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**HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION IN
THE AGE OF LOST INNOCENCE:
A STUDY OF BERNARDO BERTOLUCCI'S AND
GILBERT ADAIR'S ADAPTATIONS OF
*THE HOLY INNOCENTS***

Dissertação submetida ao Programa de
Pós-Graduação em Letras/Inglês e
Literatura Correspondente da
Universidade Federal de Santa
Catarina para a obtenção do Grau de
Mestre em Letras.

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Sá

FLORIANÓPOLIS

2012

Catálogo na fonte pela Biblioteca Universitária
da
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

K22h Kawamoto, Marcia Tiemy Morita
Historical representation in the age of lost innocence
[tese] : a study of Bernardo Bertolucci's and Gilbert
Adair's adaptations of The Holy Innocents / Marcia Tiemy
Morita Kawamoto ; orientadora, Anelise R. Corseuil. -
Florianópolis, SC, 2012.
87 p.: il.

Tese (doutorado) - Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina,
Centro de Comunicação e Expressão. Programa de Pós-Graduação
em Letras/Inglês e Literatura Correspondente.

Inclui referências

1. Literatura. 2. Cinema. 3. Pós-modernismo. I. Corseuil,
Anelise Reich. II. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras/Inglês e Literatura
Correspondente. III. Título.

CDU 82

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my sincere gratitude to all of those who were patient with me along this path.

My family, for their unconditional understanding.

My advisor, Professor Anelise R. Corseuil, for her sincerity, intellectual support and helping me grow as a researcher.

My co-advisor, Daniel Serravalle de Sá, for his timely encouragements and his attentive reading.

All professors from the master program, for their lectures which certainly influenced this thesis in some way.

Professor Antônio João Teixeira, for his substantial help in the beginning of this project.

My friends, especially Livia Paschoal, Marina Martins, Sílvia Barros and Renata Gomes Luis, whose company helps me be prepared for amazing things to happen in my life.

I also thank CAPES, for sponsoring this research.

ABSTRACT

This research discusses the representation of French youth's culture in the late 60's in a postmodern context of critical debates, through a comparative analysis between Gilbert Adair's novel *The Holy Innocents* (1988), its filmic adaptation *The Dreamers* (2003) by Bernardo Bertolucci and Adair's second version of his novels *The Dreamers* (2004). Through the theoretical framework of Fredric Jameson's interpretation of art as a capital product and Linda Hutcheon's concept of historiographical metafiction, the analysis shall demonstrate that these texts represent the historical context of the May 68 uprising through a combination of nostalgia and irony. This combination results in a postmodern contradiction which indicates a need to revise history from a contemporary perspective in which longing and distance are two main issues. In this sense, historical representation becomes more than a view of the past, it is also a reflection on the postmodern context.

Key-words: Postmodernism. Historical Representation. Adaptation.

RESUMO

Esta pesquisa discute a representação histórica da cultura francesa jovem no final da década de 60 em um contexto pós-moderno de debates críticos, por meio de uma análise comparativa entre o romance de Gilbert Adair, *The Holy Innocents* (1988), sua adaptação fílmica, *The Dreamers* (2003), de Bernardo Bertolucci e a sua segunda versão do romance de Adair *The Dreamers* (2004). Como quadro teórico, essa pesquisa utiliza a interpretação de Fredric Jameson da arte como um produto capital e o conceito de Linda Hutcheon de metaficção historiográfica. Em vista disso, a análise deve demonstrar que estes textos representam o contexto histórico do movimento francês Maio de 1968, por meio de uma combinação entre nostalgia e ironia. Essa combinação resulta em uma contradição pós-moderna, que revela uma necessidade de revisar a história por meio de uma perspectiva contemporânea em que falta e distanciamento são dois tópicos principais. Neste sentido, a representação histórica se torna mais do que uma visão do passado, ela também é uma reflexão sobre o contexto pós-moderno.

Palavras-chave: Pós-modernismo. Representação histórica. Adaptação.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCING THE DREAM: SEX, CINEMA AND NOSTALGIC HISTORY

The Dreamers (2003), by Bernardo Bertolucci, presents the story of three young cinephiles – Matthew, Isabelle and Théo – living in Paris in the turbulent year of 1968. They pay little attention to the historical events France was going through, particularly the May 68 protests. The discovery of sex and their enthusiasm for cinema alienate the young beauties so much that even historical events of their interest, such as the closure of the Cinémathèque Française – a major screening room in Paris – become minor subjects. Yet, the depiction of these historical events has a brief but privileged position on the screen. In the sequences these events are shown, the viewer notices the importance of this historical background by means of the crowds of people involved in the protests and the famous faces that appear among the rioters. In addition, real footages from the period are juxtaposed with fictional images, which an initial analysis reveals an attempt to confer authoritativeness to the representation of a historical period of important social transformations.

A scene that symbolically portrays their detachment from the ongoing historical events shows Matthew and Isabelle surprised by the images from May 68 uprisings on a television in a window shop. Ironically, when they turn their backs to the television, they are even more surprised by a giant pile of rubbish left from the riots. Even when the event is so close to them, the television image is the first to inform. The window shop works as a big frame that contains the smaller television frames. These frames within a frame indicate the unraveling postmodern reproduction of images and narratives.

The opposition between the ongoing riots and the characters' alienation creates a discomfort in relation to the historical representation. The late 60s was a period of liberation from all kinds of social norms established by the bourgeois post-World War II society. Matthew, Isabelle and Théo seem well integrated in this atmosphere as they intensely explore sexually and the cultural products of the French New Wave cinema. However, as the youth struggle for sexual, institutional, artistic and political liberation, the trio's political alienation seems awkward, as the events from the ongoing history strangely seem to be part of a distant past.

This work focuses on the historical representation of the May 68 riots in France in the film *The Dreamers* and in the novels *The Holy Innocents* (1988) and *The Dreamers* (2004), both novels by Gilbert Adair. I propose to discuss the historical view provided by the novels and the film and their insertion in a postmodernist context of critical debates. Such discussion also explores a complex network of adaptations from novel to film and then back to novel again, as the novel *The Holy Innocents* (which is in itself a homage to the 1929 novel *The Holy Terrors*, by Jean Cocteau), was adapted into the screen, *The Dreamers* (2003), which by its turn influenced the posterior homonymous novel, *The Dreamers* (2004).

The representation of May 68 in Adair's and Bertolucci's texts point to a postmodern historical perspective that has been defined as nostalgic and ironic (Fredric Jameson, 1984 and Linda Hutcheon, 1989). The texts demonstrate an awareness of its representation of the past, mixing sentimental longing with ironical distance. This self-reflexive characteristic is emphasized by an awareness of their own literariness, as they are filled with references to prior works of art, which are not only quoted but also reproduced. Furthermore, Adair's rewriting of his first novel adds a different level of complexity, indicating a continuum in terms of its inscribing in art history. Such inscribing can be seen as a "dialogical ongoing process" (Stam, "Beyond" 64), which foregrounds that all texts, and not only adaptations, are part of an active intertextual dialogism. Adair's rewriting can also be read in the light of John Caughie's studies on the economic interests in adaptations (25). In doing so, this research aims at contributing to the current studies of adaptations of historical representation in fictional texts.

The fictional texts were chosen, firstly, because of the unusual relationship they have, since the transposition of a book into a film is the most commonly known process; secondly, because of Bertolucci's intriguingly appropriation of historical images and other scenes from other films. This fusion between history and fiction creates an unexpected textual effect of bricolage and homage to previous works; lastly, because of the nostalgic feeling evocated by these texts – the feeling that 1968 was the last breath of youth hope from the twentieth century, in which everything seemed to be revolutionary and the future looked bright.

In order to investigate the adapted texts through a historical focus, this research discusses the representation of history in Bertolucci's and Adair's texts from a critical perspective based on Jameson's (1984) and Hutcheon's (1989) definitions of postmodernism.

In addition, it also encompasses Andreas Huyssen's (1995 and 2003) concepts of memory, nostalgia and utopia, and Hayden White's (1978 and 1987) studies on narrative and historical representation. The main historical references for this research include Margaret Attack's studies on the representation of May 68 in fiction, Richard Neupert's analyses of the history of the French New Wave Cinema, and Richard Ivan Jobs's works on the role of youth in France after World War II.

In terms of procedures, the thesis is organized in three analytical chapters and a concluding one. Each analytical chapter focuses on a different fictional text: "Chapter I" presents an analysis of *The Holy Innocents*, focusing on the representation of the historical events of 1968 in France; "Chapter II" analyzes *The Dreamers*'s connection between postmodern representations of history and filmic techniques, focusing mainly on editing and mise-en-scène; "Chapter III" emphasizes the issue of adaptation, comparing the corpora and dialoguing with economic issues. The last chapter, "Final Remarks," retraces the main issues raised in the research, presenting a final and general comparison between the corpora.

1.2 BERNARDO BERTOLUCCI AND GILBERT ADAIR

1.2.1 Bernardo Bertolucci

Bernardo Bertolucci is an Italian director, whose career can be divided into two periods.¹ In the first period, his films are closer to Pasolini's and Godard's cinema with films like *The Grim Reaper* (1962), *Partner* (1968) and *The Conformist* (1970). He was nominated for the Oscar with the latter film, but the Academy only gave him the prize in the second period of this career, when his filmography became closer to the Hollywood industry.² This second period begins with *Last*

¹ See Tony Rayn's article "Bernardo Bertolucci: Just like starting over."

² David Bordwell defines that "the Hollywood cinema sees itself as bound by rules that set stringent limits on individual innovation; that telling a story is the basic formal concern, which makes the film studio resemble the monastery's scriptorium, the site of the transcription and transmission of countless narratives; that unity is a basic attribute of film form; that the Hollywood film purports to be 'realistic' in both an Aristotelian sense (truth to the probable) and a naturalistic one (truth to historical fact); that the Hollywood film strives to conceal its artifice through techniques of continuity and 'invisible storytelling' that the film should be comprehensible and unambiguous; and that it possesses a

Tango in Paris (1972), which is also his first movie in English. Besides, it is starring a popular American actor, Marlon Brando; different from the more regional Italian actors from his previous works. Mark Betz argues that from this moment on, Bertolucci's films are no longer Italian, but rather international (16). The director was nominated again for *Last Tango in Paris*, and the Oscar finally came with *The Last Emperor* (1987) for Best Director and Writing Based on Material from Another Media. Despite this success, Bertolucci's second period was heavily criticized. As Ron Dicker wrote, this period of Bertolucci's production "inspired disdain from fellow Italian directors who felt he had sold out [...] Bertolucci did not keep the momentum" (36). Indeed, some of his later films were not only critical, but also box office failures, such as *The Sheltering Sky* (1990) starring John Malkovich and *Stealing Beauty* (1996) starring Liv Tyler.

The Dreamers could be part of this second period, since its composition is closer to a Hollywood filmography. At the same time, it constantly refers to independent filmmakers as Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut, which along with the film's historical representation of France in 1968 might have helped raising the most diverging opinions. David Denby and Tim Robey are some of the critics who disliked the film's nostalgia. The former understands that the film returns to a past in which everything seemed connected, but that it exaggerates in its references to films, books, and politics:

At times, Bertolucci's nostalgia is almost too sad. He's longing for that moment when film, politics, and sex mutually reinforced one another as the preoccupations of youth, and set the stage for the large-scale student revolts of May, 1968. "The Dreamers," however, is so conscious of these connections that it seems less like a fresh creation than like an anxiously literal series of historical footnotes (*The New Yorker* par.5).

Robey argues that, although the film evokes a period full of ideologies and novelties, it limits itself into a nostalgic view of this historical period. According to him, nostalgia in itself is not ideological, it simply recovers a historical moment, constituting a non-critical look.

fundamental emotional appeal that transcends class and nation" (*The Classical Hollywood Cinema* 3).

He problematizes that nostalgia may be resumed into a market appeal, which turns the film into an empty experience (par. 5).

On the other hand, this pessimistic view is not shared by some critics who were cinephiles in the 60s in Paris and seem to understand Bertolucci's nostalgia. As Andrew Sarris declares in *The New York Observer*, *The Dreamers* is "the kind of movie I should recuse myself from reviewing on the grounds of a nostalgic conflict of interest: I [...] once shared his [Bertolucci's] hard-core addiction to the Cinematheque and the director-spawning film magazine, *Cahiers du Cinema*" (25). Michael Wilmington reveals that he himself was a *rat*³ in the Cinémathèque, and believes that *The Dreamers* is "an elegy to the Cinémathèque, a tribute to its legendary founder Henry Langlois and the band of cinephile brothers and sisters who haunted his theater and watched his endless screenings" (par.5). My argumentation shall show that the film is not only nostalgic, but also critical in its recovering of history.

Historical accounts have already appeared in Bertolucci's filmography. *1900* (1976) and *The Last Emperor* mark Bertolucci's "historical movies" production, which have also raised controversial discussions in scholarly reception. Similar to *The Dreamers*, the over 4-hour Italian epic, *1900*, has two parallel stories: the characters' conflicts and the history of the Italian working class' upraise. For Robert Burgoyne, these two stories are "largely contradictory" ("Somatization" 7), since the Oedipal universal story of two male friends raised together – Alfredo, the landowner, and Olmo, the proletarian – becomes an allegory of the history of Italian peasant's rise against fascism. He also understands that "an older, Oedipal structure in *1900* is emptied of its original content and subverted to the transmission of an entirely different, utopian message [the peasant communist rise]" ("Somatization" 9). Moreover, he argues that the historical account loses its meaning with the film's positive and utopian end.

Angela Dalle-Vacche takes a feminist perspective and disagrees with Burgoyne's view. She argues that the film's cyclical plot may indeed suggest a Communist utopian vision and also an Oedipus impasse, in which the Italian communist faces its catholic and bourgeois origin, but that this vision "is no utopia for woman [...] is no disruptive leap into the imaginary, but a homosocial impasse and a male wish-fulfillment safely rooted in the region of the symbolic" (72). In relation to *The Last Emperor*, James Lu also takes a feminist perspective and

³ *Rat* is a term used to describe the Cinémathèque Française's cinephiles.

criticizes the film's "historiographical lesson", accusing it of sacrificing Wenxiu – the Emperor's secondary consort – so that the "biographical" film could be romanticized (62). These accounts are relevant to this thesis, since they inform us about Bertolucci's previous historical filmography, even if the feminist perspective is not a main issue in this research.

Another relevant issue in Bertolucci's filmography is sex. Although, *The Dreamers*'s recurrent full-frontal nudity and the explicit sexual scenes seem to impress no one anymore, as Ginette Vincendeau noted (*Sight and Sound* par.6), its relevance relies in its recurrence in his films. It frequently becomes a synonym of disturbed relationships that channels solitude and foregrounds degradation. It is an escape from a disturbing reality, as *Last Tango in Paris* illustrates. In addition, sexual aggression becomes a tool to express frustration as in *Last Tango in Paris* and *The Conformist*. As opposed to these explicit treatments of sex, virginity is the expression of fascination and counterculture in *Stealing Beauty*. Equally important to demonstrate the crucial role of sex in his films is how the issue of incest is repeatedly explored in both *Before the Revolution* (1964) and *Luna* (1979).

1.2.2 Gilbert Adair

Gilbert Adair is a Scottish fictional writer and critic. In both types of writings, one aspect is undeniable: his postmodernity. Scholar Terry Eagleton recognizes that Adair's *The Death of the Author* (1992) is "a first-class post-modernist novel [that] might have bordered on perfection" (par.1). For Robert Hanks, Adair's novel *And Then There Was No One* (2009) "is a riot of cleverness and clever-cleverness, simultaneously delirious and irritating, at times infectiously funny" (55). Caroline Moore notes that in Adair's writing one gets "horribly addicted not only to alliteration but also to puns and to literary in-jokes so self-referential", which she believes may be annoying, but which still create "a hugely enjoyable entertainment" (27). Kevin Jackson made a good observation in *The Independent* when he stole Adair's own words to state that the latter is "a writer admired, thus far, deeply rather than widely" (16).

As a postmodern writer, Adair's fictional texts frequently recall previous texts. Some examples are: *The Holy Innocents*, which as it was mentioned, is a homage for *The Holy Terrors*; *Love and Death on Long Island* makes possible a dialogue with Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* (1912); and the detective series *The Act of Roger Murgatroyd*, A

Mysterious Affair of Style and *And Then There Was No One* openly parodies Agatha Christie's murder-mystery novels. He confirms the metalinguistic feature of his work in his critical work:

to be culturally literate today means above all being capable of making meaningful and productive connections within the contemporary history of art and ideas; possessing a genuine comprehension of that history as a constantly evolving continuum of intellectual and ideological currents (Adair, *Postmodernist* 7).

Sex is also a recurrent theme in Adair's work, especially homosexuality. *Love and Death on Long Island* (1990) represents a homosexual obsession, in which a middle-aged European novelist is obsessed with a teen American star. In the novel *Buenas Noches, Buenos Aires* (2004), Gideon desires to be promiscuous and does not care if he might be infected with AIDS, as long as he is not solitary. *The Act of Roger Murgatroyd* (2006), *A Mysterious Affair of Style* (2008), and *And Then There Was No One* (2009) constitute a murder-mystery series in which the main character, Evadne Mount, is a lesbian writer. His most controversial novel is probably *The Holy Innocents*, which portrays an incestuous relationship between the twins and a sodomitical rape.

In addition, Adair has a special interest in cinema, which may have facilitated his partnership with Bertolucci in the composition of *The Dreamers*. Early in his career, he wrote the script of *The Territory* (1981), directed by Raoul Ruiz. But he did not return to the big screen until 2003 with *The Dreamers*. The Scottish writer may have stopped writing to cinema, but continued writing about cinema. The thematic of cinema is present in novels like *The Holy Innocents* and *A Mysterious Affair of Style* (2007). In the latter's plot, the death of a famous director is investigated, while his assistant attempts to finish his last film. Besides, most of Adair's non-fictional books are related to cinema, as their titles reveal *Kubrick* (1980), *Hollywood's Vietnam: From the Green Berets to Apocalypse Now* (1981), *A Night at the Pictures: ten decades of British film* (1985), *An Illustrated Celebration of One Hundred Years of Cinema* (1995) and *Movies* (2000).

1.2.3 Bertolucci and Adair dialogue

Bertolucci and Adair were born in the early forties, in 1940 and 1944 respectively. This is relevant because *The Dreamers* portrays a very significant period in the history of cinema and of the Western World, which encompasses the closure of the Cinémathèque Française and the May 68 French revolt. In this period, both artists were in their twenties and in the beginning of their career.

An interview given to David Thompson in The London National Film Theatre reveals the artists nostalgic relationship with cinema in the context of May 1968. Adair, for instance, states that he had been a subscriber of the *Cahier du Cinéma* – one of the most important cinema journals of the period – since he was 15 years old: “when I got to the Cinémathèque, I already knew all about it, I knew all about the great directors, directors whose films I'd never seen” (Thompson, par.18). Both of them often visited the Cinémathèque Française in the 60s, as Adair explains that “It seemed to me that, if you were a film buff in the 60s, you went to Paris” (Thompson, par.18). Bertolucci went to Paris for the first time when he was 19 years old, and “soon we [he and a cousin] ended up in the Cinémathèque Française” (Thompson, par.16). The Cinémathèque is important to the director since his films were later screened there.

in Italy [*Before the Revolution*] had been booed by critics - I would like to say by critics and spectators, but only by critics as there were no spectators. So, as I say, Henri⁴ invited the film to the Cinémathèque Française and in a way it was adopted by *Cahiers du cinema* and I felt that I was becoming a bit French (Thompson, par.16).

The feeling of nostalgia and gratitude is evident in the speeches of both artists. Adair confessed that his desire to write about May 68 came from the lack of novels on the subject. Bertolucci complemented that: “I read it [*The Holly Innocents*] and fell in love with the details and the atmosphere of '68 which was so... right. The way the writer, Gilbert, talked about '68 went straight to my heart” (Thompson, par.43). Later, the director humorously confesses that he was filming *Partner* in Rome,

⁴ Henri Langlois was one of the co-founders of the Cinémathèque Française and was also responsible for its administration.

during the May 68, but that “Gilbert was there... [laughter]” (par.69). Further, Adair reveals more about the period when exposing his interests: “I’d always been a francophile. It wasn’t only a question of francophilia, though; there was another ‘philia’ in the air - cinephilia” (par. 18). It is tempting to affirm that just like Matthew – the film’s main character – Bertolucci and Adair went to Paris, so that they could watch movies in the Cinémathèque, and found a shelter for their intellectual growth.

These affinities between these artists are probably the reason why *The Dreamers* has an aspect that few filmic adaptations have: a real partnership between the director and the writer. One may argue that adaptations are always an association of ideas between the artist who first composed and the one who adapted. From this perspective, all adaptations are partnerships. But what it is meant by *real* partnership is that Adair was not only the scriptwriter, he was a constant presence in the film set, as the picture below shows.



Figure 1 – Scene from the making of “Cinema Sex Politics.”

Bertolucci revealed that he did not appreciate scriptwriters on his set while shooting because “too often I see a kind of horror on the writer’s face because what I do is often so different from the script” (Thompson, par. 41). Then he explains how Adair was allowed to be there and how he felt about it.

I said to him, “Gilbert, here’s something new. I’d really like you on the set all the time because I know I’m going to make all sorts of changes and I want you to represent the physical continuity between your story, the story that you wrote, and what I’m inventing”. [...] So, *together*, we invented new scenes and cut some old ones. It was a new experience for me, having rewritten dialogue when I needed it, dialogue that would have taken me some time to write. I’d speak with Gilbert, then he’d just go to a room at the back of the apartment and return 10 minutes later with new dialogue - it was fantastic (My emphasis, Thompson, par. 41).

Their partnership was *real* because it constituted a mutual exchange, in which both director and writer could have their own adapted opus.

Moreover, Adair confesses that he saw in another person’s view an opportunity to understand and refine his work.

I also decided to rewrite the novel at the same time as I was writing the script. This was an opportunity for me to write the novel I’d always wanted to write. So my reticence was simply because I just didn’t want it to be made into a film, any film, but then, when I was told *who* wanted to film it, I had to say yes (Thompson, par. 39).

1.3 ADAPTATION, POSTMODERNITY AND HISTORY

Considering the double process of adaptation of the corpora under analysis and their intricate historical representation, this thesis relies on two main theoretical frameworks: adaptation and postmodernism, of which the latter is the most relevant. Adaptations tend to be quite polemic due to their relationship to a prior text or texts. Theorists, such as André Bazin in “Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest”, Linda Hutcheon in *A Theory of Adaptation*, and Robert Stam in “Beyond Fidelity: the dialogics of adaptation”, have observed that the adapted text is generally depreciated, since the generalized expectation is that an adaptation should attempt to be *loyal* to the original text, keeping *the spirit* of the text. This is commonly observed in media transitions, as it happens in filmic adaptations of books. Hutcheon

explains that the vain assumption of a film adaptation being seen as a mere reproduction can be problematic; while the book becomes the “untouchable” reference, the film tends to be observed negatively, in a prejudiced hierarchical scale (*Theory* 34). Seymour Chatman proposes the following solution:

Close study of film and novel versions of the same narrative reveals with great clarity the peculiar powers of the two media. Once we grasp those peculiarities, the reasons for the differences in form, content, and impact of the two versions strikingly emerge (123).

In assuming that each media has different peculiarities, he calls attention to their creative possibilities in adaptations, thus, leveling the two media. In addition to Chatman’s observation, Stam explains that adaptations across media inevitably suffer modifications, and that these modifications are not only reasoned by media transition, but also by external influences, as different as ideological, political, economic, and personal reasons (“Beyond” 73). Finally, Darlene J. Sadlier emphasizes the need for a more contextual historical analysis: “From my own point of view, the study of adaptation becomes more interesting when it takes into account historical, cultural, or political concerns” (in Naremore, 190). In accordance with these critical frameworks, this research discusses the adaptations of *The Holy Innocents* within a historical perspective. As previously mentioned, the corpora’s representation of the May 68 riot in France raises intriguing postmodern issues, such as the texts’ metalanguage and ironic distancing.

Postmodern theorists disagree in a number of aspects, as this discussion further expose, but one of the few unanimous aspects is that postmodernism is a complex subject. Fredric Jameson and Linda Hutcheon, for instance, explain that postmodernism has unveiled in the most different cultural fields and into the most varied ways. Kitsch decoration, B-films, pop art, TV series, and the French *nouveau roman* are only some examples (Jameson 54, and Hutcheon, *Politics* 1-2). Thus, this thesis focuses on the postmodernist historical perspective foregrounded by the fictional texts, considering mainly the notions of historical representation, nostalgia, and self-consciousness – also referred as awareness, meta-narrative or metalanguage.

Jameson discusses the postmodern period from an economic perspective on art, arguing that art cannot be dissociated from politics, economy and history. His main argument is that “aesthetic production

today has become integrated into commodity production” (56). Thus, according to Jameson, the strict relation between money and art is problematic since present capitalist society is marked by excessive consumerism. As a result, art becomes a commodity, receiving a financial support, and an industrial demand. Notwithstanding, one can understand that not all artistic works are necessarily marketable, as the French New films and the Cinémathèque’s sessions proved. Despite this, if one considers Jameson’s perspective Adair’s rewriting could be seen as a financial pursuit rather than an artistic goal. As a commodity, art enters the processes of reproduction, repetition, adaptation, thus, losing its depth. In Jameson’s words, the industrial production of art creates “a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense” (60).

Hutcheon does not deny the existence of meaningless kitsch originated from empty copy (*Politics* 8), but she focus on a different perspective that reflects on postmodern art as contradictory and decentered (*Politics* 1 and 14). Art, history, politics, among other issues are revisited in postmodern texts, acquiring different views and meanings. As she explains: “we now get the histories (in the plural) of the losers as well as the winners, of the regional (and colonial) as well as the centrist” to mention a few (*Politics* 66). Thus, postmodern art indeed reproduces, repeats, copies, and adapts, as Jameson states; but it does so by questioning and criticizing that which it reproduces, and most of the time with an ironic twist.

To reproduce in order to criticize leads to another relevant concept in this thesis: the postmodern contradiction, which “both legitimizes and subverts” (Hutcheon, *Politics* 101) cultural codes and conventions. It subverts by being ironic about ideologies and forms. Furthermore, Hutcheon explains that contradictions are an essential postmodern feature, and that they are not necessarily solvable issues, as they frequently generate more questions (*Politics* 14).

In this sense, parody is the ultimate postmodern form of expression. It recovers and ironizes the past. In fact, Jameson believes that postmodernism has subverted parody, creating pastiche. He argues that parody mimics with a critical, creative and ironical position, while pastiche is simply a “blank parody”, a neutral copy “amputated of the satiric impulse” (65). This research favors Hutcheon’s perspective, whose understanding is that parody has assumed different forms and intentions “from that witty ridicule to the playfully ludic to the seriously respectful” (*Politics* 94). In this way, Jameson’s view that parody has vanished in the postmodern period is counterargued by the possibility of

one's acceptance that parody actually has become more intricate since it has acquired new forms.

Moreover, in *Parody Without Ridicule*, Hutcheon further explains that parody uses irony, but not necessarily ridicule (2). Bertolucci's reproduction of famous films' sequences is parodic, but these scenes are not humorously contesting, but rather seriously respectful. They pay homage to the films they parody. This goes in accordance with Hutcheon's affirmation that parody "is not always challenging in mode. Parody can work to single continuity with [...] a tradition of film making" (*Politics* 107-8). This parodic effort can be illustrated by the sequence in which Isabelle, from *The Dreamers*, explicitly mimics the character of Marlene Dietrich, Helen Faraday, in Josef von Sternberg's *Blond Venus*. Her mimicking is exaggerated, but it is not comic. She is not mocking Dietrich's performance, she is rather respectfully recalling her performance.

Hence, postmodern parodic art turns its attention to the past as a site for inspiration and contestation. Jameson's and Hutcheon's theories also diverge about this subject. The former understands that postmodern art appeals to the past since it is not capable of creating its own style. It imitates "dead styles" (65), cannibalizing history. As a consequence, postmodernism reproduces history creating numerous but also empty images of the past. On the other hand, the latter's opinion is that these multiple images of history are a way to provide different perspectives on history. As a result of this, postmodernism is a form of questioning monolithic ideas of a dominant story about history (Hutcheon, *Politics* 66). Thus, as Jameson affirms, postmodern texts do create numerous images of the past, but this is not due to a lack of creativity. The diverging views of the past allow the expression of different social groups in the construction of a new understanding of history, as a form of pluralized history.

Huyssen complements this postmodern view of history by arguing that our society is filled with present pasts: "the world is being musealized" (*Present* 25). The growth of museums, memorials, historical documentaries, memoir writings, to mention a few, are only a demonstration of this musealization. A fear of forgetting generates an obsession with the past, which dominates our society. The desire to pull the past into the present vary from guilt for the unforgettable horrors of the past (*Present* 26) to a nostalgic feeling for an idealized past (*Twilight* 88). To Huyssen, the present is not interfering with the past, but the past cannot be avoided in the present.

The idea of a grand and unified history is also demystified with the understanding that history is only acknowledged through its representations. Representations are far from being facts. According to White “all original descriptions of any field of phenomena are already interpretations” (“Fiction” 128). Hence, a historical event cannot be simply described, it is first interpreted and, only then, represented. In *The Content of Form*; White explains that discourse in itself is an expression of the content, which means that the way in which something is told already influences its interpretation. Different narrative genres modify the final understanding of the past. In this sense, historical representation is a subject to its genre. Furthermore, for White “the facts do not speak for themselves” (“Fiction” 125), somebody always speaks for them. This somebody provides his interpretation, and intentionally or not, modifies and limits history. In short, this biased understanding of the past is rather inevitable.

In this sense, Jameson is correct when affirming that the past is cannibalized, and Hutcheon is also correct when affirming that postmodernism de-totalizes history. However, one can argue that history has always been cannibalized and de-totalized; this is not a postmodern privilege. The postmodernism privilege is the awareness that history has always been cannibalized and because of this, it should not be totalized.

The postmodern self-consciousness is also influenced in the understanding that the past can only be acknowledged from one’s contemporary perspective. Our present vision will always influence our understanding of the past; the present is a ghost that hunts the past in postmodern texts. In addition, the past cannot exist without present representations, and it is in doing so that the present distorts the past. In any case, postmodern art is not concerned with the “real” past, but with the awareness that all the past we know is from present representations. It wants to de-naturalize the static notion of present and past, and future. This is evident when, in film, Matthew refuses to join the May 68 riots and leaves, arguing that the violence and protests were meaningless. As historiographer Kristin Ross explains May 68 is generally characterized as an alienated uprising in which “nothing happened” (19). Thus, Matthew carries the supposedly lucidity of thirty-five years of understanding that the riots’ violence had no effective results, an interpretation that would not be easily available for those involved in the May 68 protests. It can also indicate a very repressive interpretation of the political events and what they represented to future generations.

Hutcheon provides a further and complete explanation on the relationship between history and postmodern self-consciousness, acknowledging that:

The past is something with which we must come to terms and such a confrontation involves an acknowledgement of limitation as well as power [...] we only have representations of the past from which to construct our narratives or explanations. In a very real sense, *postmodernism reveals a desire to understand present culture as the product of previous representations*. The representation of history becomes the history of representation (My emphasis, *Politics* 58).

Postmodernism's self-consciousness contests the modernist tradition of "transparency in representation" (Hutcheon, *Politics* 34). Catherine Belsey, for instance, explains that for Classic Realism literature is expected to create a world of its own where the individual is able to forget his present reality (2). Postmodern literature does the opposite; the reader is constantly reminded of the text's position within a web of representations and discourses. The reader is reminded not only of the text's artificiality in representing history, but also of its textual nature (Hutcheon, *Politics* 15).

As a matter of fact, postmodern texts not only copy, they also quote. This explicit quotation of other or previous art(s) is another way to express self-consciousness. Indeed, Jameson explains that postmodern art "no longer simply 'quote' [...] but incorporate into their very substance" (55). In Isabelle's mimic of Marlene Dietrich, for instance, we see both Isabelle's parody and Dietrich's performance of the same sequence. Reproduction and quote are intertwined, and incorporated into the film. In doing so, Bertolucci overtly shows to his viewers that he is reproducing and from where he is doing this. Adair's quote of Umberto Eco exemplifies better the complexity of the postmodern self-conscious reference:

One can find a witty allegory of postmodernism in *Reflections on 'The Name of the Rose'*, the limpid little volume written by Umberto Eco to explain the genesis of his bestselling novel. He defines the postmodernist's attitude as "that of a man who loves a very cultivated woman and knows he

cannot say to her, 'I love you madly', because he knows that she knows (and that she knows that he knows) that these words have already been written by Barbara Cartland. Still," continues Eco, "there is a solution. He can say, 'As Barbara Cartland would put it, I love you madly.' At this point, having avoided false innocence, having said clearly that it is no longer possible to speak innocently, he will nevertheless have said what he wanted to say to the woman: that he loves her, but that he loves her in an age of lost innocence. If the woman goes along with this, she will have received a declaration of love all the same" (*Postmodernism* 13).

Postmodern art does not only reproduce and quote other fictional texts, it also reproduces history. Jameson exemplifies this process with the historical fictional films, arguing that these films' nostalgic historicism creates an "ideology of the 'generation'" (66), which reduces history into stereotypes of the past. Most relevant to this research is not Jameson's negative perspective, but the understanding that the aesthetic of nostalgia "endows present reality [...] with the spell and distance of a glossy mirage" (68). The past affects the present with the illusionary spell of better bygone days.

Hutcheon defines nostalgia as a place for emotional longing and ironic distancing. She explains that nostalgia is not simply homesickness, the missing of a place. Nostalgia is an idealized and a sentimental longing for a *time* ("Irony" 19). Since time cannot be returned to, we feel nostalgic. It credits the past with present desires. Taking this into consideration, Bertolucci's and Adair's recovering of 1968 in France is overcrowded with sex and films, while the violent riots become distant or fast images. The positive memories stay longer on the screen, because nostalgia transforms the past into an ideal site. This idealized past cannot be returned to because it also never really existed.

The issue of nostalgia raises another postmodern paradox. The conflict between the edged ironic subversions (Hutcheon, *Politics* 93) with nostalgia's emotional idealized past. Hutcheon explains this issue in the following quote:

If our culture really is obsessed with remembering—and forgetting—as is suggested by

the astounding growth of what Huysen calls our “memorial culture” with its “relentless museummania” (1995, 5), then perhaps irony is one (though only one) of the means by which to create the necessary distance and perspective on that anti-amnesiac drive. The knowingness of irony may be not so much a defense against the power of nostalgia as the way in which nostalgia is made palatable today: invoked but, at the same time, undercut, put into perspective, seen for exactly what it is—a comment on the present as much as on the past (“Irony” 23).

Thus, postmodern text mocks the obsessive urge to remember with irony, but at the same time, it does not deny this nostalgic urge. Irony grants nostalgia with presentness; it calls attention to nostalgia’s distorted view of a certain past. In this sense, irony prevents nostalgia from being merely sentimental, and adds a critical position to historicism. For instance, Matthew, Isabella and Théo’s passivity in relation to the May 68 riots is ironic, because May 68 was a remarkable riot formed by young minds. They are young and involved with the Cinématèque and the students’ issues, but even though, they act passively in relation to the riots for a long time, as if those issues did not belong to their present reality. Still, history is there ironically and distant, aware that it cannot be fully recovered.

2. CHAPTER I

The history of France in 1968 is *The Holy Innocents's* background; specifically, the “Langlois Affair” and the May 68 riot. It is a story about the young American Matthew and his unusual French twin friends, Danielle and Guillaume. Despite the ongoing events, these three young beauties seem to understand little of the historical context, as they are only interested in films and sex. In this sense, the narrative is on the characters’ obsessions with games, movies and sex, it distances itself from history. This combination of history and fiction and the text’s metalanguage suggests a sense of paradoxical irony.

2.1 CINÉMATHÈQUE FRANÇAISE, ITS RATS AND THE “LANGLOIS AFFAIR”

The Cinémathèque Française is a cinema house founded in 1936, by Henri Langlois, Georges Franju, Paul-Auguste Harlé and Jean Mitry. Their initial objective was to create a movie library where films could be preserved. It also sheltered many film sessions, which made it famous because of the diversity of the films exhibited. Furthermore, filmmakers with less or no financial support could have their films screened there, which facilitated the contact between public and films. The novel describes the Cinémathèque as being full of “true fanatics, the rats de la Cinémathèque, those who arrive for the six-thirty performance and rarely leave before midnight” (3). In addition, it was an active part in the education of many innovative directors from that period, such as Robert Bresson, Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut, to name a few. Bernardo Bertolucci himself, as he mentions in David Thompson’s interview (par.16), was one of the directors, who used to attend the Cinémathèque’s sessions.⁵

The Cinémathèque is where *The Holy Innocents* begins. The third person narrator describes some of its aspects in details, such as its address “in the XVIth Arrondissement between the avenue Albert-de-Mun and the Trocadéro esplanade”, and decoration which is composed only of “kinetoscopes, praxinoscopes, mechanical peepshow, shadowboxes, magic lanterns and other naïve and charming relics of the cinema’s prehistory” (3). This detailed description, which continues throughout the narrative, shows a concern in reproducing history

⁵ The Cinémathèque Française still exists. Since September 2005, it moved to the 12th district in Paris, in the modern building designed by Frank Gehry.

accurately, as an attempt to recover the image of the Cinémathèque with precision and objectivity.

At the same time, this attentive description is also accompanied by a metaphorical language. The depiction of the Cinémathèque's two entrances provides such examples. The first of them is from the *place du Trocadéro*, with "its illuminated fountains that will sometimes play on unseen into the night like jugglers without an audience" (3). This simile compares decoration pieces (fountains) to people (jugglers). The result is a humanization of the fountains, which seem as abandoned and neglected as jugglers without an audience. The poetic language also evinces a bohemian attitude, suggested by the night time and the loneliness. The other Cinémathèque's entrance is through "a kind of Japanese garden", where "through this garden's floodlit shrubs [one] can be glimpsed the wrought iron Mount Fuji" (3). Inside this garden, one sees the Eiffel Tower with a Japanese perspective; as if it could influence a person's view. Similarly, the Cinémathèque also influences the characters, Danielle, Guillaume and Matthew. They see their world as a movie, and are constantly and consciously acting as if they were part of it. The novel's emphasis on a romantic idealization of this cinema house – it is inserted in a palace (Palais de Chaillot) and is surrounded by gardens and fountains – suggests that their obsession is nourished by films in as much as it is by the place where they are screened.

The detailed description loses its attempted objectivity and is flooded with nostalgia with the metaphorical language. Still, nostalgia is emphasized with the understanding that the Cinémathèque constitutes a factual reference, which enhances the importance of the detailed descriptions. As a result, factual and fictional accounts complement each other in the realization of nostalgia.

Even a suggestion that the Cinémathèque is not as grand as one may expect does not diminish the nostalgic feeling. The narrator, for instance, relates that some may be disappointed by discovering that "on closer inspection, the Cinémathèque itself forms only a modest part of the whole edifice [the Palais de Chaillot]", that indeed, "one reaches, almost furtively, by a basement entrance tucked away to one side" (3). Nonetheless, the reader soon understands that this aspect rather increases the notion of exclusivity and cinephilia, as "a secret society, a cabal, a Freemasonry" (3-4). The Cinémathèque becomes an exclusive

room, where the *rats*⁶ may hide themselves from the world, and be alienated into the screen, “the screen really is a screen. It screens them from the world” (4). The novel’s nostalgia does not only long for a place, the Cinémathèque, but also for what it represented to those young cinephiles, a secret society.

In this sense, the *rats* also raise nostalgia. They represent a whole generation, which was obsessed with movies. They would stay hours in the Cinémathèque’s sessions, talk about them in the cafés, and then go home to read about them in the *Cahiers du Cinéma*.⁷ They would even have their own language when “talking shop: which is to say, cinema” (9). The conjunction of all these elements: setting, characterization and language represents a generation of people as cinephilic *rats* that only existed in the 60s in France. This literary mood fits into Fredric Jameson’s understanding of nostalgia as the creation of an “ideology of the ‘generation’” (66) – the stereotype of a generation. He problematizes that these stereotypes portray history through a romanticized nostalgia, which implies a lack of politicization. These depoliticized stereotypes ignore more complex, in-depth and encompassing understanding of history. For Jameson, it actually “displaces ‘real’ history” by a nostalgic view of a generation (67). I anticipate that Jameson’s pessimistic view is not sustained in this thesis, although it does not deny the existence of an idealized generation.

The ideology of generation exposes that time is not only romanticized in relation to a period, but also to the characters’ age. It was not enough to be in the 60’s, one also had to be young. Matthew, Danielle and Guillaume are examples of typical *rats*. When the reader gets to know them, they are walking to the Cinémathèque in the historical February 68. Matthew is nineteen, and Danielle and Guillaume are seventeen years old, they are twins. They are comparing Henry King’s to Frank Borzage’s versions of *Seventh Heaven* (1927 and 1937, respectively). Their cinephilia foregrounds that even if they have already seen King’s movie and thought it had nothing in special, “it would no more occur to them to miss it than it would occur to a newspaper reader to cancel his order after an issue of mediocre news.”

⁶ According to Gilbert Adair, *rat* is the term the Cinémathèque cinephiles used to refer to themselves (4).

⁷ *Cahiers du Cinéma* was an influent French film journal, among its main writer were André Bazin, Claude Chabrol, Jean-Luc Godard, Jacques Rivette and François Truffaut.

They also have a particular relation with the screen in itself, as “they did not covet the role either of judge or jury but saw themselves as friends, or rather guests, of the huge white screen” (9). This simile further infers that their presence was not an issue of entertainment or education, but rather of fellowship.

In this novel, the historical events trigger the story’s incidents. Thus, the characters, unfortunately, do not watch a movie by King or any other director in that specific evening for the Cinémathèque is closed. Another *rat* informs them that Henri Langlois, the Cinémathèque’s curator, was dismissed by André Malraux, France’s Minister of Culture. Historiographer Herman Lebovics affirms that this indeed happened, and that the minister alleged that the curator was not careful enough with the films. Lebovics states that Malraux was right in part, that the curator would carelessly keep the films in his bathtub or under his bed (149), although this does not diminish his relevance to the history of cinema.

The novel’s account of this event is done with scrutiny. The narrator explains that it was called the “Langlois Affair.”⁸ Besides, “a Committee of Support had been instituted,” and the Ministry of Culture was receiving “telegrams from film-makers around the world who had donated prints of their films to Langlois, and to Langlois alone, and who refused to authorize any screening of them in wake of his departure” (19). Directors, scriptwriters, actors, film lovers, among others, joined to protest against the imposition of a new curator. As a matter of proof, the documentary “Cinema Sex Politics” shows real footages from the event, in which François Truffaut is leading the riots and Jean-Luc Godard is bleeding from the aggression of the police. It also shows letters from Alfred Hitchcock and Charles Chaplin, complaining about the removal of Langlois. The relevance of the people involved demonstrates that it was not only a local revolt, but an indignation that spread to other countries. In addition, it also sustains that although Langlois might have been careless with the movies, his role as curator was widely recognized.

This historical account of the “Langlois Affair” is sprinkled with a romanticized enthusiasm. It was exciting and big since it was “splashed over the front page” and “extraordinary.” Not to mention that the Cinémathèque’s closure was planned as a *coup d’état*,⁹ and a “*coup*

⁸ Rosenberg confirms this information (par.5).

⁹ A government overthrow.

de grâce” (19).¹⁰ Furthermore, Langlois’s importance is compared to the Cinémathèque: “he [Langlois] had become as much of an institution as the institution he had founded” (14). Nostalgia then arises from the Cinémathèque and its curator, and both become symbols to a generation, and the revolt around their separation appeals to a romantic and nostalgic excitement.

In sum, the presence of these historical accounts in the novel appeals to verisimilitude when reproducing the Cinémathèque, its *rats* and the “Langlois affair,” providing a certain authenticity to the story. In spite of this, the historical portrayal also conveys nostalgia by its use of metaphorical language and romantic images. This apparent contradiction between the emphasis on the factual and the idealization by the metaphorical language gains meaning when the characters are shown to have nothing to do with the Cinémathèque’s closure, and end up entrapping themselves in the twins’ apartment.

2.2 MAY 68 IN FICTION

The “Langlois Affair” was a big movement in the film scene, but it was small when compared to a movement that happened three months later. Richard Jobs explains that May 68 was a month of civil war in France. It started and grew under the leadership of young university students from the Paris University at Nanterre, when they occupied the university’s administration in order to complain about class discrimination, political bureaucracy and other issues concerning the institution. Until May 2nd 1968, when Paris University at Nanterre shut its doors due to the constant protests from its students. Against this decision, students from other universities joined the riots, making the protests even bigger (278-80). A civil riot was installed.

The revolt grew so fast because it soon reached the factory workers, who had other demands, such as wage rise, less working hours, among others (Jobs 278). Suddenly, French population and government realized the real dimension of the youth’s power. Besides, they represented not only their interest, but the population’s interest as a whole. Historiographer Kristin Ross states that “9 million people, across all sectors of public and private employment—from department store clerks to shipbuilders—simply stop working” (3). Around two third of the French workers joined the students on the streets, causing a series of general strikes. This almost caused the collapse of President Charles de

¹⁰ A deathblow.

Gaulle's government. A consensus aspect, as Chris Reynolds points out, is the police's excessive violence against the protesters, which is interpreted as an inability of President de Gaulle to deal with the situation, and a motif that incited the rioters even more (13).

Scholars such as Julian Jackson, Margaret Attack and Reynolds have criticized the diverging interpretations around May 68. The former argues that this period's problem is its excess of interpretations. According to him, May 68 was widely but not deeply discussed (626). In the history(ies) of May 68, one can recall the postmodern understanding that history is acknowledged from interpretations and representations (Hutcheon, *Politics* 78). Indeed, Jackson claims that "May 1968 was a protean upheaval whose meanings are plural" (630). Jobs confirms that even "among the students protesters themselves, chaos reigned" (283). May 68 cannot be narrowed into a young-white-middle-class Marxist movement. Still it is difficult to define it in any other way but plural.

In *The Holy Innocents*, the May 68 revolt begins in February with the "Langlois Affair". After this incident, Matthew does not lose the twins' friendship as he feared, because they find other distractions. With the twins' parents traveling, they are alone in the apartment and Matthew is invited to move in. Their favorite game is the Home Movies, in which while one mimics a film scene the others have to guess. Soon, the penalties become sexual forfeits, until the point in which the game or forfeits are no longer necessary. As the characters, the reader forgets the political conflicts, and the whole context of 1968 in France is resumed into three young beauties playing sexual games. They isolate and alienate themselves once more, as they did in the Cinémathèque. If the screen screened them from the world (4), now the apartment imprisons them as they find a new form of alienation: instead of films, they are now alienated by sex. The characters' alienation suggests a consciousness in the novel's representation of May 68. Since the relevance of the revolt contrasts with their non-engagement. This distance implies that the focus is not on the history of May 68 or the "Langlois Affair" but on cultural context in which these young cinephiles were inserted.

The characters' isolation is broken by a paving stone, which symbolizes the presence of history in the plot story. It comes from one of the May 68 riots, and breaks the apartment window, shattering their Trenet record, which plays relentlessly during their games. This stone ends their isolation by calling attention to the riot and forcing them back into streets. In this sense, the paving stone stands for the riot, the

uprising of violence, and also history in itself. The latter notion unveils that the characters cannot hide from what is going on in France, as it declares that somehow history hits everyone, even those who did not even notice it. But their joining the riot does not mean that they become more active in relation to May 68, as their further alienation shows.

The novel's progressive plot emphasizes the alienation of the characters. It begins with the Cinémathèque's protest, moves into the apartment, passes through a small trip and ends with the street riot. In a circular structure, the final riot reminds the initial protest, since the Cinémathèque is just the beginning which generates the final confront. This progression is explained as the following: in the Cinémathèque's episode, they see the protesters from above, they are "overlooking the scene and sat there dangling their legs and biting on their crusty baguette sandwiches" (16). In this moment, they are spectators; Danielle assumes an all-privileged position, as "she annotated the spectacle that lay spread out at their feet. She played God" (16), judging everyone who walks under them. In the apartment, they play the Home Movies game, mimicking *Top Hat* (57), *Citizen Kane* (58) and *Beyond the Forest* (64) to mention only three. At this point, they are actors-to-be. Finally, when they decide to leave the apartment and join the May 68 riot, they become actors. As the narrator says "the director cried *Action!*" (126). The following quote shows how even when they participate in the riot, they are just role-playing, or playing a new game.

And so, slowly, gradually, without being aware of what was happening to them – and even if they would only ever belong to that aristocratic race of revolutionaries more fascinated by the decline, the delicious deliquescence, of the old and moribund world than aroused by the problematic genesis of the new – *Guillaume and his sister found themselves once more in thrall to a cause, a charm, to an exciting new drug* (my emphasis, 140).

They become even more alienated along the story. Their participation on the street riot is just another game, a new drug. Their obsession with films and later with sex distances them from understanding, and reality becomes an image to be acted on. They move from the role of spectators to that of participants without never fully comprehending the meaning of the two revolts, the Cinémathèque and the May 68. They see it all as part of a grand movie.

Lost in the middle of the riot, the twins unexpectedly find an old friend, Dauphin. The latter introduces the main characters to the revolt France is going through. He raises three quite relevant topics in relation to May 68, each one is related to a different episode: an appointment with Cohn-Bendit (136), a bookstore (138-9) and a restaurant (141). These three aspects raised by Dauphin reinforce the idea that the novel possesses a concern in recovering history with details and accuracy.

Daniel Cohn-Bendit was probably one of the main young figures of May 68. Being of German origin, Cohn-Bendit was 23 in 1968 and was a sociology student at University of Nanterre. Whereat that point his career as a revolutionary began. As the novel portrays, he was a leader on the streets, “he represented the street [...] wherever he went the streets followed him” (136). Dauphin has an appointment with him at Denfert-Rochereau (143), meaning that they are forming a riot there. Cohn-Bendit’s figure is symbolic because he represents the youth uprising, the young leading force that began May 68.

According to Jobs, the role of youth in May 68 has its roots in the World War II. The postwar period redesigned France’s economy and government, and mainly rejuvenated its society (6). After its liberation in 1944, France reconstructed not only its buildings and streets, it went through a cultural reconstruction as well. The postwar period suffered two different booms: the economic and the baby boom. Because of the latter, youth dominated the country in a ubiquitous way that could not be ignored. The elderly population suddenly saw themselves as minority, and the government had to start thinking about these young people’s needs. Another aspect is that the devastated postwar France bet its future in this generation. Jobs writes that “youth and youthfulness became a key site around which France imagined and planned this future” (24).

May 68 becomes the utmost symbol to this youth generation: the “one thing that makes the events of May 1968 so unique historically is the authoritative role played by youth in such a broad and grand uprising [...] 1968 helped to repoliticize the concept of youth as revolutionary” (Job 283). This revolt demonstrated that the youth was indeed a powerful and uprising generation. This youth force is then represented by Cohn-Bendit and also Dauphin, who differently from Matthew, Guillaume and Danielle, was committed with the ongoing changes in France. Furthermore, the narrator also describes other young revolutionaries, such as “a semi-conscious young man” (128), “a young girl [...] beating with her bare fists the chest of a CRS officer” (146) and “a young black woman” being interrogated by the police (147). The

term young is indeed exhaustively repeated, but it reinforces the notion that youth was the leading force in the May 68 revolt.

The bookstore, *La Joie de Lire*, represents the intellectual force in May 68. Dauphin takes the trio there, because they are “Martians,” and need “re-education” (137). In the bookstore, he picks up “books off one of the tables as mechanically as though he were buying staple foods in a supermarket” (139). Knowledge is abundant, and it is consumed as such. Margaret Atack emphasizes the importance of the intellectual power in May 68 in “Intellectual Fictions.”¹¹ In this article, she explains that this revolt did not begin in the university by chance, but because there was a general discomfort in the way education was organized. They wanted it to be more democratic and interdisciplinary. The students would participate in the riots during the day, and discuss them during the night (66). In accordance to this combination of do and talk, the narrator describes that “the same young people who had been demonstrating in the streets an hour or so before [...] were now leaning against its [the bookstore’s] walls or sitting cross-legged on its uncarpeted floor” (138). Being a young revolutionary also meant being an intellectual. In Atack’s words “the politically motivated were nothing if not propelled by intellectual curiosity” (67). And, Dauphin does agree with this. As he says: “History, knowledge, imagination – they’ve taken to the streets. They’re in circulation. They’re no longer private property. They’re no longer the private property of an élite, to be dispensed to those it considers worthy to receive them” (134).

The restaurant represents the raise against the bourgeoisie. While Danielle crosses the street to buy cigarettes, Guillaume, Matthew and Dauphin stand by a restaurant. The latter despises the men’s Italian jackets and the women’s excessive use of jewelry. To him, they are the “*petits-fascistes*” or “as you say *petits-bourgeois*. Fit for nothing but the dustbins of history” (141). Ross argues that May 68 was influenced by the Vietnam War’s and the Algerian War’s memories. Both represented a negative image of imperialism over countries that were economically and politically weaker (8-10). To May revolutionaries, the United States in Vietnam and France in Algeria used force to impose their imperialist order “in the name of independence and freedom” (Atack 10). CRS’s aggression toward the students and workers was, in a similar way, imposing order in French society. Moreover, the modernization of France was introducing consumerism and alienation to French middle-class. Atack states that the “Vietnam war was providing a political focus

¹¹ This article is part of her book *May 68 in Fiction and Film*.

for the critique of consumerism and the economic logic of capitalism” (10). She further explains that “critique of the socio-economic system goes hand in hand with a critique of the alienated, distorted conception of man, turned into a consumer of products with artificially stimulated needs” (24). Thus, in Dauphin’s criticism of the petit-bourgeois for their wearing imported clothes and consuming in excess, one can read the historical context of May 68 whose main targets were capitalism, consumerism and alienation.

These three aspects suggest how the novel’s appropriation of history can be correlated to major historical issues of May 68. These aspects also show the disparities between the historical characters and the behavior of the fictional ones: while Cohn-Bendit fights for youth’s beliefs, Matthew, Danielle and Guillaume alienate themselves. The contrasting irony generated by their behavior is further supported by the realization that, in the novel, the uprising began with the “Langlois Affair”, an event in which although they did not participate they were aware of, but that they watched as passive gods.

Further irony is that they did not participate in the Cinémathèque riot, even if they appreciate its movie sessions so much. Adding to this, their need to be re-educated seems awkward since when they arrive at the bookstore, Danielle asks “oughtn’t we to be cutting our teeth on *Das Kapital*?” (139). She is forehanded aware of the Marxist ideas, and this is probably due to the fact that they come from a well-educated family, their father is a famous poet. The fact that the twins are petit-bourgeois casts doubt on the restaurant critique and their joining the uprising. Indeed, these ironical disparities evince a critique on alienation revealing a hidden hypocrisy.

Contrasting with these detailed images, nostalgia is foregrounded again with an idealized image of the revolt. It is almost a feast, as the Cinémathèque image: people “waved [...] tinier red handkerchiefs at them through the [window] bars” (143), which decorate the moment. A group of musicians arrived and “assembled on the square underneath the stars, in the shadow of Notre-Dame, to play for their own pleasure alone, ‘Vilja’ from *The Merry Widow*.” The bombs look like fireworks: “each time a pink or white flare shot up and fell back to the earth with a spill of cascading sparks and a loud, whining sound, like a firework” (146). Even, the tear gas provides an exotic and romanticized scenario, in which “the façades of the houses were trembling, as in the desert” and “the streets lights had acquired mauve haloes”. Furthermore, the barricades are not only built out of stones and wood, they are also made with passion and sweat: “the first of the barricades, too, were, being

erected, out of railings, gratings, paving stones, branches, passion and sweat” (144), indicating a passionate dedication in relation to this revolt.

In the novel, this romanticized riot ends with Matthew’s death. He dies attempting to protect his twin friends. He picks up a red flag and starts singing to call the police’s attention. Then, he is shot. This episode can be read as both an unselfish and a selfish acts, the first because Matthew sacrifices himself to save his friends, the second because he only does so, in order not to feel alone. Furthermore, his death marks the end of the riot and the revolt in the novel; which infers the notion that his sacrifice not only saved the twins but also ended the civil riot. In doing so, he is symbolically saving France from capitalism, wars and traditional bourgeois’ ideas, since he represents all of those who suffered in the May 68’s riots. Even the CRS officer who shot him feels guilt and has “tears in his eyes” (150). His death raises a romanticized view of history, a nostalgia, in which revolutions were apparently made by a single person in love. The alleged historical realism is subverted by an ironical trivialization of the historical representation.

Matthew’s death also raises a utopian romanticism in the sense that with his death and with the end of the riot, their future seems brighter and full of hopes. The “epilogue” shows Danielle and Guillaume back into the Cinémathèque’s darkness. Langlois is there presenting François Truffaut’s new film *Baisers Volés* (154).¹² It is as if Matthew’s death brought the Cinémathèque back into regularity. Nostalgia raises an enthusiastic feeling in relation to their future. Such conjunction illustrates Andreas Huyseer’s argument that nostalgia and utopia are twin sisters (*Twilight* 88).

The real accounts of May 68 are obviously different. Unexpectedly, the riots lost their power and dissipated until the end of that month. That is why it is a one-month revolt. The explanations to this sudden dissipation are confusing and misleading. According to Reynolds, some historians point to the contradictions between the CGT (*Confédération générale du travail* - France’s leading trade union) and the workers, while others historians accuse mistakes in communication and others point to the diverging ideologies (14). Consensus is difficult to find in relation to any of May 68’s aspects. Ironically, one may wonder if Matthew was not really there and caused the May 68’s mysterious end.

¹² *Stolen Kisses* (1968).

2.3 THE SPIRIT OF THE TIME

One of the conflicting interpretations of May 68 is that it was an alienated and a depoliticized revolt (Atack 24 and Ross 200). This argument seems difficult to sustain since students, workers and intellectuals were major participants in this movement. But I raise this issue just to provide a more holistic view, pointing that the 68 movement had some contradictions. As Reynolds explains “1968 has been described as furthering the dominance of capitalism in France by breaking down the barriers to modernization thus creating the exact the opposite of what it supposedly aspired to” (11). The problems related to May 68 have to do with its apparently “lack of result,” because May 68 is generally assumed as a “cultural revolt” or a “revolt in communication,” an intermediary moment to other “more significant” revolutions such as the Velvet Revolution in Prague in 1989. Ross actually explains that the prevalent version of May 68 is that “nothing happened politically, although culturally the changes were enormous” (21).

In this situation, Dauphin is a character to be noted. Through his clothes, it is possible to notice a dramatic change in his behavior. He used to wear a sober dark suit, read the Wall Street Journal, and “his politics had always been conservative and capitalist” (133). But now during the May 68 revolt, he is wearing “a leather bomber jacket with exotic markings and a filthy fur-trimmed collar” (133), most surprisingly he has a topknot hair cut “in the Chinese style” (134). Dauphin scorns a group of adults in the restaurant, accusing them of being *petits-bourgeois*. In fact, they may be *petits-bourgeois*, but Dauphin is criticizing the exactly kind of person he once was. Hypocrisy and frivolity cannot be dissociated from his discourse. His radical change indicates the depthlessness of his beliefs, which makes his radical position against the *petits-bourgeois* just as empty and depoliticized as the ones he is criticizing.

Another conflicting perspective is the boredom associated with the bourgeois students and the May 68 movement (Atack 12). Pierre Vianson-Ponté even published an article entitled “La France s’ennuie”¹³ on May 15, 1968. As I have mentioned, postwar-France passed through an economic boom, the pre-May 68 moment was a period of economic and political stability (Reynolds 12). Due to this perspective, some historians have argued that the students were only rioting against older

¹³ France is bored.

generations. For some critics, May 68 was actually an oedipal revolt. They were “an irresponsible, bon-enfant tantrum by a group of spoilt, Parisian students” (Reynolds 7), who, in a generalized view, decided to make a revolt because they were bored.

This tone of boredom caused by stability is present in *The Holy Innocents*. The twins’ ennui leads them to a constant pursuit of newness. They are bored, because they have everything. They are young and beautiful; Guillaume is seventeen, “muscular and lean” (4), Danielle is “an hour and a quarter his junior” (5) and “without an inch of disfiguring fat” (73). They are from an educated and bourgeois family; their father is a known poet (36), Guillaume rides his *mobylette* (62), and Danielle wears fox boas (5) and Chanel suits (23). Even more, they are alone and free to do whatever they want, since their parents travel a lot. They do find a pet to play with, young American Matthew, but that is not enough. They invent games to spend their time: the Home Movies (58), La Petite Croix (69), their sexual theaters, and the Ouija board (95). But they soon get bored again. Before going to the streets, their alienation is reflected in a complete inertia, in which “whether dead or merely sleeping, they were not to be awakened by any crude, external alarms, not by the footfalls, the sirens, the explosions that were none the less approaching closer and closer” (117). The Trenet record is what keeps them in this dreamlike state. It is only when the paving stone shatters their record that they realize something is going on under their window. When they join the manifestations in the end, it is not a sign of their political awareness or sense of responsibility toward any cause. They are just bored and looking for a new kind of game. This characterization also indicates a criticism to the characters’ ennui and triviality in relation to the riots and political changes.

Furthermore, the characters’ alienation can be associated with their compulsion to consume art without any kind of critique. Similar to modern capitalist societies, in which the excessive and unnecessary consumption of cultural products leads to an alienated and distorted society, Matthew and the twins consume films, as they watch the Cinémathèque’s movies with obsession and compulsion. Even when they know that a film has “nothing special” they will watch it. The implied critique is that their film consumerism is as empty as the capitalism excessive consumption of products. Their obsessed cinephilia empties their critical opinion. For instance, they get surprised to know that the Cinémathèque was closed because “so singlemindedly had the three young people focused their scrutiny on the Cinémathèque’s screen, they had remained in total ignorance of what had been taking place

behind it” (19). They did not know anything about Langlois’s dismissal until the Cinémathèque’s closure. This is even worse if one thinks that cinema is what interests them. But they were only focusing on the screen, never on how the movies got there.

This alienation through art is also evident in their mimic of Godard’s *Bande à Part*. Since the Cinémathèque is closed and they have no other distractions, they decide to imitate the scene in which *Bande à Part*’s characters attempt to beat the Louvre’s run record. They assume it to be “a gesture of resistance, an act of quixotic defiance against the Cinémathèque’s closure. If films could not be screened there, very well, *very well*, they would take them into the streets” (28). In fact, they are doing exactly the opposite they thought they were. Their parodic act is a depoliticizing one because their main purpose is to fulfill a personal wish. They do not bother about the riot raised by the cinephiles, but instead they opt to do their own private movie. Their mimic emphasizes more their empty cinephilia than a political act. To the trio, art does not mimic life, but the other way around they mimic art. In addition, the word “quixotic” reinforces the idea of the illusions, which Dom Quixote invents in order to see the world through his own distorted vision.

2.4 SEX IN 68

The post-World War II youth culture brought waves of new trends that invaded France. Sexual liberation was among them. The development of contraceptive methods was a big impulse towards sexual liberation. The contraceptive pills became popular in the mid-20th century, freeing women from the danger of pregnancy and also from the obligation of building a family. Jobs alerts that sexual activity was condemned by society only if it was related to young females. Young women were still expected to assume the roles of mothers and housewives. Catholic Church and the government joined forces to condemn women’s liberation (190). Thus, sexual liberation was much more a women’s cause than a male’s preoccupation. Because of this, Jobs points out that “sexuality became the arena in which young women asserted their autonomy,” and further concludes that women’s independence was “based on the pursuit of sexual pleasure” (193).

Youth reinvigorated France in many aspects, but in their own way. An indication of this is Richard Neupert’s alert that the French baby-boom was not caused only by the happy family union of new couples after the war. He reports that hospital surveys in the 1950s indicated that third percent of the women were having unwanted

children (6). His conclusion anticipates the disparity between youth and tradition, arguing that “the lack of widely available contraceptives serves to highlight very real tensions between contemporary women’s lives and the social norms of traditional France” (6). From *les baby-boomers* came a generation called the New Wave.¹⁴

This feminist aspect is particularly interesting if one compares Danielle to her stepmother. These two women portray the distance separating these two generations. Danielle’s answers and attitudes are always ironical and provocative. She, for instance, demands her brother to masturbate under a Gene Tierney poster in front of her and Matthew. This punishment is the first sexual forfeit of their Home Movies game. When Guillaume refuses to do so alleging that, if it were her, she would not pay such a shameful forfeit, she answers “No, I wouldn’t. But then, she isn’t my type. Otherwise...” (65). In another occasion, revolted with Rollos’s¹⁵ hypocritical attitude, Danielle turns a bowl of salad on his head (106). But the most interesting episode that really shows who Danielle is and how she feels about herself is when she plays God. Sitting on a balcony beside her two men, she is so secure about herself that she judges everyone who passes under them. She annotated the spectacle that lay spread out at their feet. Insolently staring at a teenage girl with brown eyes, an olive skin and the inking of a moustache, she would remark: “Yes, to be sure, that type obviously had to exist, whatever you think of it” (16).

The twins’ unnamed stepmother, on a quite different position, is not even a mother or a wife, she is a full-time secretary. She married their father, the poet, eight months after their mother’s death. Before this, she was his real [paid] secretary. Marriage gave her an unpaid and full-time job, as “her role in the poet’s life was to serve that rather anemic, crabby invalid: his inspiration” (36). The worst of it is that she is completely voiceless in this house, indeed one of her services is silence, “She was ever at its [her husband, the poet] beck and call with an unending supply of placebos – cups of watery Indian tea, inane words of encouragement and, *mostly, silence*” (My emphasis, 36). In opposition to Danielle, who “as a Trappist monk takes a vow of silence

¹⁴ This term later inspired the naming of a famous filmic group, the *Nouvelle Vague* or French New Wave, which was composed by innovative French directors, some of them are Alan Resnais, Jacques Rivette, Jean-Luc Godard and Françoise Truffaut.

¹⁵ An Argentinian friend.

she had taken a vow of conversation” (16). Besides, the stepmother’s silence does not come from a freewill vow, since she “felt like screaming a dozen times a day, [but] never raised her voice above a whisper” (36). Her insignificance to this family is accentuated in relation to the cats, which “she was mildly allergic” (36) to the cats, what would not prevent the animals to walk freely in the apartment. Her well-being is not more important than the cats’ presence. Thus, while Danielle snobbishly plays God, her voiceless stepmother becomes an unpaid and full-time secretary in pretty bad working conditions.

Danielle represents two raising forces from that period. Firstly, she is young, and secondly she is a young woman. She clearly is not under her brother’s or Matthew’s influence, she has her own contradictory and strong opinions. She is stubborn, proud, bossy, witty, and prankster. In accordance to what Jobs explains about feminine power (193), Danielle uses her sexuality to assert her autonomy. Indeed, she is the one who first rapes Matthew, who is by the way raped twice. Danielle’s rape is not only an issue of pursuing sexual pleasure; it is an act of dominance and imposition. This is observed in how she bullies Matthew “come, come, my little Matthew, you aren’t being terrible gallant, you know. Is the prospect of making love to me so very hateful?” (73). She affirms her power over him, using the same kind of force that is historically associated to men, rape.

This feminine power is not the only sexual revolution brought by the youth. Jackson explains that May 68 incontestably influenced two movements: the feminist Movement de Libération des Femmes, founded in 1970, and the gay Front homosexuel d’Action Révolutionnaire, inaugurated in 1971 (632). May 68 requested people to have a more liberal view. In a way, it opened doors to the Gay Liberation, which happened in the late 60s and mid-70s.

In *The Holy Innocents*, Matthew suffers from suppressing his homosexuality. His sexual orientation is hidden even from his best friend, who “was revolted by this unsolicited disclosure” (6). This unsolicited disclosure is Matthew’s revelation that he was in love with his best friend. Not to mention, his unconditional love to Guillaume that is expressed through a rape. This sexual violence humiliates Matthew, but, at the same time, it also pleases him, “a rape that already filled the youth with a strange elation even as he knew its intention was to pain and degrade him” (114). He accepts the violence as a way to demonstrate his love. In his way, Matthew enjoys the rape. His homosexuality is expressed through violence, even among those – Guillaume and Danielle – who recognized and accepted it.

The twins' incest is another demonstration of sexual liberation. The siblings are not only breaking with catholic rules of virginity before wedding. They are also confronting the family institution. The boundaries of brotherhood do not prevent them from doing what they want. In spite of the fact that they are aware of how immoral this sexual taboo is to society, since when Matthew asks Danielle what she would do if their parents discover, she repeatedly answers "It must not happen" (79). The simplicity of her answer shows how guilty this witty girl feels. She finds no arguments to defend her acts, and neither can picture the possibility of being discovered.

Furthermore, sex alienates the characters more than the films. They do not have films to watch, but for a while they still remember them in the Home Movies. Gradually, the game is forgotten along with the films. Their focus goes from films to sex within the game. They are young and alone, and sex is their new entertainment, as the following quote shows: "Langlois and the Cinémathèque had long been forgotten. They had a Cinémathèque of their own, a Cinémathèque in flesh and blood" (79). Their exaggerated "consumption" of sex also leads to alienation, which adds a sentimental longing – nostalgia – for this period's sexual discovery.

2.5 THE POSTMODERN HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION

The conjunction of detailed description and metaphorical language indicates one of the characteristics that reveal the novel as a historiographical metafiction. According to Hutcheon, this kind of novel is both fictional and worldly. This combination is postmodern because it is paradoxically self-conscious of the artificiality of its historical account (Hutcheon, *Politics* 15). This paradox is generally accompanied by irony, since the metafictional novel tends to infer contradictions in the narrative. In other words, the postmodern element comes from the awareness in mixing historical and fictional representation, and being aware of the ironical paradox this may raise. The paradox is that history cannot be fully recovered, and the historiographical metafiction evinces this through irony.

One example of how the scrutiny in portraying history is subverted by fictive aspects of the story is Matthew's death. When he dies, he unexpectedly becomes a historical subject. In the sense that, while in the apartment, his love only leads to humiliation and degradation, such as the rapes (74 and 114) and the excrement in his face (117). But in the street, his love becomes a heroic act, which is

realized only through a historical moment. Most importantly is that Matthew dies to save the twins, but in doing so he symbolically also saves France. The contradiction and the irony is that all those young adults, who actually cared about the uprising, are resumed into one-character selfish deed. This way, history is trivialized, and May 68 ends up distorted by the story. It is also ironic how France, with all the cultural connotations it embodies, is symbolically saved by the American immigrant, who is only doing that for romantic and personal reasons. This ironical trivialization of history does not raise postmodern consciousness, but rather emphasizes a romanticized nostalgia.

The characters' alienation is a better example of how the conjunction of history and fiction raises an ironical paradox. As true *rats* they should know about the "Langlois Affair." Their diligence in relation to the Cinémathèque should inform them about it. Even more, they should at least participate in the protest. Their only "political" act is the parody of Godard's *Bande à Part*, which is actually an excuse to fulfill their own desire. Due to this overt individualistic desire, the characters seem rather to live in a different reality, that is not in 1968, but in some nostalgic time about 1968. Their ongoing historical moment needs to be explained to them as if they did not belong there. Further relevant is that the characters' ironical indifference indicates a postmodern self-conscious paradox in representing history. In the sense that the novel attempts to reproduce history, but it knows it cannot, thus it focuses on a nostalgic view which creates irony and sustains this awareness.

Furthermore, postmodern self-consciousness is also evident in metalinguistic strategies. An example of this is when Isabella plays God (16). Firstly, her playing god recalls the writer's own role in creating characters. To illustrate, she suggests more cheekbones to a blond young man, which the narrator ironically comments "meaning: if I were God." This comment could be easily changed for "if I were the writer," or even "if I were the narrator," which stands for the postmodern self-conscious position of recalling aspects that are outside the story's world, and that are related to the novel itself. In other words, Danielle's play, added by the narrator's comment, creates a metaphor to the very act of creating stories. A second aspect is that later in this play Isabella is surprised when she sees a pair of blind albino twins, both dressed in the same way and "both carrying white canes which they tapped in time together." About them, she says: "well! I can't say I'd ever have thought of that!" (16). This constitutes a meta-image since it recalls Danielle and her brother's own incestuous relationship, remembering that they are also

twins. In this duplication of the twins, the novel anticipates its own plot, foregrounding its meta-fictional characteristic.

The novel's heavy references to other works of art also corroborate to the notion of a self-conscious postmodern novel, indicating that it knows its place in art history and position itself as such overtly. Some of the novel's references are Bob Dylan (6), Jean Cocteau (23), Katsushima Hokusai (26) Edgar Degas (29), François Truffaut (32) and René Magritte (53). This use of references goes in accordance to one of the May 68's ideas that knowledge was power. Meaning that the frequent recovering of films, paintings, and songs, reinforce the intellectual power as part of May 68 historical representations. Danielle demonstrates this when they are leaving the Louvre museum, she muses "Why, when nature imitates art, does it always choose the worst art to imitate? Sunsets by Harpignies, never by Monet" (31). Her commentary shows that she is quite educated. Harpignies and Monet painted in the same period, the nineteenth century, and treated the same theme, landscape, but they converged to different schools. While Monet is widely known by his Impressionist paintings and his sensitive hues of blue, Harpignies was from the Barbizon school, which favors a more realist view, and silvery pervades in his landscapes. Moreover, Atack explains that "knowledge was (sexual) power" (69). The conversion of intellectual power into sexual power is present in the characters' games, in how they go from film guessing to sexual domination; as when Théo is not able to guess Danielle's mimic, his forfeit is to masturbate in front of Matthew and her (67).

The novel portrays another interesting postmodern aspect: duplication. This doubling is observed in the twins. As Matthew is the focalizer, it is through his perception that the story is built. Thus, it may be argued that Guillaume and Danielle's uncanny reproduction comes from his mutual love for the twins. He constantly strives to understand the mirroring of these siblings, puzzled by their similarities. For instance, Guillaume has a round scar on his face, and Danielle imitates him in a certain moment. Matthew believes that they look so alike that "when Danielle pressed too hard on the cardboard, causing it to pop off her cheek and land on the table, Matthew dreamily expected Guillaume's scar to do likewise" (27). Her mimic is certainly unpretentious, as she is using a round cardboard, although this does not prevent Matthew from seeing an uncanny connection between them. Later, he sees the twins sleeping together and they are so intertwined that "the limbs of one seemed also to belong to the other". One body is completing the other, as if they were one. Matthew is so astonished by

this, that he “remained stock still on the threshold of the room” (46). He sees the French twins as uncanny as the albino twins because of his love, but other instances of the novel may indicate that Matthew may indeed be right.

This uncanny aspect raised by ambiguity outstands in relation to Danielle. She is feminine and sensual, wearing her grandmother’s clothes all the time, which accentuate her body since they are too small for her, her prewar little Chanel suit was “ornately cuffed and buttoned, it was at least two sizes too tight for her” (23). Nonetheless, she is constantly imitating beautiful, sensual, and also sexually ambiguous¹⁶ actresses like Greta Garbo (50) or Bette Davis (64). Furthermore, her torso’s description is “not devoid of a certain troubling ambiguity; for one might have said the torso of a male youth *en travesti*, his own gender dissimulated even down to his skin, his bone structure” (73). Her maleness resembles and approaches her to Guillaume. She uncanny mirrors her brother, so close they are. In addition, it is mysterious the way she dislikes mirrors. As she says “It is vulgar to look at yourself in a mirror all the time. A mirror is for looking at others in” (5), thus giving the impression that she does not see herself in the mirror’s duplication, but rather her male version, Guillaume.

The duplicity or doublings does not end with the twins. They are multiplied by them. The twins’ mirroring is further complicated with their frequently mimics. The reproduction of films by the characters constitutes innumerable doubled and reproduced images, as when they mimic a scene from Godard’s *Bande à Part*. Another doubled image is Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People*. A reproduction of it appears hung in the guest’s room where Matthew sleeps. Later, when he is shot, his posture is quite similar to this painting. He has a red flag “raised it high in the air, adopted the stance of a mountaineer posing for a photograph, or of Delacroix’s *Liberté*” (149). Another uncanny double is Danielle and her Grandma. As the narrator describes “The laughter of the two women, separated as they were by an abyss of seventy years, seemed to blend together so seamlessly, in such wondrous harmony, that it was all but impossible to know where Danielle’s ended and her grandmother’s began” (94). The lapse of time between them does not prevent this reflection, in as much as, the difference of gender between the twins. These uncanny duplications indicate the postmodern issue of reproduction. The reproduction of history, the reference and connection

¹⁶ These actresses are known for an “androgynous” stylization. For more information see Brett Farmer’s *Spectacular Passions*.

to other arts, the nostalgia and the doubles in the story, all indicate the novel's postmodern position.

This postmodern position is relevant since it turns our attention to a different aspect of history. The issue is not as much on the truthiness of the represented aspects as it is on a contemporary concern in how to portray it. In this sense, the focus is on a contextual history about youth culture in the late 60s. Furthermore, as the subversion of the historical by the fictional loses relevance, so does the dichotomy between the political and the personal. Since the emphasis is on the conscious representation and the contextual history. In this sense, I understand that the sexual exploration and the cinematic attention happening inside the apartment are as revolutionary and as historical as the revolt happening on the outside. In sum, the problem may seem that the history of May 68 is subverted by the fictional story, but nostalgia, irony and the conscious representation raised by them shows that the personal story is also an account of history.

3. CHAPTER II

The Dreamers is a nostalgic film. Its historical representation is quite similar to *The Holy Innocents*⁷. Its nostalgia rises from the longing for the late 60s in France; specifically, for the Cinémathèque Française's cinephilia and for the revolutionary feeling of May 68. This may create a dream-like instance, especially to those viewers who were Cinémathèque's cinephiles, as the journalists Andrew Sarris and Michael Wilmington confessed to be (see "Introduction" 6-7). In this sense, the title gains meaning, since its dreamers refer not only to the characters, but to the public in itself, which inserted in this time-machine, the film, travels through time into a nostalgic dream. But the film's nostalgia is not only illusionary, it is also conscious. Its historical representation reveals a postmodern attitude of awareness. Through cinematic techniques, the film exposes the postmodern self-consciousness of overtly exposing its own discourse in reproducing history. It creates a dream-like atmosphere, but it is aware of its construct and makes it clear for its viewers.

3.1 THE WRINKLED FACE OF LÉAUD

The historical representation of the "Langlois affair" and the closure of the Cinémathèque Française imply what Linda Hutcheon refers as postmodern self-consciousness (*Politics* 6). Matthew (Michael Pitt), Isabelle (Eva Green) and Théo (Louis Garrel) first meet in the revolt raised by the "Langlois Affair." In this sequence, real footage and fictional images are combined. It begins with the image of the French actor Jean-Pierre Kalfon,¹⁷ acting as himself (00:04:24). He is reading a text by Jean-Luc Godard, which is against the removal of Langlois from the Cinémathèque's administration. Then, Jean-Pierre Léaud¹⁸ – another famous French actor and also acting as himself – shares the reading of Godard's text. While they are reading, the film's vivid colors are

¹⁷ Jean-Pierre Kalfon was mainly known for Godard's *Week End* (1967) and Jacques Rivette's *L'amour Fou* (1969). He participated in many French New Wave films.

¹⁸ Jean- Pierre Léaud became famous when he was still a boy. He was the troubled boy Antoine Doinel - the main character - in François Truffaut's first and one of his most acclaimed films *400 Blows*.

intertwined to real black-and-white or pale-colored images. The viewer sees a real footage of Langlois, who is happily climbing the Cinémathèque's steps, a twenty-four-year-old Léaud surrounded by policemen, who is reading the same Godard's text, an excited public listening to his reading, and the faces of Jean-Paul Belmondo, François Truffaut, and others famous individuals marching among the Cinémathèque's protesters.

This sequence contrasts real 68 images to fictional representations of them. This contrast foregrounds the film's postmodern self-consciousness in representing history, since it reminds the viewer that these events really happened, and also that he or she is watching a reproduction of them. In other words, it reveals the text's openness in exposing itself as a representation. In addition, the introduction of documentary footage among the fictional text emphasizes the text's qualities of verisimilitude, due to the fact that it indicates how alike those images are.

This juxtaposition of shots may seem confusing and discontinuous, but continuity is respected. The Cinémathèque is one of the elements that confer continuity to this sequence. Its stoned walls, its front stairs and its sign "Musée du Cinema" are unmistakably repeated in both the black-and-white and colored shots. This repetition sustains continuity in relation to space. It even creates an illusion that time has not passed, as this cinema house has remained the same.

Another relevant aspect in continuity is, ironically, Godard's text.¹⁹ It provides a sense of flow in this apparently anarchic editing, because it links the sequence's shots. It could be assumed as a sound match, since it is not a graphic element, but the text is read by two people, Kalfon and Léaud. Even Léaud's voice appears in two versions, when a young Léaud begins a phrase and his older Léaud finishes it. Thus, along their reading, what joins the shots is Godard's text, which

¹⁹ Godard's filmography is full of editing discontinuities (Stam, *Literatura* 335). He was one of the leading directors in the French New Wave movement, along with François Truffaut. One of their main issues was to give personality to their films, in an attempt to deviate from those films that were too much guided by their producers, who were more interested in economic aspects than in artistic ones (Figueirôa 52). Because of this, these latter films tend to follow certain patterns. David Bordwell in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* defines many of these patterns, continuity being one of them. Hence, the irony is that what provides continuity in this sequence is a text from a director who disrupted continuity in so many movies.

constitutes a continuity prop.²⁰ The sound rather emphasizes discontinuity, due to the difference between Kalfon's and Léaud's voices.

Graphic matches also connect the shots. An example is when a black-and-white crowd from 1968 is clapping, and is followed by a vivid colored crowd. The 1968 crowd's applause is finished by a 2003 version, which confers linkage and continuity to these images. Another example of graphic match is when older Léaud throws copies of Godard's text to a colorful public, and a black-and-white version catches them, again joining the past to its own representation. In a way, the film does more than showing its source, it connects them, by juxtaposing the factual and fictional images. The result of this combination is an emphasis on the recovery and reproduction of history, what I have been referring as self-consciousness, according to Hutcheon's terminology (*Politics* 6).

The use of historical footage also evinces another postmodern way of reproduction. It exposes that the film is reproducing not from history in itself, (and I am not arguing that this is even possible), or a memory as Andreas Huyssen has argued (*Twilight* 3) but from a representation of it. May 68 is filtered and shot in those black-and-white images, which, by its time, is re-represented in *The Dreamers*. To put in a different way, history is reproduced in the historical footages, which are inserted and restaged in the fictional film. This foregrounds how historical representation may be complex, due to the loops of intertextualities, which becomes one of the cores of the film's subject.

On the other hand, the contrast between the colored and black-and-white shots infers a sense of discontinuity, or at least rupture. This break with continuity is revealed by a clear disparity between the shots. This dissimilarity caused by the quality of images highlights the time lapse between the shots. It shows that not only time has passed since those black-and-white footages were shot, but that technology has improved. In this sense, space brings a sense of continuity with the image of the Cinémathèque, while time raises disruption. In addition, the intense and rhythmic cuttings between footages and their representations accentuate the feeling of revolt against Langlois's dismissal.

The contrast between the younger and older Léaud also foregrounds this postmodern consciousness in representing history. A

²⁰ David Bordwell defines prop as "when an object is motivated to operate actively within an ongoing action" (175).

distracted viewer may not recognize at first sight the wrinkled faces of Kalfon and Léaud, but as a postmodern text, the film would not allow such information to be missed. It highlights their presence by showing the figure of a younger Léaud. Jean-Pierre Léaud became famous when he was still a boy in François Truffaut's *400 blows* (1959), and he continued making success in New Wave films, especially in movies by Truffaut and Godard. Léaud's recurrent presence in these directors' films made him an iconic figure in their filmography. He participated in seven films by Truffaut²¹ and nine by Godard,²² and most of them were during the French New Wave period. The documentary *Two in the Wave* (2010) declares that when the two directors had a misunderstanding after May 68, Léaud was divided between them, explaining that "Godard and Truffaut fight over him as if over a child: the New Wave's child" (01:20:57). Léaud is a symbol to the French New Wave in as much as the Cinémathèque, and the directors who made him famous. Thus, to bring this younger Léaud is a way to remind the public who this older Léaud is. Similar to the black-and-white footages, the contrast between Léaud's younger and older figures emphasizes the gap of time, and mainly the text's overtly awareness of this difference. Moreover, Léaud's older figure also creates a contradiction. That is because older Léaud is acting as himself in 1968, but he is obviously much older than he should be in 1968, and his age is not hidden under any kind of make-up. This contradiction merges present and past by inserting a mature Léaud acting as his own younger self.

3.2 THE PATH OF GODARD

Another revealing sequence is the mimic of Jean-Luc Godard's film *Bande à Part*. This sequence interpolates Godard's and Bertolucci's version of a race through the Louvre Museum. It begins in a previous sequence, in which Isabelle is suggesting that they should repeat *Bande à Part*'s Louvre race. While she describes the latter film, we see Odile, Arthur and Franz running in the museum. Then the film

²¹ *Antoine et Colette* (1962), *Love at Twenty* (1962), *Stolen Kisses* (1968), *Bed and Board* (1970), *Les Deux Anglaises et le Continent* (1971), *Day for Night* (1973) and *Love on the Run* (1979).

²² *Alphaville* (1965), *Pierrot Le Fou* (1965), *Masculin Féminin* (1966), *Made in U.S.A.* (1966), *La Chinoise* (1967), *Week End* (1967), *The Oldest Profession* (1967), *Joy of Learning* (1969) and *Déetective* (1985).

cuts to *The Dreamers*'s characters already running in the Louvre. Their colored shot is continued by Godard's black-and-white version, and the interpolation between the two films continues until the end of the race. In Godard's *Bande à Part* (1964), Odile, Arthur and Franz beat the Louvre run world record with nine minutes and forty-five seconds. In Bertolucci's *The Dreamers*, Isabelle, Matthew and Théo beat their record by seventeen seconds.

This surmount does not suggest Godard's cinema as obsolete, or that time overcame his filmography. I understand that it rather suggests continuity. The term continuity is here used in relation to what Linda Hutcheon attributes to parodies. She argues that parody may demonstrate continuity in relation to film-making tradition (*Politics* 108). Hence, it is my understanding that the reconstruction of this sequence, along with others, does not indicate a simple reproduction, but also a continuum. In a way, *The Dreamers*'s sequence continues Godard's sequence. We feel like Isabelle is giving progress to Odile's race. As a consequence, the past is renewed in colorful shapes. In doing this, the film pays homage to Godard's film and indicates itself as part of Godard's tradition, being inspired by his filmography.

Furthermore, this reference to Godard also expresses postmodern self-consciousness. Similar to the historical footages, the interpolation between *Bande à Part*'s images and *The Dreamers*'s reproduction reveals how conscious the latter film is in relation to its reference. In the sense that Bertolucci's films came historically after Godard's, and that *Bande à Part* is an artistic reference to *The Dreamers*. It also exposes how the films are intertextually connected. In this case, the historical awareness is not shown by its focusing on a historical event, but on the text's own history. The gap of time is also evident in the quality of the images, but the emphasis in here is not on the passage of time as the contrasting versions of Léaud shows, but on the pervasive presence of the French New Wave in contemporary cinema.

This sequence also constitutes a parody. It is so because it subverts and emphasizes Godard's films, combining irony and reproduction. A key characteristic is that its parodic approach does not use ridicule to create irony. Its parody is rather a respectful reproduction. The irony arises from the fact that Isabelle, Matthew and Théo's race subverts the meaning that Odile, Arthur and Franz attribute to their race. The latter trio is trivializing the museum's high art. They steal money and works of art from Odile's uncle, because they care little about their artistic value, as they are only interested in their monetary value. In this sense, Godard's film is a criticism on the over valorization

of art. Besides, as a New Wave director, he was looking for new aesthetics in a constant attempt to innovate, and detaching himself from classic forms which are the Louvre's main content. Different from this, Isabelle, Matthew and Théo do precisely what Godard's film is criticizing. They overvalue his film when they risk being caught and Matthew risks being deported, so that they can mimic the film's sequence. Odile runs to despise a social order that privileges high art, while Isabelle runs to mimic Odile. When they overvalue, they create irony, but not necessarily ridicule, since their reproduction is rather nostalgic and respectful, allowing room for a critique of their mimic.

It is precisely because it is respectful and not necessarily challenging, that the parody may demonstrate continuity in relation to film-making tradition. In paying homage to Godard's filmography, the film unveils a deferential admiration. So much so that the trio is only willing to do the Louvre race, when Matthew proves to be a real cinephile, guessing a scene from the musical *Top Hat* (1935) in which Fred Astaire tap dances over Ginger Rogers. As Isabelle says: "There is something Théo and I have been meaning to do for a long time, but we've been waiting for the right person to do it with" (00:36:44). Their imitating Godard's film is a special event to them, because they pay a lot of respect to it. Hence, Godard's film is recovered, reproduced, and transformed into a parody, but as a respectful influence.

Continuity is also shown in the film editing. The cuts from colored to black-and-white shots may again seem disruptive, but the sequence unrolls smoothly. The interpolation of different images seems to be part of a sequence because their action and place of the action are the same. In both images, they are speeding in the Louvre Museum, and even the corridors are the same. Besides, the characters' proxemics, clothes and the camera position are also quite similar. The film's editing respects these correspondent shots. For instance, the viewer sees Odile descending a set of steps followed by Franz and Arthur, but it is Isabelle who gets to the bottom of it with Théo and Matthew after her (00:38:16). Thus, these graphic matches provide editing continuity.

Furthermore, postmodern meta-fictionally is ironically expressed with Adair's presence in this sequence. The author himself appears as a passerby, before the first cut to Godard's film. He is admiring the paintings and acts passively to the characters' running. This demonstrates meta-fictionally since Adair is the film's scriptwriter and the writer of the adapted text. The film refers to itself. He is an element from outside the fictional world, but he is explicitly inserted in the fiction. Similarly to Kalfon and Léaud, Adair was young in 1968, he

was not as famous as the mentioned actors, but he was already an artist. Thus, again as Kalfon and Léaud, Adair's older figure creates a contradiction and reminds us about the passage of time, and the film's consciousness in relation to its historical representation.

3.3 OTHER WAYS

This appropriation and reproduction of other films is repeated in other sequences of *The Dreamers*. The films, which are also parodied, are Godard's *À Bout the Souffle* (1960) (00:10:40), Rouben Mamoulian's *Queen Christina* (1933) (00:28:45), Mark Sandrich's *Top Hat* (1935) (00:36:05), Tod Browning's *Freaks* (1932) (00:38:38), Josef von Sternberg's *Blonde Venus* (1932) (00:43:03), Howard Hawks's *Scarface* (1932) (00:49:20), and Robert Bresson's *Mouchette* (1967) (01:43:29). Similar to *Bande à Part*'s sequence, *The Dreamers*'s characters mimicking these films is intertwined with the films' corresponding sequences.

The repetition of this technique of appropriating and reproducing is a way to express postmodern self-consciousness in relation to itself as art in history. This self-consciousness lies in this explicit reference, that besides being reproduced, it is appropriated, and in some moments, even explained. This is observed when Théo demands Isabelle and Matthew to guess what film he is mimicking. Théo pretends to die and his body is marked by the shadow of a cross, as he says "Name a film where a cross marks the spot of a murder, or pay the forfeit" (01:49:52). They are not able to guess, but Théo gives the answer: "Scarface. Howard Hawks, 1932" (01:50:18). Thus, we see the parody, we are informed about the name of the film parodied, the director, the year, and ultimately we see the original sequence. These recurrent references to other films also place *The Dreamers* in a historical filmic tradition. Similar to Godard's *Bande à Part*, *The Dreamers* becomes a result of these filmic references, part of a filmic tradition. It recuperates their existence and represents a homage to them. Furthermore, the film's own existence relies on these references, since their images are not simply parodied, but also inserted as part of the film.

Margaret Atack remarks on the way images influence people's life. She focuses on advertisements, arguing that "the way they symbolize the extent to which everyone needs to live the images, live the social messages, are one alienating factor in contemporary society. Stereotypes, clichés, and received ideas inflect personal identity too" (18). This understanding that advertisement images are highly

influential in our lives is also identified in the film, although, the reproduced reference is not on ads, but rather on other films. As Susan Sontag once affirmed going to movies in its beginnings was a way to learn how to be attractive (par.4). The movies provided tips, and still do, in how to behave, what to wear, say, read, among other aspects.

In *The Dreamers*, all three characters imitate other films, but Isabelle is the character who most mimics. She is constantly imitating a different actress in a different role, such as Greta Garbo in *Queen Christina* (00:28:45) or Marlene Dietrich in *Blonde Venus* (00:43:03), thus making up for her own personality. One hardly knows who she really is. She embodies Atack's and Sontag's ideas, and turns her own personality in a complex patchwork of film stereotypes. An example is when Matthew admires her, saying that she looks "like a movie star," her answer is a pretentious "I was" (01:01:09). In this manner, Isabelle is not simply acting, but she incorporates the films into her life as *The Dreamers* does with other films into its plot. As an illustration, when Matthew questions their Louvre race, arguing that they may be caught, she answers "they weren't caught in *Bande à Part*" (00:37:35). Matthew's screamed answer, "it's a movie" (00:37:39), is promptly ignored. To Isabelle, André Bazin's notorious argument that the cinema comes from an urge to recreate the world (25) makes no sense. She prefers the other way around, the postmodern one, in which films influence the ongoing of life and life becomes the reproduction of them.

Two sequences expose the complexity of Isabelle's disguise. In the beginning of the film, Matthew sees her tied to the Cinémathèque's gates, as a way of protest, but in fact she is not, she is just role-playing. Later, when she attempts suicide (01:43:29), a moment of high emotion in which it is possible to expect only legitimate feelings, she remembers Robert Bresson's *Mouchette* (1967). In this film, Mouchette is also trying to kill herself. Bearing this in mind, it is possible to affirm that Isabelle imitates so many characters, that she becomes a collage of them, which results in creating a character for herself. In doing so, she becomes an example of Jameson's notion that the subject, and not only art, becomes fragmented in a postmodern context, due to the loads of influences received (63).

A three-folded mirror in Isabelle's room represents this fragmentation of her personality. In this sequence, Isabelle is mimicking the statue Venus de Milo, and the spectator sees her from three different angles in the mirror (01:28:04). This is the first time Matthew enters her room, and he is comparing it with his own sisters' room back in the United States. He looks at the teddy bears at her bedroom and realizes

that this room is unexpectedly similar to any other girl's room. He could not predict this from the multifaceted Isabelle. Thus, the three-folded mirror suggests that Isabelle possesses many personalities, and the combination of these form her fragmented personality.

Moreover, the issue of conscious representation is also observed in the film's mise-en-scène. Théo's room is filled with posters, among them are Godard's *La Chinoise*, Mao Tsé-Tung, and the American actress Gene Tierney. He also has pictures and clippings of *400 Blows*, Ana Karenina, Roberto Rossellini's *Paisan* (1946), Jean-Paul Belmondo, David Hemmings in Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966), to name a few. These elements from the mise-en-scène provide an understanding that is similar to the reproduced films. They indicate further artistic references, not only from the characters, but also from the film. Théo summarizes this issue of productive reproduction when he proposes that "maybe one reproduction will inspire another" (01:51:00). The mentioned films influenced *The Dreamers*, which reproduces them as a parody, and by its turn, may affect other texts, creating a true postmodern loop of references.

Some of the film's artistic references can also be associated with the film's plot and meaning, which indicates that these references are not random. Samuel Fuller's *Shock Corridor* (1963), which is the first film quoted, tells the tale of Johnny Barret, a journalist who inscribes himself into a mental institute in order to solve a murder mystery. Through the end, he discovers who the murder is, but by then, the shock therapy damages him in such a way that he never leaves the hospital. In Fuller's film, the corridor is a primary element, it is where the patients may interact, and because of this, it is where Johnny unveils his mystery. In Bertolucci's film, the apartment seems more like a maze, composed of many corridors and some random rooms, than with an apartment. Corridors are the set for eight moments along the film (00:11:17; 00:24:35; 00:24:50; 00:38:00; 00:40:46; 00:43:08; 00:52:10; 01:25:57). Not to mention other moments which are not exactly corridors, but reminders of them, such as a sidewalk (00:02:04), a staircase (00:05:43), a river side (00:09:34), a bridge (00:10:21), and even a restaurant (00:39:23). These images of corridors provides the notion of passage again, in which when crossing through them, the characters arrive different at the other side. An illustration is when Matthew participates in the Louvre race, it is only after facing the museum's corridors that he is accepted by the twins. In both films, the obvious assertion that corridors take people from one side to the other acquires a metaphorical meaning, in which they lead people to more

than places, but actually transforms them. Johnny goes crazy, while Matthew grows up.

Furthermore, most of the referred films emphasize an iconic aspect, such as Isabelle's Dietrich and Garbo, which demonstrate how these two actresses were idolatized and part of their imaginary. Godard's *Louvre Run* shows veneration, and it expands to a critique in which this exaggerated idolatry distorts the film's meanings; while Bresson's *Mouchette* exposes how the characters lost their own identity with the massive influence they received from films. The recovered images are not simply emptied of their original meaning, as Jameson understands it (62). The retrieval of the original images calls the viewer attention to the original reference, and as a consequence, the references are not lost, but rather emphasized.

Ultimately, these references are not random, because they provide a unified view of cinephilia. They represent the films which created a generation of cinephiles in the late 60s, who would watch any film and have a truly heterogeneous list of reference. In the first sequence, Matthew sits in the Cinémathèque's room and we see the impressive images of Fuller's *Shock Corridor*. From this moment on, the viewer knows that all the references along the movie are a recollection of that nostalgic past in which all kinds of movies were extraordinary, to use a *rat's* term. Even when the viewer may not share these references, he/she might understand the iconic feature of the images or the influence they had in the film.

3.4 TWO PARALLEL (HI)STORIES

In *The Dreamers*, the trio – Matthew, Isabelle and Théo – get acquainted for the first time in the conflict raised because of Langlois's removal from the Cinémathèque Française. Later, their relationship also ends in the middle of a riot, but now from the May 68 uprising. This concurrence between their relationship and historical events, along with other instances, creates a parallel between the trio's plot and the 1968 history, as if what is happening in France is also happening with these characters, or the other way around. It communicates a connection between these two stories, the fictional and the "real".

The fictional story meets history in the characters' first encounter during the "Langlois Affair." Matthew arrives at the Cinémathèque walking among the protesters. He soon sees Isabelle, who is pretending to be chained to the gates. He is immediately in love with her; then Théo arrives, and he is citing the filmmakers present in the protest: "Truffaut,

Godard, Charbol, Rivette, and Renoir, Jean Rouch, Rohmer” (00:07:29). Their conversation ends when the police attacks and forces them to run. It is interesting to note that this initial moment already shows a connection between the film’s main themes: sexual attraction, cinema and politics. The strong bond between these themes help raising nostalgia, since it implies an idea that everything in the late 60s evoked these issues.

Every major instance in their relationship is marked by something taking place outside the apartment, which marks the parallelism between the trio’s story and history. Gradually, their relationship becomes more problematic and the accumulation of small conflicts leads them to a final separation. Firstly, they meet at the Cinémathèque protest, as it was described. Secondly, Matthew and Isabelle lose their virginity while Théo observes rioters running from the police from his window. Thirdly, when the heterosexual couple goes to the movies without Théo, they see the conflicts on a television storefront and a giant pile of rubbish from the riots, which is when they, and also we, realize the proportion of the May 68 conflict. Lastly, a paving stone shatters their window and calls attention to the riot, when they are trying to reconcile again. These incidents sign that they pass through a gradual process of understanding. Adding to this, their joining the riot is the culmination of the two parallel conflicts: their love triangle from inside the locked apartment and the May 68 conflict. Differently from *The Holy Innocents*’s characters, who gradually expose more alienation.

It is ironical how it is precisely television, that is widely assumed as the ultimate alienator, that informs them about what is happening in France. Although, it is relevant to note that what calls Matthew’s attention is the screen, so familiar to him in the movie sessions. It is only after seeing in the television screen, that they note the pile of rubbish right behind them, which creates an ironical effect of contradiction. Their obsession with the image is emphasized by the mediation of television as a means to have access to the real, which is right behind them represented by the rubbish pile.

The connection between what happen inside and outside the apartment is observed mainly in relation to Matthew and Isabelle. Their relationship corresponds to a bourgeois traditional form of romance. As their parody of a typical couple from the 60s shows, they listen to music from a juke box, drink coke from the same glass, have their image gradually closed by the camera iris, and sit on the back of the movie theater to cuddle, heavily contrasting with the Cinémathèque’s cinephiles who always sit in the first row. Thus, the concurrence

between the historical and the heterosexual conflicts indicates that this “more common” relationship does not fit in this dream-like state, as its conflicts rise in the same proportion as the street conflicts. Their heterosexual relation is more common because it contrasts with the twins’ incestuousness and the trio’s *ménage-à-trois*; both relations do not come from sexual intercourse, but from the sexual games and tension between them. Still, Théo is put apart when the romantic relation between Matthew and Isabelle grows. This division leads to their final separation when Isabelle has to opt between the men and decides to stay with her brother in the middle of a violent riot.

In this parallelism between history and story, the apartment functions as an allegory to certain aspects of French society. France was criticized as a decadent bourgeois society in that period. A simplified and broad overview of history is that the young revolutionaries viewed France as a decaying society, which fought the World War II and was capable of reconstructing itself, but which in that moment was decaying into capitalist amenities and consumerism (Reynolds 11 and Attack 10). In accordance to this, the apartment’s low illumination, the torn and old wallpapers, the long corridor composed of book shelves, the painting reproductions, the heavy and dark curtains, the velvet sofas, among other elements, create an atmosphere of a decadent bourgeois environment. These elements indicate a long gone period of glamour that is now downgrading. The apartment is where the old bourgeois values inhabit, and inside it these values are also questioned.

Théo is the young figure who questions this bourgeois safety. He does so by objecting to his father. The latter is a decadent poet, whose most famous lines, according to Théo, were “a petition is a poem/a poem is a petition” (00:20:42), but who refuses to sign a petition against the Vietnam War. Controversially, all three main characters end up also assuming the twins’ father passive behavior, which leads to a further complexity. They incorporate the two sides of the revolt. From one side, the accommodated bourgeois, who enjoys expensive wine while discussing art and politics. From the other side, the young revolutionary, who attempts to break every social taboo he encounters. This generates a critique of their contradictory behavior, which questions the political engagement of those young cinephiles. Furthermore, Théo also embodies this bourgeois contradictory behavior with his lamp in the shape of Mao Tsé’s torn. The irony is that he praises Mao, as when he asks Matthew: “why don’t you think of Mao as a great director? Making a movie with a cast of millions” (01: 31:52). But Théo does not realize

that this kitsch image trivializes Mao's own image and ideas. It turns the communist leader into a capitalist product.

It is also ironical how it is the American character who points to this bourgeois accommodation: "for me there is a distinct contradiction [...] if you really believed what you were saying you'd be out there, out there on the street" (01:33:14). Théo, in this moment, becomes a hypocritical figure just like his father. They both criticize, but they continue enjoying their bourgeois privileges. Another example is when Matthew and Isabelle lose their virginity in the kitchen floor, while Théo is frying eggs (00:57:46). He hears noises coming from the street and sees people running from the police, carrying red flags. Although, he demonstrates puzzlement, the inside event is more relevant at that moment. The irony rises from his affected trivialization of both: the sex and the revolt. Lastly, their indifference in relation to the outside riot reveals how their bourgeois distance provides them with a safety, in which even their immediate history can be observed from a safe distance, as if those conflicts under his window did not belong to his time.

3.5 THE POSTMODERN POSITION

The Dreamers's final sequence reveals a postmodern interpretation of history. In the final riot, Matthew fights with Théo, arguing that they should all leave, that the protest and violence – Théo is holding a bottle of Molotov cocktail²³ – are useless. In Matthew's words "this is fucking fascism in a fucking bottle" (01:47:11). He appeals to their intellectual power, pointing to their heads arguing that this is the way they should fight. Isabelle, who is just role-playing at the riot, decides to stay with Théo. Matthew who is now mature and willing to stand for his beliefs decides to leave the twins, the revolt, and in a postmodern twist steer, he also leaves the past.

By this I mean that Matthew's final act of leaving indicates an influence of the present in the representation of the past. As it was discussed in "Chapter I" (6-7), May 68 was a month of civil revolt in France, it raised a huge popular commotion, but unexpectedly it soon lost its power within a month. Diverging opinions about this uprising abound, but it seems that the film follows the prevailing version – which is not necessarily the correct one – that, according to Kristin Ross, nothing significant changed in terms of politics and economy, only

²³ A homemade gas bomb.

culturally (21). President Charles de Gaulle disappeared in Baden-Baden (Germany) for a while, but he soon returned and continued in the government; while France's economy did not change, and the American influence over it could still be felt. This way, Matthew leaves because he is rejecting the idealization of that past and the utopian view present in *The Holy Innocents*. In the film, as opposed to the novel, the American youngster exposes the weight of a historical understanding of his act.

On the other hand, May 68 represents the culmination of personal and cultural changes to Matthew, as he says "it was here [in France] that I got my real education" (00:03:01). He changes from a naïve, virgin and solitary young man, who is always alone in the Cinémathèque sessions, who is always caught in Isabelle jokes and provocations, who is actually raped by her, to an argumentative, seductive and clever man, who dares Théo, who audaciously invites Isabelle to a date, and who is the first to understand their own alienation. When he contests the May 68 and differentiates himself from the other young rioters, he embodies the postmodern consciousness of the historical representation in which he is inserted. He carries a comprehension that would not be commonly acknowledged by those involved in the May 68 uprising.

Furthermore, the film subverts its own representation of May 68 in Matthew's leave. When he leaves, the view of the changes attributed to the May 68 movement is deconstructed. The viewer sees famous figures among the Cinémathèque's protesters (00:04:50), people running from the police carrying red flags (00:57:44), Théo's school full of messages and drawings of Mao Tsé-Tung on its walls and the police watching the students in front of the school (01:47:11), Théo arguing against the Vietnam war (01:13:16), a giant pile of rubbish on the streets when Isabelle and Matthew go to the cinema (01:24:49), Matthew lecturing Théo about his passivity (01:33:26), and finally the voice of a multitude calling to the uprising (01:46:21). These instances provide a utopian feeling of changes. In Matthew's words, "there is something going on out there, something that feels like it could be really important, something that feels like things could change" (01:33:24). Controversially to his own words, he argues that the violence is pointless and goes away, leaving the spectator with a rather dystopian feeling, in which all the revolts lead to nothing. This subversion unveils the film's initial recovering of history as problematic. If Matthew's act deconstructs the entire 1968 utopia, then what rests is a contemporary consciousness in relation to the turmoil of sex, cinema and drugs from France's late 60s.

The characters' passivity in relation to the May 68 riots also raises irony in the film. Differently from *The Holy Innocents*, in which the trio does not really comprehend the events, *The Dreamers*'s characters are indeed aware of these factors, but they take too long to realize their alienation and participate on the riots. Some instances that show their passivity are when they were among the Cinémathèque protesters (00:08:45), when Théo has a glance at the running protesters from his window (00:57:46), when a school friend questions Théo's passive behavior (01:10:54) and when Isabelle and Matthew see the riots from a television storefront (01:23:46). Even more ironical is Théo's hypocritical discourse on communism and Mao, which are among the revolutionaries' ideas, while sipping in his father's expensive wines (01:33:14). As the twins' father says "Before you can change the world, you must realize you yourself are part of it. You can't stay outside looking in" (00:20:11). When the characters neglect the May 68 uprising, it suggests flaws in this revolt and a critique on their distant behavior.

4. CHAPTER III

This chapter's focus is on the issue of adaptation. It does so by comparing the first novel – *The Holy Innocents*, the filmic adaptation – *The Dreamers* (2003) – and the second version of the novel – *The Dreamers* (2004). This comparison retraces and compares these texts with an emphasis on their postmodern historical representation. The purpose is to provide a more holistic view of the analyzed texts, unveiling not only each texts' aesthetic representations, but also their intertextual relation. This dialogue between the texts is also approached through a postmodern position, bearing in mind that Gilbert Adair rewrote his work after the release of a film adaptation of his own novel. This type of adaptation was already discussed by Bruce Morrisette in 1985, when developing his theories on French experimentalist writer Robbe-Grillet, still there are few studies related to this subject.

4.1 ADAPTING ADAPTATIONS

In the “Afterword” of Adair's *The Dreamers*'s, he writes that this second book version is “much closer to the film than the first version” (192). The author says that because of his dissatisfaction with his novel's first version, he refused many proposals to adapt it into screenplay. It was only when he heard the name of Bernardo Bertolucci that he accepted a filmic adaptation. Moreover, he got the assignment to write the film's script, and, in this position, he saw an opportunity to rewrite his novel. Adair says that this second version is not a novelization of the film, arguing that since novel and film are different media, it could never be an exact adaptation, such an attempt would just develop an awkward result (*Dreamers* 192). In Adair's words, the film and the second novel “may be twins but – just like my own fictional siblings, Théo and Isabelle – they're not identical” (*Dreamers* 193). This comparative analysis does not attempt to attest or not Adair's argument. It does rely on similarities or differences in order to unveil the dialogue between these adaptations as postmodern texts, taking their historical account into consideration.

4.1.1 The Characters

The representation of 1968 in France is quite similar in both novels. For instance, the Cinémathèque Française and the period's zeitgeist are still nostalgic references, which convey a romanticized

view of the portrayal of the May 68 uprising and the “Langlois Affair”, but it is contrasted and balanced by a postmodern subversion of its own historical representation, mostly because of the characters’ alienation. Indeed, Adair’s modifications are mostly limited to removing parts; he did not add significant aspects to the second version of his book.

One of the few expressive removals from the first novel is the excerpt in which the trio decides to go to the Folletiere châteaux. This is where the twins’ grandmother inhabits, and to arrive there, they invite Rollo, an Argentinian friend who has a car. There, their grandmother obliges them to go to a cousin’s wedding. The removal of this sequence brings this second novel closer to the film. In the first novel, the châteaux and the wedding sequence provides the understanding that, even though the characters relate to other people from outside the apartment, they are still alienated. Danielle (Isabelle in *The Dreamers* 2003 and 2004), for example, scorns her cousin Jacquemette because of her bourgeois life style. Although, she herself also possesses a quite limited understanding. Her cousin is a flat and simpleton character, whose newlywed husband is only interested in the bride’s family’s money, he even cheats on her during their wedding party (103). This marriage exposes the falsehood in their bourgeois relation, which is sustained by money and status. On the other hand, Danielle is not able to see their own bourgeois actions; an example is that their alienation in relation to May 68 is maintained by films, sex and the twins’ father’s financial support. In general, the trio always stands from a non-engaging political perspective, as when they sit on a balcony playing God while the other cinephiles are worried about the “Langlois Affair” (16). Thus, both Danielle and her cousin are alienated but in different ways. The former is more related to misinterpreting, while the latter to being a philistine. The trio’s interaction with other people shows that they do not truly understand the political context.

In the film and in the second book, the characters seem to have a better understanding of May 68. They never go to Folletiere, or any other place. They start at the Cinémathèque, spend a long period locked in the apartment, until they finally hit the streets again. This isolation and cyclic series of action provide the understanding that the apartment isolates them. It infers the idea that they are alienated because the apartment creates this world within a world, that only in this apartment they can fantasize about sex and films. As soon as they leave it, they reintegrate their previous activism, or at least pretend to do so.

Bearing this in mind, it is possible to associate the texts’ titles to their characters. *The Dreamers*’s (2003 and 2004) main characters are

dreamers. Since while in the apartment they live in a private world, as in a dream or an alienated illusion. But still, they know what the reality under their window is, they simply ignore it. *The Holy Innocents's* characters, on the other hand, are holy, or naïve. They do not comprehend the political movement, being apart from the events, even when they are participating. Besides, it is ironical how a trio which is so sexuality aroused can be “holy” and “innocent”, but they are, as their political understanding of it is so limited.

In the second novel, Adair did not create new characters, he eliminated some and modified others. Charles is one of these characters, whose transformation is worth noticing. He is a correspondent character to Dauphin in *The Holy Innocents*, and does not exist in the film. His figure is relevant because, as Dauphin demonstrated in “Chapter I” (16), his hypocritical quality stands for other students: he was once a typical student of economics with conservative and capitalist beliefs (161), but within the revolt he became a kind of bohemian hippie with a Chinese top-knot and mottled jeans, better said a hipster. He stands for a critique in relation to the participants of May 68, because his contradictory change exemplifies and highlights how weak those students beliefs could be, how they could easily change their beliefs according to a different trend. As this character does not exist in the film, this second novel becomes closer to the first book in this aspect, but mainly it shows that it positions a further critique in relation to the film.

The twins’ stepmother shows another difference related to the characters. In the first novel, the contrast between Danielle and her stepmother expose much of the ideas of the period. Danielle is young and bold and represents some important issues associated with the rise of the feminist movement. On the other hand, her stepmother is treated as a maid or a secretary for the entire family, serving only to full-fill their immediate needs, like food and cleaning. In the second novel, the twins have a mother and not a stepmother, but still she is a non-paid maid and a “much younger woman than her husband” (50). Thus, in the novels, the disparities between Danielle/Isabelle and her stepmother/mother indicate a gap between generations in exposing how the feminist rise distanced daughters from their mothers. The film, on the other hand, portrays a young demanding mother and wife. She does not bow to their wishes, but shows wisdom and balance in the family. Despite this, she does all the home chores by herself. Still, the gap between her and Isabelle is smaller, which indicates a crescendo in women’s fight for equal rights, and not a sudden upraise as in the novels.

4.1.2 The Postmodern Historicism

The novels portray a romanticism that does not exist in the film. In the novels, the apartment becomes a world in which sex is synonym for degradation, as Théo's masturbation, Matthew's double rape and the twins' incest show. Once sex becomes associated with the apartment, it becomes a key factor in holding them alienated. As a consequence, romantic love does not have space in this sexual arena, and is only realized in the streets, during a May 68 riot with Matthew's death. In both novels, he dies trying to save the twins. Irony can be read in one's understanding that is in a historical representation, a supposedly recovering of reality, that romantic overrated love may exist. Otherwise, when they are inside the apartment, Matthew is only a sexual object for the twins to play with, and his desperate love does not mean much to them. To conclude this romantic idealization, the twins lament and cry for their dead friend (189). The alleged realism associated with history is subverted with Mathew's romantic deed. The history of May 68 is trivialized into one brave sacrifice, and the nostalgic plot imposes itself over history. But it is worth noticing that according to Linda Hutcheon, irony may not be a simple defense against nostalgia, but it rather becomes "a comment on the present as much as on the past" ("Irony" 23), a comment about the difficult in present representations.

On the other hand, Bertolucci's film provides a different perspective on history. In the film, love is not even an issue. The trio's relation infers more self-discovery and growth than love. As a consequence, Matthew does not die heroic, he rather abandons the twins in the final riot. His abandonment also subverts the historical representation by how he contrasts with the rest of the crowd. The fact that he portrays a completely different view of May 68 may suggest the influence of a present understanding over that historical moment. In addition, he is the film's narrator, and he does so from a future perspective, which provides the illusion that his future position influenced his past action. Thus, the historical representation is also subverted and trivialized, but because of this consciousness that arises from Matthew's act.

Other minor difference is the division of the first book in chapters, which constitute three parts: Paris. February, 1968; Paris-Normandy. March, April, 1968; and Paris. May, 1968. This division highlights the historical moments of the novel, and suggests a further concern in situating the reader in relation to history. This is also emphasized in the first novel's long explanation about May 68 provided

by Dauphin, who elucidates about the Nanterre students (135), Daniel Cohn-Bendit (136), the consecutive strikes (137), the communist writers (138-139), and the rise against the bourgeoisie (141). This concern with the May 68's details diminishes in the film and second book version. An example is the many authors cited in *The Holy Innocents* (1988) – Marx, Engels, Lenin, Bakunin, Gramsci and Althusser (139) – they do not appear in the adaptations, which corroborates to the idea that these adaptations are less concerned about providing a full explanation of May 68, than they are about being conscious about their representations.

4.2 THE POSTMODERN UPHEAVAL

What is further interesting about Adair's rewriting is that he is quite aware of the process. His own words expose this consciousness in relation to the adaptation, as he declares that he rewrote the novel "as in a palimpsest, to *overwrite*" (*Dreamers* 192). It is this understanding that adds to my considering it in terms of postmodernity. By this I mean that postmodern consciousness is foregrounded not only on the texts' historical representation, but also on the act of adapting. Similarly to the parody of Jean-Luc Godard's *Bande à Part*, in which Bertolucci's *The Dreamers* overtly positions itself as historically influenced by this film, by an explicit appropriation of Godard's film. The second book version is also consciously related to its adapted sources – *The Holy Innocents* (1988) and *The Dreamers* (2003).

In other words, the act of rewriting after a filmic adaptation also creates a loop of postmodern reference. It indicates the closeness between what Fredric Jameson refers as high and low art (54), literature and cinema, respectively. That is, if one considers literature as canonical and cinema as a mass media. In fact, this process constitutes more than a simple approximation of the arts: it is an overcoming of the alleged boundaries between high and low art. The postmodern feature relies on the breaking of these hierarchical references.²⁴

Moreover, the process of adapting an adaptation unveils a further postmodern feature: Jameson's understanding of the capital power over artistic production (56). Taking into consideration the range and popularity of the filmic medium, it is not hard to understand why publishing houses tend to reprint books that are adapted to the screen. In

²⁴ Linda Hutcheon already discussed the knocking down of this barrier in relation to adaptation in *A Theory of Adaptation*, in which she relates the issue of adaptation to a variety of unexpected media.

many cases, the covers of these books are a clear appeal to the film, as it happens in Adair's second version, which on the top right, one can read "Now a major motion picture."

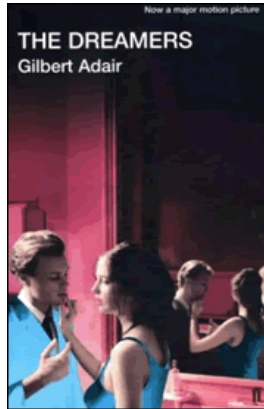


Figure 2 - The Dreamers's cover by Gilbert Adair.

In view of this, Adair's rewriting maybe understood through an economic interest, in which his novel would become more popular after the film, and the rewriting of it would boost the book's sale. This affirmation is reinforced by the understanding that few and unexpressive were the modifications proposed by the author.

The texts' approach to sex also contributes to the understanding of this financial project backing up the adapting process. The film is quite sexually oriented, it has explicit sex scenes (00:55:14 and 01:00:20) and the main characters are naked in so many sequences that their nakedness becomes familiar to the spectator. Nevertheless, when compared with the books, the film is less saucy. The homosexuality, the incestuousness, the androgyny and the sodomitical rape from the novels just disappear in the film. The omission of these sexual instances could indicate a desire to appeal to a bigger public, mainly if one considers the higher costs implied in a filmic production. Besides, Bertolucci's previous films have showed that he indeed has a tendency for bold sexual scenes, as *Last Tango in Paris* and *1900*. These arguments lead to Jameson's notion that artistic values may be bounded by external factor, in this case the financial one.

5. FINAL REMARKS

This research has argued that the historical representations in Gilbert Adair's novels – *The Holy Innocents* and *The Dreamers* – and Bernardo Bertolucci's film – *The Dreamers* – reveal a postmodern position by being both nostalgic and ironical conscious. The history of France and its youth in 1968 is recurrently emphasized and subverted. This contradiction indicates a need to revise history from a contemporary perspective in which longing and distance are two main issues. To reach this purpose, my analysis foregrounded different aspects related to history and postmodernism in each of the analyzed texts. In the first novel, the discussed issues were the Cinémathèque Française, the “Langlois Affair”, the May 68 uprising, French youth and its relation to sexuality. In the film, I gave priority to intertextuality in different sequences, in which Bertolucci's use of *mise-en-scène* and editing disclosed other historical issues, such as the appearance of French actor Jean-Pierre L  aud, a scene from Jean-Luc Godard's *Bande    Part*, the confrontation between traditional bourgeois and youth revolutionary values. The second novel's discussion provided a comparison between the texts' use of history and their insertion within a postmodern context.

In *The Holy Innocents*, I demonstrated how nostalgia foregrounds with the intermingling of “factual” description and metaphorical language. These modes of writing come to the fore with the Cin  math  que Fran  aise, the “Langlois Affair” and the rats, as representatives of a cinephiles' generation. The main characters – Danielle, Matthew and Guillaume – represent typical *rats*, but their excessive obsession with movies leads to an alienation, which distances them from the May 68 events. The result is an obliteration of the political movement and an emphasis on their drive towards sex, cinema and music. These cultural elements are part of the uprising, of course, but the political and historical facts move into a sort of background, as a setting for the characters' libidinal desire. The historical representation of May 68 is romanticized in a blurred nostalgic view.

Nostalgia, which is present in all three texts, arises from the longing for a period in which everything seemed connected. Music, sex, drugs and films seem to transmit the same ideas about the youth culture of the late 60s in France. Above all, they all seemed to be passing through a revolutionary stage. Music with Rock and Roll; sex with contraceptive pills and no marital attachments; drugs with the new synthetic hallucinogens like amphetamines and LSD; and films with the

French New Wave. It was all new, and all seems to be converging into what became the May 68 Uprising in France. Indeed, the western world as a whole was passing through a wave of countercultural movements, which lead to some unforgettable revolts, such as the Prague Spring in 1968, the Night of Tlatelolco in Mexico in 1968 and the Moratorium to the End of Vietnam War in the USA in 1969. From this perspective, May 68 acquires a new meaning and becomes a revolt not only nourished by students' and workers' concerns, but also by the collision of all the newness, which stimulated the youth generation so intensely.

Although the novel highlights historical figures of May 68, like the leader Daniel Cohn-Bendit, who represents the youth revolt, the role of the intellectual force and the rise against the petit-bourgeois; emphasis is given to the three young characters' alienation from the historical events. Thus I argue that it is mostly the contrast between the nostalgic view of history and historical consciousness that generates irony in the text. The ironic contradiction also arises from the characters' alienation, the fact that they stay still for so long makes it hardly believable, which in a way trivializes history. This irony alludes a paradoxical self-consciousness, in which the novel reveals the impossibility of recovering history, and that an unbiased view of history cannot be avoided. The nostalgic view of history appeals to a personal much more than to an accurate historical account. This notion is complemented by the novel's denouement, in which the plot imposes itself over history. Matthew's romantic death resumes the entire historical representation into one heroic deed, which is also quite ironical. This romanticized end raises utopia, and the characters' future is also idealized, as if Matthew's death saved not only the twins, but also the Cinémathèque, French cinema and even France in itself. Besides, May 68 was so largely discussed, as "Chapter I" shows (27-8), that it feels even harder to provide an original image of it.

In the analysis of Bertolucci's *The Dreamers*, a revealing editing aspect is the intertwinement of real footage and the reproduction of them in the fictional film, as illustrated in the interweave of a Godard's sequence. This technique evinces the metalinguistic aspect of the film by overtly exposing the reproduced referent. Such use of metalanguage not only reveals nostalgia with its overt reproduction, but also irony in its contradictory treatment of temporality in the Cinémathèque's riot and in the Godard's sequence. Moreover, the exposition of the reproduced film shows how the recovery of history relates not only to the history of France in 1968, but also to the film's history as a work inserted in a parodic web of references.

Unlike the novel, in the film Matthew avoids a utopia view when he does not die heroically, but rather contests the riot and leaves, arguing that the violence and protests were meaningless. When he does so he unveils a future – in relation to the characters – or a present pessimistic interpretation about May 68. His act implies a de-naturalization in relation to time, since in a way, the future influences the past. This notion returns to Hutcheon's understanding that the past is only accessed by representations. In this sense, the past is unreachable, as our knowledge of it is filtered from a contemporary perspective. The historical representation becomes a reflection of both past and present (Hutcheon, *Politics* 7). The result is a more conscious view of the text's own position in history. Not to mention that this ironical consciousness draws attention to the texts as texts, to their meta-narrative. When doing so they distance from an attempt to be factual history, or precisely to provide an illusion of truth, they rather remind that they are textual and fictive constructions.

In addition, Robert Tally argues that utopia is about the present (115), since it fixes the present with a future positive view. In this sense, nostalgia may also be about the present, as it longs for a romanticized past as a space marked by our own desires and drives, but which is, nonetheless, markedly different from our present. The change of focus from utopia to nostalgia is argued with Huyssen's statement that the present and the future are disenchanted references in the postmodern period, as society changed the way it relates to time, it went through a "shift from an exclusive future orientation to the memory pole" (*Twilight* 89). Because of this shift, nostalgia becomes a "twin for utopia, as the maker for longing" (Schlipphacke 72). In this perspective, nostalgia is more a negation of a present and a future than a vain idealization of past. For instance, it is possible to affirm that the film's nostalgia longs for a kind of cinephilia cannot be seen nowadays. Since Bertolucci's *The Dreamers* is much more a historical account of cinephilia than of May 68. In sum, we feel nostalgic about something that looks better in the past than it does in the present, or it may look in the future.

Moreover, Adair comments that nowadays it is too easy to find a movie, and because of this we lost the passion that those 60's cinephiles had. He believes that their cinephilia came from the difficulty in watching some movies. This notion adds to my review of Adair's and Bertolucci's personal relations to the Cinémathèque and the French New Wave in the introductory chapter. As I noted, this is not to justify my

analysis with an authorial argumentation, but I do not deny the weight their experience might have had in the composition of their works.

Lastly, I provided a comparison between the three texts from the corpus. This analysis broadens the historical account from history in the text, to history within the texts. By this I mean a discussion on how these texts relate and how their plot is adapted. Through this perspective, one might notice the influence of a financial aspect, which according to Jameson indicates how art is also a capital product (65). This argument is sustained due to the small changes done by Adair. Indeed, he only shorted the first version of his novel, suggesting that the second novel may be after all a marketable novel made possible by the popularity of the movie. The new cover, for instance, is a clear appeal to the film. On top of this, I observe that the modifications are not an issue of media differences, but rather of authorial choices.

The importance of Jameson's pessimistic view of the relation between art and the market does not necessarily invalidate my choice for Hutcheon's multiple perspectives on postmodernity. I consider their theories through different angles, which in a way complements one another. Thus, according to Hutcheon's standpoint the historical representation in the corpora denotes a historiographical metafiction (*Politics* 15). This terminology is explained as a kind of text that is both historical and fictional, but mainly that it is conscious of its own artificial historical account, which raises a contradictory irony. This kind of historiographical metafiction is possible with one's understanding that postmodern texts are open to different and converging perspectives. As "real" history is impossible to be represented, we are left with various and multiple versions of the real. For this reason, the corpora slightly differ in their view of late 60s youth. The novels portray a more romanticized youth, while the film a more disillusioned view, in which the young generation is marked by a bourgeois selfishness, which did not care for the revolt in as much as it cared about itself being revolutionary. Furthermore, May 68 is recovered due to its undeniable importance, but the distance kept from it may also indicate an attempt not to mystify it, or not to transform it into an ossified image. It does so by showing different images of its participants from the true engaged revolutionaries with Cohn-Bendit, to hypocritical and alienated ones with Dauphin/Charles and the twins.

Nonetheless, my argument diverges from Jameson's notion that nostalgia conveys kitsch historicism (55). Bertolucci's and Adair's historical representations may trivialize May 68, but their texts actually do not attempt to portray a real history of this revolt. The texts' narrative

distance from such attempt by focusing on a nostalgic account, which emphasizes a different kind of history, a contextual one, which encompasses books, music, films, sexual behavior, among other. Thus, their representation aims at a view of the late 60s cinephiles, who were only part of that huge movement. In doing so, it understands that the portrayal of such a subject may be too complex, as Adair comments about Hollywood's Vietnam movies: it may be "too multilayered, to be comfortably confined within the closed plot structures" (*Postmodernism* 10). In this sense, nostalgia becomes a reflection on that cinephilia, reinforcing the longing for that late 60s. Furthermore, it arises through a consciousness of the particularity of one's experience, and one's contemporary perspective over it. In doing so, historical representation does not necessarily create a limiting perspective over history. It rather understands nostalgia as a postmodern way of making meaning, in its own terms. As Matthew, we dream about France in 1968 with films, sex and music, but we can only have a glance at the "Langlois Affair" and the May 68 uprising, never fully realizing or participating in them.

Through this perspective, I corroborate with Jameson's idea that temporal boundaries have effaced in postmodern period (66). These boundaries have become more slippery, as their intersection has increased. But I do not consider this effacement as a negative aspect, since what effaced the boundaries is our awareness in relation to the representation of history. The past is no longer a simple nostalgic dream, it is a conscious dream of an unrecoverable past.

Umberto Eco denominated this conscious postmodern period as "an age of lost innocence", which names this thesis. His idea stands for a period in which quotations and allusions must always come with their references. The lost innocence means that we cannot quote naïvely believing that our viewer/reader will not recall/know the reference. With this in mind, the novels and film emphasize their loss of innocence when representing history and quoting their artistic references so ironically conscious. Through a different perspective, "loss of innocence" also associates with the late 60's youth, which revolutionized most of the period's blooming issues – sex, feminism, drugs, cinema, to name a few – and to the characters' own personal history. As Matthew says "it was here [in France] that I got my real education" (00:03:01).

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