Figure 73 Intertitles introducing *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, prod. Alcon Entertainment/Columbia Pictures, USA, 2017)

Following the first film's original mood, this new story is consistent with a scenario of further loss. However, what was current temporal context of 2017 is very different from the one in 1982. The time that passed in between films also exacerbated the issues it addresses. The passage of time in the diegesis is aligned to the passage of time in real life from 1982 to 2017. The vision of *Blade Runner 2049* creates an updated view of the future. This update comes from a new place of knowledge, from a present in 2017 with better understanding of technological development than in 1982 and how the issues addressed by *Blade Runner* have developed since. Compared to *Blade Runner's* polluted world, lack of nature and artificial animals, in *Blade Runner 2049*, the ecosystems have completely collapsed and caused a major shift in humanity's way of life. The worry of the first film about corporations taking over society has escalated to corporations taking over the very survival of humanity. Equally, while the replicants in the first film were enslaved, the new 'race' of replicants have been stripped completely from their free will and purposefully made to obey humans.

Following the first film, the creation of the line of replicants designed to obey becomes a more resonant subject. The parent movie had already addressed the blurred lines between replicants and humans, and how they serve as mirrors for humanity itself. To learn that these same replicants could be created to obey, connects to humanity's own free will and the possibility of losing it as we experience the impact of social media radicalisation, the “post-truth” era and dataism (Van Dijck, 2014; Emmert-Streib, Dehmer and Yli-Harja, 2016; Lewandowsky, Ecker and Cook, 2017; Peters, 2017; Sismondo, 2017; Visvizi and Lytras, 2019). In this way, the film seeks to look further into how this progression in society can affect the human spirit and its psyche. This is reflected in the fashioning of its new hero, which, unlike Deckard, has been immersed in these circumstances since his creation. As Hamblin and O'Connell articulate:

[*Blade Runner 2019*] took a much darker turn, as Wendy Hui Kyong Chun argues, replacing the ‘terrifying yet thrilling ascent’ of neoliberalism figured by the rugged individualism of Deckard in Scott’s original film with the precarious reality of a fully realised neoliberalism and the ‘submissive, literally and constantly wounded, ramen-making, endlessly working white male K’ (n.p.). (Hamblin and O’Connell, 2020:9)

These new circumstances are directly connected to those from the previous film. They show the future stage of the path the story world had been following, but for the same reason, they are inseparable from their past. They establish links of causality and continuity among the events in one and the other, but these in themselves create loops that refer back to them and link past with present. For example, the protagonist officer KD6-3.7 (Ryan Gosling) is a new replicant Blade Runner which now incorporates the feature of unquestionable obedience to his superiors. This issue of free will builds on from the themes created in the first film like the manipulation of Rachael’s memories. This link serves as a social commentary of how these are still prevailing issues in 2017. However, the connection between them does not stop there; the film will go back to Rachael’s memories and refer explicitly to the manipulation of artificial memories as part of its narrative. The relationship between past and future in the sequel will

be dealt with in a myriad ways to serve its storytelling. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the different modalities of its nostalgia.

For the most part, nostalgia is understood as a longing for the past, and this seems to imply that said past is believed to be better than the present. It is because of this that nostalgia has been criticised as a conservative feeling that ignores the progress made in terms of social justice and equality (Hewison, 1987; Lowenthal, 2015). This can be seen in sentiments like the now infamous slogan "Make America Great Again" associated with the campaigns and policies of former President Trump<sup>51</sup>. This slogan promotes an idea of having had a "better" America in the past, ignoring how in the past this America posed greater inequality to marginalised groups such as native Americans, African Americans, Asian Immigrants, women, and LGBTQ+ communities, for example. However, taking a closer look, one realises nostalgia is much more complex than this.

Many argue about the different ways in which nostalgia operates and how it should not be reduced to a reactionary longing for the past. Nostalgia is in fact a very complex emotion that encompasses different types of relations with temporality and can take different forms under different circumstances. How the nostalgic subject sees or relates to the past, present and future is something which many authors have also raised as key to differentiating types of nostalgia. This particularly concerns nostalgia's political implications. Pickering and Keightley (2006) not only raise the necessity of differentiating between modes of nostalgia as experience and style but also between a reactionary and a progressive nostalgia (Pickering and Keightley,

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<sup>51</sup> A similar slogan was used during the campaign of President Ronald Reagan ("Let's Make America Great Again"). Reagan's campaign meant to renew America's prosperity and power after the setbacks of the 1970s in the midst of the Cold War (Morgan, 2019: 60) Donald Trump's use of this similar slogan creates a reference to these times and reinforces the use of nostalgia as a politicised narrative to further conservative agendas (Wheeler, 2017).



2006:920). The difference between these two is that a reactionary nostalgia is one that dwells in the past wanting to go back to it, while progressive nostalgia is one which looks at the past as a tool or inspiration to move towards the future. These two types of nostalgia are also used by Laura Jane Smith and Gary Campbell in their text 'Nostalgia for the future': memory, nostalgia, and the politics of class' (2017), where they explore how nostalgia does not necessarily idealise the past as 'perfect' or 'better than the present'. The authors propose a use of nostalgia that understands that [the past] was hard, difficult, and inequitable (Smith and Campbell, 2017:613) and that this understanding can be used as a tool to motivate the fight for a better future:

It is also often about valuing the achievements of the past in terms of a set of political and social values that are seen to have underpinned those achievements [...] These values are ones that are frequently defined as important in envisaging a possible future, although the ethos of hard work tends to be translated into future and present imaginings as a hoped-for application by current and future generations to their educational attainment. In doing so, the nostalgic are explicitly offering a nostalgia for the future in which their descendants are envisaged as not only carrying on, but also, and more importantly, *developing upon the achievements realised in the past*. This form of nostalgia is imaginative and creative [...] (Smith and Campbell, 2017:613 my emphasis)

In this way, they also make a distinction between 'reactionary nostalgia' and 'progressive nostalgia', where progressive nostalgia is "a particular and unashamedly overtly emotional way of remembering that actively and self-consciously aims to use the past to contextualise the achievements and gains of present-day living and working conditions and to set a politically progressive agenda for the future" (Smith and Campbell, 2017:613). Smith and Campbell specifically promote a use of nostalgia that needs to look back into the past to understand its moral worth to establish this past as "a point from which to 'carry on' and make a new and improved future" (Smith and Campbell, 2001:623). This intricacy between nostalgia and the future is key to understand the dynamic between the two in matters of temporality, particularly for the case of the *Blade Runner* films which deal with the juxtaposition of past and future.

They need to constantly negotiate the tensions between the two to maintain continuity and purpose while moving forward in their narrative. Not to mention that the films address several social issues that require the ability to mediate the social circumstances of the past for a possible future. Similarly, in *Media and Nostalgia* (2014) Niemeyer claims that nostalgia deals with "positive and negative relations to time and space" and how it is also "related to a way of living, imagining, and sometimes exploiting or (re)inventing the past, present and future" (Niemeyer, 2014:2).

In other words, many agree that nostalgia can present itself in different ways, and how the person uses and responds to this nostalgia influence the effects it can have. Nostalgia can be a way to idealise the past and become incapable of motion and looking forward, but it can also become the longing for a better future and the wind beneath the wings of a progressive agenda. For instance, a conservative agenda would turn to nostalgia in a discourse that promotes the past as better than the present. Prompting, people to work towards turning back to how things were before; any actions that differ from that former *status quo* would stray away from what is wanted for the future. On the other hand, a progressive agenda would use nostalgia to see the past, not as something to go back to, but as an example of how to move forward and build on. Seeing the past through the lens of progressive nostalgia appreciates the fact that "we stand on the shoulders of giants" and how change has been achieved before is how we can keep making change happen in the future. Therefore, nostalgia functions as an ever-adaptive tool to investigate our emotional relationships with past, present, and future. This is how the *Blade Runner* films exemplify progressive nostalgia through the foundations of its production, namely progressive nostalgia mode.

Nostalgia as a mode has often been criticised as a commodified practice that is about a

'hyper-realised style' associated with the past, which makes it entirely hollow or "not real." As Vera Dika draws from Fredrick Jameson's critique of postmodernism, "it seems like [postmodern] temporal and linguistic density erects a type of barrier blocking reference to the natural real (that is, to real things in this world) and to history" (Dika, 2003:4). For these critics, postmodern nostalgia becomes a pretty wrapping with nothing inside, which keeps us away from reality. Images become an inauthentic reference of a reference of a reference that separates us from the "thing-in-itself." Therefore, there is a constant search and longing for reality in a society where "everything" is about images rather than essence; as Deborah Tudor notes: "critics of postmodernism assert that under its regime, the real becomes a commodity, something that has distinct market value" (Tudor, 2012:337)<sup>52</sup>. This in turn relates to the critique of both postmodern nostalgia and sequels as lazy modes of production which seek to recycle earlier styles and stories, harvesting things from the past rather than creating something new. However, as Grainge argues:

The second major conceptual tendency in modern nostalgia critique involves the conception, and examination, of nostalgia as a culturally specific *mode*. Critics are often less concerned with the basis and politics of nostalgic longing than with its stylistic form and significance in a world of media image, temporal breakdown, and cultural amnesia. At issue here is not the substance of nostalgic loss but the specificity of postmodern memory itself. (Grainge, 2000:28)

In other words, Grainge points out how the critics of nostalgia often fail to separate nostalgic content from nostalgic form, which leads them to confuse the "wrapping" as the core feeling of nostalgia. Therefore, he points out the necessity to separate the mood from the mode, the reactionary from the progressive. This allows to analyse them separately, fully grasp the nuances of this emotion and how they interact among each other.

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<sup>52</sup> It strongly echoes Lieutenant Joshi's comment "We are all just looking out for something real". In this search for something real, not only comes the search for real memories or if replicants are as real humans, but it is also about how to define what real is. In the first *Blade Runner*, characters often asked animal owners if the animals were 'real', this question was always answered by saying they were not; real animals had become unaffordable. In 2049 when K asks Deckard if the dog following him is real, Deckard replies "I don't know. Ask him" bringing in question our understanding of what being real means.

Similarly, sequels are often criticised as unoriginal productions which only aim to exploit familiar stories in the box office. For example, Quentin Tarantino has argued how “original filmmaking [is] in “combat” with franchise blockbusters” (Campbell and Mathurin, 2020). Indeed, sequels have played an important role in economic terms for studios and the tensions among the originality-familiarity-profit dynamics are a strong factor influencing the production of films (Campbell and Mathurin, 2020). Because of this, sequels are often criticised as being no more than means to an economic end (Hansen, 2015). Moreover, some even go up to the point of asking whether sequels are “destroying cinema” (Cox, 2019; Whittington, 2019) due to the lack of new stories and originality in the industry. However, sequels are able to do much more than they are given credit for *because* of their form, such as *Blade Runner 2049*. As stated above, this sequel does not simply recycle one same story, but expands on it and creates something new *from* it. As screenwriter Michael Green stated in Entertainment Weekly: “It couldn’t be a movie that just felt like getting the band back together. It had to be *what is our story* and to make sure you are telling a story that is worthy of the title” (Vilkomerson, 2017). Furthermore, it is because of this very expansion on a familiar subject that the story manages to explore the effects of time in a way closer to cinematic realism through its collapse of cinematic representation<sup>53</sup>.

For the creation of *Blade Runner 2049*, the use of a nostalgia mode is prominent and particular. The nostalgic mode of the films refers to its stylisation within the production design, from its sets, props, costumes, hair and makeup to its music and sound design. As Sprengler writes, “various components of a film can reinforce or deconstruct the nostalgia on offer” (Sprengler, 2009: 68). This way, the stylisation of the film takes a crucial part in the collaborative construction of the story and its mood. Furthermore, Sprengler notes: “cinematic

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<sup>53</sup> For a more detailed explanation of Hopkin’s Tiers of cinematic representation and collapse see Chapter 1.

engagements with nostalgia have the potential to provide critical insights into the operations of visual pastness" (Sprengler, 2009:67). By designing audio-visual elements to the story, cinema can communicate an auditive or visual sense of a temporal location. In analysing the complex relationship between media and nostalgia, Dominik Schrey (2014) discusses the importance of considering the "mediality of nostalgia itself" and with it the ability to 'nostalgise' the media. As an audio-visual medium, cinema can recreate the aesthetics of a past time and use the nostalgia for this past as part of the spectacle. To fully understand this use of nostalgia, it is necessary to dissect the different ways in which it presents itself by asking Tannock's question of 'who is nostalgic for what?', and therefore, what is the arena for that particular temporal tension.

Focusing on the sequel, this nostalgic relationship is created between the later and the former productions. It becomes a mode of engagement with the texts that facilitates the creators and audiences of the sequel to become nostalgic for the time when the original film was created or watched, respectively, as well as its legacy since. The temporal situation of the production and reception becomes a factor for this; the sequel's audiences of 2017 may be nostalgic for the time when they watched the original in 1982 and the many emotional resonances that this creates. Nostalgia can be a mode of engagement which simply makes the subject reminisce about a past time. For the creators, however, this means a progressive nostalgia and remembering the film becomes a prompt to engage in a creative and imaginative relationship with the past. This nostalgia is an active decision of bringing something from the past into the future. In a way, it is a tangible example of how progressive nostalgia works. It uses the appreciation of the past to create the future, which does not necessarily mean recreating the past exactly as it was.

As discussed above, nostalgia gives to its subject a choice about how to relate to progress. This is a choice where nostalgia negotiates the meaning of the past for the present and the future. As a sequel, *Blade Runner 2049* makes this negotiation of meaning not only by seeking to emulate *Blade Runner* in keeping a similar style, but it also means to construct a newer future which is informed by the new present. The production of the sequel emulates the aesthetics of its predecessor, which offers continuity and consistency to a story that happens in the same universe. It serves to 'nostalgise' the text as "the present is 'nostalgised' by the aesthetics of the past that create a new method of engaging with the 'moment'" (Niemeyer, 2014:13). The aesthetic of *Blade Runner 2049* can create a mixture of futuristic imagery and a nostalgic aestheticization of it. Even in terms of the production, the designers kept to the old-school set-design building a scale model of the city rather than computer-generated imagery (see figure 74).



Figure 74 Left: Set design model for *Blade Runner* (1982). Right: Set design model for *Blade Runner 2049* (2017). (Images from IMDB)

However, even if the production replicates many aspects of the previous film, the replication of the past is trumped by the purpose of telling a new story and informing the narrative. For example, the film's setting in Los Angeles 2049 maintains the architectural style from 2019; the grey, rigid, structures reflect the overcrowding and futuristic aesthetic of the

city. The sequel maintains the same style and it even keeps some of the same buildings as seen in figure 75. Yet, they are modified to show the passage of time and their decay by putting off the lights that once showed the life inside it. The sequel shows K's vehicle moving from dim, foggy and neglected areas of the city to the newer structures. Similarly, the flying cars maintain the futuristic style that was imagined in the 1980s with new perks and technology. Had the new production been created from scratch, the imagination of this future would be informed in its totality by our current aesthetics and technologies rather than the now-archaic vision from the 1980s, but the purpose of this film was not merely to imagine a future, but to also incorporate the past of this cinematic universe.



*Figure 75 Above: Architectural design of Los Angeles 2019 in *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, prod. The Ladd Company/Shaw Brothers, USA, 1982)*

*Below: Architectural design of Los Angeles 2049 in *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, prod. Alcon Entertainment/C)*



Similarly, several features of the mise-en-scène and story maintain a close resemblance to moments from 1982, they include familiar props such as the illuminated umbrellas and costumes. However, as would happen in the real world after 30 years, fashion has evolved. For example, both Pris (Daryl Hannah) from *Blade Runner*, and Mariette (Mackenzie Davis), from *Blade Runner 2049*, are replicant sex workers, as well as involved in the replicants' resistance, this relates the characters with each other narratively. The newer character, Mariette, maintains a resemblance to the original Pris in her wardrobe and style (Figures 76 and 77). They both wear a faux fur coat with dissimilar patterns, short skirt, tall boots, and a wet-messy hairdo; Mariette also wears a faux fur hat that mimics the volume of Pris's hair and smoky-eye makeup.



Figure 76 Daryl Hannah as Pris in *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, prod. The Ladd Company/Shaw Brothers, USA, 1982)



Figure 77 Mackenzie Davis as Mariette in *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, prod. Alcon Entertainment/Columbia Pictures, USA, 2017)



The result is a constant negotiation between what addresses the past from 1982 and the implementation of a new future from 2017. Even if *Blade Runner 2049* closely uses its predecessor's aesthetics, it does not deny the progress or changes made in the time between one film and the other. It takes this opportunity to re-imagine the future from a new perspective. The connection between the two movies allows an understanding of the transformation from 1982's future to 2017's. The production shows this mediation between imagining a future and nostalgia for the past in various ways. In this process, it explores issues that did not exist when the first film was created but are relevant through the parallel venue of its aesthetics. For example, when the new character Joi (Ana de Armas), first appears in the film, K is returning home and begins having a conversation with a woman. The camera stays on K as the woman asks him about his day suggesting she must be K's partner making dinner. Once K sits at the table the hologram of a woman dressed as a traditional 1960s housewife appears. In reality this is an operating system designed to keep K company in his lonely flat (see Figure 78). The aesthetics of the past represented in Ana de Armas's costume mixed with the future-like aesthetics of the ethereal, floating operating system illustrate the preoccupation of using digital media to address and/or substitute emotional relationships in a lonely, individualistic future. In this way, the mix and tensions of the past-future mode serve to aid the storytelling mood of complex narratives about the tension of past and future.





Figure 78 Ana de Armas as Joi, AI hologram companion in *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, prod. Alcon Entertainment/Columbia Pictures, USA, 2017)

## Nostalgia Mood, History and Memory

In *Blade Runner*, as in life, the borders between nostalgia, memory and history are sometimes indistinguishable. Nostalgia shares a complicated relationship with memory in that it can often make the nostalgic subject “remember” a past that was never real. If the nostalgic subject remembers the past as a greater, better time than the present, she is likely to have forgotten the things about that past that can compromise her idea of a perfect time. This is usually the case for a conservative feeling which 'forgets' past social issues or even scientific facts, like how illnesses treated today with over-the-counter medicines were a death sentence some decades ago. Niemeyer explains how media have been developed to aid the fallibility of human memory. Many media have been created as tools to aid in the preservation of memory throughout time; from the invention of the first taxing records to all kind of recording apps now readily available in our pockets (be it for photographs, video, or audio recording); every time becoming more sophisticated, with larger capacity and easier accessibility (like the cloud). Media such as this allows to "activate, frame and render memory shareable" (Niemeyer, 2014:4), creating and containing what Deleuze calls artificial signs of the past (Deleuze, 2014).

This relationship between media and memory is central to *Blade Runner* and has

attracted the attention of memory scholars such as Alison Landsberg (1995). Landsberg develops *Blade Runner's* use of prosthetic memories and the complex interaction between media and memory. At the heart of her discussion is the difference between "artificial" and "real" memory, their relationship with a person's sense of identity and what is at stake under the categorisation that we give to one and the other. Landsberg names these 'prosthetic memories' and describes them as: "memories which do not come from a person's lived experience in any strict sense" (Landsberg, 1995:175). In other words, one could also say that a memory is real if what is remembered really took place, as a part of history, while an artificial memory would only exist in the mind of that who "remembers." This goes to the heart of the very complicated issue between memory and history, where memory has been seen as the "bad twin brother to history" (Niemeyer, 2014:4). Niemeyer explains that memory and history are by no accounts the same; however, it has always been difficult to define the frontiers of one and the other. Moreover, memory is in itself one of history's objects (Niemeyer, 2014:3-4). This also correlates with Joan Tumblety's discussion of memory as both a source and a subject of historians' enquiries (Tumblety, 2013:2). In Niemeyer's account, however, the two have always been intertwined and at many points unrecognisable from each other. She even argues that it has always been difficult to determine what memories are "real". It is important to distinguish memory from history, but memory "is essential for 'historical elaboration'" (Niemeyer, 2014:4). However, this "ability to remember the past, and to actualise it, includes the imperfections of the human mind and endorses sometimes voluntarily embellished or falsified memories on an individual and collective level" (Niemeyer, 2014:3).

Anyone familiar with *Blade Runner* knows that memory takes a central role in its narrative, and with it, the understanding of the past. In the film, Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford), is a Blade Runner recruited by officer Gaff (Edward James Olmos) to retire four replicants that

have reached Earth. During his investigation, Deckard meets Rachael (Sean Young); who is a replicant but does not know it until Deckard conducts a Voight-Kampff test on her (a test to discern replicants from humans through involuntary physiological responses). Learning that she is a replicant comes as a shock for Rachael, who at first struggles to believe it. Eldon Tyrell (Joe Turkel), the replicants' creator, reveals that he made Rachael believe she was a human by implanting memories into her mind.

**Tyrell:** [...] After all, they are emotionally inexperienced with only a few years in which to store up the experiences which you and I take for granted. If we gift them the past, we create a cushion or pillow for their emotions and consequently we can control them better.

**Deckard:** Memories. You're talking about memories.

Tyrell also gave Rachael a fake photograph of her childhood as a memento of her made-up past, an artificial sign of the past in the present. For her, this was proof that her past, and hence her memories, were real. The distortion of reality through memory has been noted as part of nostalgia since many nostalgic subjects long for a past that was never real. Boym makes a point to state that: "the alluring object of nostalgia is notoriously elusive" (Boym, 2001:xiv). Rachael's reliance on this made-up past shows how nostalgia can be tied to fantasy, and the importance of this for her self-knowledge. Furthermore, what she thinks of her past determines what she thinks of herself in the present since "memories are less about authenticating the past, than about generating possible courses of action for the present" (Landsberg, 1995:183). The intricate relationship between memory and identity is one that has also been widely documented (Piaget, 1967; Lury, 1998; Megill, 1998; Brison, 2002; Addis and Tippett, 2004; Holdsworth, 2011; McCarroll, 2019). Therefore, it is easy to appreciate how the manipulation of the replicant's memory implies the manipulation of their own sense of identity. Coming to terms with her past has huge consequences for Rachael and determined what her future would and could be. In this sense, nostalgia becomes how Tyrell controlled Rachael.

*2049* continues this inquiry into memory from different perspectives and from a

different temporal context. Firstly, it continues the themes of memory and identity that were already addressed in the story told in *Blade Runner*. Namely, the existence of real and artificial memories and the significance this has for the replicants. But on a second level, the sequel also integrates 'secondary memory'<sup>54</sup> in its recollection of the previous film (Jess-Cooke, 2009:130). The story from *Blade Runner 2049* “remembers” its past from *Blade Runner* showing an awareness of the events from 2019 (1982) both as the past of the narrative and as the past of the production. The unrecorded existence of the characters create both a narrative and conceptual link between the ending of *Blade Runner* and the underlying plot of *Blade Runner 2049*. This link can be traced back to Batty’s iconic and nostalgic monologue before his death (see figure 79) where he talks about the loss of his memories:

I've seen things you people wouldn't believe.  
Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion.  
I watched c-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser Gate.  
All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain.  
Time to die.



Figure 79 Rutger Hauer as Roy Batty in *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, prod. The Ladd Company/Shaw Brothers, USA, 1982)

This speech is intimately related to a sense of loss of the past, how everything Batty

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<sup>54</sup> Jess-Cooke’s term to describe “second-hand” memories and experiences as “a form of cultural remembering that negotiates and mediates the past through inherited memories” (Jess-Cooke, 2009:103)

had seen and lived would be "lost in time, like tears in rain". The loss of him and his memories meant the loss of the future that they could provide, the value of Batty's life for others. The emotional impact of this event causes Deckard to re-evaluate what he believes about replicants and his job as a Blade Runner. This motivates him to take Rachael and run away together. The end of the film shows Deckard and Rachael leaving his apartment without revealing what their plans are or where they might go. However, thirty-five years later, as K's involvement in the investigation progresses, it is revealed that the birth of Deckard and Rachael's child was the motivation for the rebellion of the replicants. This event became catalyst for the replicants to fight for a humane treatment. This rebellion took place in the virtual period between the two films, becoming a part of the past of the replicants to which they look up to as a motivation and a reason to build a better future for themselves. Tracing back the events to the origins of the story told in *Blade Runner* allows to see how this revolution began brewing with Deckard and Rachael's escape, but also the chain of events that leads to that decision. Batty, Pris, Leon and Zhora's escape to Earth in the first place, would lead to Deckard meeting Rachael, and to his change of view about replicants, which led him to escape with Rachael and the conception of their child, which became the hope for the replicant's revolution. To be able to remember and investigate this past allows to see the effects of time on a larger scale, giving a sense of poetic justice to Batty's loss as the memory of him lives in and permeates the events of the sequel.

In *Blade Runner 2049* memory becomes the form and content of its storytelling, connecting both films, but also making a meta-commentary on itself through the temporal intertextuality of the time-critical sequel. The memory of the original film in the sequel is already shown in its opening text as it recalls and links to the previous film. However, the inherited memories remain throughout the film making the story's mood and filmed events' mode work together to echo *Blade Runner*. Equally set in Los Angeles, the main story follows the new Blade Runner K (Ryan Gosling), who is introduced during his latest mission of

discovering and retiring an outlaw replicant, Sapper (Dave Bautista). This leads him to find a group of bones buried in Sapper's yard, which after being analysed by the police department, they discover belonged to a female replicant who died during childbirth. They discover that these bones have been buried for thirty years, the transversal period between *Blade Runner* and *Blade Runner 2049*. K's commanding officer, Lieutenant Joshi (Robin Wright) gives him the task of investigating the event and "retiring" the born replicant. From then on, the film becomes a search for the past to discover the replicants' fate but also K's own history.

K's investigation takes him back to the events of *Blade Runner* as it is revealed that the bones belonged to Rachael. K discovers that she died giving birth to her and Deckard's child, revealing some of what happened to the couple during the 30 years of the interval between one film and the other. This uncovers the clues and the memory left by the previous film that connect the two and show the continuity from point A to B in the same fashion as Deleuze's transversal reading, where each clue is a window of the train in Proust's allegory. According to Landsberg: "The cinema, in particular, as an institution, which makes available images for mass consumption, has long been aware of its ability to generate experiences and to install memories of them" (Landsberg, 1995:176). *Blade Runner* did a culturally significant job in implanting memories in its viewers since 1982 as it became a cult film and significant milestone in film history. In 2017 *Blade Runner 2049* makes use of those already implanted memories (either actively or passively) to navigate its story. Furthermore, this also links to the specific notion of Tannock's exploration of nostalgia in which he talks about the search for continuity by looking for points of causality. K carries a transversal search of the events that takes him from Rachael's archives to Officer Gaff and to Deckard himself. Each of these stations becomes a window to the past, a window to *Blade Runner* and the virtual events of the intermittent gap.

After discovering Rachael's bones, the first stop in K's investigation leads him to the

recordings of Rachael's Voight-Kampf test from 2019 (see Figure 80). *Blade Runner* shows the moment when this recording was created, and *Blade Runner 2049* shows it after being preserved for 30 years in Niander Wallace's archives. This recording is played as part of the few vestiges left by an infamous blackout, but it is also a reminder and a direct nod to the original scene. In the complex temporal intertextuality of *Blade Runner* and *Blade Runner 2049*, these recordings become objects of temporal tension. Framed by the new modernity — intra and extra diegetically, namely 2017 in real world and 2049 in the story — the video player is an obsolete device needed to play older recordings. However, compared to 2019 (1982) it is a more modern device than the one where the original Voight-Kampf was recorded. These technologies, or their different elements, are signalled as either 'old' or 'new' depending on the perspective of their temporal context. For example, while from the perspective of the audiences they look like a future technology, for the characters in the film this is archaic technology needed to play archaic recordings (similar to how we would now use a VHS to play our childhood tapes). Furthermore, there is a different temporality for the contents of these recordings. Technology has developed over time to satisfy the need of recording and playing those recordings, but the recording itself remains kept in time. It plays the same images from when the Voight-Kampf was recorded. The frame can change and add new meanings to the tape, but the contents are preserved (see Figure 81). This is a result of the relative temporal tensions between the extra-textual contexts of the film, the story-world, and the devices.



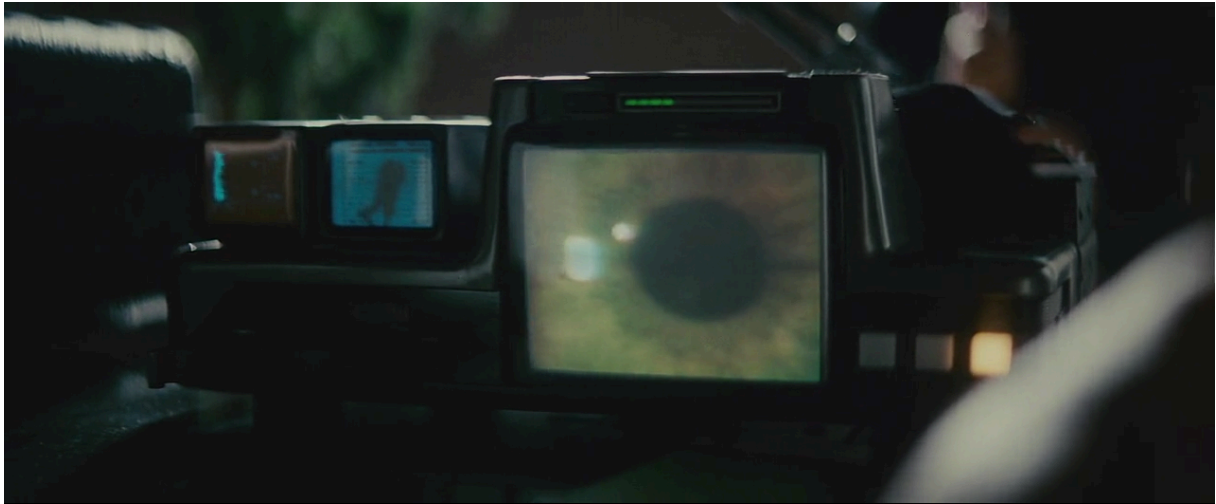


Figure 80 Conducting Rachael's Voight-Kampff test in *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, prod. The Ladd Company/Shaw Brothers, USA, 1982)



Figure 81 Monitor from Wallace's archives showing a recording of Rachael's Voight-Kampff test in *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, prod. Alcon Entertainment/Columbia Pictures, USA, 2017)

The audio of this recording reveals Deckard's involvement with Rachael, which leads K to officer Gaff played again by Edward James Olmos (see figure 82). As another stop in K's search, Olmos's becomes another window to the past. On the one hand, his personal memories guide K in his investigation, and on the other hand, his corporeality reveals the time that has passed since *Blade Runner's* events filmed in 1982, and the story told in 2019. In the same fashion as his younger character, he is folding origami figures throughout his interrogation with K, re-presenting the past in the present. I have already discussed extensively the significance of the ageing body as natural signs in chapter one, as is the case for Gaff's ageing body. However, I would like to bring attention back to the artificial signs of Olmo's memories, Rachael's Voight-Kampff test recording and the difference between one and the other. Instead of the natural signs of the characters ageing, these are artificial signs that were intentionally created to manifest the past in the present. However, as discussed above, human memory is frail and its archive - the organic body - ephemeral. Therefore, technology has been created to transcend the loss of memory through devices such as the recording. The film of the Voight-Kampff not only can bring the memories of the past as the conversation with Gaff did, but it shows the same images from 1982 of the extreme close up of Rachael's pupil with the audio from her interrogation with Deckard in the background preserving the audio-visual memory. This recording leads me to the crucial role of the archive for preserving memories and how this significance is featured prominently in the film, not only memory but the media that hold memory.



Figure 82 Above: Edward James Olmos as Gaff in *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, prod. The Ladd Company/Shaw Brothers, USA, 1982) Below: Edward James Olmos as Gaff in *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, prod. Alcon Entertainment/Columbia Pictures, USA, 2017)

In *Blade Runner 2049*, archival records are present both at the level of the story told, as well as of the events filmed. In terms of the diegesis, the archives are crucial for K's investigation. The different media, from written records, audio recordings, video recordings, all the way to the new technologies from that future like the glass spheres and projections serve as scaffolding for the history and memory of past events, both preserving them and allowing K to access them. Pierre Nora explores the archive in relation to his *Lieux de mémoire*, or sites of memory (Nora, 1989). For him, archives are part of a group of *Lieux de mémoire* (like libraries, museums, commemorations, and celebrations) that are "history's most elementary tools" and "the most symbolic objects of our memory," as well as "embodiments of a memorial consciousness" (Nora, 1989:12). I have already elaborated on the importance of memory

throughout the film and how it relates to the character's story and identity. This is something that Nora also agrees with stating how "the quest for memory is the search for one's history" (Nora, 1989:13). But it is Nora's attention to specific 'sites of memory' that is perhaps most relevant for my argument.

Nora discusses the archive by stating how "modern memory is, above all, archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image" (Nora, 1989:13), namely, artificial signs of the past. This is something that is clearly seen throughout K's tracing of history in the film. K accesses several archival records in different forms to uncover the mystery of the born replicant: from the carved date on the tree, the written records of the children at the orphanage, the DNA records of the replicant, to Rachael's recording of her Voight-Kampf test. This last, in particular, comes with an emphasis on the importance of archival data in a scene that does a meta-commentary on the parent film's recording. To access these records, K needs to go deep into Niander Wallace's archive. The place where they are kept is shown as an immense temple filled with cutting-edge archival technology that implies its capacity to house an "unparalleled quantity of documents" (see figure 83). It also implies that, in this future, the need to archive and record data has followed the trend of growing exponentially as Nora suggests (Nora, 1989:12). Moreover, real archival records are used in the production of the film making a meta-commentary about itself. The memory of the events filmed from *Blade Runner* is housed in the archives making a trace. On several occasions, the film reproduces recordings from the original film that both serve the plot and make for nostalgic spectacle. Within the film, these archival records take an important place as an agent for the nostalgic mood *and* mode aimed at the characters and the audiences. This duality makes the recordings operate in an intertextual way intra and extra diegetically, since they preserve the memory of the past from the story told, but also of the events filmed.





*Figure 83 Niander Wallace's archives in Blade Runner 2049 (dir. Denis Villeneuve, prod. Alcon Entertainment/Columbia Pictures, USA, 2017)*

The circumstances of Wallace's collection of records, also relate to Nora's reference to "privileged memory" (Nora, 1989:12). While the author expands on the issue regarding marginalised groups without access to memory, the film shows the other side of the coin and highlights how privileged individuals have access to existing archives and are in control of the recording of history. The industrialist Niander Wallace, who acquired the remains of the bankrupt Tyrell corporation, is shown to have a monopoly of various markets in the *Blade Runner* universe. He rose to power because of his production of synthetic food to prevent world famine, but he also develops many of the technological devices that fill the lives of the population (like K's JOI). Likewise, he clearly dominates a big part (if not the biggest) of history's records and memory. By this point, Niander Wallace has been established as the most powerful individual in *Blade Runner 2049's* universe. Therefore, when Luv (Sylvia Hoeks) - Wallace's personal replicant assistant - refers to him as a "data hoarder," one is able to relate this to today's issues surrounding data surveillance and the power that the data can give to their holders. Furthermore, the archive is where the collective memory of society is preserved. In the end, these were the objects that allowed K to access the different clues throughout his investigation and solve the mystery, simultaneously learning more about the story of his people. It becomes a way for humankind to preserve, access and share its past.

As I have discussed above, nostalgia is related to the distortion of memory and the emotional effect this can have on the subject. However, this distortion also has an important bearing on the collective level. Niemeyer accurately articulates it as:

Nostalgia is related to the concept of memory since it recalls times and places that are no more or out of reach. This involves two different directions in which the relation of memory and nostalgia might lead. It can be seen as being essential and useful for maintaining identities, and also as a factor of social amnesia (Niemeyer, 2014:5).

When this understanding of nostalgia as a prism through which to look at the past is extended to a larger group of people it is possible to see how it can significantly influence the course of

society. As Niemeyer puts it, nostalgia can lead to a case of “social amnesia” where society forgets the injustices or issues of the past. And, as I have discussed, what we believe of the past greatly influences what we do with the future. Hence, misremembering certain institutions or group of people easily leads to failing to build an adequate future for them. *Blade Runner* introduces the issues of memory distortion for the individual and, from this foundation, *Blade Runner 2049* talks about the significance of collective memory and addresses the issue of social amnesia. When Rachael’s bones were discovered by the police department, Lieutenant Joshi, instructs K to erase every trace about it that could reveal the existence of the bones or the replicant child. With this, she wants to ensure the erasure of its memory and any traces that could lead back to it. She explicitly tells K that this was the way to maintain the status quo and what she calls the ‘natural order of things’ separating humans from replicants. This in itself is an example of a politicised use of reactionary nostalgia, one that seeks to prevent progress by painting the past, a time of clear separation between ‘races’, as something to aspire to. This speaks directly to Tannock’s idea about the sense of discontinuity nostalgia can bring about by displacing ideas, communities, or institutions of the past as if not having a place for them in the present and future. This displacement was the case for the marginalised group of replicants Nexus8 and Rachael’s archives that K needs to dig out from Niander’s deepest records.

Furthermore, at the beginning of K’s investigation, it is revealed that between 2019 and 2049,<sup>55</sup> there was a big blackout<sup>56</sup> that wiped huge amounts of archives and data. This complicated K’s inquiry into the origin of the bones and the child he was looking for, but it also represented how a substantial part of the collective memory of society had been erased and

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<sup>55</sup> Director Denis Villeneuve commissioned three short films to promote *Blade Runner 2049* before its release: *Blade Runner: Blackout 2022* (Shinichiro Watanabe), *2036: Nexus Dawn* (Luke Scott), and *2048: Nowhere to Run* (Luke Scott). These shorts actualise some of parallel events that take place between 2019 and 2049, among them the events behind the blackout in 2022.

<sup>56</sup> An analogy could be made between the idea of a ‘blackout’ in the diegesis and the time-gap between the films when the spectators are “blacked out” from the unrecorded existence of the *Blade Runner* world.

lost<sup>57</sup>. At various times throughout the film, the characters mention 'the blackout' as a familiar historical event that impacted their lives. Talking about this blackout in the film, the record keeper mentions to K: "Everybody remembers where they were at the blackout, you? [...] I was home with my folks". This remark shows the significance that this event had in the world and how it changed it, its evocation similar to events like India's partition, the fall of Berlin's wall, or 9/11<sup>58</sup> mixing the collective with the individual experience, and how it is recorded in memory (Goodall and Lee, 2015). In a sense, this major blackout in the film's universe is a loss of history and an enabler of social amnesia. Bringing into the present the memory of a born replicant began to shed light into the replicants' possibility to belong in the future. But it was a plan that had been brewing for the past thirty years waiting for the right time to be revealed and be effectively input in the collective memory.

As mentioned above, memories (or lack thereof) were a way to control the replicants, either by preventing the future enslaved replicants from developing them with a four-year life span or implanting them to make them believe they were human, like Rachael<sup>59</sup>. In *2049*, replicants such as K are aware of their implanted memories from the beginning of their existence. It is no secret to them that they do not have a past; this comes hand in hand with the new feature of obedience. However, this issue becomes relevant to the story when K looks into his own memories and finds one that is linked to his investigation in a tangible and personal way. When he finds Rachael's bones, he discovers a date carved on the tree next to where they were buried. This is the same date carved in a wooden horse from a memory he has of being a kid. This date signifies a connection between the past inside his mind and the reality of the

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<sup>57</sup> It even prevented Deckard from tracking and finding his child.

<sup>58</sup> It is important to point out how also for the events of 9/11 there has been research about the distortion of memory. Individuals narrate their memories of the event, for example that they saw the towers collapsing, later to find out that they couldn't have seen them because they were at a faraway location (Hirst *et al.*, 2009; Chen, 2011).

<sup>59</sup> (And, maybe, Deckard?).



present, which makes him wonder whether this memory might be real instead of implanted.

The question of whether or not this was a real memory is solved by Dr Ana Stelline (Carla Juri), whose work is to design the fake memories implanted in the replicants. She lets K know that the memory is in fact, real. In this process, we also learn about the attention that is put into the design of implanted memories that are given to the replicants, and K has a conversation with Dr Stelline about the nature of memory:

**K:** What makes your memories so... authentic?

**ANA:** I was locked in an aseptic cloister at eight. If I wanted to see the world, I had to imagine it. I got very good at imagining. Wallace needs my talent to maintain a stable product. "Provide context for unavoidable affect." I think it's only kind. Replicants live such hard lives, made to do what we'd rather not. I can't help your future, but I can give you good memories to think back on and smile. [...] It's better than nice. It feels authentic. If you have authentic memories, you'll have real human responses, wouldn't you agree?

**K:** Are all the memories constructed, or do you ever use ones that are real?

**ANA:** It's illegal to use real memories. But there's a bit of every artist in their work.

**K:** How can you tell the difference? Can you tell if a memory really happened?

**ANA:** Untangling memory and history. They all think it's about more detail, dutiful exactitude, hyperbolic photorealism -- that's not how the memory works. We recall with our feelings... and our feelings are awful students. The mind is an impressionist. Anything real should be a mess.

When K asks Anna if his childhood memory is real, Anna tells him that: "Somebody lived this, yes". The fact that this memory is real tells K that he is Rachael's child and changes everything he believed about himself and his people; for the first time, he thought of himself as more than just a slave created to follow orders. K's realisation mirrors that of Rachael's Voight-Kampf test in reverse; it follows the same thematic as the first film, but *2049* expands on it from a different starting point. Instead of going from "real" to "fake" as with Rachael, the change is from "fake" to "real" giving new insights and perspectives to the matter. Either way, both realisations about their own memories make the replicants question their own identity. It also reproduces Deckard's transformation after his encounter with Roy, which made him regret killing replicants by making him understand they were more than mere soulless machines and makes a parallel between the significance of the origami unicorn that makes Deckard question

the reality of his memories (see figure 84), with the wooden horse that does the same for K – even if the other way around (see figure 85). The two resemble each other not only in their stylistic representation but also in the themes and enquiries they elicit about memory. Furthermore, this conversation about the nature of memory highlights many of the issues related to nostalgia as both reactionary and progressive. Nostalgia does not change the events of the past, but it affects *how* we relate to those events. It is the emotional response that we have about past events and how this impacts the behaviour, emotions and beliefs we have in the present. With this revelation, what changed was not the memory in itself, but the lenses through which K looked at that memory and, hence, the emotional response it produced in him.

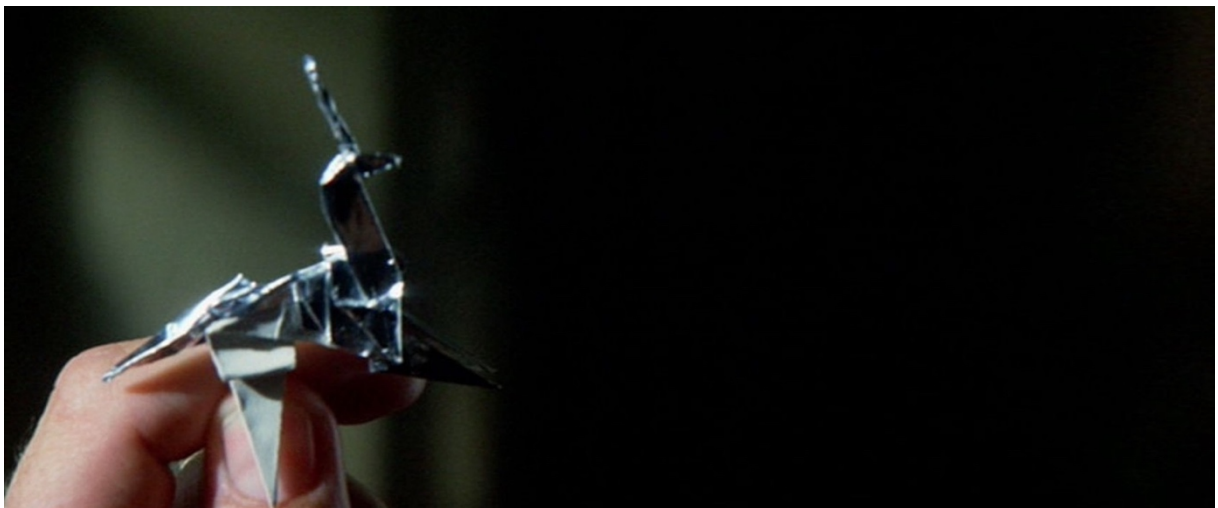


Figure 84 Origami unicorn in *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, prod. The Ladd Company/Shaw Brothers, USA, 1982)



Figure 85 Wooden horse in *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, prod. Alcon Entertainment/Columbia Pictures, USA, 2017)

However, K later learns that, even if the memory is real, it was not his own but Dr Ana Stelline's. Through her work creating memories, Dr Stelline shared her own. Even if K realises this was not his memory, the experience of it had already changed him. The experience of Ana's memory allowed K to understand what it was like to walk in her shoes, and what it was like to think of himself as free, loved, and worthy of living despite being a replicant. As Dr Stelline states: "If you have authentic memories, you have real human responses". With this, Dr Stelline makes a reference to what Landsberg discusses how prosthetic memories (such as cinema) "had the capacity to transform one's subjectivity, politics, and ethical engagements" and "because they feel real, they help condition how a person thinks about the world and might be instrumental in articulating an ethical relation to the other<sup>60</sup>" (Landsberg, 2009:222). In other words, these prosthetic memories help to generate empathy by allowing the observer of the other's memory to experience and engage with the emotional experience of that memory (Landsberg, 2009). This experience changed K, made him go against his own programming and lie to his commander to then join the cause for his race's freedom. A shared memory was the critical factor in K's transformation from a Blade Runner tasked with retiring replicants to joining the cause for replicants' revolution. This experience as shared between Ana Stelline and K is likely to be shared with other replicants since she designed their memories. Taking these memories from the individual to the collective memory allowed for the cause to grow among them. Furthermore, to bring into the present the memory of a born replicant began to shed light on the replicants' possibility of belonging in the future. In this way, the collective memory creates the collective human response of feeling and understanding the other's pain and strive for the dignity and freedom of the replicant race.

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<sup>60</sup> This can in turn be related to cinema's capacity to generate empathy through shared experiences and the emotional responses it generates (Smith, 1994).

## Integrating Past, Present and Future

As developed in the first chapter, the past is not separated from the rest of time. It (co)exists in the present along with the future. Therefore, a change in the actualisation of the past affects the actualisation of the future, although there can be a moment of dissonance between one and the other. After following the traces of the born replicant's past, K's search culminates when he finds Deckard in the ruins of a once magnificent Las Vegas (see figure 86). The design of the set where Harrison Ford makes his appearance emulates the nostalgia that the actor represents for the films. This calls to mind chapter two where I discuss how Céline and Jesse stroll among Greek ruins in the third film of the *Before Trilogy*, reminiscent of their past relationship (See Chapter 2). The city where K finds Deckard is a place of ruins and decaying buildings that hold the memory of their previous glory. This setting is modelled in the same way Boym explains how "the physical spaces of city ruins and construction sites, fragments and bricolages, renovations of the historical heritage and decaying concrete buildings in the international style embody nostalgic and anti-nostalgic visions" (Boym, 2001: xviii). What is left of this Las Vegas in the film are only ruins, fragments and decaying concrete buildings. Within their ruins, these fragments of concrete still hold the spaces that were previously filled with life and glamour, the spaces that once were halls, rooms, or magnificent salons within which people walked, played, dined, and chatted. In this sense, they embody nostalgic and anti-nostalgic visions. Nostalgic in that they maintain the memory of their "former glory" as a ghost of what once was, and anti-nostalgic in that it shows the decadence of that past and how humanity has moved on and progressed since then.



Figure 86 Ruins of Las Vegas in *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, prod. Alcon Entertainment/Columbia Pictures, USA, 2017)

In this nostalgic environment of chronological dirt — where the change of temporal horizon has made this city, its buildings, and the objects inside them be “out of time<sup>61</sup>” — the encounter of the old with the new takes place. The new Blade Runner, K, finds the old Blade Runner, Deckard, and questions him about his past looking for answers about what he believes to be his origin. This is Harrison Ford’s first appearance in the film, the place is silent, and the camera is focused on a medium close-up of the back of K as we hear Harrison Ford’s scratchy voice ask him “Mightn’t happen to have a piece of cheese about you, now? Would you boy?” Here, the *mise-en-scène* is playing with the audience’s likely familiarity with Harrison Ford’s

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<sup>61</sup> For a more detailed explanation of chronological dirt see Chapter 3.

distinctive voice<sup>62</sup>, and of his relationship with *Blade Runner*, playing with the spectator's anticipation of his appearance. This would not work as effectively without the cemented place of Harrison Ford's portrayal of Rick Deckard within pop culture and collective memory. For the reveal, K slowly turns to see who is talking to him, and the camera cuts to a long shot of K from Deckard's point of view. The camera cuts to a dark corner from where Deckard's figure slowly emerges in a medium close-up while pointing a gun at K. The image of Deckard pointing a gun is one which was repeatedly used in *Blade Runner* (see figure 87) and echoes in Ford's reprise. However, this time Harrison Ford is thirty-five-years-old, hence an older Deckard, pointing the gun (see figure 88). In the same way that the ruins maintain the memory of a space filled with life and activity, the older Harrison Ford holds the memory of the young Rick Deckard of 2019. His worn-out body as the ruins left of that younger Blade Runner comprise an orchestrated reveal of nostalgia spectacle for the audience. Harrison Ford's appearance is a significant and emotional moment of nostalgic spectacle in the film, which illustrates Christine Sprengler's point that a "single prop or specific actor [can be used] for engaging and evoking nostalgia" (Sprengler, 2009:67). Here it is Harrison Ford who engages and evokes nostalgia through the intertextual meanings he carries with him. In the world inside *Blade Runner*, his earlier days relate to Deckard's nostalgia for his past with Rachael. Still, beyond *Blade Runner*'s world, Ford also evokes a sense of nostalgia for the cultural context of the film during 1982, not only in his previous role as Rick Deckard but also of his 'glory days' as a lead in the many action films he starred in during the 80s and 90s (e.g., *Indiana Jones*, *Star Wars*). Harrison Ford's body becomes one of Nora's *lieux de mémoire* as it holds the memories from *Blade Runner* through its natural signs that (re)present the past in the present.

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<sup>62</sup> Contrasting to the bodiless voice of his younger self heard during the Voight-Kampff playing.



*Figure 87* Harrison Ford as Rick Deckard in *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, prod. The Ladd Company/Shaw Brothers, USA, 1982)



*Figure 88* Harrison Ford as Rick Deckard in *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, prod. Alcon Entertainment/Columbia Pictures, USA, 2017)

After K and Deckard bump into each other, Deckard believes K is there in his capacity as a cop to take him in, so he begins to fight him. In response, K runs into what used to be a showroom within the casino which played projections of performers from the 1950s and 1960s. While K and Deckard fight, images of Elvis, Marilyn Monroe and Liberace are projected around them. For the film's audience, these figures are intimately related to nostalgia since these old-time celebrities are well known, iconic figures of the past. Particularly, for the older generations in the audience, they belong to a time they can be nostalgic for at the present. Nostalgia for the 50's and 60's has been about for a significant period of time in various types of media, from music (Runowicz, 2010), television (Goren and Beil, 2015), politics (Jobson,



2018) or even food (Duruz, 1999) particularly for mature American audiences as they are the related to a romanticised post-war era of economic prosperity. Therefore, the understanding of these projections for the audience is unmistakably nostalgic and evoking a bygone era.

In the context of the film, they make for a complex fusion between past and future. Firstly, it makes for a nostalgic spectacle in different levels. For one, the setting implies that the production and attendance of this show within the diegesis of *Blade Runner 2049* were unambiguously motivated by nostalgia, as the show brings back these stars from the past for the spectacle of it. This spectacle becomes an actualisation of the past's coexistence with the present through the digital presence of the old stars. However, it has the potential to become a nostalgic spectacle for the audience from outside the film as well. From the audience's perspective from 2017 and onwards these images decontextualise these archival images and transfers them from the past into the future creating a digital palimpsest that creates a superimposition of temporalities. These projections seem like an advanced technology from a future we had not reached<sup>63</sup>. For instance, the projections are close to life-like performances of these long-gone celebrities, and they are able to interact with the scenario by moving around the tables, with its sound temporally and spatially synchronised to make it seem as if the artists were singing before the public. The aesthetics of the *mise-en-scène* also create a futuristic image contrasting with the star's evocation of the past. As seen on image 4.18, the projections of Elvis and Marilyn are made with a futuristic technology of lights that make it seem like the stars are virtually present in the room, but also the lights projecting the figures themselves give the scene a grandiose presence. Furthermore, contrasting K and Deckard's proportions with the projections', these look bigger than regular people which makes them more imposing (see

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<sup>63</sup> During the course of writing this dissertation, however, Kanye West made news on October 2020 for creating a life-like hologram of Robert Kardashian as a birthday present for his then wife, Kim Kardashian. With this, bringing the technology a step closer to the future envisioned in *Blade Runner 2049*. Although, as noted by Alyx Gorman: "True hologram technology is still far from any commercial application" (Gorman, 2020).



Figure 89). However, with the film's context, this is another archaic technology that has already been left behind — and, maybe, similarly, the nostalgia for these times and artists has been left behind too. The show room is as abandoned as the rest of the city, and the holograms do not function properly anymore. The images keep glitching and the sound keeps going off intermittently (see Figure 90). The images of these artists are hard to grasp by this withering technology in the same way that memories become fractured and partial. Parts of the songs are clearly remembered/projected while others are unable to make it through.



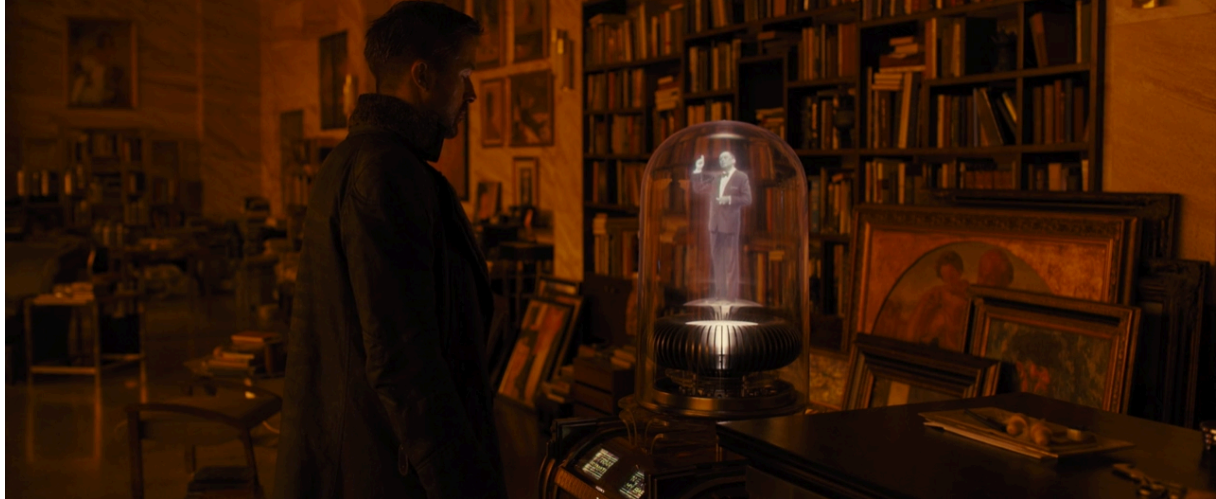
*Figure 89* Holograms of Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe in *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, prod. Alcon Entertainment/Columbia Pictures, USA, 2017)



Figure 90 Elvis Presley's hologram glitching in *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, prod. Alcon Entertainment/Columbia Pictures, USA, 2017)

A few minutes after this scene, there is another instance of these nostalgic holograms where Frank Sinatra is gracefully projected inside a glass bell jar, creating an analogy of the fragile preservation of the past. In this sequence, Deckard has accepted that K is not there to arrest or hurt him and invites him to have a drink. The scene is tinted in sepia surrounded by different signifiers of the past like old furniture, paintings, and books (see figure 91). Among them, there is a jukebox-like device which plays, not just Frank Sinatra's song, but a Tri-dimensional hologram of the singer performing it. The superimpositions between past and future in the mise-en-scène as described above not only serve as a nostalgic spectacle, but they also help to reinforce the temporal clash between the characters and within the plot. Similarly, this is what is playing in the plot as the new Blade Runner, K, encounters the old Blade Runner, Deckard, ("I had your job once. I was good at it"), which in itself is significant in terms of the temporal distance between them. But also, through K's interrogation of Deckard, the plots of the parent film and the sequel are brought together. Here, Deckard explains to K what happened after he and Rachael escaped at the end of *Blade Runner*; a bridge begins to form between 2019(1982) and 2049(2017) illuminating more clearly the continuum of time within the gap of both films. All this time, Deckard had been hiding away in this decaying city to keep his child safe. It was a way for him to be stuck in the past and immobile in time. When K enters his life,

Deckard is forced to face the future he had been avoiding, since in the plan to save his daughter: “everyone had a part, [and his] was to leave”. At that moment, the past had to be left behind to make way for the future.



*Figure 91* Hologram Franks Sinatra in *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, prod. Alcon Entertainment/Columbia Pictures, USA, 2017)

As the sequences analysed above, both in form and content, this moment is charged with extra-diegetic nostalgia for the audiences. Within the sepia room, with its several signifiers of the past – including Rachael’s photograph – the viewers and the characters are given a space to dwell on the loss and longing of a past time. However, this dwelling is soon disrupted by the antagonists of the story as Luv bombs her way into the building and captures Deckard. This becomes a violent way in which the characters – and in turn the viewer – are forced to move on into the quick-developing future; they can no longer afford to stay stuck within the ruins of the past. In particular, because that past can be used against them as a way to sentimentally manipulate them. In following scene, the film is self-aware of the manipulative powers of reactionary nostalgia, as Niander Wallace faces Deckard seeking to find more information about the born replicant. To manipulate him into revealing the location of his child, Wallace appeals to Deckard’s nostalgia, namely, his life with Rachael, presenting it as an appealing bribe for him to give in. To do this, he uses the sound recording from 1982 when Deckard and Rachael met. Wallace attempts to seduce him into cooperating by making him

believe he would be able to go back to the way things were. To materialise this, Wallace puts on a nostalgic spectacle of his own. He butters Deckard by talking about the moment when he and Rachael met, aiming to remind him about the emotion of that moment, as Dr Ana Stelline said: “We remember with our feelings”. In his words for Deckard, Wallace also creates a reminder for the viewer about *Blade Runner*: “All these years you looked back on that day, drunk on the memory of its perfection. How shiny her lips, how instant their connection and how painful it must have been to lose her.” While Niander speaks these lines, the film cuts to a flashback from *Blade Runner* when Deckard meets Rachael showing his memory of that moment, but also making the film engage with its own past and archive. Wallace’s pitch to Deckard is a quintessential use of reactionary nostalgia. He is promoting an understanding of a past that was better than anything the future could bring; one which was necessary to go back to. He expresses this by telling Deckard "I know you love pain. Pain reminds you of the joy you felt was real" a sentiment linked with a feeling of nostalgia from a painful present about a joyful past. This is when he presents to Deckard an 'alternative to this pain', he has modelled a new replicant exactly like Rachael for him to bring back the past. There is a subtle music playing in the background, but it drowns in the echoes from the ominous, empty chamber they are in. For the same reason, when Rachael’s clone enters the room, the echo amplifies the sound of her heels as she walks, similar to the sound Rachael’s heels made in the first film as she entered the room, anticipating her reveal.

Putting this scene together with the one when Deckard meets Rachael for the first time one is able to appreciate the similarities and differences between them (see figures 92 and 93). To begin with, the colour palettes in both sets are in a similar shade of yellow and gold, with an accentuated chiaroscuro. In both films, the real Rachael and Rachael’s clone, enter the scene from the background as a dark silhouette and make their way into the light for her face to be

revealed to Deckard. The sequel makes a point for Rachael's clone to mimic the original in every way, from her hair, make up, and costume, to her body language and, particularly, her trademark pose of her right hand inside her blazer's pocket. The sequel resonates with the earlier set of images orchestrated by Wallace to appeal to Deckard's memory (and, maybe the audience's memory of the first film). In this way, Niander creates a nostalgic spectacle *for* Deckard. However, even if this spectacle was meant to be a repetition to "return to the past" the return of Rachel exactly as she was thirty years ago brings out the difference of this return: that she is not the real Rachael<sup>64</sup>. When Rachael's clone reaches Deckard, there is a superimposition of temporalities; she looks exactly the same way as Rachael did thirty years ago, as if time had not passed, but Deckard does not look like the younger man he was back then, there is an anachronism in the coexistence of these two bodies. What returns along with Rachael, is the difference in that return: the difference of an aged Deckard, and the different, cloned Rachael<sup>65</sup>. Furthermore, Deckard's reaction to Wallace's proposal is one of rectification of what was a false sense of past. He corrects Wallace by telling him that he made a mistake in his artifice, pointing out that "her eyes were green". This lets Wallace know that not only does Deckard see through his manipulative scheme, but that he has no intention of submitting himself to a past that never was and never again will be. Deckard is able to be nostalgic for this past without the need to bring it back. Nostalgia here is used as an emotion that allows Deckard to engage with his past and what it meant for him — he is able to remember — but he understands that the object of his memory is lost and cannot come back, and even if it did, it would not be the same.

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<sup>64</sup> It is also important to point out the twofoldness of this simulation, since Sean Young's face was artificially recreated for the film. In his text about Algorithmic Face Recognition, Celis Bueno cites Kelly Gates writing: that 'any system for representing the face tells us something about the society and historical moment that produce it' (Celis Bueno, 2020). Here, it represents the anachronistic reproduction of a historical moment, and also relates to Deleuze's sense of the face as the affect image.

<sup>65</sup> Similar to the fake nostalgia in *T2: Trainspotting* (as discussed in Chapter Three), where the film uses different actors to portray Sick boy and Renton while making a meta-commentary about the insincere nostalgia; this scene also creates meta-commentary about insincere nostalgia given that it is not Sean Young reprising her role.





Figure 92 Rachael entering the room for the first time in *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, prod. The Ladd Company/Shaw Brothers, USA, 1982)



Figure 93 Rachael's duplicate entering the room in *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, prod. Alcon Entertainment/Columbia Pictures, USA, 2017)

However, as developed above, there are different ways for the past and the future to engage with each other, reactionary and progressive. Contrasting Deckard's encounter with Rachael's clone, the ending scene shows an encounter of the past and the future embodied by

the performances of Harrison Ford as an old Deckard and Carla Juri as his daughter, Dr Stelline (see figure 94). Here, the difference in their corporeality does not signify an anachronism, but a collaborative and caring encounter between the old and the new, their corporeality telling the story of their moment in time synthesising past and future. Harrison Ford represents *Blade Runner*'s past in his (re)presentation of Rick Deckard, carrying with it the travelled road and the lessons learned. Meanwhile, Ana's young body and short introduction represents the blank slate and open possibilities that Deckard and the replicants have opened. A new future with the virtual potentialities that this new object of encounter can realise, and with her, a new potential future for all the replicants.



Figure 94 Deckard meets his daughter at the end of *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, prod. Alcon Entertainment/Columbia Pictures, USA, 2017)

## Conclusion

The original *Blade Runner* film explored different themes related to memory, temporality, nostalgia, and the imagination of the future. Producing the sequel 35 years later allowed the creators to expand on these themes with a newly developed temporal lens and create a narrative connection between both films through these issues and emotions. The intertextuality between *Blade Runner* and *Blade Runner 2049* allows an exploration of the tension between past and future through its portrayal of futuristic nostalgia. It creates a dynamic negotiation between past, present, and future as it provides a way to explore the different modalities and relations between these temporalities. As such, it illuminates these tensions both as a political discourse and as an expression and experience of emotion. In this development, it shows the complexity and adaptability of nostalgia, both as reactionary and progressive, but also as mood and mode in its mediality. *Blade Runner 2049* actively shows self-awareness of its temporality and intertextuality with the original film by exploiting the nostalgia for the 1982's film. Through its narrative, production and engaging wioth its own archive, it creates a film in which memory becomes its form and content. In this way, the sequel is informed by the memory of and nostalgia for the past *Blade Runner* to show the possibilities of how the past can mould and create a new future. Similarly, I continued to show how the performers' bodies serve the telling of the story becoming *lieux de mémoire* and bringing with it a temporal context. As the final chapter to this thesis, this exploration of *Blade Runner* and *Blade Runner 2049* built on the previous analyses of the time-critical sequel to illustrate a different way in which these temporal dynamics can integrate and collapse time in itself containing past, present, and future.



# Conclusion

The conception of this thesis began with my personal encounter(s) with Richard Linklater's *Before Trilogy*. I watched these films throughout the years and watched how Céline and Jesse aged and changed from one film to the other. Realising how I had changed alongside them roused my curiosity about how this process was achieved by cinema. I had always been fascinated by cinema's capacity to capture and represent time, and I wanted to explore what this type of storytelling could say about how time changes the self, society, and the world. Coincidentally, as I write this conclusion and look back at the journey to produce this thesis, I see how the person who began writing in 2018, and the thesis itself, have changed, evolved, and encountered new and unexpected temporal horizons. The process of this thesis was disrupted by the significant worldwide event of the pandemic. This event divided our history into before and after: before and after so many lives were lost; before and after we learned about the fragility of our ecosystem and how interconnected we are; before and after we needed to rely on technology to keep close to our loved ones; before and after living through worldwide lockdowns. We are now facing an 'after' where the knowledge of our past and how we carry it with us must inform our present to build a possible future.

This thesis has analysed how time-critical sequels capture and use these long-term temporal changes through their intertextuality to tell complex stories about the passage of time. To do this, I have defined time-critical sequels as those films following up the narrative of an earlier instalment released several years before. Time-critical sequels purposefully acknowledge and incorporate the time passed between one film and the other in their narratives, revealing how the passage of time has affected them. Importantly, time-critical sequels follow the same characters, portrayed by the same actors as in their parent film, who have aged

according to the time passed, making this ageing a crucial part of the storytelling. Through a close textual analysis of selected case studies, this thesis has demonstrated how this kind of sequels provide a new way to investigate narrative time, reflecting on long-term temporalities, ageing and time-associated emotions. I have used the idea of narrative time as everything that's part of the story told between and across parent film and sequel(s). In particular, one of the main points of this thesis has been acknowledging the long-term temporal gap between one film and the other as a crucial part of this narrative time, and I explore how this duration becomes part of the story in virtual and actual ways. Consequently, it has allowed for a new way of thinking about time in cinema in the long term. To do this, I have drawn from Gilles Deleuze's philosophy of time from *Difference and Repetition* (2014) as the conducting thread of my argument to show how his philosophy of difference brings out rich aspects of time across sequels.

Deleuze's philosophical project is mainly presented in his book *Difference and Repetition* (2014), where he develops his philosophy of difference. This work is significant as it contended the philosophical traditions preceding him. He does this by providing a new method of thought that focuses on the differential relationships between objects and rejects the idea of a fixed identity. These differential relations are defined in the repetition and difference of the objects. Deleuze's work scrutinises the concepts of difference and repetition to understand a conceptualisation of the world through them. I have used this method of thought in my thesis to define parent film and sequel through their differential relations and how this vividly brings about the passage of time. One of the main parts of Deleuze's theory for developing this thesis is his three syntheses of time. These are how Deleuze proposes a new understanding of time to think about past, present and future as perpetually coexisting with each other. Using Deleuze's three syntheses of time, I have illustrated how time-critical sequels develop and contain time within themselves.

To complement Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, I have incorporated other contemporary social theories of time, guided by each set of films' subject matter. In each chapter, I allowed my case studies to lead the way thematically while also scrutinising the temporality in time-critical sequels in a broader way. I draw from theories such as Gilleard and Higgs's *Ageing, Corporeality and Embodiment* (2013), Rita Felski's *Doing time: feminist theory and postmodern culture* (2000), Barbara Adam's 'Time' (2006) and Svetlana Boym's *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001), to guide discussions about ageing in *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel*, heterosexual romantic relationships in the *Before Trilogy*, social displacement and immobility in *Trainspotting*, and futuristic dystopias and nostalgia in *Blade Runner*.

In the first chapter, I investigated *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* following the main framework given by Deleuze's three syntheses of time. I focused on the duality of the character and actor, as well as their corporeality and embodiment as analysed by Ted Nannicelli (2019), alongside Chris Gilleard and Paul Higgs (2013). Nannicelli's theory talks about how the twofoldness of the actor and character creates a simultaneous visual awareness of two different entities and a tension between the representational and presentational properties of a performance (Nannicelli, 2019). I linked these ideas to Gilleard and Higgs's concepts of corporeality and embodiment (Gilleard and Higgs, 2013), where the authors differentiate the two explaining corporeality as referring to the material actions and aspects of the body on which the person has no agency – such as ageing, and embodiment as referring to those aspects of the body on which they do – such as behaviour or movement. Linking these theories together, I showed how the actor's – hence character's – ageing over the long term becomes a feature of the story as the body becomes the surface on which changes and ageing are revealed.

Using Deleuze's first synthesis of time, I have explained the concept of the parent film

and how it serves as a first encounter with the characters and a new story. With his second synthesis of time, I developed the characteristics of the time-critical sequel. I explained how the sequel visualises the past in the present through both natural and artificial signs. I explain how the ageing body of the actor/character duality becomes a natural sign of the past that contains the past of the character/actor from the parent film in the time-critical sequel. Next, I explained how the unity of the films and the gaps in between instalments form a continuum of growth for the characters and the development of their context by using Deleuze's third synthesis of time. In this third synthesis, Deleuze draws from Nietzsche's concept of the eternal return, but he argues that what returns is difference opening up the possibilities of the future. This synthesis of time explains how, in the time-critical sequels, the past keeps returning to the present but with a difference that permits the possibility of a future. Finally, I explained how the time-critical sequels achieve a high level of temporal realism following Robert Hopkins's tiers of cinematic representation (2016) – Events Filmed, Story Told and Moving Images. This realism is achieved by collapsing their representation of time in the events filmed, and the story told, given that the time passed in real life becomes the same time passed in the story told. Through all this, the concepts developed in this chapter – the ageing of the character/actor, the parent film, the time-critical sequel, and time's realism – provided the foundation for looking at the temporal intertextuality between parent film and sequel in the subsequent chapters.

In chapter two, I built on this basis of form to look at how it contributes to the films' content. In this chapter, I analysed the *Before Trilogy* following Rita Felski's levels of temporality: everyday time and life time, developed in her study about the gendered experience of time in *Doing time: feminist theory and postmodern culture* (2000). The first level, everyday time, provided the framework to analyse the films of the trilogy individually, viewing them as exclusively a day in the life of the characters. Looking at the films from this perspective allowed me to analyse the parallels between the character's movement in space and their

movement through time. For example, I show how in *Before Sunset*, the characters are in constant movement, either walking or in modes of transportation like train, tram, or boat. This physical movement through space becomes an analogy for their movement through time and shows how the everyday perspective situates the characters at specific moments of physical and psychological time. These physical and psychological times are unique to each temporal situation and positionality. To analyse the physical and psychological time of the characters, I followed Maciej Stolarski, Katarzyna Wojtkowska, Małgorzata Kwiecińska's (2016), who have studied how couples' time perspectives affect how they relate to each and change throughout their relationship. The physical and psychological positionality in time allowed to scrutinise the specificities of each 'time-slice' and to see the couple's temporal perspectives according to their moment in time.

After analysing the specific temporality of each film, I looked closer at the nine-year gap between the sequels by using Christine Geraghty's concept of the unrecorded existence and Deleuze's concept of the out-of-field and transversal reading. Geraghty's concept of the unrecorded existence proposes that, even as the characters are abandoned at the end of the film, there is an appeal to the audience's sense of temporality, indicating that day-to-day life has continued in our absence (Geraghty, 1981). Similarly, I develop this concept further using Deleuze's theory of the out-of-field and transversality, which suggests that "the visual image has a legible function beyond its visible function" (Deleuze, 2013:19). In other words, I explain how audiences can read beyond the recorded existence of the characters to make connections and infer the unrecorded existence of the characters and story world. This reading is achieved through a transversal reading from one film to the other, connecting them and affirming the unity of their multiplicity and gaining a total and continuous view through the fragments. Understanding the transversal reading then led me to change to the second of Felski's temporal

levels, the life time. This level provided a different perspective to look at the three films as the parts of a whole that tell a unified story — changing the perspective from which to analyse the films, from the everyday time (the individual films) to the life time (the trilogy), allowed for an eagle eye's view of the characters' story, both as a couple and individually. With this change of view, I inspected the characters' individual relationship to ageing revealed in the long term of the story. Finally, using Lynne Segal's *Out of Time* (2014), I developed how Céline and Jesse's seamless ageing journey throughout the eighteen years of the trilogy was unique and gendered, yet united by the mutual and cohesive shared memory of their story.

Contrastingly, chapter three, looks at *Trainspotting* and *T2 Trainspotting* showing how the long-term of the time-critical sequel provides the narrative tools to accentuate stagnation in time. I analysed how *T2* enhances *Trainspotting's* original themes and meanings and illustrates the consequences of temporal immobility. To do this, I continued to use Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, as well as social studies of time such as Barbara Adam's social theory in 'Time' (2006), Sara Sharma's concept of recalibration (2011) and Inka Stock's *Time, Migration and Forced Immobility* (2019). Next, I developed how the films show the entrapment in time of *Trainspotting's* characters by pointing to Adam's theory regarding the standardisation, commodification, and industrialisation of time for capitalist purposes, along with Sharma's analysis of biopolitics. Furthermore, I looked at how twenty years later, *T2 Trainspotting's* intertextuality with its parent film communicates the character's increased disjointed state from standardised time and how this creates depictions of power structures, national identity, colonialism, and bio-politics.

Following, I analyse how the films show the division of temporalities across class, nations and identities and the temporal disjunctions they cause. In particular, I elaborate on how *T2 Trainspotting* illustrates Mark's failed journey of recalibration and the difficulties he

found after leaving Edinburgh at the end of the previous film. Sara Sharma's concept of recalibration relates to the expectation for the subjects in a capitalist society to self-regulate, deal with, and keep up with the demands and challenges of time. Under capitalism, individuals are expected to synchronise their body clocks and life journey to the external forces of capital, maintaining a productive and profitable body. This chapter shows how Mark struggled to keep up with this recalibration for twenty years until his body failed him, and he was forced to go back to Edinburgh to face his past. Through this pretext, I elaborate on the biopolitical implications of time stagnation as they translate into the investment or divestment of some bodies over others. For example, Spud's inability to keep up with his job, relationship, and responsibilities as a father due to his lack of understanding of daylight-saving time pushing him to relapse into his heroin addiction. As well as Begbie's imprisonment for twenty years, "stored away" from society and then facing the toll those twenty years had had on his body. Their story relates to the discussion from chapter one about how the ageing of the body contributes to the story's narrative, as the older bodies of *T2 Trainspotting* struggle to fit and adjust to their new temporal context. The actors' natural ageing becomes part of the reprise of their twenty-year-old character.

I point out how, according to Michel Foucault's *History of Madness*, throughout time, the people who have been considered a threat to the social order have been put away as not to challenge this order. I relate this idea to Mary Douglas's understanding of 'dirt' which points out how that which is considered dirty is a matter of perceived disruption of the established order. Likewise, Byron Ellsworth Hamann's concept of chronological dirt follows Douglas's theory, pointing out how, in the same way things fall out of order, they can fall out of time and be considered no longer valuable under a different temporal horizon. I argue that *T2 Trainspotting* shows how, within the frame of capitalism's imposed order, the passage of time

leaves behind those who cannot recalibrate moving further away from the social order causing their neglect and dehumanisation as “chronological dirt”. Finally, I showed how the films presents an alternative to this fate through the character of Spud, as he reconciles with and rearranges his past, turning it into stories. This creates a reconciliation between past and present by re-organising and re-envisioning it for a new possible future.

The theme of envisioned and negated futures leads me into my fourth and final chapter on *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Blade Runner 2049* (2017). In the previous chapter, I showed how the past takes a bearing over the present. In this new chapter, I show how it also takes a bearing on the future, but most importantly, how the three tenses of time coexist, interact and affect each other while in constant flux. To do this, I investigated how the parent film and sequel create tension between past and future in their use of nostalgia within a dystopian future. Drawing from Svetlana Boym’s *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001), I showed how nostalgia is an unavoidable companion to progress and becomes a producer of temporal tension. To address the nuances of nostalgia, I discussed how the *Blade Runner* films utilise nostalgia as a mood and a mode in their production and narrative, as proposed by Paul Grainge in 'Nostalgia and Style in Retro America' (2000). I explore the first addressing the story told as the emotion and sentiment of the story, focusing on the character’s experience of nostalgia, and the second as its stylistic representation of the past in the present, addressing the filmmakers’ choices to replicate the style of *Blade Runner* in the production of its sequel while still giving it an updated futuristic turn. Finally, I develop how this interplay between nostalgia and future projections creates complex temporal tensions between one film and the other. Through these temporal tensions, the *Blade Runner* films explore themes of history, memory, imagined futures, artificial intelligence and identity as looked through the lens of different temporal positionalities.



In the following section, I examine the blurry lines between nostalgia, history and memory, exploring *Blade Runner 2049*'s use of memory. I demonstrate how the sequel takes the memory of its parent film – both intra and extra diegetically – and transforms it into form and content of its narrative. I draw from texts such as Niemeyer's *Media and Nostalgia* (2014) and Christine Sprengler's *Screening Nostalgia* (2009) to point out the mediality of nostalgia and memory, and how it is reproducible and traceable through media and the archive. Therefore, I show how *Blade Runner 2049* creates a trace of mediatic memory that remembers the story told and events filmed in *Blade Runner*. I showed how this trace continues the temporal tensions in the film, as it looks back into the past to allow the narrative to move forward into the future while making a meta-commentary on cinematic memory. I draw from Pierre Nora's idea of *lieux de mémoire*, which talks about the sites that hold our memory, and further in my chapter, I argue that the ageing body becomes one of such sites of memory as it holds in itself the natural signs that (re)present the past in the present. I closed this chapter by returning to Deleuze's third synthesis of time to show how, through all of the above, the time-critical sequel provides a layered tension of time by integrating and collapsing past, present, and future, containing all of time in the implications of the image.

Although each of the above chapters focuses on a specific theme – ageing, relationships, social immobility, futuristic nostalgia – my arguments are linked together and build up on each other to inspect the implications of the time-critical sequel. These developments come in three areas: temporal, demographic, and thematic. First, the temporal development of my thesis relates to the times contained in the films. I begin my discussion with a film from 1959 and finish it with another that creates an imagined future in 2049. In this way, I show how the temporality of cinema is also contained within itself, informing and permeating past, present and future. Secondly, my discussion of the films goes from focusing

on the individual to discussions about the couple, social groups, and a global future while thematically expanding on my thesis of the time-critical sequel. As developed above, I first analysed *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* (1959-1979), focusing on the individual's ageing body, and I showed the time-critical sequel's formal characteristics through Deleuze's first syntheses of time. My second chapter built from the ideas previously discussed to analyse the *Before Trilogy* (1995-2013), where I looked at the heterosexual couple. This discussion allowed me to point to the characters' mobility and seamless transition through time while also analysing their different gendered experience. This discussion of mobility was contrasted in my third chapter when discussing *Trainspotting* (1996-2017), in which I showed how the time-critical sequel can also illustrate temporal immobility. Furthermore, this chapter extended its view to a more extensive set of characters following a disenfranchised social group. Finally, my fourth chapter on *Blade Runner* (1982-2019) wraps up the discussion by showing how the complex temporalities of the sequel incorporate past, present, and future into its narrative, synthesising all of time regarding a possible collective global future.

## Original Contribution

The production of sequels following stories from several years prior has become more apparent in the last few years. This is an increasing phenomenon, particularly in, but not limited to, Hollywood films. This thesis has filled a gap in film studies regarding the analysis of time across sequels and has shown that there is much more to this kind of multiplicity than their commercial aspects. Other scholars have extensively analysed most of the films I have examined; however, they had never been placed within a frame that links their use of time or contextualised in the way I have within film philosophy. This thesis has provided a new way to look at the temporal intertextuality of parent films and sequels and the language to speak about this specific variation.

Similarly, it provides a new way to think about how film narratives can reveal the effects and affects of time in the long term and a new way to look at a characters' arcs and growth. Finally, I have also shown a new way to use Deleuze's theory of *Difference and Repetition* within film studies for comparing and contrasting films to bring out their changes or stagnation in time. In this way, my study contributes to aid in further analyses that may wish to explore the temporal implications of sequels in general and in the specific film series that I have discussed.

## Future Avenues of Inquiry

There are many variations in sequels and multiplicities' use of time and intertextuality, and more can be said about the use of time in prequels, adaptations, spin-offs, and other retellings of stories. However, this thesis was limited to exploring and defining the specifics of the time-critical sequel. There is also further scope to keep building on the possibilities of the time-critical sequel as a medium of temporal storytelling analysing other instances and new films that incorporate long-term real-time in their narrative. In addition, many other time-critical sequels explore other themes related to the long-term passage of time. For example, there is fertile ground to study the use of time in popular franchises such as *Star Wars (Episodes VII-IX)* (2015-2019), *Logan* (2017), or the Marvel Cinematic Universe, where their production and narrative have expanded for nearly two decades and are self-aware of this aspect. There are intriguing things to say about their incorporation of time-travelling and how they built up these possibilities through their years of production and storytelling.

Smaller productions also revisit previous stories, purposefully incorporating the significance of the time passed. Just as I was writing this conclusion, the new *Top Gun: Maverick* (2022) hit theatres to excellent reviews about a story that revives the 1986 film's

legacy and, according to many critics (Ehrlich, 2022; Greenblatt and EDT, 2022; Kendrick, 2022; Perez, 2022; Shirey, 2022), improves it. There are sequels like *Mamma Mia! Here we go again* (2018) that explore themes of grief about a beloved character we knew decades ago, and horror films like *Halloween* (2018) which not only exploit the threat of an unkillable killer, but also go into the characters' journey of life-long trauma and its consequences on their mental health, livelihood, and family.

Likewise, some sequels offer a renewed vision of themselves according to improved visions of the values they once professed or the new social landscape in which they are revisited. For example, sequels such as *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm* (2020), *Bill & Ted Face the Music* (2020) and *Coming 2 America* (2021) move away from their male-centred narrative to give way to a new generation of female protagonists that lead their fathers to heal and become better people. Nevertheless, the space limitations of this thesis did not allow to include more case studies than the ones discussed. Similarly, there is still much more to be said about the audience's relationship to time-critical sequels. For my future research, I would like to focus on the audience's long-term parallel journey alongside these sequels and franchises, interrogating how the spectator relates to the complex temporal tensions that these bring about. While this dissertation focused on the textual analysis of the films, for future work, I would like to conduct fieldwork research to interrogate the audience's experience of these films concerning their own temporal journeys. I wonder how faithful fans of culturally significant stories live their fandom throughout the years and how does their fandom change as they grow up and mature. There is also room to research how the passage of time affects the viewers' demographics from one film to the other and what different perspectives different generations provide about the stories. In short, there are endless possibilities to continue exploring the time-critical sequel for years to come.

# Primary Filmography

*Antoine and Colette* (1962) Truffaut, F. France: Ulysse Productions.

*Bed and board: Domicile conjugal* (1970) Truffaut, F. London: 2 Entertain Video Limited.

*Before Midnight* (2013) Linklater, R. Faliero House Productions.

*Before Sunrise* (1995) Linklater, R. Castle Rock Entertainment.

*Before Sunset* (2004) Linklater, R. Warner Independent Pictures.

*Blade Runner 2049* (2017) Villeneuve, D. Alcon Entertainment and Columbia Pictures.

*Blade runner. Director's cut* (2007) Directed by Scott, R. Widescreen version. London: Warner Home Video.

*Love on the run: L'amour en fuite* (1979) Truffaut, F. London: 2 Entertain Video.

*Stolen kisses: Baisers volés* (1968) Truffaut, F. England: Cinema Club.

*T2 Trainspotting* (2017) Directed by Boyle, D. TriStar Pictures, Film4.

*The 400 blows* (1959) Truffaut, F. London: Tartan Video.

*Trainspotting* (1996). Directed by Boyle, D. Channel Four Films, Figment Films, The Noel Gay Motion Picture Company.

# Secondary Filmography

*1917* (2019) Directed by Sam Mendes

*12 Angry Men* (1957) Directed by Sidney Lumet

*2036: Nexus Dawn* (2017) Directed by Luke Scott

*2048: Nowhere to Run* (2017) Directed by Luke Scott

*A Quiet Place II* (2020) Directed by John Krasinski

*Alien* (1979) Directed by Ridley Scott

*Aliens* (1986) Directed by James Cameron

*Alien 3* (1992) Directed by David Fincher

*Ant-man* (2015) Directed by Peyton Reed

*Batman* (1989) Directed by Tim Burton

*Batman & Robin* (1997) Directed by Joel Schumacher

*Batman Begins* (2005) Directed by Christopher Nolan

*Batman Forever* (1995) Directed by Joel Schumacher

*Bill & Ted Face the Music* (2020) Directed by Dean Parisot

*Blade Runner: Blackout 2022* (2017) Directed by Shinichiro Watanabe

*Borat: Subsequent Moviefilm* (2020) Directed by Jason Woliner

*Breaking the Waves* (1996) Directed by Lars von Trier

*Captain Marvel* (2019) Directed by Anna Boden, Ryan Fleck

*Coming 2 America* (2021) Directed by Craig Brewer

*Coronation Street* (1960- ) Distributed by Granada Sky Broadcasting

*Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954) Directed by Jack Arnold

*Dancer in the Dark* (2000) Directed by Lars von Trier

*David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet* (2020) Directed by Alastair Fothergill, Jonathan

Hughes, Keith Scholey

*Deadpool 2* (2018) Directed by David Leitch

*Dogville* (2003) Directed by Lars von Trier

*Don't Breathe 2* (2021) Directed by Rodo Sayagues

*Eternal Sunshine of a Spotless Mind* (2004) Directed by Michel Gondry

*Game of Thrones* (2011-2019) Distributed by Home Box Office (HBO)

*Gravity* (2013) Directed by Alfonso Cuarón

*Groundhog Day* (1993) Directed by Harold Ramis

*Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014) Directed by James Gunn

*Halloween* (1978) Directed by John Carpenter

*Halloween* (2018) Directed by David Gordon Green

*Halloween Kills* (2021) Directed by David Gordon Green

*Harry Potter* (2001-2011) Distributed by Warner Bros

*Hotel Transylvania: Transformania* (2022) Directed by Derek Drymon, Jennifer Kluska

*How a French Nobleman Got a Wife through the "New York Herald" Personal Column*  
(1904) Directed by Edwin S. Porter

*Ironman* (2008) Directed by Jon Favreau

*Jaws* (1975) Directed by Steven Spielberg

*Jaws 2* (1978) Directed by Jeannot Szwarc

*Jaws 3* (1983) Directed by Joe Alves

*Jaws: The Revenge* (1987) Directed by Joseph Sargent

*Le voyage à travers l'impossible* (1904) Directed by George Melies

*Le voyage dans la lune* (1902) Directed by George Melies

*Logan* (2017) Directed by James Mangold

*Mamma Mia! Here we go again* (2018) Directed by Ol Parker

*My Dinner with Andre* (1981) Directed by Louis Malle

*No Time to Die* (2021) Directed by Cary Joji Fukunaga

*Pain and Glory* (2019) Directed by Pedro Almodóvar

*Personal* (1904) Directed by Wallace McCutcheon

*Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway* (2021) Directed by Will Gluck

*Phone Booth* (2002) Directed by Joel Schumacher

*Pride and Prejudice* (1995) Distributed by British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

*Pride and Prejudice* (2005) Directed by Joe Wright

*Rashomon* (1950) Directed by Akira Kurosawa

*Ratatouille* (2007) Directed by Brad Bird, Jan Pinkava

*Rope* (1948) Directed by Alfred Hitchcock

*Run Lola Run* (1998) Directed by Tom Tykwer

*Sing 2* (2021) Directed by Garth Jennings, Christophe Lourdelet

*Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) Directed by Jon Watts

*Star Wars* (1977) Directed by George Lucas

*Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) Directed by Irvin Kershner

*Star Wars: Episode VI - Return of the Jedi* (1983) Directed by Richard Marquand

*Star Wars* (Episodes VII-IX) (2015-2019) Directed by J.J. Abrams, Rian Johnson,

*Superman* (1978-1980) Directed by Richard Donner, Richard Lester

*Tape* (2001) Directed by Richard Linklater

*Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991) Directed by James Cameron

*The Addams Family 2* (2021) Directed by Greg Tiernan, Conrad Vernon

*The Birth of a Nation* (1915) Directed by D.W. Griffith

*The Double Life of Veronique* (1991) Directed by Krzysztof Kieslowski

*The Fall of a Nation* (1916) Directed by Thomas Dixon Jr.



*The Godfather Part II* (1974) Directed by Francis Ford Coppola

*The Hunger Games* (2012) Directed by Gary Ross

*The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* (2013) Directed by Francis Lawrence

*The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1* (2014) Directed by Francis Lawrence

*The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 2* (2015) Directed by Francis Lawrence

*The Matrix* (1999) Directed by Lana Wachowski, Lilly Wachowski

*The Matrix Reloaded* (2003) Directed by Lana Wachowski, Lilly Wachowski

*The Matrix Revolutions* (2003) Directed by Lana Wachowski, Lilly Wachowski

*The Matrix Resurrections* (2021) Directed by Lana Wachowski

*The Social Network* (2010) Directed by David Fincher

*The Suicide Squad* (2021) Directed by James Gunn

*Three Colours* (1993-1994) Directed by Krzysztof Kieslowski

*Titanic* (1997) Directed by James Cameron

*Top Gun: Maverick* (2022) Directed by Joseph Kosinski

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