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Temporal Loitering: Psychological Ageing and Animated *Flânerie*

Abstract: This article proposes reimagining the figure of the *flâneur*, traditionally associated with youth, disaffection, and urban modernity, from the perspective of psychological ageing and its affective spatialities. I argue that animation, due to its formal plasticity, metamorphosis, and temporal elasticity, constitutes a privileged laboratory for mapping non-linear psychic ages, where memory, trauma, and repetition configure modes of "temporal loitering." Within a framework that articulates the contributions of cultural gerontology and urban theory (Woodward; Benjamin; Augé; Lefebvre), I analyze three cases: *Anomalisa* (Charlie Kaufman and Duke Johnson, 2015), chapter three of *The House* (Paloma Baeza, 2022), and *BoJack Horseman* (Raphael Bob-Waksberg, 2014–2020). In *Anomalisa*, the hotel corridors and the homogenization of voices materialize the protagonist's collapsed "cultural age"; in *The House*, the flooded home performs an ecological senescence that forces the negotiation of grief and detachment; in *BoJack Horseman*, the drift through Los Angeles and episodes such as "Fish Out of Water" externalize rhythms of relapse, silence, and self-questioning. Together, I demonstrate how animation transforms *flânerie* from the boulevard to architectures of interiority (non-places, dilapidated houses, mental scenarios) and how its techniques (stretch and squash, acting, loops) allow us to think of ageing as a spatial and rhythmic experience rather than a chronological one. The proposal initiates a dialogue between animation studies and cultural gerontology, suggesting a reading methodology, "temporal loitering", applicable to other contemporary narratives in which subjects, objects, and environments age within networks.

Keywords: *Flânerie*; Animation Studies; Psychological Ageing; Spatial Temporality; Cultural Gerontology.

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EKPHRASIS, 2/2025

Age and Ageing
in European and World Cinema(s)
pp. 84–98

DOI: 10.24193/ekphrasis.34.7
Published First Online: December 30, 2025

Introduction

The figure of the *flâneur* has occupied a central position in the intellectual history of modernity. From Charles Baudelaire's poetic evocation of the nineteenth-century Parisian stroller to Walter Benjamin's monumental reworking of *flânerie* as a method of historical materialism, the *flâneur* has come to signify a particular mode of being in space: detached yet attentive, mobile yet idle, immersed in the spectacle of the city while remaining at a critical distance from it (Benjamin 422). Traditionally, this figure has been associated with youth, masculine privilege, and a form of leisurely urban curiosity grounded in the experience of modern metropolitan life. *Flânerie*, in this sense, presupposes not only physical mobility but also temporal openness: the capacity to drift, to waste time, and to encounter the city as an ever-renewable source of stimuli.

Yet this classical configuration of the *flâneur* has increasingly been called into question. Feminist scholars have long pointed out that the apparent universality of the *flâneur* masks its deep entanglement with gendered, classed, and racialised structures of access to public space (Russell 1970). Others have highlighted how late modernity, with its acceleration of everyday life and its saturation of space by surveillance and consumption, has rendered traditional *flânerie* increasingly untenable. What has received comparatively less sustained attention, however, is the way in which the figure of the *flâneur* is also implicitly anchored to a specific conception of age. The *flâneur* is typically imagined as youthful or at least ageless: unburdened by bodily decline, cognitive fatigue, or the weight of accumulated memory. His wandering appears as a choice rather than a constraint, a pleasure rather than a symptom.

This article proposes a rethinking of *flânerie* from the perspective of psychological ageing. Rather than conceiving ageing as a purely biological or chronological process, I approach it as an affective and perceptual condition through which subjects experience time, space, and memory in non-linear ways. Drawing on Kathleen Woodward's distinction between chronological, biological, psychological, and cultural age, this article foregrounds psychological ageing as a key analytical category for understanding contemporary animated narratives (Woodward 6). Psychological ageing does not necessarily coincide with numerical age; instead, it manifests through experiences of repetition, temporal disjunction, nostalgia, regret, and cognitive saturation. It is in this sense that ageing becomes spatially legible, inscribed in environments that feel stagnant, labyrinthine, or unstable.

Animation, I argue, offers a particularly fertile medium for exploring this reconceptualisation of the *flâneur*. Unlike live-action cinema, animation is not bound by the physical constraints of photographic realism. Its formal properties, plasticity, metamorphosis, exaggeration, and temporal elasticity, enable it to externalise interior states and to spatialise subjective experiences of time (Wells 6). As a result, animation can render ageing not as a gradual biological decline but as a series of affective rhythms and spatial negotiations.

Characters wander through corridors that seem endless, inhabit houses that decay alongside their memories, or drift through cities emptied of promise. In these scenarios, *flânerie* is displaced from the boulevard to what Marc Augé has termed "non-places": hotels, transit zones, anonymous interiors, and other spaces stripped of historical continuity (Augé 77).

To account for these dynamics, I introduce the concept of temporal loitering. Temporal loitering designates a mode of wandering in which movement through space is inseparable from a stalled or recursive experience of time. Unlike classical *flânerie*, which celebrates openness and novelty, temporal loitering is marked by repetition, hesitation, and an inability to move forward narratively or affectively. It is a heuristic that allows us to read animated characters as *flâneurs* of psychological ageing: figures who drift not only through urban environments but through memory, trauma, and self-reflection. Importantly, temporal loitering is not proposed as a metaphorical extension of flânerie but as an analytical framework that connects animation studies with cultural gerontology and urban theory.

At this point, it is necessary to clarify more explicitly the distinction between *flânerie* and what I term temporal loitering, as the proximity of both notions risks suggesting a degree of interchangeability that is not intended here. Classical *flânerie*, as articulated by Benjamin, presupposes a form of leisurely mobility grounded in openness to contingency and sensory novelty: the *flâneur* is the botanist of the asphalt, whose wandering remains oriented toward observation, collection, and critical spectatorship of urban modernity. Even when marked by detachment or melancholy, *flânerie* retains a forward-facing relationship to space and time, sustained by the promise of encounter and renewal.

Temporal loitering, by contrast, designates a fundamentally different experiential configuration. Rather than openness, it is defined by stasis; rather than curiosity, by saturation; rather than novelty, by repetition. While *flânerie* unfolds through the city as a field of potential discovery, temporal loitering emerges in environments that constrain movement and arrest narrative progression. It names not simply a slower or more introspective form of wandering, but a condition in which spatial movement coexists with temporal blockage, recursive memory, and affective exhaustion. In this sense, temporal loitering should be understood not as a variant of *flânerie*, but as a critical reworking of it under the conditions of psychological ageing.

The article develops this argument through the analysis of three case studies: *Anomalisa* (Charlie Kaufman and Duke Johnson, 2015), chapter three of *The House* (Paloma Baeza, 2022), and the animated television series *BoJack Horseman* (Raphael Bob-Waksberg, 2014–2020). These works were selected because they foreground ageing, repetition, and spatial dislocation while exploiting animation's capacity to materialise interior states. Across these examples, I show how animation relocates flânerie from the spectacle of modernity to architectures of interiority (hotel corridors, flooded homes, underwater cities, and mental stages) where ageing unfolds as a rhythmic and spatial experience rather than a chronological

one. Importantly, the protagonists of *Anomalisa* and *BoJack Horseman* are explicitly constructed as middle-aged men, situated within what Peter Laslett defines as the late "second age": a life phase characterised by social and professional activity yet increasingly marked by emotional fatigue, disillusionment, and an anticipatory awareness of decline (Laslett 4). Situating these characters within the life course foregrounds temporal loitering as an age-inflected mode of wandering, shaped less by openness and possibility than by accumulation, repetition, and psychological saturation, thereby aligning the case studies with the thematic focus of this special issue.

By positioning animation at the centre of discussions on ageing and urban experience, this article seeks to contribute to ongoing debates in animation studies, cultural gerontology, and media theory. It argues that animated narratives are not marginal or juvenile texts but sophisticated sites for thinking through the lived experience of time in late modernity. In doing so, it reframes the *flâneur* not as a nostalgic emblem of nineteenth-century urban life but as a figure capable of articulating contemporary anxieties around ageing, memory, and belonging.

Ageing, Temporality, and Animated Space

To reconceptualise the *flâneur* through psychological ageing, it is necessary to establish a theoretical framework that brings together cultural gerontology, urban theory, and animation studies. Each of these fields offers conceptual tools for understanding how time, space, and subjectivity are negotiated, but it is in their intersection that the notion of temporal loitering gains analytical traction. Rather than treating ageing as a biological inevitability or a demographic category, this framework approaches it as a culturally mediated experience that is spatially organised and rhythmically perceived.

Kathleen Woodward's work is foundational for this perspective. In *Aging and Its Discontents*, Woodward proposes a taxonomy that distinguishes between chronological age, biological age, psychological age, and cultural age (Woodward 6). Chronological age refers to the quantifiable passage of time, while biological age concerns the physiological processes of growth and decline. Psychological age, by contrast, designates the subjective experience of time, memory, and self-perception, and cultural age refers to the symbolic meanings and narratives through which societies interpret ageing. Woodward's insistence on psychological and cultural age is particularly relevant here, as it allows us to decouple ageing from linear temporality and to examine how it is lived affectively. Psychological ageing is marked by temporal compression or dilation, by the recurrence of memory, and by a heightened awareness of repetition and finitude. It is not reducible to decline; rather, it is an experiential mode through which individuals inhabit time unevenly.

This conception resonates strongly with Walter Benjamin's understanding of temporality. In *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin famously rejects homogeneous, empty time in favour of a conception of history as montage, composed of fragments, interruptions, and returns (Benjamin 463). The *flâneur*, in Benjamin's account, is not merely a stroller but a method: a way of reading the city as an archive of past and present layers. Importantly, Benjamin's *flâneur* is already entangled with temporality, wandering through spaces saturated with memory and commodity fetishism. However, Benjamin's focus remains largely on modernity and its ruins, rather than on the lived experience of ageing as such. By placing psychological ageing at the centre, this article extends Benjamin's temporal critique to the interior life of the subject, where history is no longer only embedded in architecture but also in cognition and affect.

Urban theory further sharpens this perspective. Marc Augé's concept of the non-place describes spaces of supermodernity (airports, hotels, highways) that are characterised by transience, anonymity, and the erosion of relational identity (Augé 94). Non-places are not devoid of meaning, but their meanings are scripted, repetitive, and impersonal. From the standpoint of psychological ageing, non-places acquire an additional resonance. Their spatial homogeneity and lack of historical depth mirror the subjective experience of temporal flattening often associated with midlife or late-life crises, where days blur together and novelty diminishes. In this sense, non-places function as externalisations of an ageing psyche, environments that seem to suspend both memory and futurity.

Henri Lefebvre's concept of rhythmanalysis provides a crucial temporal dimension to this spatial framework. In *Rhythmanalysis*, Lefebvre proposes that everyday life is organised through rhythms—biological, social, and spatial—that structure how time is felt and inhabited (Lefebvre 67). Ageing, from this perspective, can be understood as a reconfiguration of rhythm rather than a simple progression along a timeline. Moments of acceleration, stagnation, repetition, and rupture coexist, producing what Lefebvre describes as arrhythmia: a state in which rhythms fall out of sync. Temporal loitering emerges precisely in these arrhythmic conditions, where subjects find themselves caught between past habits and an uncertain future, moving through space without a clear sense of temporal direction.

Animation studies contribute a further layer by offering a vocabulary for understanding how such temporal and spatial experiences can be represented audiovisually. Paul Wells emphasises that animation is defined by its capacity for transformation and its resistance to the fixed ontology of photographic cinema (Wells 11). Through techniques such as stretch and squash, metamorphosis, and cyclical motion, animation can visualise interior states that would remain abstract or inaccessible in live-action film. This formal flexibility makes animation particularly suited to depicting psychological ageing, which often manifests as a distortion of temporal perception rather than as a visible bodily change.

Alan Cholodenko has argued that animation is fundamentally concerned with the illusion of life, foregrounding movement and change as constructed phenomena rather than natural givens (Cholodenko 15). From this perspective, ageing itself can be understood as an animated process: a series of perceptual and narrative effects rather than a transparent biological reality. J. P. Telotte's work on animated space further underscores how animation reconfigures environments as expressive extensions of character subjectivity, allowing space itself to act, respond, and age alongside its inhabitants (Telotte 12).

This approach also aligns with broader developments in film and media historiography. Scholars such as Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery, as well as Thomas Elsaesser, have emphasised the importance of moving beyond linear historical models to account for media as layered, recursive systems shaped by technological, cultural, and affective forces (Allen and Gomery 43; Elsaesser 80). Animation, with its overt manipulation of time and space, exemplifies this non-linear historiography. It invites viewers to experience time as malleable and to recognise the constructed nature of temporal continuity.

Together, these theoretical perspectives establish the groundwork for analysing animation as a site where flânerie, ageing, and temporality intersect. They allow us to conceptualise temporal loitering as a mode of spatialised ageing, one that is rhythmically organised, culturally mediated, and formally articulated through animation's unique affordances. In the sections that follow, this framework will be mobilised to examine how specific animated texts stage ageing as a form of wandering through affective architectures rather than as a linear passage through time.

Temporal Loitering as an Analytical Heuristic

The methodological challenge underpinning this article lies in the transposition of *flânerie*, a concept historically anchored in the physical practice of walking through the nineteenth-century city, into the domain of animated media and psychological ageing. To speak of animated characters as *flâneurs* risks reducing the concept to a loose metaphor, emptied of its socio-historical specificity. This section therefore clarifies how temporal loitering functions not as a poetic analogy but as an analytical heuristic: a structured way of reading animated narratives that foregrounds the relationship between space, temporality, and affect.

Flânerie has long operated as what Mieke Bal terms a "travelling concept," migrating across disciplines and historical contexts while retaining a core analytical charge (Bal 28). In film and media studies, scholars such as Giuliana Bruno have already extended flânerie beyond literal walking, reframing cinematic spectatorship itself as a form of spatial wandering. Bruno's notion of "site-seeing" emphasises how moving images invite viewers to traverse

emotional and architectural landscapes, producing a haptic and affective engagement with space (Bruno 8). Animation radicalises this process by freeing space from physical constraints altogether, enabling environments to fold inward, repeat themselves, or dissolve entirely. Temporal loitering builds on this lineage while introducing ageing as a structuring principle of spatial experience.

At its core, temporal loitering describes a condition in which movement through space is decoupled from narrative progression. Characters may walk, drift, or circulate, but these movements do not lead to transformation or resolution in conventional terms. Instead, they generate loops, pauses, and recursive encounters with memory or trauma. This distinguishes temporal loitering from classical *flânerie*, which, despite its apparent aimlessness, remains oriented toward discovery and observation. The *flâneur* of modernity encounters novelty in the crowd; the temporally loitering subject encounters sameness, saturation, or belatedness. Ageing, in this framework, is not a destination but a mode of inhabiting time that manifests spatially as repetition or stasis.

Methodologically, temporal loitering operates along three analytical axes: space, rhythm, and materiality. First, spatial analysis focuses on the types of environments characters inhabit and traverse. Drawing on Augé's concept of non-places, this involves identifying spaces that lack historical depth or relational identity (hotel corridors, anonymous offices, transit zones) and examining how they structure the character's experience of time (Augé 94). In animated narratives, such spaces often appear exaggerated or stylised, reinforcing their affective impact. The analysis attends not only to where characters move but also to how space resists or absorbs their movement.

Second, rhythm functions as a temporal lens. Inspired by Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis, this approach examines patterns of repetition, interruption, and silence within animated narratives (Lefebvre 67). Editing rhythms, loops of action, and recurring visual motifs are treated as indicators of psychological ageing. Moments where time seems to stall or where actions repeat without consequence are read as manifestations of arrhythmia, signalling a disjunction between lived time and narrative time. This rhythmic attention is particularly important in serial animation, where ageing unfolds across episodes rather than within a single arc.

Third, materiality addresses the specific affordances of animation as a medium. Paul Wells emphasises that animation's formal devices (stretch and squash, metamorphosis, and expressive acting) allow for the externalisation of interior states (Wells 25). Temporal loitering therefore attends to how animated bodies and objects register ageing through deformation, mechanical repetition, or visible seams. Stop-motion animation, with its tangible textures and articulated joints, is especially productive in this regard, as it foregrounds the constructedness and fragility of animated embodiment. Ageing is thus read not only in narrative terms but also in the material performance of animation itself.

This methodological framework is informed by broader debates in film history and media theory that challenge linear, teleological models of analysis. Allen and Gomery argue for a conception of film history attentive to practice, context, and repetition rather than singular moments of innovation (Allen and Gomery 43). Similarly, Elsaesser's media-archaeological approach emphasises recurrence and remediation over progress (Elsaesser 80). Temporal loitering aligns with these perspectives by privileging stalled time and recursive structures over narrative closure.

Importantly, this methodology does not treat animation as a homogeneous field. Following medium-specific analytical tools, the analysis remains attentive to differences between stop-motion, digital animation, and serialized television formats. Temporal loitering manifests differently across these forms, shaped by production techniques and narrative conventions. What unites them is their capacity to stage ageing as an experiential condition rather than a plot point.

Finally, temporal loitering has implications for how animated texts are situated within cultural debates about ageing. Rather than reinforcing dominant narratives of decline (Gullette 7) or successful ageing (Rowe and Kahn 143), the works analysed here foreground ambiguity, ambivalence, and unresolved affect. By adopting temporal loitering as a methodological lens, the analysis remains open to these ambiguities, resisting the urge to stabilise ageing into a singular meaning.

In sum, temporal loitering provides a structured yet flexible method for analysing how animation reconfigures flânerie through psychological ageing. It enables a reading of animated narratives that is attentive to space, rhythm, and materiality, while remaining grounded in the socio-cultural histories from which flânerie and ageing emerge. The following sections apply this methodology to three case studies, demonstrating how animation mobilises its formal affordances to render ageing as a spatial and temporal experience.

Anomalisa and the Corridor as an Ageing Non-Place

Anomalisa (Charlie Kaufman and Duke Johnson, 2015) provides a particularly incisive articulation of temporal loitering through its depiction of psychological ageing as spatial entrapment. Rendered in stop-motion animation, the film follows Michael Stone, a middle-aged customer-service consultant who travels to Cincinnati to deliver a keynote speech. What initially appears to be a narrative about professional routine quickly unfolds into a meditation on repetition, affective exhaustion, and the erosion of difference. Through its formal strategies and spatial organisation, *Anomalisa* relocates *flânerie* from the open city to the interior of a hotel, transforming wandering into a symptom of temporal stagnation.

Central to this transformation is the film's most striking device: the homogenisation of voices. With the exception of Michael and Lisa, every character in the film is voiced by the

same actor. This auditory repetition produces an uncanny flattening of social difference, suggesting not merely alienation but what Kathleen Woodward would describe as a collapse of cultural age (Woodward 11). The world appears drained of novelty, its social rhythms reduced to scripted exchanges and rehearsed politeness. Psychological ageing, in this context, manifests as a perceptual condition in which the subject can no longer differentiate between encounters; time becomes experiential monotony.

Spatially, this condition is materialised through the hotel corridor. Augé's concept of the non-place is especially pertinent here. The hotel, as a transient space designed for circulation rather than dwelling, epitomises the supermodern environment emptied of historical and relational depth. In *Anomalisa*, the corridor becomes an exaggerated non-place: long, beige, and seemingly endless, punctuated by identical doors that promise entry but deliver repetition. Michael's movement through this space exemplifies temporal loitering. He walks, turns corners, and retraces his steps, yet these movements do not advance the narrative or his psychological state. Instead, they reinforce a sense of stasis, as if time itself were looping alongside him.

This spatial repetition resonates strongly with Walter Benjamin's reflections on the arcades as sites of both circulation and entrapment. For Benjamin, the arcades embodied the dreamworld of modernity, spaces where commodities and desires circulated endlessly without resolution (Benjamin 422). *Anomalisa* transposes this logic to the late-capitalist interior. The hotel corridor functions as a contemporary arcade stripped of spectacle, where the promise of encounter has ossified into routine. The *flâneur*'s observational pleasure is replaced by fatigue; wandering becomes compulsory rather than elective.

The choice of stop-motion animation intensifies this effect. Unlike digital animation, stop-motion foregrounds the materiality of its figures: visible seams, articulated joints, and subtly mechanical movements. These qualities align with what Donald Crafton identifies as the performative instability of animated bodies, which resist seamless realism. In *Anomalisa*, the puppets' slightly stiff movements and detachable facial plates render embodiment as fragmented and provisional. This fragmentation becomes particularly salient in scenes of intimacy between Michael and Lisa. Their sexual encounter is marked not by fluidity but by awkward pauses and visible joints, underscoring the estrangement of the ageing body from ideals of spontaneity and desire.

From the perspective of temporal loitering, these material details are not incidental but methodologically significant. They externalise psychological ageing as a condition of embodied hesitation and repetition. Michael's inability to sustain intimacy or to derive pleasure from novelty mirrors his spatial entrapment in the hotel. The corridor, the room, and the conference hall form a closed circuit within which he circulates, echoing Lefebvre's notion of arrhythmia. The rhythms of professional life (travel, presentation, networking) continue mechanically, but they no longer align with Michael's affective rhythms, producing a sense of temporal dissonance.

Sound design further contributes to this spatialised ageing. The repeated voice, combined with ambient hotel noises, creates an auditory environment that reinforces homogeneity. As Rick Altman has argued, sound plays a crucial role in shaping cinematic space, often guiding perception more forcefully than image alone (Altman 10). In *Anomalisa*, sound collapses depth, flattening social space into a monotone surface. The result is a sensory experience of ageing as saturation: too many encounters that feel identical, too much time spent without meaningful differentiation.

Importantly, *Anomalisa* does not present psychological ageing as a function of numerical age alone. Michael is not elderly; he is professionally successful and physically capable. Yet his experience of time is marked by repetition and exhaustion. This distinction aligns with Woodward's emphasis on psychological age as an experiential category rather than a biological one. Temporal loitering thus allows us to read Michael as an ageing *flâneur* whose wandering has lost its critical distance and observational pleasure. He moves through space not to discover but to endure.

The film's conclusion reinforces this reading. After returning home, Michael attempts to reinsert himself into domestic routine, yet the voice homogenisation persists. The brief rupture represented by Lisa, the anomalous voice, has not altered the underlying structure of his experience. Ageing, here, is not resolved but reiterated. The corridor has expanded beyond the hotel to encompass everyday life itself. In this sense, *Anomalisa* offers a bleak but precise depiction of temporal loitering as a condition of late-modern subjectivity, where *flânerie* survives only as a hollowed-out practice of movement without transformation.

Through its use of stop-motion materiality, non-place architecture, and auditory repetition, *Anomalisa* exemplifies how animation can spatialise psychological ageing. The film demonstrates that temporal loitering is not merely a narrative theme but a formal strategy, embedded in the rhythms and textures of animated space. As such, it provides a foundational case for understanding how animation reconfigures the *flâneur* as an ageing subject wandering through architectures of affective exhaustion.

The House and Domestic Ecologies of Ageing

Chapter three of *The House* (Netflix, 2022), directed by Paloma Baeza, shifts the terrain of temporal loitering from the anonymous interiors of late-capitalist non-places to the intimate yet unstable space of the home. In this segment, Rosa, an anthropomorphic cat, inhabits a decaying house in a world increasingly overwhelmed by floodwaters. Unlike the urban drift of *Anomalisa*, Rosa's wandering is largely domestic, confined to rooms, corridors, and thresholds that blur the boundary between shelter and exposure. This spatial limitation is crucial, as it allows the episode to explore psychological ageing through the lens of attachment, labour, and ecological deterioration.

From the perspective of temporal loitering, Rosa's movements through the house exemplify a form of wandering without departure. She circulates between rooms, climbs stairs, and peers out of windows, yet she never truly leaves. This domestic *flânerie* challenges the classical association of flânerie with public urban space, suggesting instead that ageing subjects may wander most intensely within interiors saturated by memory and obligation. The house becomes an affective map of Rosa's psyche, its crumbling structure externalising her refusal to relinquish the past.

Ecology plays a decisive role in this configuration. The encroaching floodwaters transform the house into a site of ecological senescence, where environmental decay and psychological ageing intersect. The rising water is not a sudden catastrophe but a slow, inexorable force, mirroring the gradual accumulation of loss associated with ageing. Temporal loitering, in this context, takes on an ecological dimension: time is experienced as a slow drowning, a relentless pressure rather than a dramatic rupture.

The stop-motion aesthetics of *The House* intensify this ecological ageing. Textures are highly pronounced: damp wood, peeling wallpaper, and matted fur register decay at a tactile level. As Paul Wells notes, animation's emphasis on material transformation allows environments to participate actively in narrative meaning (Wells 122). In this episode, walls sag, floors buckle, and light shifts unevenly, giving the impression that the house itself is ageing alongside Rosa. This aligns with Rosi Braidotti's posthumanist argument that subjectivity is distributed across human and non-human actors, rather than contained within an autonomous individual. Ageing, here, is relational, unfolding across bodies, objects, and ecosystems.

Rhythm is again central to this analysis. Rosa's routines follow a repetitive cadence: repair, demand payment, repair again. Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis helps to illuminate how these cycles produce a sense of temporal entrapment. The absence of narrative progression reinforces the impression that Rosa is loitering in time, clinging to a structure that no longer sustains her. The tenants' refusal to pay rent further destabilises the economic rhythm that once justified Rosa's attachment to the house, exposing the fragility of the social contract underpinning domestic life.

Crucially, *The House* introduces a turning point absent from *Anomalisa*. As the water level rises and the house becomes increasingly uninhabitable, Rosa is forced to confront the limits of her labour and attachment. The eventual decision to let the house drift away marks a shift from temporal loitering as entrapment to temporal loitering as release. Ageing is no longer figured solely as clinging to repetition but as an affective negotiation with loss. This moment resonates with Woodward's insistence that ageing narratives need not be confined to decline, but can encompass acceptance and reorientation (Woodward 148).

The final images moving toward an uncertain horizon complicate the episode's relationship to *flânerie*. Movement is restored, but it is no longer grounded in curiosity or observation. Instead, it is tinged with melancholy and restraint. Rosa does not reclaim

youthful mobility; she carries the weight of experience with her. Temporal loitering, in this sense, does not disappear but transforms. The wandering subject learns to detach from spaces that have become psychically and ecologically untenable.

By situating psychological ageing within a domestic and ecological framework, *The House* expands the scope of animated *flânerie*. It demonstrates that temporal loitering can occur not only in anonymous urban interiors but also in deeply personal spaces where memory, labour, and environment intersect. The episode underscores animation's capacity to render ageing as a distributed process, one that implicates houses, ecosystems, and routines as much as individual bodies. In doing so, it prepares the ground for the final case study, which extends temporal loitering into the serial and urban sprawl of contemporary Los Angeles.

BoJack Horseman and Serialised Urban Drift

Unlike *Anomalisa* and *The House*, which compress psychological ageing into relatively contained narrative spaces, *BoJack Horseman* (Netflix, 2014–2020) unfolds temporal loitering across a long-form, serialised structure. This expansion is significant. The series does not merely depict ageing; it allows ageing to accumulate, recur, and sediment over time. BoJack, a washed-up sitcom star navigating addiction, guilt, and self-loathing, wanders through Los Angeles in a state of affective suspension. The city, traditionally imagined as a site of opportunity and youthful reinvention, becomes an urban labyrinth of repetition and regret.

Los Angeles functions here as a paradoxical flânerie space. On the one hand, it is saturated with spectacle, celebrity culture, and consumer excess; on the other, it is marked by spatial sprawl, anonymity, and emotional isolation. The series repeatedly frames BoJack drifting through freeways, restaurants, and studios that differ superficially but feel structurally identical. This repetition resonates with Marc Augé's non-places, but on an urban scale: Los Angeles emerges as a city where movement is constant yet purposeless, where subjects circulate without arriving (Augé 78). Temporal loitering thus becomes serialised, extending across seasons rather than scenes.

Several episodes crystallise this logic. "Fish Out of Water" (S3E4) stages BoJack's wandering in an underwater city where speech is impossible. Stripped of dialogue, the episode foregrounds rhythm, gesture, and silence. BoJack drifts through unfamiliar spaces, attempting and failing to connect, his movements slowed and awkward. Psychological ageing is rendered here as communicative exhaustion: language itself becomes inaccessible. Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis is instructive, as the episode replaces verbal exchange with a muted tempo punctuated by visual gags and brief musical cues (Lefebvre 67). Time feels elongated, suspended, reinforcing BoJack's affective isolation.

"Free Churro" (S5E6) offers a different articulation of temporal loitering. Set almost entirely during a funeral monologue, the episode collapses space into speech. BoJack

wanders not through the city but through memory, looping back to unresolved childhood trauma and maternal neglect. This narrative recursion exemplifies psychological ageing as belated confrontation. The absence of spatial movement intensifies the sense of stasis; the *flâneur* is immobilised, trapped within his own discourse. As Raymond Williams suggests, such moments articulate a structure of feeling characterised by ambivalence and unresolved affect (Williams 132).

Finally, "The View from Halfway Down" (S6E15) externalises ageing as a surreal confrontation with mortality. Set on a black, theatrical stage populated by dead characters, the episode fractures spatial logic entirely. Doors open onto voids, and the floor dissolves into tar-like darkness. This *mise-en-scène* evokes Freud's notion of deferred action (Freud), where trauma resurfaces belatedly, disrupting linear temporality. Animation's capacity for spatial abstraction allows the series to visualise ageing as recursive reckoning rather than narrative closure.

Across its six seasons, *BoJack Horseman* demonstrates how animation can sustain temporal loitering as a long-term condition. Ageing unfolds rhythmically, through relapse, repetition, and partial insight. The series thus represents the most expansive articulation of the animated *flâneur*: a figure drifting endlessly through an urban environment that mirrors his own affective exhaustion.

Ageing Beyond the Human: Posthuman and Ecological Extensions

While the preceding case studies focus primarily on individual subjectivities, animation also enables a broader, posthuman understanding of ageing as a distributed process. Rosi Braidotti's posthuman theory challenges humanist assumptions by emphasising relationality between humans, objects, technologies, and environments. In animated media, where non-human entities routinely exhibit agency, ageing can be understood as an ecological and infrastructural phenomenon rather than an exclusively personal one.

The House already gestures toward this perspective through its depiction of architectural decay and flooding. Similarly, *BoJack Horseman* repeatedly frames urban landmarks—the Hollywood sign, freeways, studio lots—as mutable and vulnerable. The transformation of the "Hollywood" sign into "Hollywoo" functions as a visual metaphor for cultural senescence, where symbols of permanence erode over time. These moments align with Appadurai's notion of global cultural disjuncture, in which meanings circulate unevenly and decay alongside infrastructures (Appadurai 1802).

Animation's capacity to animate objects and spaces foregrounds what Timothy Morton terms ecological entanglement. Ageing becomes a networked process, implicating cities, climates, and media systems. From this perspective, temporal loitering extends beyond the

psyche to encompass environments caught in slow processes of degradation. Animation thus emerges as a crucial medium for thinking about ageing in the Anthropocene, where temporal scales exceed individual lifespans.

Conclusion

This article has argued that animation offers a uniquely productive site for reimagining flânerie through the lens of psychological ageing. By introducing the concept of temporal loitering, I have proposed a methodological framework for analysing how animated narratives spatialise non-linear experiences of time, memory, and affect. Across *Anomalisa*, *The House*, and *BoJack Horseman*, *flânerie* is displaced from the boulevard to corridors, flooded homes, and fractured urban spaces, where wandering becomes a symptom of repetition, grief, and belatedness.

Rather than framing ageing as linear decline or successful adaptation, these works situate it as a rhythmic and spatial condition. Animation's formal affordances—plasticity, abstraction, and expressive materiality—allow it to render ageing visible as lived experience rather than biological fact. In doing so, animation emerges not as a peripheral medium but as a central interlocutor for cultural gerontology and urban theory.

Temporal loitering, as a heuristic, invites further application beyond animation, offering a way to read contemporary narratives in which subjects and environments age together. Ultimately, the animated *flâneur* enables us to think ageing not as an endpoint, but as a mode of inhabiting time—one defined by wandering, hesitation, and affective persistence.

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