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Chapter 16

Time Warps: The Plasticity of History in the Eyes of Robert Zemeckis

Francis Mickus

We remember World War Two as a time when the entire population met the situation with gravity and fortitude. That, however, is the history Frank Capra would want you to believe in his *Why We Fight* series (1942-44), or the visions of England and America we find in William Wyler's *Mrs. Miniver* (1942) or Lewis Milestone's *The Purple Heart* (1944). Robert Zemeckis, on the other hand, tells us that in wartime England people blew cocaine and had sex in closets while in wartime America, the response to a possible Japanese invasion was a mix of panic, bravado, incompetence and lust.

The films of Zemeckis maintain a dynamic relationship with the past and are often structured around temporal problems, be they memory, history or the very fabric of film narrative. There are only two early films which are not set in the past: *Used Cars* in 1980 and *Romancing the Stone* in 1984—the latter being commissioned work. But Zemeckis is less interested in major events than in personal, cultural and popular history which have an equal or greater hold on our lives than social or political history. He reminds us that what we retain from history are not the facts and figures, but the stories we are told. With the exception of *Allied* (2016), the director does not shoot historical films. While some films reinvent the past, as do *Welcome to Marwen* (2018) or the *Back to the Future* series (1985, 1989, 1990), Zemeckis exploits rather actual past events to create unexpected situations. His early script for Steven Spielberg's *1941* (1979), for example, is based on the panic sparked by the fear of a Japanese invasion during World War Two. *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (1988) hinges on the construction of the freeways, which actually did entail the destruction of public transportation systems.

Central to Zemeckis' outlook is the notion that individuals are essential to the unfurling of events, but that they do not live those events as if they are writing history. Young Beatle fans in *I*

Wanna Hold Your Hand (1978) are hysterically excited by the band, but generally do not see themselves as living a cultural moment. In *Allied*, people fight wars because they have to, not because of a great cosmic plan. To understand our past is to understand ourselves, and thus amend our future. In the *Back to the Future* films, the future becomes a past that may in fact never happen, whereas the past can be a future that might not ever happen either. The “you’re fired” page from Marty’s future can fade in his girlfriend’s pocket as easily as the photo of his family’s existence can fade in Marty’s. Time in the films of Zemeckis is as important as space. Our past makes us; but we also make our past, and it is as uncertain as our future. The stories we tell become more real than the realities we live. What, then, is our past?

History is always written and read along ideological lines. It is invariably *mediated* and almost always impersonal: historians have often written about past events to justify existing present situations. Thus, the nineteenth-century historian Jules Michelet could describe the history of France as a gradual unification of the nation along linguistic, cultural and territorial lines. Zemeckis was a student at USC at a time when scholars were both calling into question this historical ideology, and beginning to explore the place film had in historical and social narratives. Contemporary historians like Marc Ferro examined the field’s discomfort with film as historical document, precisely since it tends to upset established discourse. “Newsreel or fiction, the reality of the film image seems terribly real,” Ferro notes, “it becomes apparent that it does not correspond with authority’s affirmations, theoretical framework or oppositional analysis. Rather than illustrate their words, they often tend to show them up.”¹ These shifts in historical perspective influenced Zemeckis who clearly enjoys exploiting these ambiguities. There is the gleeful film student’s humor in quoting Griffith’s *Birth of Nation* (1915) as a factual representation of the past in *Forrest Gump* (1994); the joke lies precisely in the uncomfortable place that film has in history, both as historical narrative and historical document.

For Zemeckis, history ultimately is written to suit the storyteller’s needs. *Welcome to Marwen*

is a film about using the past to cope with the present, and is built on layers of recreation, including playful references to Zwick's own past filmography, particularly the use of a lego DeLorean as a time machine for one of the characters. In the film, Mike Hogencamp (Steve Carell) invents photo romances which he sets in World War Two because, as he explains, "it is the last time we were the good guys." That the "Good Guys" trope be effectively true is at the same time debatable and irrelevant: both Hogencamp's age and lack of memory would insure that any vision he would have of the Second World War is basically a recreation. His war stories are Barbie doll recreations of "G.I. meets resistance fighters" films. In the stories, Hogencamp is not even reliving specific events from the War; he is reliving his own trauma— variations on the "rape-and-revenge" movie, where it is the women who invariably come to his rescue.² *Marwen* can glamorize the Resistance because there is no need for even a fictionalized reality. The War is a backdrop and the resistance "cell" is comprised of the women who each in their way help him cope with his real life trauma. Hogencamp's need to hold onto that fictionalization is dramatized by his habit of pulling around the toy jeep filled with his characters wherever he goes.

Retelling the past becomes the primary means of reconstructing and explaining the past. It is not historical accuracy that is needed for understanding the truth, but narrative significance. Despite its epic sweep more reminiscent of David Lean than of Michael Curtiz, *Allied* is concerned with personal rather drama than political needs. Indeed, what is often depicted as nobly tragic sacrifice leaves us here with a numbing sense of waste and loss. Max Vatan's (Brad Pitt) war becomes one to save his family rather than one to save England or Democracy. He ultimately ceases to care about his wife's past; what really matters is the fact that he must do all he can to insure his family's future. The enemy at the end of the day is the person bent on destroying his family, and that enemy has no uniform. These people can be a ring of German spies embedded in suburban London; they can wear German uniforms or even be French policemen. His superiors in England are as sadistic as the German officers were in *Casablanca*. While Max will do all he can (from breaking up the spy ring to trying to hijack a plane), it is ultimately his wife Marianne Beauséjour (Marion Cotillard) who

will take matters into her hands. For the love of her husband and daughter, she makes the only (ultimately tragic) choice possible [by committing suicide and thus avoiding her husband be charged with treason].

Allied's shift of gears trips up Max' stolid, unwavering character. He never see the shades of grey, and while the dangers shift from the War in general to his wife, his allegiance is never in doubt. His dilemma stems from the fact that he must face a wife he discovers he never knew, yet knows intimately. The film, curiously, is driven more by Marianne's shadier character: she is the one who must confront her past. *Allied* closes with her writing a letter to her daughter: it could as well have been structured around that letter from the start, but would that have changed anything? Max and Marion are antithetical Zemeckian archetypes, one who is impervious to history and the consequential nature of his choices and one who is trapped in a past she must hide. Both become walled off from the world around them: the film closes with Max and his daughter living away from everything but their memories on a horse ranch in Canada. The story, as told through Max's eyes, creates a sense of moral neutrality (and even validity) which the film subverts: it is Marion rather than Max who changes and even grows through the course of the story.

Allied illustrates a recurring characteristic of Zemeckis' films: events are never lived historically. Indeed, much of humor as well as dramatic tension in his films stem from what can best be described as the characters' historic inertia. They progress through events, oblivious of the past - sometimes at their own peril. Sartre was able to coin the famously paradoxical aphorism "never were we as free as under the German Occupation"³ because freedom is an inescapable existential reality, literally an inalienable right. Because of the restrictions and humiliations, the daily choices people made had terribly high stakes but were still made at the moment for the moment. The Occupation reminded us that people do the best they can to get by, that is to survive and protect those they love. This aspect was central to the daily experience of the War on the Continent, where people had to just survive the Occupation, which often meant surviving the day. It was much less prevalent in England and for the most part nonexistent in America (the Japanese internment camps

in California are conveniently forgotten by everybody, including Zemeckis and social historians). World War Two becomes a recurring theme in Zemeckis' films because the War is seen to have been fought on moral grounds, and moral choices are always open ended. We see the story from Max' point of view and feel for his plight in *Allied* but are led to explore the moral aspect of saving Marianne. As in *Marwen*, the Americans can claim to be the good guys because they are the ones who tell the stories which are edited to fit a specific narrative, conveniently omitting not only that we were never faced with such dilemmas, but that we too carried out such dubious acts.

Zemeckis regularly reminds us that it is impossible to think historically, we only live in the moment, which is open to a multiplicity of resolutions. The implications of one's actions—a sense of historic perspective—are lost on Zemeckis' characters. Because we forget so much, how do we handle history if we must relive it? The mere fact that Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox) returns to the past in *Back to the Future* causes unexpected ripples that inevitably alter subsequent history, and Marty can do nothing to prevent that but reset the key events that insure his existence—which he knows through the story his mother Loraine (Lea Thompson) recounts about her courtship with Marty's father: one of teenage romance and courage. Upon returning to the fifties, Marty discovers the fantasy of the romance and the reality of the encounter, as well as unexpected aspects of his parents' natures. His father is a wimpy peeping Tom and his mother a nascent nymphomaniac. Since he inadvertently disrupts the historic sequence of events, Marty must recreate the past, and in so doing he recreates the legend, complete with the romance and grandeur his mother recalls. History and memory may appear initially as narrative contrivances: Zemeckis and his co-writer Bob Gale for *Back to the Future* build the films' plots around what would normally be treated as Marty McFly's back story. But they become effectively dynamic when it becomes necessary to confront the difference between history and memory. The series explore all aspects of memory, even that of the film itself with its variations (darker ones especially in the second installment of the trilogy) of the original film. The possibility of using the sequel to revisit the first movie fascinated Zemeckis.⁴ The trilogy throughout “gives a perspective to the repetitions and echoes it uses. Not only does

Marty replay scenes from one film to the next, but also is made to see himself as an actor in these stories.”⁵

In 1985, people could still remember 1955, but much was already being historically reconstructed and artistically reinvented. *Back to the Future* was shot as much with images of the era in mind as with the reality of the era. Early television series like *I Love Lucy* (1951-56) or *Leave it to Beaver* (1957-63) enjoyed tremendous popularity in syndication well into the 1970s: *Leave it to Beaver* was successfully revived as *Still the Beaver* from 1984 to 1989. It was mostly more recent fare, however, such as the series *Happy Days* (its ten year run ending in 1984) and the group Sha Na Na’s variety show (1977-81) which fueled the fifties’ nostalgia. *Back to the Future* develops a multilayered motif as it explores our memory of the fifties as well as the cultural heritage of the era, including the Western, which was then at its height. The 1955 downtown movie theater marquee in the film advertises *Cattle Queen of Montana*—a western from that year (actually 1954)—to set up the joke about Ronald Reagan becoming president.⁶

These small jokes give the time paradoxes their flavor, but they also give the film its heft. Marty McFly can announce to a group of 1955 patrons that the colored busboy at the local café will become mayor of the city, while being blissfully ignorant of the thirty years of tribulation that were needed to achieve even the possibility of a colored busboy becoming mayor. If the idea can be a joke in 1985, it is because we can appreciate the historic tension that statement generates.

The impact of such ignorance is given its full sweep in *Forrest Gump* (1994) a film where history is given center stage, only to be denied its significance. The title character (Tom Hanks) tells the story of his life to various people while sitting on a bench waiting for a bus. The story told in a first-person narrative is so self-centered as to be obnoxious, but that is mitigated by Forrest Gump’s severe mental deficiency. He can only see things through his own eyes. While anyone else would have been thrilled to shake the President’s hand, entering the space of a historic figure for a short time, all Forrest can remember is his own self (his need to pee with Kennedy, his war wound with

Johnson). He sees and participates in most of the major events of his generation, but has no opinion about them. He serves in Vietnam, phones the front desk of the Watergate hotel about a disturbance (flashlights in a dark room in the opposite building), and during a television interview, inadvertently suggests to John Lennon the idea of the song "Imagine." Forrest does not have a clue as to the significance of his actions or the meaning of the events. Events that have no incidence in his life do not exist: there is no reference to the lunar landing, for example. The protagonist witnesses the Civil Rights movement (waving to the camera at one point), but he cannot fathom its significance. What matters to him is that he politely pick up one of the black students' book: it is what any well-mannered person should do.

Many cultural historians find these simplifications in *Forrest Gump's* history unsettling. Thomas B. Byers' article "History Re-Membered" discusses how the film, by obliterating the significance of history paves the way for a reinstatement of "traditional values," basically white male dominance. A Phallocracy of sorts.⁷ Byers' article tends to take *Forrest Gump* at face value, as if the content of the film mirrors the film maker's opinions. Such a judgment however does not take into account certain aspects of the film that call attention to its own conceits. The film is told through Forrest Gump's recollections, and he is presented as a simpleton incapable of seeing beyond his immediate surroundings. Yet two crucial scenes cannot have been recalled by Forrest in the way they are shown in the film. Forrest could not conceive (what is explicitly presented in the film) that his mother would trade sexual favors to get him enrolled in school. Nor could Forrest know that the microphones had been turned off when he gives his speech in Washington. In the first case, he would remember his view from the hallway, in the second, he would remember his speech. Both scenes are ironic cinematic jokes that allow the audience to see more than what Forrest remembers, but they also serve as two editorial interruptions where the image flatly contradicts Forrest's recollections. When sequences visually expand upon Forrest's narrative, they usually draw upon what he remembers seeing and hearing. These two scenes however directly call into question the "implicit objectivity" inherent in Forrest's simple nature as reinforced by the first-person

narrative. They force us to reconsider the film's apparent historic flattening out of values and situations while questioning the reality and significance of what we have been shown, and not shown, throughout the film. Forrest Gump (the character) reduces history to a series of tautologies without significance. Reality, as *Forrest Gump* (the film) illustrates, may not always be what we see, or even remember.

Nevertheless, that which we remember is the most operative aspect of our past. Zemeckis' first film is a personal memory; he was thirteen when the Beatles arrived in New York, by which time Beatlemania was already a powerful historical moment. *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* (1978) explores Beatlemania fifteen years after the event and eight years after the Beatles broke up. In hindsight, the most amazing aspect of this debut film was that it could be made at all. It had only one recognizable actress (Nancy Allen), and the production team as well as the writer and director were unknown. Even with the backing of the young *New Hollywood* hot shot Steven Spielberg, it was shot on a shoestring budget. Yet it had access not only to enough Beatle songs to fill an album, but to footage of the Beatles as well as their iconic instruments. Forty years later, access to the mere *right* to use Beatles songs for the Curtis and Boyle film *Yesterday* (2019) would cost more than the rest of the above the line talent combined.

In 1978, although all four Beatles were still around and young enough to pass as their younger selves, they politely declined to appear in Zemeckis' film. At the time, they were "old hat," and nobody (not even the Beatles themselves) was interested in revisiting that past. Not to be deterred, Zemeckis decided to shoot around them, using an apparent weakness as a strength. The absence of the band on the sets was dismissed by Norman Kagan as a contrivance: "Here it's just an annoying constant reminder of the film's low-budget cheapness and of such depictions of real pleasures such as *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help!*"⁸ The band members' refusal would in fact serve the director's turn, for the film told the story of a group of adolescents trying to see the Beatles for their appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show*—and their inability to do so. With Zemeckis, reality is

expanded by its memorial replacements. Alexis Patelier and Danielo Zecevic describe the crescendo in the practice: “The directorial premise of *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* relies on the many methods used to fill the absence of the actual Beatles: album sleeves, figurines and camera screens.”⁹ The film becomes essentially the flip side to Richard Lester’s *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964), which shows the band unflappably watch the madness that goes on around them. The kids in the story do get to fulfill their dream, but there is for the audience a certain poignancy to the film’s premise and delivery (even more so today), as we will only ever see the Beatles through the images of the past—the records and the camera screens.

Zemeckis’ attitude to the past can be described as sarcastic nostalgia, where what you remember and what really happened are two different things. The sarcasm functions because there is an inherent difference between what the audience knows (or at least thinks it knows) and what the characters know. The dramatic and comic effectiveness of the characters’ historical inertia plays against audiences’ supposed historical awareness. Zemeckis opens his film with a less discussed aspect of Beatlemania: its commercialism. The first sequence of *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* is set in a record store, a scene of mass hysteria with a montage where boxes of albums are ripped open, discs are quickly snapped up and the shot of the cash register logging \$3.95 is repeatedly shown on the screen. Beatlemania is remembered as an explosion in popular music, but that revolution had deeper consequences, which go beyond its economic impact. The music arouses unexpected desires in people. The vicariously sexual experience of the event is shown repeatedly as a series of dirty jokes, the businessman’s kinky demands in a hotel room or the fans buying what they think are pieces of the Beatles’ sheets. Nancy Allen’s character Pam makes loves to Paul’s bass (bringing forth the underlying eroticism in the apparently innocuous song “Love Me Do”), she is stuck under the bed in the Beatles’ hotel room and finally grasps her crotch after the concert. Historical ambivalence, both personal and political, when treated comically, becomes unsettling.

Historic significance is not lost on Zemeckis; it is considered in a more oblique fashion. *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (1988) is set at a pivotal time in American history, just after the Second

World War, when the Cold War started flaring up, but before civil rights in a highly segregated, openly racist America. Historians decry Zemeckis' lack of consideration for Civil Rights, but then fail to explore the eras and topics of his films. The very year *Roger Rabbit* takes place is significant. In 1947, both Major League Baseball and the Army were integrated, but that integration could hardly apply to the rest of society. Zemeckis addresses racism indirectly, through his depiction of the Toons, who, notes Rafik Djoumi, “embody homos and African-Americans, i.e. the two communities that Hollywood needed desperately but wanted to keep at a distance, in an undeclared ghetto.”¹⁰ Toontown, where toons live, is distinctly separate from the rest of Los Angeles, just as the film's Ink and Paint club is a reference to the black speakeasies of the early century, where well-heeled whites would go slumming.¹¹ Judge Doom (Christopher Lloyd) is cruel, violent, and hunts down toons in ways reminiscent of Hollywood versions of the Gestapo, complete with glasses and a leather jacket which resemble those worn by the German Agent in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1980). The references to racism and anti-Semitism are clear and deliberate. The first use of the Dip is grizzly because it is gratuitous. Zemeckis notes that he and his collaborators “were very aware of what we were doing, although we draw the line at calling the Dip the Final solution.”¹²

Who Framed Roger Rabbit? dramatically literalizes a truth: fictional characters are real. The film reinvents the legendary Hollywood past, with the added twist that animated characters are as real as any live action star. As such *Roger Rabbit* and *Forrest Gump* become mirror images, where the former treats fictional characters historically while the latter treats historical figures like fictionalizations. We remember Bugs Bunny as well as (if not better than) we do Humphrey Bogart or Franklin Roosevelt. More importantly, we remember them by the same means: with images and storytelling. Biography is fundamentally a fictionalization of the person's life, one that is as open to interpretation and appropriation as the life of any character in a novel is. Fiction is history and history is fiction; and that, for art, is what is essentially useful. The Beatles are characters that hover just beyond the limits of the movie screen. *Roger Rabbit* and *Forrest Gump* explore the process of integrating personal narratives into historical narratives that began with *I Wanna Hold Your Hand*.

Zemeckis denies historical perspective in his films because films are shown in the present tense. There can be no absolute determinacy in films where history becomes the present; when it becomes a film, the past is open to all the possibilities the present enjoys. The Beatles change Pam's life as easily as Forrest nudges John Lennon's career.

The gleeful rage that epitomizes Zemeckis' early work has given way to a more teasingly compassionate treatment of his characters and situations. He better understands some of the reasons behind the irrational behavior people adopt, and so there is a greater sense of hope. But that essential wariness when faced with history has not changed. Is it, however, history that interests Zemeckis or is it not rather a certain sense of the past that we carry within us? In the introduction to its dossier on Zemeckis, the web magazine *Acme* noted that

From the Beatles (*I Wanna Hold Your Hand*) to Santa Claus (*The Polar Express*) while passing through the Old West (*Back to the Future 3*), his films are interested in the beliefs and the great historical and cultural myths. Highly referential and voluntarily self-reflexive they also develop a philosophy of film and the means of its creation.¹³

The great historical and cultural myths the dossier alludes to are all *recent* myths. The history the director explores begins with the Second World War; Zemeckis never discusses the American Revolution or the Pilgrim's crossing over on the Mayflower or even the First World War: the Far West is more the imaginary past of films and television, a land of epic myths rather than historic reality, including most importantly the West as seen through the European eyes of Sergio Leone.

What Zemeckis is ultimately studying is not so much history, but the way in which we transform the past into history. That transformation is fraught with dangers, for, as George Steiner put it, "[i]t is not the literal past that rules us, save, possibly, in a biological sense. It is images of the past. These are often as highly structured and selective as myths."¹⁴ The danger lies precisely in that selectiveness. The opening title to the film *What Lies Beneath* (2000) is an image of the title itself breaking to the surface of a body of water: the first word to appear is *Lies*. The film tells the story of Claire and Norman Spenser (Michelle Pfeiffer and Harrison Ford), a couple who must deal with

their crumbling marriage. Claire must do so by trying to retrieve a memory and Norman by trying to suppress it. The memory in this case is a ghost story, the film becomes a metaphor of how we process the past, which is structured through a series of embellishments (as was the case of Loraine McFly's recollection of her first date) and suppressions as is the case here.

The past for Zemeckis is always personal but becomes social: culture is the network of shared personal references and practices that binds a group or a society. These references are often structured around explanatory narratives: myths. Zemeckis' films are explorations of the cultural myths that are at the heart of contemporary American popular culture, the major events, the lifestyles, but also modes of expression: music and films themselves. He pokes at the tensions that sustain those myths, which demand that the history we are told be riddled by embellishments, omissions and lies. John Ford's *The Man who Shot Liberty Valence* (1962) famously closes with the journalist's line "print the legend." Zemeckis tells stories that upset the legend. He dirties the embellishments, questions the lies and leaves holes where omissions are found.

Popular culture is notoriously evanescent, as tastes, styles and artifacts change rapidly. One popular song is forgotten and replaced by another, but as the twentieth century progressed, the means to reproduce and disseminate popular cultural artifacts became increasingly sophisticated. The resulting work became more permanent and consequently, popular culture could be given its own historic perspective. Artists themselves became aware of this and anxious of their own significance. When Zemeckis was finishing his *Back to the Future* trilogy, George Harrison released his song "When We Was Fab," which addresses the cultural significance of the Beatles. In 1978 the band were virtually discarded; ten years later they had become fixtures in Western culture. Zemeckis is prescient in his assessment of the Beatles' impact; despite its initial failure, *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* played an important role in reassessing the Beatles. The film itself has grown in stature, earning its place in film history with its inclusion in the prestigious Criterion Collection.

Zemeckis and his co-writer Bob Gale are both surprised by the lasting popularity of *Back to the Future*, but its popularity is proof that it has become increasingly difficult to establish a valid

distinction between “popular” and “high” culture. Which one creates greater coherence in society as a whole? What are the shared references? The director himself has earned his place in cultural history, and an important one. In 1978, Spielberg backed his star pupil for his first film. Forty years later in the futuristic film *Ready Player One* (2018), in which the memory of both Robert Zemeckis and *Back to the Future* play an important role, it is Spielberg who pays tribute to his pupil by placing him in a list of masters that includes his own mentor Stanley Kubrick.

The past has become the future.

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² Robert Hospayan, "Klaus Barbies," in *Film de Culte*,

<http://www.filmdeculte.com/cinema/film/Bienvenue-a-Marwen-6735.html> (accessed Nov 10, 2019).

³ Jean-Paul Sartre, "La République du silence," in *Les Lettres Françaises*, September 9, 1944 n.20. Posted by the Bibliothèque National de France on their page *La Laïcité en Questions* <http://classes.bnf.fr/laicite/anthologie/46.htm>. (accessed November 23, 2019).

⁴ See Caseen Gaines, *We Don't Need Roads: the Making of the Back to the Future Trilogy* (New York: Plume Books 2015), 129.

⁵ Alexis Patallier and Danielo Zecevic, "Déjà Vu : Paradoxes temporels, répétitions et dédoublements," in *Acme Revue Cinématographique* n. 1 October 2008, 44-47, 46. All translations from French are mine.

http://vincent.baticle.free.fr/pdf/Acme_RobertZemeckis.pdf (accessed November 10, 2019).

It can be added that the third film is surprisingly distant from the previous two. There are no present consequences to

Marty's trip to 1885. Would not Biff have been a different man as a consequence of his forebear's humiliation?

⁶ The third installment of *Back to the Future* and *Roger Rabbit* are the two films that overtly explore narrative genres: the basic frameworks we use to remember past events. Just as *Roger Rabbit* recreates hard boiled Los Angeles through the use of film noir tropes, in the third part of *Back to the Future*, the DeLorean literally drives into the film, bursting through a drive-in movie screen to arrive in the middle of an Indian charge in Monument Valley—John Ford country. Marty McFly's changing costumes reflect the evolution of the Western from the fifties onward (much as his guitar solo in the first film of the series was an arch history of rock guitar). Doc Brown (Christopher Lloyd) first dresses him up in a "singing cowboy suit." As the film progresses, Marty adopts Clint Eastwood's clothes styles, along with the more harden views of the Old West.

⁷ Thomas B. Byers, "History Re-Membered: 'Forrest Gump,' Postfeminist Masculinity, and the Burial of the Counter Culture," in *Modern Fiction Studies*, Vol. 42 no. 2 *Narrative and History* (Summer, 1996), 419-44. It can be said that Zemeckis' politics are conservative. It is surprising that three years after Lawrence Kasdan's *Silverado* (1985), and nearly thirty year after John Ford's *Sergeant Rutledge* (1960), Zemeckis and his cowriter Bob Gale could not find a place for the black musicians in the third part of *Back to the Future*. Harry Waters, Jr (Marvin Berry in the Series) himself accepted the impossibility as obvious (quoted by Gaines in *We Don't Need Roads*, 214.)

⁸ Norman Kagan, *The Cinema of Robert Zemeckis* (London: Taylor Trade Publishing 2003), 38.

⁹ Patallier and Zecevic, "Déjà Vu," 47.

¹⁰ Rafik Djoumi, "Qui veut la peau de Roger Rabbit ? : Contre-culture pour toute la famille," in *Rockyrama*, Saison VI, Vol. 4, 4^{eme} trimestre, 2018, 30-35, 35. Hervé Joubert-Laurencin notes how Zemeckis regretted having to cut the final scene where all the happy toons gather at his grave to mourn the "nice producer." This scene was placed as is and the end Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993). *La Lettre Volante. Quatre essais sur le cinéma d'animation* (Paris, Coll. L'Œil Vivant, Presse de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1997), 94 and 100. [note : while this is not the actual quote, but a summary, the term 'as is' – telle quelle – appears in the original. I felt the bluntness needed to be maintained even in the condensed version]

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Kagan, *Robert Zemeckis*, 97.

¹³ Vincent Baticle and Danielo Zecevic, Introduction to the dossier "Robert Zemeckis: Contes, Croyances, Technologie," *Acme Revue*, 7.

¹⁴ George Steiner, *In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes Towards the Re-Definition of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 3.