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Difference Reading: A Deleuzian Analysis of contemporary French series fiction for adolescents

by

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Abstract

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DIFFERENCE READING: A DELEUZIAN ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY FRENCH SERIES FICTION FOR ADOLESCENTS

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This thesis reassesses the inherent repetition in series fiction that is considered as fundamental and yet negative, by looking at a corpus of contemporary French series for adolescents. Repetition is foregrounded through the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, which requires it to be thought *for itself* and not in relation to any original. Moving from notions of generality and resemblance that have dominated criticism of series fiction to date, this thesis shifts the focus from one of comparative difference to pure repetition. Deleuze's concept of *becoming* is used to explain the reader's creative involvement within a series and proposes the Deleuzian simulacrum as a metaphor for the form.

Positing a need to move away from a traditional linear reading of series, this thesis suggests alternatives that reflect the nature of real reading experiences and move away from the need to experience series as a whole. The concept of the rhizome is used as a model for the connectivity within and external to series. A reassessment of closure and resolution is presented, and the paradoxical joint actions of disconnecting and reconnecting become an essential part of the rhizomic experience of series reading. Concepts of growth are reassessed by redefining time in relation to pure repetition, freeing growth from the necessity of chronology. Deleuze's concept of pure time, *Aiôn*, reveals how 'growth' may even occur in the most 'static' of series.

The simulacrum coupled with Deleuze's concepts of *minoritarian* and *majoritarian* voices are used to show how adolescent series fiction, typically considered as a narcissistic fiction, is a doubly false literature pertaining to be something it never can be. This thesis postulates the presence of a virtual voice of series fiction, created within and through the reader in becoming. It is this unique and intense voice that may motivate young readers' enthusiasm for series fiction.

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1 - Beyond the formulaic: a new critical approach to series fiction

In entitling her article on the popularity of series fiction *Secret in the Trash Bin*, Anne Scott MacLeod expresses much about the critical expectations of this popular form of children's literature (MacLeod, 1984, 281). Lydia Cushman Schurman and Deidre Johnson's concept of "scorned literature" equally highlights the value judgements that are brought to bear on series and other such "subliterary fiction" (Johnson, 2002, xi). Adults in general and adult critics in particular are often baffled as to why children and adolescents are attracted to series fiction. To the outside observer, the repeated characters may appear two-dimensional and stereotyped. The series fiction reader, in contrast, apparently finds pleasure in repeatedly encountering the same characters. Drawing on traditional hermeneutic approaches to literature, critics focus on the lack of difference between volumes of series, and express concern that reading series can "lead to an addiction whereby the young, curious reader is transformed into a homogenized reader, dependent on certain expectations and codes that make it appear the world is manageable and comforting" (Zipes, 2001, 8). Such concerns about series fiction imply further assumptions that young readers are undiscerning and naïve. How is it possible, then, to approach series fiction for young readers without subjecting it to these value judgements, and without undermining the potential of the young reader, to get beyond the scorn and the formula that dominates criticism of series literature?

The philosophy of Gilles Deleuze provides one such approach. Deleuze offers a way of thinking that privileges intense and transforming encounters and can offer new insights into the unique encounter of reader and book. His thought is radical and far reaching and its full implications are only just being explored. Michel Foucault famously proclaimed of Deleuze "[m]ais un jour, peut-être, le siècle sera deleuzien" (Foucault, 2001, 944), but his exact meaning is elusive. Deleuze undoubtedly has a deserved place in the history of philosophy, but a *Deleuzian approach* is somewhat more difficult to define, as Claire Colebrook writes,

> as yet, there is not a 'Deleuzean' movement in literary criticism: there is no equivalent to Jacques Derrida's creation of deconstruction, Michel Foucault's influence on New Historicism or Freud's psychoanalysis. Just what 'Deleuzean' literary criticism would be remains an open question (Colebrook, 2002, 150).

Patrice Maniglier suggests an alternative interpretation of Foucault's words, however:

> Foucault voulait donc dire plutôt ceci: les livres de Deleuze semblent aujourd'hui tournoyer dans le ciel indifférent et lointain de la métaphysique, mais c'est, à la manière de l'aigle de Zarathoustra, uniquement pour mieux préparer le moment où ils fondront sur la Terre et inscriront leurs effets en lettres vivantes dans la politique, le savoir, l'art (Maniglier, 2002, 26).

The implications of Deleuze's work in a variety of fields is also captured by the *Magazine littéraire*'s February issue of 2002 dedicated to *L'effet Deleuze* (published to coincide with the posthumous publication of *L'île déserte et autres textes*). It presents a series of short articles entitled, *Deleuze, pour quoi faire?*, covering the versatility of his work. "In the past decade," writes Slavoj Žižek in his recent book, "Deleuze emerged as the central reference of contemporary philosophy: notions like "resisting multitude," "nomadic subjectivity", the "anti-Oedipal" critique of psychoanalysis, and so on are the common currency of today's academia" (Žižek, 2004, xi). Paradoxically this effusion of Deleuzian concepts sits uncomfortably with his own thought. As David Rabouin points out,

> [d]ans *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, Deleuze et Guattari avaient mis en garde contre cette tentation inévitable de voir des concepts partout, cette tendance de plus en plus accentuée à croire qu'il est facile d'en créer. [...] Mais il est vrai que Deleuze avait aussi voulu une position de la philosophie qui opère comme réservoir, où chacun peut puiser ce qu'il veut, à la manière qu'ont les œuvres de Spinoza ou de Nietzsche de nous saisir comme un courant d'air. Ce courant d'air, il l'appelait une "rencontre". Car un nom propre ne désigne pas un sujet, mais "un effet, un zigzag, quelque chose qui se passe entre deux comme sous une différence de potentiel" (Rabouin, 2002, 17).

Previous studies have considered the *rencontre* between Deleuze and literature, notably André Colombat's *Deleuze et la littérature* (1990), which considers the impact of Deleuze's critiques of philosophers such as Hume, Nietzsche and Bergson on his readings of the work of Lewis Carroll and Michel Tournier amongst others. The more recent collection *Deleuze and literature* (2000) edited by Ian Buchanan and John Marks similarly looks at how Deleuze reads literary texts and asks and how texts can be read in a Deleuzian way. Ronald Bogue's *Deleuze on Literature* (2003) considers the work that influenced Deleuze and the literary references which recur throughout his writing.

This thesis proposes a new *rencontre* between Deleuze and children's literature, and specifically series fiction for young people, in the search for a new direction for the analysis of this fiction and for Deleuzian studies. Whilst for some this may appear an unusual combination to propose, especially given Deleuze's own tastes for literature, there are nonetheless echoes of an interest in children's literature in the literary references that permeate his writing, and Deleuze is himself the subject of a 'children's' book, *L'oiseau philosophie*, exquisitely illustrated by Jacqueline Duhême. This thesis draws on Deleuze's reservoir of concepts to point to what may occur when reading series fiction. Before embarking upon this *rencontre*, this chapter explores the problems with existing analyses of children's literature and series fiction for young readers. It goes on to discuss how Deleuze can help overcome these difficulties and which of his concepts have particular relevance for the study of juvenile series fiction.

The child in children's literature

Juliet McMaster describes what she considers to be the principal difficulty of children's literature when she writes: "to start from the point of *arrival*, the child consumers, feels like Alice's Looking-Glass logic, in which you must select the exact opposite direction in order to get to where you really want to go" (McMaster, 2001, 281).[1] Children's literature is *for* children, *about* children, although it is rarely written *by* children for their peers, as Jack Zipes remarks, "children's literature *per se* does not exist" (Zipes, 2001, 40), and it is therefore unsurprising that Jacqueline Rose describes children's fiction as impossible (Rose, 1994). The children in children's literature tend,

[1] She draws a comparison to Renaissance literature or Shakespeare where there is a distinct point of origin, the period, the author (McMaster, 2001, 281).

then, to be on the receiving end of the process, as David Rudd comments, "despite the possessive apostrophe in the phrase 'children's literature', it has never really been owned by children" (Rudd, 2005, 16). He continues, however, "it is surely unacceptable [...] to argue that one must *be* a child in order to write genuine children's fiction, or to read it" (Rudd, 2005, 19).[2] Such is the difficulty with the child in children's literature, that s/he is often marginalised. Not only, as Victor Watson remarks, "the study of children's literature in universities all over the world is often entirely divorced from an interest in its intended readership" (Watson, 2000, 1), but also, as Peter Hunt notes, "whatever critical theory we produce for children's literature, it will have little or nothing to do with children. Thus we may say, Book X is literature (as opposed to reading matter), or Book Y is good literature (as opposed to not-so-good), regardless of whether children actually read it, or like it, or buy it" adding "to ignore children is really only to regularize what is happening now" (Hunt, 1974, 119). This is a literature defined by its intended readership, but not limited to it. The child is the centre of everyone's preoccupations but is kept at arm's length during the process. Only when the child is presented with the book to read does it become an active part of the process. As Jacqueline Rose writes, children's fiction "rests so openly on an acknowledged difference, a rupture almost, between writer and addressee. Children's fiction sets up the child as an outsider to its own process, and then aims, unashamedly, to take the child *in*" (Rose, 1994, 2).

Peter Hunt advocates the need to adopt a new criticism when dealing with children's literature, which he calls *childist*. "to transpose the arguments for 'feminist' reading to the area of children's books, we need a new word. 'Childish' and 'child-like' already have layers of accumulated meaning and association. 'Childist' may serve our purpose" (Hunt, 1995, 192). Childist criticism seeks to make the adult critics of children's literature acknowledge and consider the child's perspective, but, as Hunt openly admits, is grounded on (im)possibilities: "childist criticism confronts an unacknowledged impossibility by manipulating probabilities. The impossibility is that the adult can never really know what a book means to a child: the major probability is that a child's reading differs substantially from an adult's" (Hunt, 1995, 180). Hunt

[2] At this point I do not wish to embark on a discussion of what exactly a child *is* (or an adult for that matter). I tackle this problem from a Deleuzian perspective in the later stages of this thesis. For the time being, it suffices to consider the child as a binary opposite to the adult.

argues that an adult accepting the implied role and surrendering to the book "is as close as we can get to *reading as a child*" (Hunt, 1995, 48), but he outlines further complications in the process: "Do you read as the child you were, or as the child you are? on your self-image as a child or the memory of the 'feel' of youthful reading? How far can experienced readers forget their adult experience?" (Hunt, 1995, 48). Hunt's goal is laudable, but by his own admission is always beyond our reach. Even if the adult reader surrenders fully to the text, it is hard to see how they can fully disregard their current self and lifetime of experience.

Further complications are added when considering the latter part of the term 'children's *literature*'. Those involved in the domain of children's literature are traditionally concerned that it is 'good' in some way and that it deserves the label 'Literature'. Those who make these quality judgements are typically adults, who are an essential and yet difficult element of children's literature. When W. H. Auden wrote "there are good books which are only for adults [...] there are no good books which are only for children" (Auden, 1972, 11) and when C. S. Lewis wrote "I am almost inclined to set it up as a canon that a children's story which is enjoyed only by children is a bad children's story" (Lewis, 1969, 210), they highlight the fundamental position of the adult in children's literature. Adults write it, provide it, critique it, review it, ban it, burn it (in some extreme cases), decide whether it is indeed children's *Literature* or not and must still be able to enjoy it as an adult. Victor Watson points to a solution, however, "if we describe all children's texts as *children's literature*, we have effectively abolished literary distinction. This might not be a bad thing – it is not a quality that interests most young readers, and adults cannot agree what they mean by it" (Watson, 2000, 2). As Victor Watson suggests in the title to his foreword to the book *Where Children and Texts meet*: "children's literature is dead: long live children's reading", the focus of interest should shift from the abstract literature for the implied child to the more concrete reading of the real child.[3] Whilst it is not my intention to enter into a discussion about just what constitutes 'good' literature as opposed to 'bad' literature or for that matter what

[3] In her article *Exit children's literature?* Maria Nikolajeva highlights a similar phenomenon: "contemporary children's literature is transgressing its own boundaries, coming closer to mainstream literature, and exhibiting the most prominent features of postmodernism, such a genre eclecticism, disintegration of traditional narrative structures, polyphony, intersubjectivity, and metafiction" (Nikolajeva, 1998, 222). She predicts that "sooner or later, children's literature will be integrated into the mainstream and disappear" (Nikolajeva, 1998, 233) but refrains from saying whether this is good or bad.

constitutes 'literature', it is worth pausing to consider in more detail the problems such value judgements create for the more specific domain of series fiction for young readers.

The young reader's choice

There are books that young people read and there are books that adults would like young people to read: the two are not necessarily contiguous. What adults deem to be good, worthwhile, edifying and wholesome does not always concur with young readers' preferences. Aileen Pace Nilsen et al discuss the dichotomy between value judgements of adult critics and young people's popularity judgements. They postulate that young people and adults do not share the same criteria for evaluating books: when a book is found 'illuminating' for adults, it is typically inaccessible for children, who look for a good story above anything else. They provide a list of books for young readers from 1951 to 1975, and compare popularity and critical acclaim. Many of the most popular titles are elements of series, but these are rarely the ones that have pleased the critics.[4] This highlights the long-standing and continuing divide between series fiction and the literary canon (Pace Nilsen, Peterson, and Searfoss, 1980), and is reinforced by numerous library surveys.[5]

The fact that series fiction often features amongst young people's reading choices is often much to adults' amazement and annoyance. This is not, of course, a genre reserved exclusively for young readers; series fiction is enjoyed by both adult and young readers alike. For adults, reading series fiction may be considered as simply a harmless distraction, as Hugh Crago notes, "in adulthood, lovers of a particular story will buy every available edition, or collect every work by the same author, or read every biography and popular article about him or her, or (in the case of film) see every rerun" (Crago, 1993, 287), and such fanaticism does not tend to give cause for concern. For young readers, such emotional investment is treated with greater caution. Young readers of series may be considered compulsive and obsessive, unwilling to move away from what is

[4] Popular titles include volumes from: the *Ramona* series by Beverley Cleary; the *Dark is Rising* series by Susan Cooper; the *Pippi Longstocking* series by Astrid Lindgren and the *Borrowers* series by Mary Norton. *The Borrowers* and *The Dark is Rising* are two titles praised by critics but the other volumes in the series which feature in the survey, namely *The Borrowers Afloat* and *Over Sea, Under Stone*, are not.

[5] Adele Greenlee's article lists many library surveys across the decades which show series books dominating best-seller lists and selected as favourites by young readers in North America (Greenlee, 1996). Peter Soderbergh writes that "Nancy Drew is the most popular juvenile book in France" (quoted in Deane, 1991, 10).

known, familiar and safe, as Muriel Tiberghien remarks, "s'ils lisent "ça", ils ne lisent rien d'autre" (Tiberghien, 2002). Adults worry that series ensnare young readers and trap them in a never-ending cycle of predictable and 'samey' reading.

Adults consider series reading as "le MacDonald de la littérature" (Pol, 2002), and this junk food metaphor recurs in many critics' assessments. Bruce Butts describes Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* as "predictable, filling, but lacking nutrition [.] I teach a great many students who would happily eat burgers for most of their meals, but I would not be happy if that was the only nourishment they had" (Butts, 2003, 280).[6] Michael Cart similarly recommends a more varied diet of reading, writing,

> it is not that I think that series books in and of themselves are particularly dangerous, whether they be the currently voguish horror series or the sweet this and that romance series that set young hearts aflutter in the 1980s. We have had series since the days of Oliver Optic and Horatio Alger, and the republic has somehow survived. But when that is *all* that is available on the shelves of a self-styled superstore, something is seriously wrong (Cart, 1995, 155).[7]

Series reading is equally discouraged by pedagogues. It may be tolerated and justified to some extent as a necessary stage in reading development; a way of reading more by providing copious material to practise and improve reading skills (Decréau, 1994; Campbell, 2002), but the fact that young readers may find series reading pleasurable is disquieting, as Charles Sarland notes, "traditionally literary studies have taken a hard line on pleasure, specifically by creating hierarchies of pleasure, some being held more worthwhile than others [...] the more people liked something the less worthwhile the pleasure" (Sarland, 1994 (b), 115-116). In his book on series fiction of

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[6] *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, written by Daniel Handler under the pseudonym of Lemony Snicket, relates the disasters that befall the Baudelaire orphans and Count Olaf's (their treacherous uncle) attempts to get his hands on their fortune. Published by Harper Collins, thirteen books are planned for the series. In 2004 the first three volumes were made into a film, starring Jim Carey as Count Olaf.

[7] Cart may be referring here either to the *Point Horror* series or the *Goosebumps* series, both published by Scholastic, which were very popular in the 1980s and 1990s. For a more a detailed analysis of the *Point Horror* series see (Sarland, 1994 (a), 1994 (b)). Cart also refers to the *Sweet Valley High* series created by Francine Pascal and first published by Random House in the 1980s. For analysis of this series see (Huntwork, 1990). Oliver Optic, the penname of William Taylor Adams (1822- 1897) and Horatio Alger (1832 – 1899) are renowned for their rags-to-riches boys series (Schurman and Johnson, 2002).

the twentieth century, Paul Deane enumerates the many criticisms and concerns about series fiction and summarises as follows:

> the main arguments directed against series are that they are badly written books which contain unreal characters in impossible situations presented sensationally and sentimentally; they are mass-produced without inspiration or integrity; this lack of integrity carries over into the books, which are filled with false values and hence cannot elevate or inspire the child. At best, they are worthless trash; at worst, harmful and unwholesome junk. Once a child has read one of a series, he or she will read all the rest, in the process ignoring better reading (Deane, 1991, 23-24).

In spite of, or maybe because of such criticism, young people continue to read series, as David Rudd remarks in his work on Enid Blyton, "adult protests, then, add to the child's pleasures [...] The more adults seek to control and define what children should be doing, the more that groups such as the Five will appeal" (Rudd, 2000, 203-204). Indeed, as Adele Greenlee remarks, "lack of acceptance by literary critics has not been an obstacle to series books' enduring popularity with children" (Greenlee, 1996, 17).

When series fiction is greeted with anything from slight suspicion to downright disdain, why, then, embark on an academic study of it? Critics, notably Schurman and Johnson write of series fiction "almost everyone, it would seem, encounters – and even savours – some "subliterary fiction"" (Schurman and Johnson, 2002, xi), and for them the popularity and pleasure of this "sub-literature" is sufficient to justify its interest. For others, challenging the status quo of critical opinion is reason for a study of series fiction. Series fiction for young readers overlaps two major areas of critical thinking, that of popular culture and studies of children's and adolescent literature. Both these areas share a common problem, namely "the task of getting an academic establishment devoted to a rather elitist "great tradition" to take seriously the study of literature it has usually treated condescendingly or ignored" (Bixler, 1984, 63). Series fiction for young

readers has an added problem in that it is a subgenre of a subgenre and therefore suffers from what Victor Watson terms as a "double deficit of critical attention" (Watson, 2000, 208). Paul Deane even suggests that librarians, critics and teachers have traditionally been "so set against a study of children's series [because] they were afraid such an analysis would reveal that the bases for their objections were not so valid or secure as they supposed" (Deane, 1991, 48).

My motivation for this particular study of series fiction for young readers is more closely derived from the remarks of Peter Hunt however, who writes that series are "so characteristic of writing for children" (Hunt, 1995, 131). Paul Deane also comments that "fiction series are almost the only books that have been consistently produced for the consumption of children themselves" (Deane, 1991, 4) adding "it is not expected that adults will read such books to children" (Deane, 1991, 5). Series fiction goes some way to reducing the adult influence that so dominates 'children's literature'. Series books are typically sold at accessible prices in accessible locations and purchased by the readers themselves (Deane, 1991; Hunt, 1996). Young readers may borrow, swap and trade volumes; they may chat about characters and storylines. These abundant series are experienced, 'lived' and devoured by enthusiastic young readers with little adult intervention. Indeed the young reader of series fiction is somewhat harder to marginalise. Kimberley Reynolds subtitles her chapter on the *Girl's Own Paper: a literature of their own? Or what girls read*, in her book on girls' reading at the end of the nineteenth century (Reynolds, 1990).[8] Her subtitle is pertinent: just as Victorian young ladies chose to read this weekly periodical, so contemporary young readers choose to read series fiction. This interest, enthusiasm and involvement may point to it being *a fiction of their own* and takes us a step closer to the indefinable and impossible notion of 'children's literature': a reason in itself why critics should not simply disregard series.

Critical work on series fiction for young readers tends towards four main areas: repetition and formula; the age of young readers attracted to series fiction; the series book as object; and how series should be read and the consequences on possible taxonomies of series. The following sections examine these areas in more detail and

[8] The *Girl's Own Paper* was a Victorian weekly magazine published between 1880 and 1941 (Ward).

consider how a Deleuzian approach to series fiction can help overcome some of the difficulties with series fiction.

How to read series and what to call them

Critics try to distinguish between different types of series fiction and many terms for series exist. These definitions are typically linked to perceived character development and the order in which the volumes may be read. Sherrie Inness writes that "the biggest problem comes in differentiating between books in a series (the Little House books) and series books (Nancy Drew and her ilk). [...] in books in series, the characters generally age as real people do" (Inness, 1997, 2). Gary D. Schmidt calls such books "integrated series" (Schmidt, 1987, 36). These show progression and development and although "characters might change in individual novels, [...] it is the cumulative change achieved by the end of the series that is most significant in terms of meaning of the whole" (Schmidt, 1987, 36). Alasdair Campbell refers to these "progressive type of series" as "the sequence", writing, "the greatest advantage of the sequence form in the hands of a creative writer is that it enables him or her to trace the development of character and reveal the complexities of society, thus leading the reader forward to greater maturity" (Campbell, 2002, 6).

Series books, however, "take place in a timeless world where the characters never grow any older or grow older in the most gradual fashion" (Inness, 1997, 2). When series have unchanging characters, Schmidt considers that "there is no need to read these books in any particular order. The plot and experience of each novel is independent of the others; the series is tied together only by the recurrence of the principal characters" (Schmidt, 1987, 35). It is this lack of character development that concerns critics and leads to series being dismissed. Campbell writes, "there will always be repetitive series which achieve great popularity, but so long as they lead nowhere and can be read in any order, few queries about them are likely to arise" (Campbell, 2002, 7). Schmidt concludes,

> the delight in these novels comes about as variations are played upon a theme; characters are put into new sets of problems and solve them in the old familiar way. This can, of course, lead to rather formulaic writing, and

> perhaps explains why the later novels of the Dolittle and Oz and Mary Poppins series are inferior to the earlier novels (Schmidt, 1987, 35).

Whilst most critics agree it is necessary to make the distinction between 'good' series and 'bad' series, between series with growing characters, who develop and mature, and series with characters stuck in a timeless void, young readers may be less discerning and lack of character development does not necessarily impede children reading and enjoying series. Inness warns of a consequent danger of defining such a crisp taxonomy, writing, "I would advise against insisting upon the distinct difference between books in a series and series books; instead, it is perhaps more reasonable to study the interplay and interweaving of the two styles" (Inness, 1997, 2-3). Her assertion is intriguing: is there something to be gained in reading both types of series, or should one be extolled above the other? Can different types of series be treated equally? Should the adult critics of series fiction be taken more seriously than the young readers who appear to enjoy it? A Deleuzian approach allows an equal treatment of all types of series fiction. Deleuze is very clear on what he asks of a book:

> on ne demandera jamais ce que veut dire un livre, signifié ou signifiant, on ne cherchera rien à comprendre dans un livre, on se demandera avec quoi il fonctionne, en connexion de quoi il fait ou non passer des intensités, dans quelles multiplicités il introduit et métamorphose la sienne (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 10).

Deleuze then has an anti-hermeneutic approach to literature. He does not insist on the critical explanation of texts, but rather on whether the text transmits *intensities* and allows for connections to be made.[9] Peter Hunt's adult critic of children's literature does not need to take on the mantle of reading *as a child* and face the impossibilities that this provokes. Deleuze does not require the reader (adult or child) to read 'as'. He requires the reader to submit to the text, but only as a non-interpreter, an experiencer not a searcher of meaning. This notion of intensities dominates Deleuze's thought. It overcomes the very notion of Literature. In his search for intensities and in his insistence that "on considère un livre comme une petite machine a-signifiante; le seul

[9] See Chapter 3 for a further discussion of intensities.

problème est "est-ce que ça fonctionne, et comment ça fonctionne?" Comment ça fonctionne pour vous?" (Deleuze, 1990, 17), Deleuze overturns the need for literary elitism. Bruce Baugh writes,

> [t]he question then is never simply 'What can a work do?', but always 'What can it do for you/me/us?' [...] Answering this question determines not whether the work is 'good' in some objective sense or according to recognised literary 'values', but whether it is good 'for me'. By 'good for me', Deleuze [...] means something that increases my power of action (Baugh, 2000, 54).

A Deleuzian approach clearly offers a new way forward from the traditional discussions about quality assessments of children's literature and series fiction. By looking at a spectrum of contemporary French series in this thesis, covering both 'series books' and 'books in series', and others occupying a more liminal space, the analysis of series fiction can be taken beyond taxonomies of value judgements through a Deleuzian perspective of intensities. Deleuze's theory of intensities is particularly relevant for series fiction. Series fiction for young readers may not always be highly regarded by critics, but it nevertheless has an impact on readers. In reading multiple volumes of a series, readers are 'guaranteed' similar pleasures; there is an expectation when following a series fervently or when dipping in and out of it that repeated and recurring elements will be found. The reader is reassured in the pursuit of a series that the text will be 'good for me' because previous volumes have satisfied that criterion. The reader has already experienced intensities transmitted by these past volumes and may be looking for those intensities to be transmitted again. Deleuze's personal and experimental approach to literature is particularly pertinent for developing child or adolescent readers who are experimenting to find the literature that 'works for them'.

Deleuze and Guattari also provide an alternative interpretation of reading series in their elaboration of the *rhizome* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980).[10] For Deleuze it is not the individual volumes of the series that are of relevance, but the flow of intensities in the movement between them. Deleuze speaks of "une multiplicité de dimensions, de lignes et de directions au sein d'un agencement" (Deleuze, 1996, 160): the assemblage

[10] See Chapter 4.

created between series reader and series text. In this thesis, I intend to focus on series reading, on what happens when a young reader follows a series closely from start to end, and on what happens when a reader dips in and out of a series and how the concept of an ending is also destabilised in the series form and how the rhizome can provide an alternative understanding of this.

Understanding the encounter

Moving away from a hermeneutic approach to literature and focusing on intensities has various repercussions, especially for children's literature and the series fiction within it. Considering fiction from the Deleuzian perspective does not involve the search for meaning, but the search for the intensities that are released when the encounter that is reading occurs. For Peter Hunt, "talking about a book means [...] talking about an encounter" (Hunt, 1984, 189) or, as Victor Watson puts it, about a "meeting" between child and text (Watson, 2000, 1). Understanding this somewhat mysterious interaction between young reader and book is one of the major motivations for many scholars of children's literature.

Aidan Warlow suggests what may cross a child's mind as this encounter takes place: "the child (we are discussing children but all this applies to adults as well) picks a book from the shelf, or unpacks it on Christmas morning, or has it dumped on his desk by a teacher. And then he asks the crucial question 'Will it be any good?'" (Warlow, 1978, 91). This process is, for Warlow, essential for "getting into the story" (Warlow, 1978, 91). This is not a passive experience but an active one. Not only must the reader come to the text but the text must also come to the reader and create a desire for further reading within the reader. For the younger and more inexperienced reader, setting this dynamic in motion may not be straight-forward. For Warlow, "the reader is in a confused position" (Warlow, 1978, 91) at the start of reading. "This ambivalent period before 'getting into the story' is critical in deciding whether to go on or put the book aside. Clearly the period of confusion is very brief in stories which conform to familiar and predictable conventions" (Warlow, 1978, 92).[11] Louise Rosenblatt describes this process as transactional and unique to every reading occasion. It is the encounter

[11] The more mature the reader for Warlow, the longer s/he may be able to tolerate this period of confusion.

between reader and book, "the dynamic to-and-fro relationship that gives rise to the work" (Rosenblatt, 1995, 292).[12]

Once this barrier has been passed and the young reader has gained access to the book and is 'in' the story, total absorption may follow. Victor Nell considers that "among the mysteries of reading, the greatest is certainly its power to absorb the reader completely and effortlessly and, on occasion, to change his or her state of consciousness through entrancement" (Nell, 1988, 73). To capture the essence of these encounters, where the young reader is fully absorbed in a book, Peter Hollindale refers to two passages, one by Graham Greene from *The lost childhood* and the other by Robert Louis Stevenson from *A gossip on Romance*. It is worth quoting each at length:

> [i]n anything fit to be called by the name of reading, the process itself should be absorbing and voluptuous, we should gloat over a book, be rapt clean out of ourselves, and rise from the perusal, our mind filled with the busiest kaleidoscopic dance of images, incapable of sleep or of continuous thought. The words, if the book be eloquent, should run thenceforward in our ears like the noise of breakers, and the story, if it be a story, repeat itself in a thousand coloured pictures to the eye. It was for this pleasure that we read so closely and loved our books so dearly, in the bright, troubled period of boyhood (Stevenson, 1908, 151).

> in childhood all books are books of divination, telling us about the future, and like the fortune teller who sees a long journey in the cards or death by water they influence the future. I suppose that is why books excited us so much. What do we ever get nowadays from reading to equal the excitement and the revelation in those first fourteen years? Of course I should be interested to hear that a new novel by Mr E. M Forster was going to appear this spring, but I could never compare that mild expectation of civilized pleasure with the missed heartbeat, the appalled glee I felt when I found on a library shelf a novel by Rider Haggard,

[12] Rosenblatt writes that her "insistence on the term transaction is a means of establishing the active role of both reader and text in interpretation and ensures that we recognize that any interpretation is an event occurring at a particular time in a particular social or cultural context" (Rosenblatt, 1995, 295). Where Rosenblatt insists on the interpretation of a text, Deleuze does not.

> Percy Westerman, Captain Brereton or Stanley Weyman which I had not read before (Greene, 1951, 13).

However romantic and idealised these passages may be, however misleading the memory of them may be, both Stevenson and Greene depict the all-consuming, passionate and almost otherworldly experience that reading can be. Hollindale comments that "for Greene the intensity of absorption is exclusive to childhood; for Stevenson it is specially associated with childhood, but achievable by the adult also. For Greene the childhood reading pleasure is formative and influential; for Stevenson it is chiefly self-sufficient delight" (Hollindale, 1991, 91). This otherworldliness and the total absorption to which reading may lead could be described as essential to the intense experience of reading and the encounter between reader and book. Deleuze's concept of *becoming*, developed in *Mille Plateaux*, his collaborative work with Félix Guattari, affords a deeper insight into this encounter.[13] Becoming, the fusion of two heterogeneous bodies, enhances our understanding of the processes at work when reading occurs and takes the concept of reader involvement in a text beyond the paradigm of mere identification with the character.

Whilst there may appear to be a number of similarities between a Deleuzian encounter of reader and book and reader-response theories, any such similarities are only superficial and are effectively reflected in Deleuze's anti-hermeneutic stance. Where reader-response theories emphasise the reader's role in the creation of a text's meaning, Deleuze's quest is not for the creation of meaning but for the creation of intensity. Reader-response theories inevitably focus on the reader; a Deleuzian analysis, however, may indeed start with the reader, but goes on to consider the *agencement* of voices in a textual encounter. For Deleuze, the result of becoming is the *agencement collectif d'énonciation* which goes beyond notions of reader and character, creating its own unique voice of the reading experience. This thesis proposes the concept of the *zeroth voice* to encapsulate the *agencement collectif d'énonciation* as it is a voice that exists beyond and before subject and object of reading.[14]

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[13] See Chapters 3 and 5.
[14] See Chapter 6.

The series book as object

Series books are also highly collectable objects. The perpetuated continuity of series fiction may "quickly become a matter of collecting all the titles, the first step in what used to be called 'building a library'" (Watson, 2000, 8). These books, as objects, have aesthetic appeal. Aidan Chambers remarks on this, writing, "the book-object is a piece of sculpture which, like any piece of sculpture, can please or displease us, cause us to make this or that association" (Chambers, 1983, 174). Margaret Mackey also points to the aesthetic appeal of series books to young people who, she notes, "are profoundly accustomed to having their eyes pleased" (Mackey, 2001, 170). Mary Huntwork writes in her article on the *Sweet Valley High* series that

> features such as the small pennant on the cover bearing the number of the book, the lists and order forms for other titles, and the hook paragraphs at the end of each novel leading into the next story, all emphasize the serial nature of the books. The series approach appeals to the "collect all twelve" mentality most children have grown up with (Huntwork, 1990, 138).

Such an interest in seriality is not exclusive to publishing for young people. Gérard Genette points to the power and potential of these emblems in his work *Seuils*, so much so that people look for series or collections when they do not necessarily exist. He writes,

> [i]l est aujourd'hui si puissant que l'absence de collection est ressentie par le public et articulée par les medias comme une sorte de collection implicite ou *a contrario*: on parle ainsi, par un abus presque légitime, de la "collection blanche" de Gallimard pour designer tout ce qui, dans la production de cet éditeur, ne porte pas de label spécifié (Genette, 1987, 27).

Indeed, publishers often present individual volumes of a series as "a desirable item to consume, to own, and to add to one's collection" (Lassén-Seger, 2002, 162). As both Victor Watson and Gabrielle Cliff Hodges suggest, collecting books enhances a sense of

belonging to a "fellowship of readers" (Cliff Hodges, 1996, 269). Readers share a common ground and "enthusiasm and book-oriented social activity" (Mackey, 1990, 484) are created. In the internet age, fans can discuss series and their characters and plot in chat rooms, predicting plot twists and future events. Series reading is not an isolated experience and for Greenlee this explains the ongoing popularity of series "because they are created with personal involvement and engagement in mind" (Greenlee, 1996, 17).

When a series is followed closely or collected obsessively, however, it supposes considerable emotional (and potentially financial) investment. Margaret Mackey writes,

> with series, publishers have a substantial incentive to build and maintain interest, as the returns will come in more than once, and readers also have more than one opportunity to make their own literary and financial investments. There is room, time, and reason for extended contact between publisher and purchaser, author and reader [... series] demand, and indubitably receive, a serious commitment from readers (Mackey, 2001, 168).

It is however these very notions of 'investment' and 'commitment' that are a cause of concern of educators and parents. Young readers are targeted and marketed to, and publishers see the potential investment that young readers can make and try to capitalise on it. Publishers promote the regular, assiduous, logical reading of series fiction. Muriel Tiberghien describes their aim as follows:

> de capter puis de retenir un lectorat ciblé d'avance comme le plus large possible, bons et mauvais lecteurs confondus dans une même politique de fidélisation qui doit s'établir aussi dans la durée, argumentaire commercial oblige (Tiberghien, 2002).

So strong is the appeal of series that publishers may reissue books in the series form, as Terri Schmitz remarks, "it seems as though more and more books are being made to look like series" (Schmitz, 2002, 425), adding that "the concept of brand-name

recognition seems to be driving the way many publishers are packaging their books" (Schmitz, 2002, 425). Each re-edition is being designed to attract new readers and keep readers coming back for more. Young readers (naïvely or not) are ready to make the financial and emotional investment in series. In obsessive collecting there is also the risk that actual reading is overlooked. Gemma Moss cites an example of a boy who

> owned thirty-one Goosebump titles, and was often to be found in school showing them to other boys, passing them round, and indeed flicking through them. However, he was actually treating the books as objects to collect rather than read, and had only managed to get through three of the thirty-one titles (Moss, 1999).

Considering the series book as an aesthetic object opens up the question of why readers are attracted to certain books and the importance of the physical look of the book for the potential purchaser/reader. What makes some readers so emotionally involved in series fiction, what makes them collect every title in a collection and what makes them read them so intensely? Deleuze considers that it is not necessary to ask what literary texts mean, just what they trigger, what connections they provoke. His concept of intensities, and the notion of the *virtual* on which they are founded, go some way to explaining this emotional pull of a book/series.[15]

A 'time' for series

Most critics agree that series fiction appeals to young readers of a very distinct age. For J. A. Appleyard, "you can chart children's growing interest in these books, the peak of their involvement with them, and their waning fondness for them" (Appleyard, 1994, 84). The compulsive reading of series fiction, is, most adults hope, a passing phase. Entering this phase can be tolerated, "mais l'essentiel est d'en sortir" (Loock, 2002). Paul Deane gives a concrete age to this period when series fiction reigns supreme. His comments, albeit targeted for an American audience, are pertinent:

[15] See Chapter 3.

> the majority of fiction series are read by eight- to twelve-year-olds, these ages corresponding approximately to school periods from the end of grade two (the average series probably cannot be read much before this time) to the end of grade six (when most children have "broken the series habit"). [...] It must be noted, though, that several very recent ones, such as Doris Fein, the Nancy Drew Files, and the Sweet Valley High Series, with their strong elements of romantic attachments among the continuing characters, their interest in fashion, and their treatment of teenage concerns, imply a slightly older reader. Publishers indeed state that they are designed for "older readers" or "young adults," yet twelve-year-old girls, and younger, who were surveyed responded to such material as well" (Deane, 1991, 35).

Ganna Ottevaere-van Praag suggests, however, that "les romans se lisent en principe à partir d'un âge de départ, celui où les compétences et les expériences de l'enfant/adolescent lui permettent une perception suffisante du texte pour qu'il en retire du plaisir" (Ottevaere-van Praag, 1999, 1), and views any upper age limit as redundant. For her, once competences have been acquired, there is no restriction on reading age. The difficulty with any form of age classifications, is that marketing a novel for a distinct age immediately makes it more desirable for those under that age (Eccleshare, 1998).

The period of interest in series fiction corresponds to Erik Erikson's stage of 'Industry versus Inferiority' in his work on the eight developmental stages of life, and which covers the time from the start of school to puberty, also corresponding to Freud's latency period. Each stage is dominated by a crisis which must be resolved successfully if an individual is to pass onto the next stage. In this particular stage, children need to discover a sense of industry and achievement (Erikson, 1956). Barbara Moran and Susan Steinfirst turn to Erikson in their work on series fiction. They write,

> in what is called the normative crisis of early adolescence, the child has to resolve the dilemma of "industry" while at the same time, internalize a sense of "inferiority." There are strivings toward competence, mastery, and achievement, which will gradually lead to a sense that he or she must

> "do" or "accomplish" to gain recognition and become a productive individual (Moran, 1985, 116).

Acquiring a sense of accomplishment and competence concurs with Adele Greenlee's survey of common threads in girls' series books from 1867 – 1989, where she finds that "the girls' achievements are done independently with little parental involvement" (Greenlee, 1996, 20). Parents are conveniently elsewhere and most of the action occurs outside the home. Babysitting in contemporary series books "provides a plausible way for a middle school girl to be competent independently" (Greenlee, 1996, 20). For Moran and Steinfirst, it is therefore

> not surprising that young people may well find comfort in these repetitious plots, and guidance from the strengths of the series characters who, despite the silliness and cocksureness of it all, are competent, autonomous young men and women, successfully poised on the brink of adulthood" (Moran, 1985, 117).

Series fiction provides young readers with autonomous, capable characters solving puzzles and problems logically and independently. Where characters work together in groups, they are disciplined and organised (Lassén-Seger, 2002). Such traits also correspond to Piaget's period of *concrete operations*: "these greatly enlarge [the child's] ability to organize means independently of the direct impetus toward goal achievement; they are instruments for dealing with the properties of the immediately present object world" (Inhelder and Piaget, 1968, xiii). For Piaget, children learn how to deal with abstract situations later during *formal operations*. For Appleyard, the repetitive reading of series fiction and fixation with "the girl or boy detective is a fantasy of what maturity will be like; it may need repeating dozens of times in dozens of variations before a ten-year-old is satisfied that it is a possible future" (Appleyard, 1994, 86). Eventually, however, the young reader, suitably reassured, will move on (or at least concerned adults hope they will).

In addition to notions of time linked to the reader, concepts of time and growth within series pose certain difficulties, in particular for series where little character growth

or no strong sense of sequence is demonstrated. David Rudd's work on the series fiction of Enid Blyton offers an insight into some of these problems. He postulates that the characters of the *Malory Towers* series occupy a liminal space where "normal notions of space, time and structure are disrupted" (Rudd, 2000, 123). For him, a reading which insists on growing out of series fiction "is warranted only by looking from the outside, diachronically. For the young reader there is simply a space opened up, in which the young reader [...] can wallow" (Rudd, 2000, 221 note 9).[16] Whilst series may fulfil a developmental role, presenting readers with competent young characters, Rudd's notion of the creation of a liminal space into which the reader is projected when reading a series shows that the idea of a time for series and time in series is not as clear cut as it might appear. I support David Rudd's premise, not by looking at whether readers simply grow out of series fiction, but by considering how time in series interfaces with repetition to provoke this liminal, synchronic space. I use Deleuze's concept of the time of repetition, *Aiôn*, as a basis for understanding time in and of series.[17]

Repetition and Formula

Series fiction is almost unanimously considered as repetitive and formulaic by critics and neither of these traits is well-regarded. On occasions these aspects are attributed to the series "assembly-line method of production" (Johnson, 2002, 160 n13) and provoke claims that they are "manufactured" (Hunt, 1994, 16) rather than written. Perhaps the most well-known series that fall into this category are the *Nancy Drew* and *The Hardy Boys* series from the infamous Stratemeyer syndicate.[18] This is not exclusively the case, however. "Even the series written by single authors have uncomplicated plots and limited characterization when series' volumes have a consistent formula" (Greenlee, 1996, 17). For critics, the recourse to repetition and formula is what causes a 'good' series to decline, as Gary D. Schmidt notes, "the great series are great because the author is able to work creatively and artistically within the confines of a series' structure.

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[16] Here David Rudd is responding to Gill Frith and her work on the school story, in which she considers such fiction as a stage to be "grown out of" (Frith, 1987, 123).

[17] See Chapter 5.

[18] Edward Stratemeyer (1862-1930) and his syndicate created outlines for entire series and individual volumes to be written by ghostwriters. The syndicate produced series from 1906 to 1984 and has thousands of titles to its name. Pennames were always used to give the illusion of a 'real' author. Some of the most well known series are *The Bobbsey Twins*, *The Rover Boys*, and *Tom Swift*.

A series begins to lose its power when an author is stifled by the confines of the structure" (Schmidt, 1989, 164-165).

More positively, repetition can be considered as a source of fun. Bruce Butts refers to J. D. Salinger's short story *For Esmé – with love and squalor* to show how children love repetition. When meeting someone for the first time Esmé's brother, Charles, always asks them the same riddle: "what did one wall say to the other wall?" (Salinger, 1994, 73).[19] When Charles repeats the riddle to Esmé's interlocutor (X), he answers it and the fun disappears: "it is quite apparent to both reader and X that what had delighted Charles had been the opportunity to revisit his joke. Over and over. It is evidently a tireless source of amusement to him" (Butts, 2003, 278)[20]. Where children appear to revel in repetition, adults, it would appear, do not conceive such repetition in the same way, finding it tedious. Bruce Butts writes of Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*,

> on the one hand, I would concede that these self-consciously wry stories are wittily engaging for the first couple of books. On the other hand, in the longer term they ultimately amount to little more than a handful of jokes repeatedly and formulaically retold. The familiarity of the same circumstances arising veers precariously close to the exploitation of a young reader's willingness to hear the same gag again and again (and again), and I doubt that this is a device that we should applaud (Butts, 2003, 280).

For Butts "repetition has been the centre of the series' success" (Butts, 2003, 282), and repetition yielding pleasure has distinct Freudian overtones. Freud remarks on an infant's compulsion to repeat in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.*[21] Observing an infant

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[19] "Meet you at the corner!" (Salinger, 1994, 73).

[20] Esmé Squalor appears as the Baudelaire orphans' new guardian in *The Ersatz Elevator* the sixth volume of *A Series of Unfortunate Events.*

[21] Deleuze makes his opposition to Freud particularly clear in his essay *Ce que les enfants disent* and in his joint work with Félix Guattari *L'Anti-OEdipe.* Whereas Freud reduces childhood imaginings and desires to the oedipal *papa-maman-moi* triangle of psychoanalysis, Deleuze overturns this with his concepts of *trajet* and *devenir.* Despite the fact that I am dealing with young readers and adolescent characters, it is not my intention to explore why Deleuze offers an alternative to psychoanalysis or indeed why his anoedipal analysis may be a useful tool for the study of juvenile fiction. Deleuze's overturning of Freudian

repeatedly discarding and recuperating a wooden reel on a string revealed the child's need and desire for repetition. He writes, "this, then, was the complete game – disappearance and return. As a rule one only witnessed its first act, which was repeated untiringly as a game in itself, though there is no doubt that the greater pleasure was attached to the second act" (Freud, 1986, 225). The child's gesture compensated for his mother's absence over which he had no control; by pulling the string back and returning the reel, the repetition allows the child to conquer the unpleasant situation.

J. A. Appleyard also questions why series such as *Nancy Drew* and *The Hardy Boys* are attractive to young readers, writing,

> the reason seems to have something to do with the combination of sameness and diversity that is common to these books. Over and over, in constantly changing settings, the heroes and heroines face new versions of danger or evil or crime, but the structure of the situations, the behaviour of the characters, and above all the outcome are reassuringly familiar" (Appleyard, 1994, 62).

Appleyard, too, acknowledges a difference in adult and child understanding and conception of repetition, remarking, "what to adults seems repetitive in these stories must to the child appear as confirmation that in diverse new areas of experience, what counts is still recognizable and familiar" (Appleyard, 1994, 63). Not only are plots, characters and scenarios formulaic and repetitive, but young readers also read specific volumes repetitively, Appleyard writes, "repetitive reading of these stories is a clue to their attraction. Not only is one book very much like another in the series, but the true fan may reread the same book 'at least a dozen times'" (Appleyard, 1994, 85). Victor Nell describes such a process as "reading gluttony" and discusses a "gluttonous reader, a text gobbler who swallows books whole, achieving that pinnacle of gluttonous security, the ability to eat the same dish endlessly, passing it through his system whole and

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repetition and its usefulness to series fiction is addressed through his concept of pure repetition. His concepts of *trajet* and *cheminement*, whilst not addressed explicitly, are nonetheless present in the discussion of the *rhizome* and the *ritournelle* in Chapters 4 and 5.

miraculously wholesome, ready to be re-eaten again and again" (Nell, 1988, 239).[22] It is such repetitive reading which provokes the greatest pedagogical concern. Alasdair Campbell defends it, however:

> the repetitive type of series, in which there is virtually no development of character, can be defended on various grounds [...] for having provided abundant material which may encourage the less able reader or help the more adventurous to relax between spells of serious reading (Campbell, 2002, 7).

Copious reading material is typically considered to be the only benefit of repetition for the young reader. It cannot be good to read the same thing again and again, nor to read something which is so near to the original apart from minor variations. In pointing to the divergence in child and adult experiences of repetition, Appleyard and Butts do not provide explanations of why young readers appear to enjoy and revel in the predictability and minute variation on a theme, when adults only see the 'same' ad infinitum.

Critics recognise that repetition is a key element of series fiction and in line with this, the study of series fiction requires a methodology that puts repetition to the fore. My intention is to explore repetition beyond psychological compulsion, to discover what makes young readers return to the same book time and time again, and to seek out a theory of repetition which may go some way to explaining why repetition in series is so effective and powerful. Deleuze develops a comprehensive theory of repetition in his thesis *Différence et Répétition* (1968). In it he puts forward the concepts of *pure repetition* and *pure difference* or *différence en elle-même* and *répétition pour elle-même* (*repetition for itself* and *difference in itself*). For Deleuze, it is only through repetition that difference is possible. For him, repetition is difference is repetition and is necessarily an intense experience. Pushed to the extreme, repetition becomes a simulacrum and, as will be demonstrated in the later stages of this thesis, Deleuze's notion of the simulacrum can help us understand the problematic notion of the 'child' that often besets the study of

[22] Nell is not specifically referring to young readers here.

'children's literature'.[23] The advantages of a Deleuzian approach to repetition are that it shifts the focus of attention from one of comparison to the essential experience of repetition.

Beyond the formulaic: towards a difference reading

This work on series fiction draws on the basis that series are repetitive and perpetuated. It proposes a *different* criticism for series fiction. In order to construct such an analysis, the logical starting point is a reassessment of repetition. Through its redefinition, it is possible to valorise the new that comes from it, and subsequently build an analysis from a more constructive perspective. The respective roles of sequencing and narrative resolution can then show the much richer rhizomic texture that may exist between series texts than that which a traditional linear analysis may presume. The rhizome is key to exploring the concept of growth, where the linking of reader and character in the process of becoming has much in common with the ideas of rhizome in the texts themselves. By moving away from the idea of growth towards a specific goal and by redefining time in relation to pure repetition, it can be redefined as a link-forming process not limited to the accomplishment of rites of passage. Aiôn furthers the understanding of connectivity and reveals how growth may even occur in the most 'static' of series. Deleuze's concept of the simulacrum, coupled with his concepts of *minoritarian* and *majoritarian* voices, lead towards the *agencement collectif d'énonciation*, or the presence of a virtual, 'zeroth' voice of series fiction, created within and through the reader through becoming.

This thesis proposes only one of the many possible *rencontres* between Deleuze and juvenile series fiction. The concepts I draw from his reservoir are, I believe, the most pertinent for a study of juvenile series fiction. Deleuze's concepts are, like his rhizome, interlinked. The path I advocate in such a conceptual rhizome moves from pure repetition and its related concepts of pure difference and the simulacrum. It explores the rhizomic fabric of series which in turn loops back to the concepts of active forgetting and the cut, concepts implicit in the theory of Deleuzian repetition. It considers becoming as an access point to this cut, this time of Aiôn, and focuses on

[23] See Chapters 3 and 5.

what is created out of this becoming: the *agencement collectif d'énonciation* and the 'zeroth' voice unique to every reading experience.

Repetition is the constitutive element in this approach to series fiction and should be celebrated, encouraged and experienced, not compared and analysed. My analyses do not discard current criticisms but aim to explore them further. I identify series reading, not as a lesser reading, homogenising and rendering experience the same, but as a difference reading. By looking beyond the common structure of series to the intensities transmitted from those series, the ongoing appeal and popularity of series fiction may be uncovered.

2 – The series form in France

While Anglo-American scholars bemoan the paucity of serious critical work on juvenile series fiction (Deane, 1991; Watson, 2000; Schurman and Johnson, 2002), the origins and history of series fiction in France are even less well documented and studies of French children's and adolescent literature rarely give so much as a cursory nod to its existence. Most critics agree that "the first series book for children was published in America in 1835 – though it apparently was not labelled as such until 1839" (Johnson, 2002, 147). Despite the American influence notably in the creation of France's first children's library, *L'Heure Joyeuse*, the trend for series fiction did not appear to follow until much later (*L'Heure Joyeuse: 70 ans de jeunesse 1924-1994*, 1994).

This chapter collates information on series fiction in France and charts the growing interest in seriality for young readers from Jules Verne's publication of his *Voyages Extraordinaires* through Hachette's well-known collections, housing the first true series in the 1950s. It is my contention that there have been two distinct waves of interest in and production of series fiction in France. The second part of this chapter defines my corpus in relation to the gap between these two intensifications of interest in series fiction. Having defined my corpus, I also consider issues of readership and classification of the series at the end of the chapter.

Development of series fiction in France

Notions of seriality in France can be traced back to the early children's literature of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when a penchant for moral tales developed on both sides of the English Channel. The author of the first sequel for young readers in France could be considered to be Madame Leprince de Beaumont (1711-1780) who wrote *Le magasin des enfants, ou dialogues entre une sage gouvernante et plusieurs de ses élèves* (1757) followed by *Le magasin des adolescents* (1760) (Carpenter, 1995, 53). These were, however, inspired by the earlier work of Sarah Fielding (1710-1768), in particular *The Governess or Little Female Academy* (1749) (Carpenter, 1995, 53). De Beaumont's were translated into English as *The Young Misses Magazine* and *The Young Ladies Magazine* respectively, demonstrating the reciprocal exchange of instructional stories between the two countries. Other authors of such didactic tales include Sarah

Trimmer (1741-1810) and Mrs Barbauld (1743-1825) in England, and Madame de Genlis (1746-1830) and Arnaud Berquin (1749-1791) in France, all of whose work enjoyed success in translation. Isabelle Jan considers such output thus: "dans la deuxième moitié du XVIIIe siècle, une littérature aussi abondante qu'artificielle [...] se répand dans les milieux de la noblesse ou de la bourgeoisie aisée" (Jan, 1985, 27). Her comments could easily be transposed to contemporary series for young readers, so often criticised for their abundance and artificiality.

The tendency of English authors enjoying the success of their work translated for French audiences continued into the nineteenth century. Such authors include Maria Edgeworth (1767 – 1849), who could be considered as introducing the motif of a recurrent character to such literature with her impetuous Rosamond, first appearing in *The Parent's Assistant* in 1796. Barabara Hofland (1770-1844) and Charlotte Yonge (1823-1901) also gained popularity in France and indeed Edgeworth wrote to Hofland to attest to the popularity of Hofland's *The Son of a Genius* (1812), translated as *Ludovico* (1817) in France (Butts, 1992, 41). Yonge's *Heir of Redclyffe* (1853) although not destined for young readers was popular with both children and adults alike and was rapidly translated into French, as were her later stories for children, including *The Daisy Chain* (1856), appearing in translation in 1857 with the epithet 'par l'auteur de L'Héritier de Redclyffe' a marketing technique worthy of any contemporary author. Whilst elements of seriality exist in thse works, they are not series, but rather collections of short tales, linked by the general theme of instruction and didacticism, and with the occasional recurrent character.

By 1871, G. A. Henty (1832-1902) was finding success with his imperialistic boys' adventure books, the first of which was entitled *Out on the Pampas; or, the Young Settlers.* Whilst Henty's work did not feature recurrent characters, his texts nonetheless were dominated by themes of bravery and heroism. "By 1886, [Henty] was generally producing four books a year, and reckoned he could write one in twenty days; in all, he published some eighty boys' stories or collections of shorter pieces" (Carpenter, 1995, 245): an output which could rival that of Enid Blyton. Humphrey Carpenter, quoting Harvey Darton, author of *Children's Books in England: five centuries of social life* (1932) writes, "if you have read only two or three of the seventy-odd books he wrote for boys

you know most of the rest, even if you like one first encountered ... better than those you met later when you could recognise the formula" (Carpenter, 1995, 246). Henty's novels could therefore be considered as the first formula fiction translated into French, although his success in translation did not match his popularity at home.

In parallel to the success of Henty's work, another phenomenon was emerging in France, which took a step away from the didacticism of the earlier literature and as the title suggests moved towards a more pleasurable and entertaining reading for children. In the early 1860s, Pierre-Jules Hetzel founded *Le Magasin d'éducation et de récréation*, and published Jules Verne's *Cinq semaines en ballon*: "premier volume des *Voyages extraordinaires* et d'une oeuvre qui totalise soixante-trois romans et dix-huit nouvelles" (Caradec, 1977, 159) and with this "Jules Verne s'engage alors à fournir à l'éditeur deux volumes par an, pendant vingt ans" (Ricochet).[24] Verne's commitment to Hetzel could be considered as a move towards a form of series fiction and certainly foreshadows some of the criticisms of future series fiction, notably the large number of episodes, the generalisation of the diverse narratives under the one title, author and reader commitment, writing to formula and so on. It was, however, a successful and popular formula: "[d]ans les faits, Verne sign[a], en près de quarante ans, 54 volumes, de mieux en mieux payés, le succès sans cesse croissant de ses "Voyages" motivant, en effet, une générosité accrue de la part de Hetzel" (Leroy and Chollet, 2005, 17).

Prior to the creation of Hetzel's *Le Magasin d'éducation et de récréation*, Hachette signed a contract with la Comtesse de Ségur. This event of 1855, which Rosemary Lloyd describes as the "real birth of books for children in France" (Lloyd, 1992, 21), contributed significantly to the development of the *bibliothèque rose*: "the beautifully bound and illustrated works of which were to become so much a part of French childhood memories" (Lloyd, 1992, 21). Contrary to popular belief, the *bibliothèque rose* was not created specifically for Madame de Ségur but "pour occuper les enfants pendant les voyages, et permettre à leurs parents de lire tranquillement" (Leroy and Chollet, 2005, 9). Madame de Ségur was one of the first authors to be published in this collection and

[24] There is some discrepancy over the date when the periodical was founded and when Verne's first work was published. Perrot considers the periodical to be founded in 1864 and yet puts the publishing date of *Cinq semaines en ballon* in 1862. According to Caradec the first volume of the *Voyages Extraordinaires* appeared in 1862. The Centre National des Etudes en Littérature de Jeunesse's website Ricochet puts this publication in 1863, having taken the manuscript to Hetzel in 1862.

"obt[int] un tel succès auprès des enfants qu'elle dev[int] l'auteur principal de la collection" (Leroy and Chollet, 2005, 9). Hachette's creation of the *bibliothèque rose* and its counterpart for older readers, the *bibliothèque verte* highlights one difficulty with the notion of series fiction in France: there is some confusion between the terms *série* and *collection* and often they are used interchangeably. Whilst Anglo-American literature for young readers developed towards the series form, in France, thanks to Hachette, the collection was much more prevalent. The two *bibliothèques* are more precisely collections of books around similar themes rather than series in their own right. Their visual appearance with their matching pink and green spines blurs the distinction between series and collections further, as does the fact Hachette has always shown "un goût prononcé" (Thaler, 2002, 26) for series fiction and there has been, and continues to be a predominance of series within the two *bibliothèques*. Another distinction that exists between Anglo-American and French literary development is the concept of young adult literature. Adolescence in itself has only existed as a concept since the beginning of the twentieth century, making it inappropriate to apply to earlier series fiction for older children. Young adult literature as a genre is no more than fifty years old (Hunt, 1996, 4) in Anglo-American culture, but is still very much in its infancy in France, as a classification distinct from children's fiction.

This research focuses solely on series, sequences of books linked by a recurring character, rather than collections of books linked loosely around a common theme. Isabelle Jan considers, with some degree of vitriol, the development of Hachette's *bibliothèque verte* to be the origin of series fiction in France:

> [à] partir des années 50 débute une commercialisation à la fois sauvage et servile et s'amorce une industrialisation: la fabrication en série d'un objet de grande consommation. C'est le règne d'Hachette avec la "Rose" et la "Verte", autrefois tout à fait disjointes, aujourd'hui confondues de fait. L'évolution de la Bibliothèque Verte est exemplaire. Elle est allée d'une édition bon marché, populaire, mais diffusant des textes de bonne qualité en partie héritées du fonds Hetzel, sorte de "classiques du people" à l'usage des enfants, à une para-littérature. Elle commence à négliger son fonds, presque totalement abandonné aujourd'hui, au moment où elle changeait sa fameuse et austère présentation

> "verte" pour une présentation toujours bon marché et cartonnée mais style "romans de gare" et qu'elle introduisait en France les "séries" (Jan, 1985, 159).

From the 1950s to the 1970s Hachette had particular success with the series in their collections, publishing in August 1955 the first *Nancy Drew* title 'by' Carolyn Keene, pseudonym of the Edward Stratemeyer syndicate (and known in France as the *Alice* series by Caroline Quine), and followed in the October by *The Famous Five* by Enid Blyton.[25] After the success of the initial volumes,

> Hachette se met à traduire la série sans respecter la chronologie des parutions originales. Une liberté qui ne semble en rien perturber l'adhésion des jeunes lecteurs. *Les Cinq et le Trésor de l'île* (*Five on Treasure Island*), l'histoire initiale mettant en scène pour la première fois la fratrie Gauthier [...] et leur cousine Claudine [...] ne sera ainsi publiée en France qu'en 1961, en dix-septième position (Leroy and Chollet, 2005, 40-41).[26]

Raymond Perrin captures the influence of series in translation when he writes, "les séries anglo-saxonnes anticipent un processus amplifié par les futures séries françaises, ou étrangères" (Perrin, 2003, 166) and a wealth of French series did indeed follow. 1958 saw the arrival of Georges Bayard's fifteen year-old *Michel*, who was the subject of thirty-nine adventure and mystery books and with whom parallels could be drawn to *Nancy Drew*. The *Michel* series ran until 1985. Bayard started a similar series in 1980, *Cécile,* destined for a female readership. More directly traceable to the influence of Enid Blyton, 1958 marked the start of Georges G. Toudouze's *Les Cinq Jeunes Filles* series with their numerous holiday adventures. Similarly, Paul-Jacques Bonzon's *Les Six Compagnons* about the adventures of six friends and their dog, remained popular from its inception in 1961 to Bonzon's death in 1978. The series was then continued, firstly by Olivier Séchan, adding three titles to the original thirty-eight, then by Pierre Dautun, adding a further six titles and finally by Maurice Périsset adding another two titles (Leroy and Chollet, 2005, 71). Bonzon also penned another series between 1965 and 1975, perhaps

[25] Le Club des Cinq originally appeared in Hachette's Collection Ségur-Fleuriot and was only 'demoted' to the Bibliothèque rose in 1958. Blyton's Le Clan des Sept was, however, published immediately in the Bibliothèque Rose.

[26] Claude Voilier, one of the translators of the Famous Five, added twenty-five volumes to the series, newly named Les Cinq between 1979 and 2003.

the least related to its Anglo-American cousins during this period: *La famille HLM*, "les deux héros principaux, Marco et Bichette, se voient obligés de suivre leurs parents dans une tour ultramoderne [...] Bonzon y étudie les états d'âmes des petits compagnards déracinés" (Leroy and Chollet, 2005, 75). Georges Chaulet's *Fantômette* appeared between 1961 and 1987. The forty-nine titles about the masked heroine have roots in the earlier *Fantomas* and *Arsène Lupin* texts and have subsequently been developed as cartoons and a television serial. Lieutenant X (aka Vladimir Volkoff) introduced the *bibliothèque verte*'s first spy series in 1965: *Langelot agent secret*, whose eighteen year-old hero was the subject of no less than forty adventures. The 1970s were marked with the creation of Philippe Ebly's *Les Conquérants de l'impossible* series: originally an adventure series, it gradually grew into the science-fiction genre over its nineteen volumes. In 1977, Ebly created the nine volume *Evadés du temps* series and from 1984 he developed the seven-volume series *Les Patrouilleurs de l'an 4003*. Since this period, the very notion of "la série enfantine [a été] momifiée sous les couvertures roses et vertes des deux Bibliothèques qui la commercialisèrent" (Decréau, 1994, 7).

By the mid 1980s this first wave of series creation had all but drawn to a close. Series fiction did not come into the spotlight again until the mid 1990s, when, in 1994, *Bayard Poche* inaugurated its *Passion de lire* collection: its flagship series was none other than the translated *Goosebumps* (*Chair de Poule*) collection which was soon to become as phenomenally popular in France as it was in the United States. Jean Perrot comments,

> [d]evant l'ampleur du phénomène et la multiplication des collections qui a suivi, traduisant un engouement, force a été de constater que les jeunes lisaient ces livres avec délectation: une "mobilisation générale" des écrivains paraît donc avoir été explicitement décrétée par diverses maisons d'édition françaises, de manière à faire pièce aux "Américains" (Perrot, 1999, 29-30).

Bayard created its own competition in the rival *Polar Gothique* collection by Michel Amelin, written between 1997 and 1999. It was only some time after the 1998 translation of the first *Harry Potter* book appearing in France and the translation of the *Lemony Snicket* series in 2002 that a true second wave of French series started to build. Only in 2002 did Philippe-Jean Catinchi comment in *Le Monde* that "l'année semble

placée sous le signe du feuilleton" (Catinchi, 2002) and Azam and Noiville stated later in the same year, "depuis le phénomène Potter, les séries pour jeunes adultes [...] font fureur" (Azam, 2002). In the same way that Hachette's translated series triggered a spurt of French creations through the 1950s to 1970s, so the huge success of these more recent Anglo-American series can be seen as the inspiration for series such as *Peggy Sue et les fantômes* by Serge Brussolo (first published in 2001, currently numbering eight volumes), *Golem* by Marie-Aude, Elvire and Lorris Murail (2002), and *Tom Cox* by Frank Krebs (first appearing in 2004 and very much in the style of *Harry Potter*).

The corpus presented in this research is designed to explore what happened between these two waves of interest in, and creation of, series. It consequently consists of contemporary series in France appearing from the mid 1980s to the end of the 1990s. It is my contention that during this period, series fiction for young readers was able to develop in a much less constrained way than during the 'golden age' known to Hachette from the 1950s to the 1970s, an impetus that may now be in the process of reversing yet again in the wake of interest created by the latest Anglo-American imports. The series produced during this period also stand apart, primarily because they were not being actively marketed as such. My corpus reflects a broad range of series 'types'. Some are highly repetitive and formulaic with stereotyped characters, true 'series books' to borrow Sherrie Inness's term. Some have complex character development and growth and could easily be defined as 'sequence' or 'integrated series'. Others occupy a more fluid middle ground. The corpus is thus representative of the spectrum of series available in France since the 1980s. The series in this corpus have a recurrent protagonist who is emblematic for the series as a whole, whether the protagonist features eponymously or not. Focusing on series with a recurring character eschews the issues of the collection in France. Written by a range of authors, collections are typically groups of similar works linked by a common theme rather than a common recurring character. Such collections typically include a large amount of translations. In order to capture the true momentum of French series, collections and works in translation are not included in this corpus. What is more, series fiction in translation provokes other concerns about cultural accessibility and the need for modification for a French readership. This is a distinct area and outside the scope of this thesis.

Corpus

The texts considered in this research consist of the *Emilien* and *Nils Hazard* series by Marie-Aude Murail; the *Maxime* and *Samuel* series by Brigitte Smadja; the *Kamo* series by Daniel Pennac; the *P. P. Cul-Vert* series by Jean-Philippe Arrou-Vignod; the *Danse!* series by Anne-Marie Pol and the *Gagne!* series by Jacques Lindecker. The following section briefly introduces each series (more detailed synopses are provided in the Appendix).

Emilien

This seven volume series produced between 1989 and 1993, originally published in the *Ecole des Loisir*'s *Médium* collection, introduces the thirteen year-old Emilien and his mother Sylvie. Over the course of the series, Emilien matures gradually and the series closes as he turns seventeen. With a predominantly domestic setting, Murail uses this series to broach a variety of family-related concerns. The fatherless Emilien has a close relationship with his mother and feels threatened by her ever-changing relationships and the succession of potential step-fathers. The mother-son dynamic dominates until the last episode where Emilien is able to come to terms with her choice of partner. His mother's unstable love life is juxtaposed to Emilien's relationship with Martine-Marie, his girlfriend from the end of the first volume in the series, *Baby Sitter Blues*, whom he plans to marry in five years and with whom he plans to have four children. *Babysitter Blues* was broadcast as a *téléfilm* in 1997 by France 3. When the *Emilien* series was originally published it was not ostensibly marketed as such. This series has recently been reprinted (2006) as a recognisable series with matching covers and an illustrated hero, in the *Ecole des Loisirs*'s *Neuf* collection. This move to market the *Emilien* series as such may be linked to the recent influx of popular series in translation.

Nils Hazard

Murail's second well known series written between 1991 and 1998 follows Nils Hazard, an illustrious professor turned sleuth: a French Indiana Jones.[27] Highly intelligent, flirtatious and capricious, his life is a mixture of lectures and archaeological digs and is interrupted by the teenage Axel, his charge from the second volume, *L'Assassin est au collège.* In this detective series, mysteries are linked to topics of public

[27] The Indiana Jones films appeared in 1981, 1984 and 1989. In the 1990s Bantam published a series of Indiana Jones stories. These were not marketed in France.

debate and there are underlying themes relating to Nils's growing relationship with Catherine Roque, a former student, and his acceptance of their daughter, Juliette, who arrives in the final volume. The initial volume of the series, *Dinky Rouge Sang,* draws on Hitchcock's *Marnie.* Nils, in the same way as Marnie, is haunted by the traumas of his past and fixated by his red Dinky toy car. It is only by unravelling the problems of others that he is able to make sense of his own.

Maxime

The *Ecole des Loisirs* has three collections for young readers: *Mouche* aimed at 7 – 9 year-olds, *Neuf* aimed at 9 – 12 year-olds and *Médium* for 12 – 16 year-olds. Brigitte Smadja develops her *Maxime* series over these three collections between 1991 and 2002. The gradual maturation of the character is thus designed to correlate with the growth of the reader. The first book in the series, *J'ai décidé de m'appeler Dominique*, deals with Maxime's sister coming to terms with his imminent arrival and finally being allowed to choose the baby's name. The following books in the series are presented from Maxime's perspective and Maxime ages from six to seventeen by the end of the series. This series also has a domestic setting and deals with a variety of family related issues. Maxime's uncle Jonas also features in Smadja's first novel for adults, *Le jaune est sa couleur* (1999).

Samuel

Written between 1991 and 2002, Smadja's *Samuel* series is, like the *Maxime* series, presented over three collections of the *Ecole des Loisirs*, providing distinct character growth: characters age from six to seventeen. The *Samuel* series is however more complex as it is developed on two distinct branches (see Figure 1 below).

The first of these focuses on Marie and her growing awareness of her feelings for Samuel and marks the development of their relationship. The second is primarily written from the perspective of Samuel's sister Pauline. The character of Samuel is however the focus for all characters across both branches and links all volumes in this series and, for this reason, I have chosen to name it after Samuel. Although it is not marketed as a series as such, as is often the case with the *Ecole des Loisirs*'s publications, Smadja responded to reader interest in closure of the two threads, by providing the final volume, *J'ai rendez-vous avec Samuel*, which ties both branches together.

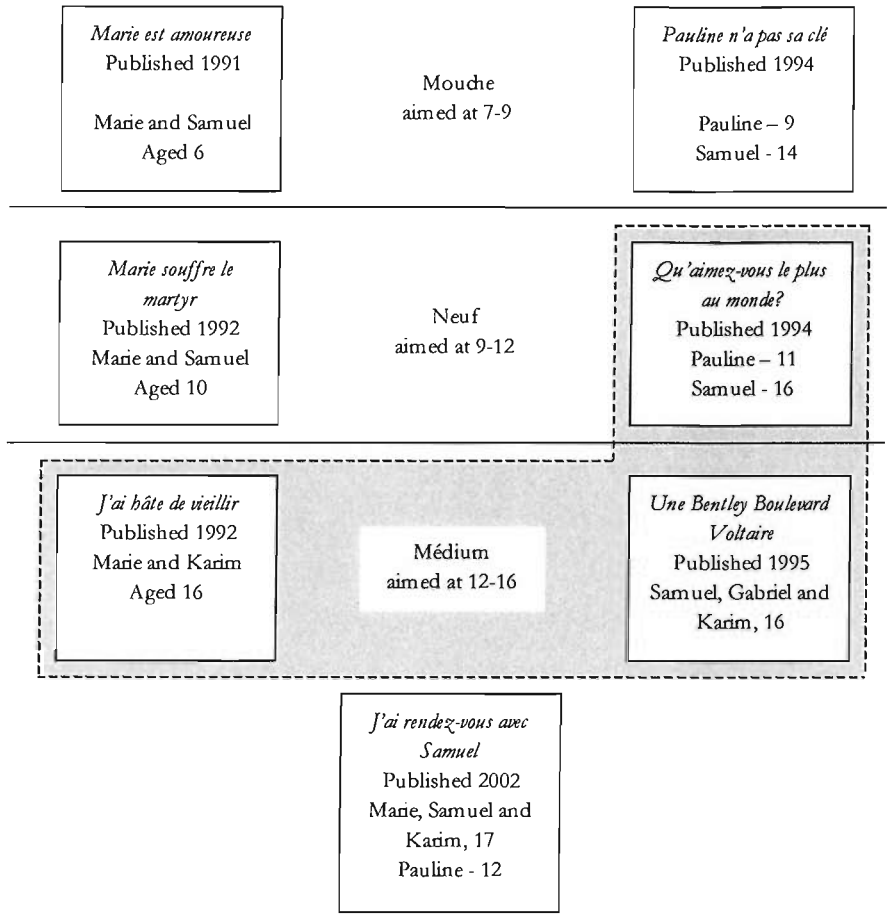

Figure 1: A representation of the Samuel series by Brigitte Smadja. The titles are provided in italics, followed by the dates of first publishing. The principal characters and their ages are provided below this. The three volumes enclosed in the shaded area occupy the same time period

Kamo

Written by Daniel Pennac and originally published in the *Je bouquine* magazine between 1988 and 1992 then reprinted in Gallimard's *Folio Junior* collection in 1997, this four volume series about the adventures of Kamo is narrated by his friend, Toi.[28] It is difficult to define the *Kamo* series in terms of chronology. There is a conflict between dates of original publication, content and the recommended reading order in the Folio editions. The single volume hors-série presents the volumes in the clearest chronological order (see Table 1). Essentially school based, the *Kamo* series also ties in

[28] *Folio Junior* also published in 1984 the first *livre dont vous êtes le hero*: the role play books that became popular in the 1980s. Throughout *Le Clocher d'Abgall*. Emilien is in the process of reading/playing one such book.

with Pennac's series for adults, the *Malaussène* saga, which introduces Benjamin Malaussène and his extended family. Benjamin's brother, Le Petit Malaussène is at school with Kamo. Pennac's novel for adults from 1999, *Messieurs les enfants*, is a reworking of the theme from *Kamo et Moi*, where Kamo and his friend, Toi, find themselves transformed into adults whilst their parents have been transformed into children.[29]

Texts (in order of single regrouped volume)	**Original publication date**	**Folio imprint number**	**Order in Folio imprint**	**Character event sequence**
L'idée du siècle	June 1992	803	4th in series	Progression from the CM2 to the 6ème
Kamo et Moi	February 1985	802		In the 3ème
L'agence Babel	February 1987	800	1st in series	
L'évasion de Kamo	February 1988	801		One year after *L'agence Babel*

Table 1: Publication dates and sequence for the *Kamo* series

P. P. Cul-Vert

Pierre-Paul Louis de Culbert (alias P. P. Cul-Vert), a rotund pupil of the Collège Chateaubriand 4e2, is pretentious, greedy, aristocratic and has a penchant for the melodramatic. P. P. Cul-Vert is also a self-declared genius. Published in the *Folio Junior* collection between 1989 and 2000, the fast moving mysteries in this series are generally provoked by P. P.'s overenthusiastic imagination, and occur on school trips or during holidays overseen by the history teacher Monsieur Coruscant. P. P. solves these mysteries with the aid of his two friends, Mathilde and Rémi. The three protagonists narrate alternating chapters in the first volume of this series. The following volume, *Enquête au collège* allows Rémi to narrate. Pierre-Paul and Mathilde each narrate a volume respectively before the narrative returns to Rémi for the final two volumes of the series. Volumes from both the *Kamo* and the *P. P. Cul-Vert* series have also been developed in audio book format in Gallimard's *Ecoutez lire* collection.

Danse! and Gagne!

Pocket Jeunesse, created in 1994, "propose des séries à succès telles que *Danse!*, *Heartland*, *Gagne!*, *Dylan le dauphin*, ou *Ange et compagnie* et des collections comme *Toi + Moi*, *Rigolo* ou *Les filles*" (*Pocket Jeunesse: la maison d'édition*), amongst many others. From

[29] In 1972 Mary Rodgers published *Freaky Friday* in which mother and daughter change places overnight.

this publishing house, only four series are written by French authors: *Danse!*, *Gagne!*, *Dylan le dauphin* and *En Selle*. From this list I have selected to study the two clearly gendered hobby series, *Danse!* and *Gagne!*, written by Anne-Marie Pol and Jacques Lindecker respectively. Despite many similarities to ghost-written series such as *Nancy Drew* or the *Hardy Boys*, these are not the product of a writing syndicate. The series chart Nina's and Martin's entrance into their respective vocational schools and their struggle to stay there. Survival, achievement and friendships are dominant themes across both series. The pressure put on the pupils to succeed provokes minor dilemmas which tend to be resolved by the end of each volume. These series are the most recent in the corpus and do not fall into the precise time-frame proposed. I have included them in this research, however, as examples of 'series books' that appear to follow a rigid formula, and because neither are specifically derived from any Anglo-American works in translation during the latest wave of revival. Published since 2000, *Danse!* totals thirty-three volumes. The *Gagne!* series can be considered as a response to the popularity and success of *Danse!* in its attempt to capture a male readership. Started in 2003, it currently numbers ten volumes.

Reflections on the corpus

Whilst it is not my intention to do a thematic study of the series in my corpus for reasons that will be clarified in Chapter 3, the next section expounds issues of readership and ways of classifying these series, and explores some of the key characteristics of the texts.

Character age

The age of the protagonist and his/her ageing over the course of the series have implications on the readership of a series and on the way in which it is viewed. Most of the characters in these series have reached the age of thirteen, and whilst many of them are seen to age over the course of the series, most do not age beyond their late teens. In this respect, the characters and their series could be termed as 'adolescent'. I use this term to encompass the many subcategories that prevail to define literature with teenage characters, or aimed at teenage readers, such as 'teen fiction' or 'Young Adult' (YA) fiction, or their equivalence in age classification. These terms are often used interchangeably and indiscriminately in children's literature criticism, depending on the standpoint and implication required. In addition, the term *Teen lit* is also used and

reflects the American origins of the genre and the large amount of work in the field emanating from the United States. *Teen lit* refers concretely and exclusively to the teenage years and as a result is not used as freely as the adolescent and YA labels. The term Young Adult is currently fashionable and often considered more respectful of (or at least more flattering to) the implied readers. Publishers in France often market adolescent fiction to precise age groups: Gallimard's *Folio Junior* collection targets 10-14 year olds, whilst *Pocket Jeunesse*'s series target 9-12 year olds. The *Ecole des Loisirs* abstracts these age categories by marketing books in named its collections, Mouche, Neuf and Médium. In general, adolescent collections are referred to as *romans ados*; the *jeunes adultes* category is not (yet) widespread in France.[30]

Such semantic wrangling with descriptive problems eschews the ultimate dilemma with adolescent fiction that has existed since its inception: the "problem that everyone knew that readers under the magic age of thirteen would be reading these books" (Eccleshare, 1998, 388). Julia Eccleshare's insightful observation proceeds to discount such comments succinctly however, writing,

> what is at issue is not so much the teenage of the reader as the teenage or 'young adulthood' of the characters. The expectation is that teenagers should read about the things that they themselves are doing or would enjoy doing if only they could (Eccleshare, 1998, 387).

In Chapter 3 and again in Chapter 5, this notion of adolescent literature reflecting society, and its implications, will be explored further within the context of the simulacrum. For now, it is sufficient to consider the protagonists of this corpus to be adolescent in that they have reached the threshold of their teens. Two notable exceptions must be highlighted however: in the *P. P. Cul-Vert* series a younger protagonist is presented. Pierre-Paul precociously has "deux ans d'avance" (Arrou-Vignod, 1997, 10) at school and is therefore propelled into an older environment. His chronological immaturity is counterbalanced not only by his intellect but also by his two teenage companions in the series. The *Nils Hazard* series unusually introduces an adult

[30] In this thesis the term *adolescent* is used to describe the corpus, but the terms *YA* and *teen lit* are considered as interchangeable when used in citation.

protagonist. To overcome the potential difficulty of an adult protagonist for a younger reader, Nils is rendered immature and 'adolescent' in many ways.

Contemporary life

The adolescence of these protagonists has many implications. It gives rise to a number of recurring themes, such as first love, increasing responsibility, the questioning of parental relationships and friendships, as well as a range of topics of contemporary public debate, including subjects from areas as diverse as drugs and AIDS, sects, suicide and human cloning. In 1974, Marc Soriano remarked that in order to create an effective adolescent fiction, which inspired, interested and challenged its intended readers,

> il faudrait utiliser franchement des motivations réelles: la sexualité, la vie affective, l'actualité avec ses problèmes économiques, politiques et sociaux. Or une loi non écrite, mais impérative dans notre société veut qu'on évite – sauf dans les éditions politiques ou confessionnelles – d'aborder devant les jeunes ces sujets jugés litigieux (Soriano, 2002, 120).

Despite the strict law of 1949 governing production of children's literature in France, "there are no restrictions any longer to what subjects can be treated" (Nikolajeva, 1998, 223). Instead, adolescent fiction covers

> matters of ethnicity and race, issues of faith and religion, markers of gender and sexuality, problems of home and society, choices of politics and belief, concerns about money and the future. In short, the YA genre now engages the most profound, deepest, and richest issues that we face (Aronson, 1995, 36).

I consider the series in this corpus to be 'contemporary' in that they reflect current society and its permanent state of flux:

> young adult literature is as restlessly mutable as Odo, the shape-shifting character on *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, endlessly changing shape, form, mode, theme, and topic in response to changes in the culture (especially the popular culture), in reader interest, and in market demands and dictates (Cart, 1996, 241).

One theme uniting all these series is school and frequent references are made to the French *collège* and *lycée* systems. These series cover the full range of educational experiences possible: the passage from primary through to secondary school and the culmination of schooling in the *baccalauréat*; the difficulties of changing school, of being a new student or of accepting a new pupil in school. The series also address alternative or specialist schooling such as life as a *pensionnaire* or following CNED courses.[31] As characters age, they begin to consider life and education beyond school. The pressure to succeed and to achieve good academic results is present throughout, independent of the school experience. The *baccaulauréat* is viewed as an essential rite of passage (see chapter 5). Extra-curricula activities, in the form of school trips and visits, and attending *colonies de vacances*, are also an integral part of the series. Being at school serves one other purpose: it is a mechanism to allow characters to act independently of parental control. The *Kamo* series in particular reflects this preoccupation with school. According to Daniel Pennac, its four volumes each represent a school subject:

> [j]e me suis amusé. J'ai choisi un "Kamo" par matière ou par événement majeur: L'idée du siècle: le passage en 6e, L'agence Babel: l'anglais, L'évasion de Kamo: l'histoire, Kamo et moi: le français. J'en ai un pour les maths et un pour les SVT en tête, mais ils ne sont pas encore écrits. Ils sont là. Selon moi, les enfants ont envie de parler de l'école (*Daniel Pennac: Fiche auteur*).

It is entirely normal that series fiction for young people should treat the subject of school but the prevalence of this theme cannot be completely divorced from the backgrounds of the authors. With the exception of Anne-Marie Pol and Jacques Lindecker, the authors are all *agrégés en lettres* and are involved in education or have responsibilities within the publishing industry in some way. Jean-Philippe Arrou-Vignod, whilst continuing his teaching, became a consultant for the fiction collections at Gallimard Jeunesse in 1994, and in 2000 he began to direct the creation of the *fiches pédagogiques* that accompany the books selected by the *ministère de l'éducation nationale* and published by Gallilmard. Since 2002 he has directed the Hors-Piste collection for 9-12 year olds. Brigitte Smadja also teaches and directs the collection *Théâtre* for the *Ecole des*

[31] Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance. Nina's attendance at her ballet school requires her to follow CNED courses.

Loisirs. Daniel Pennac taught until 1995 when he decided to concentrate full time on writing. Marie-Aude Murail similarly is a full-time author and also holds a doctorate in children's literature. The overtones of her interest and study of children's literature can be seen in the choice of name for her fascinating character Nils Hazard, professor of Etruscan archaeology at the Sorbonne. The French academic Paul Hazard made a well known contribution to the study of children's literature with his work *Les Livres, Les Enfants et Les Hommes* (1932). This prevalence of teachers and academics exacerbates the problem of the French publishing system, which is "too rigidly bound to literature and school" (Perrot, 1996, 718) and which puts great emphasis on children's literature that serves a purpose. Indeed, *Folio Junior*, created in 1977, considers itself as,

> la référence dans le genre avec des auteurs comme Jean-Philippe Arrou-Vignod, Henri Bosco, Roald Dahl, Pierrette Fleutiaux, Dick King-Smith, Daniel Pennac, J.K. Rowling, Claude Roy, Tolkien, Michel Tournier, etc.: une collection très largement prescrite par les enseignants" (*Gallimard Jeunesse: Qui sommes nous?*).[32]

One of the highest accolades for a children's author is for their work to appear on the list of titles recommended by the *ministère de l'éducation nationale* to accompany the *collège* curricula.[33] Somewhat surprisingly, some series fiction features.

Gender

There is (somewhat unusually) a prevalence of male protagonists in the series of this corpus. Traditionally series are divided into series for boys and series for girls, but issues of readership related to the series in this corpus cannot be so easily and clearly defined. Nikolajeva writes on the rigid preferences of young readers:

> empirical research shows that children prefer to read about characters of their own age or some years older. As far as gender preferences are concerned, it is maintained that boys normally like to read stories about boys, while girls make no distinction. I have no doubts about the truth of these statements; however, I believe that such preferences have more to

[32] *Folio Junior* also published in 1984 the first *livre dont vous êtes le hero*: the role play books that became popular in the 1980s. Throughout *Le Clocher d'Abgall*. Emilien is in the process of reading/playing one such book.

[33] See appendix for recommended titles.

> do with plots than with gender of characters. Male readers are, in our society, conditioned to prefer "masculine" plots (dynamic, linear, action oriented), which seldom have female protagonists. Female readers prefer or are conditioned to prefer "feminine" plots (circular, character oriented, psychological), which may have both male and female protagonists. In fact, young adult novels are mostly read by preteen or younger teenage girls, regardless of whether they have male or female protagonists (Nikolajeva, 2003, 7).

In accordance with these gender preferences, certain assumptions could be made about the series in the corpus and their readership. It is clear that *Danse!* and *Gagne!* could be thought to be read predominantly by female and male readers respectively. The novels in Ecole des Loisir's *Médium* collection correspond most closely to Nikolajeva's young adult category, both in content and age grouping and could therefore be thought more likely to be read by (pre)teenage girls. The predominance of male protagonists in these series might nonetheless attract male readers, particularly in respect to the *Nils Hazard* and the *P. P. Cul-Vert* series which are in the style of the detective story.

The *P. P. Cul-Vert* and *Kamo* series are more difficult to classify as young adult and could easily attract readers of both sexes, the fast-moving action in *P. P. Cul-Vert* and the dominance of male characters in both serving to attract the male readership. The more ambiguous narrating character of Toi in the *Kamo* series and the alternating narrative perspectives in the *P. P. Cul-Vert* series may also allow easy access for readers of both sexes. Indeed, to attract a dual readership, Jean-Philippe Arrou-Vignod allows each of the three protagonists to narrate in the first volume of the series and alternates between them thereafter. This technique is employed at a more elaborate level in Brigitte Smadja's *Samuel* series. The *Marie* branch with its eponymous female protagonist may appeal more to female readers, as would the first two volumes on the *Pauline* branch. The final volume also places Marie in a dominant narrative position being entitled *J'ai Rendez-Vous avec Samuel.* If these aspects are taken into consideration, it might imply that only the volume *Une Bentley Boulevard Voltaire* attracts a male readership and even then it may not because of the young adult categorisation. Gender distinctions are nevertheless ambiguous in all of these series. Whilst gender cannot of

course be ignored, it is not my main preoccupation in this thesis. I hope instead to show that Deleuze offers another way of approaching what is typically a genre defined by its form and by the gender of its readers.

The series look

The *Danse!* and *Gagne!* series have a consistent visual image, dominated by the series logo. Each numbered volume is immediately recognisable as part of its series and both are clearly *Pocket Jeunesse* publications. The frontmatter for each volume contains an author biography, reinforcing Jacques Lindecker's involvement with children and highlighting his writing for adults and Anne-Marie Pol's unaccomplished dream of becoming a ballerina. The publisher's address is provided for correspondence and points to an implicit community of appreciative readers. Each text in the *Danse!* series has a summary extract from its preceding volume and typically contains fifteen chapters, each with emotive headings reinforced by the regular use of ellipses and exclamation marks. The backmatter contains a list of titles in the series and references to other series or collections published by *Pocket Jeunesse* and a taster extract of the next volume. The back cover provides the age classification for the series (à partir de 9 ans) and the publisher's internet address, which in turn gives access to synopses, author information, lists of titles and allows taster chapters to be downloaded. The *Gagne!* series also follows this format closely.

Gallimard's *Folio Junior* collection similarly has an identifiable format. Each volume is recognisable as part of this collection but not as part of an individual series. In addition each volume is numbered as part of the *Folio Junior* collection, but not by series, implying that the volumes for each series may not be grouped together. In contrast, the *Ecole des Loisirs* does not ostensibly market its series as such, adding an interesting dimension to their coherence and unity and the reader's role in piecing them together (the *Emilien* series now being the exception). Each collection has its own distinct format, but the individual series do not have a separate visual identity. *Ecole des Loisirs* houses some of the best known and renowned children's authors in France and has a reputation for publishing 'quality' children's literature. Its reluctance to openly market series can be seen as a means of safeguarding that reputation.

Between the waves

Where Anglo-American series fiction has such an established place in children's reading (whether welcomed or not), in France the history of series reading is more nebulous. Blurred by the development of collections and tainted by the stigma of infamous series in translation, series fiction in France occupies an uneasy position. A wave of interest in and prolific production of series fiction began in the 1950s and terminated in the early 1980s. Only now are series and the series form in vogue once again. In the interim, a period of quasi 'disinterest', series in France were able to develop unconstrained with regard to their Anglo-American counterparts. In searching for the series form in France for this study, I have therefore composed my corpus of the few series produced during this period, where such external influences were at their ebb.

3 - Commonality

More of the same

> Series [...] are built for the long haul. Everything about them, plot, characters, setting, style of writing, even the physical look of the book, contributes to that aim, which is to provide you, the reader, with that same grand experience night after night, week after week, year after year, ad infinitum (Makowski, 1998, 2).

Silk Makowski articulates one of the main functions of series fiction that is to provide more of *the same*. A series can only be defined as such if it exhibits commonalities. In English, the definition for the term 'series' reads: "a set of literary compositions having certain features in common, published successively or intended to be read in sequence" (*Oxford English Dictionary*) and the French term 'série' is described as an "ensemble composé d'œuvres qui possèdent entre elles une unité et forment un tout cohérent" (*Trésor de la langue française*). All series possess some internal unity and cohesion, which is derived from the common elements repeated from volume to volume.

The repetition of theme and character, coupled with a coherent storyline across the multiple volumes is what readers come to expect from a series and find pleasurable, and indeed is what appears to attract them to the genre. Herein lies the contradiction of series fiction, however: the reader's pleasure of finding again *the same* character and themes attracts disdain and concern from many critics. This is not a problem unique to series fiction. Traditional hermeneutic approaches to literature in general focus on the concept of difference *between* and when such difference cannot be demonstrated, the literature concerned is typically rejected as inferior. Children's literature in general suffers under these conditions because of what both Perry Nodelman and Cedric Cullingford identify as its apparent *sameness*. For Nodelman this is one reason for its unhappy position in the field of critical theory. Such theories traditionally look for distinctiveness and uniqueness and this "thwarts would-be interpreters simply because

so *few* children's novels move much beyond the formulaic or the stereotypical" (Nodelman, 1985, 5). Cullingford enhances this idea of sameness by considering "in one sense all popular children's books [as] part of a series. There are few genuine 'one-offs', for they tend to follow the same patterns, the similar formulae that are known to appeal" (Cullingford, 1998, 120). Anne Scott MacLeod's comments are equally representative when she describes series fiction as "a species of formula literature, not necessarily (in fact, not often) well written but skilfully tailored to the tastes of a young audience, [...] long on action, if short on credibility" (MacLeod, 1995, 119). If, as Nodelman suggests, children's fiction is "a serious challenge to conventional ideas about interpretation and distinctiveness" (Nodelman, 1985, 6), then children's series fiction represents an even greater challenge to these ideas, because of its inherent commonalities and repetition: a challenge which is rarely addressed, as Victor Watson remarks,

> series fiction has played an enormous and largely unacknowledged part in children's reading throughout most of the twentieth century; and [...] the critical world has been content to accept a number of seriously misleading and simplistic critical assumptions about its nature and value (Watson, 2000, 8-9).

In order to approach series in a way that does not condemn them from the outset, traditional criticism must therefore be re-evaluated.

This chapter focuses on the commonalities in adolescent series fiction. By drawing on Deleuze's anti-hermeneutic stance and his focus on pure repetition, it affords a deeper insight into the commonalities and repetitions in series fiction and provides a possible way forward that does not condemn such fiction from the outset. In order to begin to consider repetition, it is first necessary to unpack his concept of intensities, which dominate his thought.

Intensities

Throughout his work Deleuze questions what philosophy is and what it does. He strives to make philosophy creative and writes, "la philosophie n'est pas un simple

art de former, d'inventer ou de fabriquer des concepts [...] la philosophie [...] consiste à *créer* des concepts" (Deleuze, 1991, 10). These *concepts* are "not labels or names that we attach to things" (Colebrook, 2002, 15) and should not be confused with everyday concepts used banally in an attempt to give meaning to abstract ideas, and which go some way to ordering the world into convenient categories. Concepts are dynamic: they do not reduce the world into manageable boxes, but rather transform and extend experience, as Claire Colebrook demonstrates in her description,

> [i]f I ask you for a definition of 'happiness' you might say 'what makes you feel good', or 'what we're all aiming for'. But philosophical concepts cannot have these succinct definitions because they create a whole new path for thinking; the concept of happiness would not refer to this or that instance of happiness; it would have to *enact* or *create* a new possibility or thought of happiness [...] their power lies in being open and expansive. For this reason we have to understand them through the new connections they make (Colebrook, 2002, 17).

Deleuze views concepts like literary texts: it is not necessary to ask what they mean, just what connections they trigger. A concept "is evaluated not by the degree of its truth or the accuracy of its reference, but by the effects it creates within and outside of the plane on which it finds itself" (May, 1997, 169). To elucidate this more fully, it is necessary to consider notions of the *actual* and the *virtual* which underlie Deleuze's theories. The actual is what exists in reality; it is the thing that *is*. It is not particularly difficult to give an everyday, descriptive label to the concept of a 'book': for example, it is a set of printed pages, bound together in a volume. It is the physical book that can be looked at, touched and sensed.

Western thought traditionally emphasises the actual above the virtual. With the actual, there is a sense of movement towards a predestined end and a limited number of possibilities to achieve that end. The *Danse!* series, for example, is *actually* a series about the passion of dancing and all the volumes could be generalised under its title. Deleuze, however, posits a new way of looking at reality, one that does not just consider the actual but encompasses the virtual. For Deleuze each actual thing embodies something of the virtual. The actual has no possibilities beyond itself; the actual book is and can be

no more or less than an object containing a story because it "already contains all future possibilities, and possibility would just be what we imagine might have happened. Possibility would be less than the actual and not a power in its own right" (Colebrook, 2002, 96). A Deleuzian perspective does not deny that the book is actually this object (containing the exhaustive set of actual future possibilities), but Deleuze also highlights the potential for the virtual. The virtual is not subordinate to the actual but exists in equality with it: "l'actuel et le virtuel coexistent, et entrent dans un étroit circuit qui nous ramène constamment de l'un à l'autre" (Deleuze, 1996, 184). It is not just an unfolding of a pre-given possibility, but the explosion of possibilities. The virtual side of a *Danse!* volume may be one of discovery, exploration, adventure, and so on: notions rooted in the everyday object but at the same time take it beyond that which it really is.

Moving this concept out of the everyday, or considering the book *virtually* entails asking of what *percepts* and *affects* it is composed. In *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* Deleuze considers observing a work of art, which he describes as:

> *un bloc de sensations, c'est-à-dire un composé de percepts et d'affects.* Les percepts ne sont plus des perceptions, ils sont indépendants d'un état de ceux qui les éprouvent; les affects ne sont plus des sentiments ou affections, ils débordent la force de ceux qui passent par eux (Deleuze, 1991, 154).

This leads him to say that the work of art is "un être de sensations, et rien d'autre: elle existe en soi" (Deleuze, 1991, 155). The book can be considered in a similar way. A book in itself, the unopened volume, is composed of percepts ("what we receive") and affects ("what happens to us") (Colebrook, 2002, 21-22). It is a 'block of sensations' existing independently of the potential observer/reader. It is worth reiterating at this stage what Deleuze demands of a book: he refuses to ask what it signifies but rather asks "avec quoi il fonctionne, en connexion de quoi il fait ou non passer des intensités" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 10). Of interest here is the phrase 'fait passer': the book, the compound of percepts and affects, functions *with* and transmits intensities *to* an external body. Intensity is necessarily plural, it occurs in the connection between book and external observer/reader, in the process of transmission. Intensity is a flow between parts. My focus is then the flow between book and reader, between series

book and the characters within it and young reader. Whilst Deleuze focuses on the object transmitting these intensities, the book nonetheless provokes something within that reader and indeed, intensities are "the necessary condition for explanations of why life is significant but uniquely so for each individual" (Williams, 2003, 8). For different readers, the connection with a *Danse!* book may evoke the freedom of dancing, the dream of succeeding or of achieving a goal, or the memory of past dance classes. It may trigger notions of becoming a renowned ballerina to some, and warm-up exercises in cold sports halls to others. These sensations may exist in the actual book but the connection to a unique reader and the related flow of intensity releases the expansive potential of the virtual book.

Intensities are a difficult balance between the measurable and the immeasurable. For Deleuze, all things or events are both actual and virtual at the same time. This also helps overcome the difficulty that certain intensities will be unique to a given experiencer depending on their own personal background: because all intensities are grounded in some actual, everyday thing, it is possible to go some way to predicting a range of probable intensities that may arise from that actual thing and its connections.

Considering fiction from the Deleuzian perspective of the virtual does not involve the search for meaning, but the search for the intensities that flow between book and reader. The Deleuzian concepts of pure difference and pure repetition are expressions of intensity in themselves and may help resolve how the repetitive nature of series fiction, and the commonalities found in it, have an effect on the intensities that readers experience, and how intensities are heightened because of the fact that they are repeated. These concepts of pure difference and pure repetition must be elaborated relative to generality and resemblance however: notions which have dominated criticism of series fiction to date.

Generalities

Repetition and generality are two very distinct concepts and should not be confused. From the outset Deleuze is resolute on this point, stating, "la répétition n'est pas la généralité. La répétition doit être distinguée de la généralité, de plusieurs façons.

Toute formule impliquant leur confusion est fâcheuse" (Deleuze, 1968, 7). For Deleuze, "l'échange ou la substitution des particuliers définit notre conduite correspondant à la généralité" (Deleuze, 1968, 7). Examples of generalities can be found throughout the series in the corpus. In the *P. P. Cul-Vert* series, for example, Pierre-Paul is, by his own admission, brilliant and demonstrates this in a variety of ways: "le drame avec moi, Pierre-Paul de Culbert, c'est mon intelligence prodigieuse" (Arrou-Vignod, 1997, 32). At school "sa moyenne frôle la perfection" (Arrou-Vignod, 2000, 18) and with a "double coup de génie" (Arrou-Vignod, 1998, 39) he brings both Mathilde and Rémi to Scotland to help him in his search for the Loch Ness monster. Everything about Pierre-Paul is superlative to the extent that he even plans his own statue for the school courtyard, his design showing him "tout nu dans une toge d'empereur romain, une lyre à la main et le crâne auréolé d'une couronne de lauriers" (Arrou-Vignod, 1995, 156). When compared to Pierre-Paul, "forcément, les autres passent pour des imbéciles, comme ce pauvre Pharamon [Rémi] qui depuis le début entrelarde de ses borborygmes mes géniales déductions" (Arrou-Vignod, 1997, 32). In addition, he does not hesitate to tell Rémi: "question intelligence mon pauvre Pharamon, tu es un nain [...] Un homoncule! Un protozoaire!" (Arrou-Vignod, 1993, 43). It is of no consequence that these statements occur in different volumes of the series: each could be substituted for any other with no impact.

In the *Gagne!* and *Danse!* series, common themes of survival and achievement in the football/ballet community and friendship permeate the series and dominate the narratives. The series commence with admission to the respective training schools, La Charmille and Le Carmargo, for the protagonists Martin and Nina. Throughout the series the protagonists must demonstrate qualities such as hard work, perseverance and team spirit in order to achieve their dreams. Both protagonists are driven to pursue their dreams, despite setbacks, by the memory of a deceased parent: Martin lost his professional footballer father to a sudden heart attack and Nina's mother, who was passionate about ballet, died of cancer. Both are isolated in the neutral space of the training centre for their dreams to be realised. The possibility for substitution between the two series is clear. There is also scope for internal substitution within these series, in particular amongst characters, who are easily identifiable in these series through their repeated "vices, gestures, [and] habits" (Eco, 1985, 163). Edouard, one of the boys

closely allied with the malicious Gus is initially described as "un champion dans la catégorie des frimeurs" (Lindecker, 2003, 25) and later as "un gros frimeur" (Lindecker, 2003, 72) and a "vantard" (Lindecker, 2003, 66). Edouard's pretension is his one dominant character trait. Each instance of it may be substituted for the next with no change to the narrative. Similarly Nina's recurrent perseverance is demonstrated through her motto "quand même" which is not only uttered with great regularity by Nina, but also features as chapter titles and even the title of *Danse 29*. Such highly overt repetition leads to criticism that characterisation is stereotyped and superficial. Characters are seen as inert: they "start at square one at the beginning of each new novel" (Schmidt, 1987, 35). On a larger scale, this is again demonstrated by the two ends of the *Danse!* series. The narrative of the first volume is occupied by Nina's audition for Le Camargo. *Danse 2* elaborates Nina's new life at the dance school and begins with a chapter appropriately entitled *Ma nouvelle vie*. By *Danse 32* Nina is looking for a new dance school as Le Camargo has closed. Her first search in *Danse 1* can be substituted for her search for a replacement. On finding a new Académie, Nina remarks that this is "le jour J. Celui où débute ma nouvelle vie" (Pol, 2004, 115) just as it did at the beginning of the series. Nina even discovers that this new school has "un duplicata de Mme Suzette" (Pol, 2004, 119), the concierge of Le Camargo, highlighting thus further the substitution that is possible within these series. Each instance of Nina and Martin's hard work or each instance of Edouard's big-headedness or Nina's 'quand-même' could be substituted directly with another.

In discussing series, critics tend to focus on such generalities in them. The following description, albeit written about completely different series, could easily be applied to *Danse!* and *Gagne!* or the *P. P. Cul-Vert* series:

> these stories are the highly formulated, good-guy-wins-out-over-bad-guy fairy tales of the older child. They move along quickly, have lots of dialogue and little narrative description, and are highly predictable. Some researchers believe that young children like and generally prefer stereotyped characters, and are comforted by the sameness and simplicity of the characters and plots (Moran, 1985, 116).

Although Moran and Steinfirst are not trying to denigrate series but are looking for an explanation as to why they are attractive to readers, their answer lies in the predictability and sameness of the plot and characters. Whilst it is tempting to call such similarities 'repetition', these recurring motifs should not be confused with *pure repetition* from a Deleuzian perspective and should only be considered as *generalities* because of the possibility for direct substitution between them.

Where direct substitution is not possible, the notion of *resemblance* arises. Resemblance is used to fit more disparate elements to a common formula and as such could be considered as the antithesis of pure repetition. Many resemblances between these series can be made. It could be stated, for example, that adolescent fiction often portrays the protagonist within a 'dysfunctional' family and that he/she undergoes a period of isolation from the family home. Marie-Aude Murail chooses a thirteen year old hero, who lives with his single mother near Paris in one of her series. Over the course of the narrative Emilien discovers his father's identity, acquires a girlfriend, an uncle and a number of potential step fathers and a half sister. Nils is an orphan, raised by his grandparents. Kamo, Nina and Martin have all lost a parent to illness. Marie's father is separated from her mother and lives in Canada, Rémi's father left when he was three years-old. P. P. Cul-Vert is a *pensionnaire* because his parents are regularly away on business. This image of the non-traditional family may also facilitate the period of isolation away from parental constraints as discussed by Bruno Bettelheim.[34] Protagonists move away from the family space to reach some form of self-realisation. Nina and Martin go to their training schools. P. P. Cul-Vert's adventures are related to school excursions. Emilien goes to a *colonie de vacances* and Nils discovers himself as he uncovers the past during his archaeological digs. The repeated themes in these series cannot be substituted directly with one another without changing the outcome of the individual series, but in focusing solely on the *general* nature of the recurring themes and ignoring their variations, the series are being made to *resemble* each other.

At the highest level, a uniform image of adolescence could be identified within fiction targeted at adolescents. For Julia Eccleshare, adolescent fiction "has evolved as the most narcissistic of all fictions as, in its current form at least, it seems primarily directed towards mirroring society and in doing so offering reassurance about ways of

[34] See Chapter 5.

behaving" (Eccleshare, 1998, 387). The presence of adolescent protagonists in almost all the corpus supports this and although the main exception, Murail's *Nils Hazard* series, uncharacteristically presents an adult protagonist, Nils is nonetheless depicted as highly childlike. His childish characteristics permeate the series: his highly developed imagination, his narcissism, his frequent contact with youth and his refusal to accept responsibility. Even faced with impending fatherhood, Nils is unable to relinquish the attention seeking child role, as he stubbornly states "mais c'est moi le gamin" (Murail, 1998, 22).

Claire Féliers describes these authorial efforts to provide recognisable heroes and scenarios in her comments on the *Pocket Jeunesse* series:

> les auteurs s'efforcent de réduire la distance avec les lecteurs en leur disant: "Voilà l'univers que vous connaissez, c'est votre univers, ça peut être vos copains avec leur méchanceté, leur gentillesse, leur désespoir, leurs coups de gueule, leurs ratages, le regard un peu méchant que l'on pose sur les parents parfois, le téléphone et toute la technologie qui va avec..." (Féliers, 2002).

Féliers's comments highlight not only the desire to substitute between series and internally to series, but also between the textual world and the reader's world. Féliers's use of the word *réduire* is significant; in *resembling* these series, they are being squeezed into manageable categories. Traditional criticism tends to stop at this observation of generalities in series fiction and what dominates this criticism is a "philosophie de la représentation, de l'original, de la première fois, de la ressemblance, de l'imitation, de la fidélité" (Foucault, 2001, 948). Series are reduced to a list of exchangeable generalities as their variations are destroyed through resemblance. When, in the previous chapter, I commented on the importance of school in the series, I could also have been accused of resembling the series. Other resemblances that could be made across the series include the status of Paris and the ethnic origins of the principal characters. There is, for example, an expectation that readers will be familiar with the Parisian metro and other transport services and have knowledge of principal landmarks. Similarly, characters are predominantly white, and ethnic characters (when they feature) occupy minor roles and are distinguished by their low socio-economic background: as Adele Greenlee

comments, "series books generally picture a society that does not question social status, racial inequalities, or pressing social issues" (Greenlee, 1996, 20). There may indeed be degrees of truth in this statement, but Greenlee tellingly uses word 'generally'. When, in her article, she draws out the common threads in series books for girls, she is participating in the process of generalisation, which in itself is a cyclical process, as Henri Bergson notes, "la généralisation ne peut se faire que par une extraction de qualités communes; mais les qualités, pour apparaître communes, ont déjà dû subir un travail de généralisation" (Bergson, 1939, 175). From a Deleuzian perspective, resemblance is the mechanism which destroys pure difference. By resembling elements of a series, difference, which cannot otherwise be ignored, is subsumed to make fit a given category, like fitting the square peg in the round hole. In this way, "seul, peut être pensé comme différent ce qui est identique, semblable, analogue et opposé; *c'est toujours par rapport à une identité conçue, à une analogie jugée, à une opposition imaginée, à une similitude perçue que la différence devient objet de la représentation*" (Deleuze, 1968, 180). Series may on the surface be littered with generalities, but it is necessary to dig deeper and look at the repetition which acts as an interface with those generalities, because "s'il est vrai que la généralité est tout autre chose que la répétition, elle renvoie pourtant à la répétition comme à la base cachée sur laquelle elle se construit" (Deleuze, 1968, 103).

Difference and Repetition

Deleuze refuses the concept of *comparative difference*. He demonstrates how difference has never been thought in itself, but has always been thought through subordination to uniqueness, equivalence and representation, as Michel Foucault remarks, "[o]n l'analyse d'ordinaire comme la différence *de* quelque chose ou *en* quelque chose" (Foucault, 2001, 955). Deleuze reworks the concept of difference by focusing on the fact that "la différence a son expérience cruciale" (Deleuze, 1968, 71) which releases intensities within the experiencer. Deleuzian difference does not stand alone, but must be thought in relation to his concept of repetition for itself. He demonstrates how repetition, in the same way as difference, is misunderstood in Western thought. Umberto Eco's comments on series exemplify this misunderstanding. He considers the reader of series is "consoled by the "return of the Identical," superficially disguised" (Eco, 1985, 168). The variation a series introduces, which Eco sees as the identical-disguised, is according to Deleuze "not added to repetition in order to hide it, but is

rather its condition or constitutive element, the interiority of repetition *par excellence*" (Deleuze, 2001, xvi). Where for Eco variation merely disguises repetition, for Deleuze variation is the difference in repetition. Deleuze shows that the return of the identical is an impossibility and frees repetition from subordination to the same or the identical, allowing repetition to be thought for itself. Foucault explains, in *Theatrum philosophicum*, his critique on Deleuze's *Différence and Répétition* and *Logique du Sens* that Deleuze requires difference to be conceived of differentially:

> [c]elle-ci [la différence] alors ne serait plus un caractère relativement général travaillant la généralité du concept, elle serait – pensée différente et pensée de la différence – un pur événement; quant à la répétition, elle ne serait plus morne moutonnement de l'identique, mais différence déplacée (Foucault, 2001, 956).

Deleuze's concept presupposes Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal return: the infinite recurrence of events. His interpretation is as follows:

> [l]'éternel retour ne peut pas signifier le retour de l'Identique, puisqu'il suppose au contraire un monde (celui de la volonté de puissance) où toutes les identités préalables sont abolies et dissoutes. Revenir est l'être, mais seulement l'être du devenir. L'éternel retour ne fait pas revenir "le même", mais le revenir constitue le seul Même de ce qui devient. Revenir, c'est le devenir-identique de devenir lui-même. Revenir est donc la seule identité, mais l'identité comme puissance seconde, l'identité de la différence, l'identique qui se dit du différent, qui tourne autour de différent. Une telle identité, produite par la différence, est déterminée comme "répétition". Aussi bien la répétition dans l'éternel retour consiste-t-elle à penser le même à partir du différent" (Deleuze, 1968, 59-60).

The conventional interpretation of repetition in series fiction focuses on the returning elements within the series and the differences *between* the first and subsequent occurrences of those elements. This is not repetition in a Deleuzian sense because it is founded in resemblance and generalities. To help define Deleuzian repetition an example from the *Nils Hazard* series can be used. In the first volume Nils is condemned to relive scenes in his adult life witnessed as a small child before his parents' death. The

narrative repeats these past memories because Nils failed to come to terms with his feelings of guilt and fear during his adolescence. A psychoanalytical interpretation of this is articulated by Pirlot, who postulates, "*il faut donc faire plus attention aux adolescents qui refusent leur adolescence qu'à ceux qui la vivent vraiment:* ceux qui reculent devant les obstacles, par peur de leurs pulsions (sexuelles, agressives) sont ceux qui restent bloqués dans la répétition" (Pirlot, 2001, 62-63 emphasis in the original) and indeed Nils appears trapped in a cycle of repetition. Deleuze, however, takes an anti-Freudian stance on this, writing, "[j]e répète pas parce que je refoule. Je refoule parce que je répète, j'oublie parce que je répète. Je refoule parce que, d'abord, je ne peux vivre certaines choses ou certaines expériences que sur le mode de la répétition" (Deleuze, 1968, 29). Each enigma presented in *Dinky Rouge Sang* repeats a moment of Nils's past: Frédéric's fate takes Nils back to his early childhood; Nils can empathise with Paul who feels like an outsider in his own family and he recognises the fear pervading François's adolescence as the same that affected his own. It is only in solving the mysteries for others and reliving his experiences in the mode of repetition in this first volume that Nils is gradually able to accept his own adolescent traumas. The repeated 'same' is a 'same' which transforms. Nils recognises a repetition of his own fear in François, but this 'same' fear has been transformed in its projection onto François. The repetition of the fear has newly inaugurated the fear and transformed its background and Nils's perspective of it.

For Deleuze there is an undeniable relationship between expectation and repetition. Deleuze develops this relationship by drawing on the work of David Hume (1711-1776) and Henri Bergson (1859-1941). Hume was influential for his work on *causality* and in his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* he demonstrates that repeatedly experiencing two related events in the past provokes expectation of similar occurrences in the future. He writes, "after a repetition of similar instances, the mind is carried by habit, upon the appearance of one event, to expect its usual attendant, and to believe that it will exist" (cited in Morris, 2001). Deleuze develops this idea with respect to the tick-tock of the clock. Hume argues that causal relationships are not based on reasoning but on observation and experience: the clock repeatedly ticks and tocks, the experience of this culminates in the expectation and belief that tock will continue to follow tick in the future. Deleuze takes the past ticking (A) and tocking (B) of the clock

and contracts them into a single tick-tock (AB): a single habitually repeated event. Bergson provides a similar example of the clock striking four. Being distracted Bergson is not able to simply count the number of strikes and so attempts to estimate and notices that his "sensabilité [...] avait donc constaté à sa manière la succession des quatre coups frappés, mais tout autrement que par une addition" (Bergson, 1927, 95). When Bergson's clock strikes (A,A,A,) a fourth strike (A) is expected to follow the third because it has consistently done so previously and "le nombre des coups frappés a été perçu comme qualité, et non comme quantité" (Bergson, 1927, 95). Of significance in these two examples is that "expectation is not only a matter of expecting a particular thing to follow another because they have done so in the past. It is also a matter of expecting a particular conjunction of independent things to make one. Furthermore, it is to expect a great number of perhaps unidentified unconscious things to come together to form a unit" (Williams, 2003, 88). Deleuze insists that "la contraction désigne aussi la fusion des tic-tac successifs dans une âme contemplative" adding that "quand nous disons que l'habitude est contraction, nous ne parlons donc pas de l'action instantanée qui se compose avec l'autre pour former un élément de répétition, mais de la fusion de cette répétition dans l'esprit qui contemple" (Deleuze, 1968, 101). For Deleuze expectation is therefore only possible for two reasons: it can only exist in respect to the synthesis of time, of the contraction of the past projected into the future through the present, and in the contemplating mind, in the person who experiences it.[35] Deleuze writes of the former:

> [l]e présent, le passé, l'avenir se révèlent comme Répétition à travers les trois synthèses, mais sur des modes très différents. Le présent, c'est le répétiteur, le passé, la répétition même, mais le futur est le répété. Or, le secret de la répétition dans son ensemble est dans le répété, comme signifié deux fois. La répétition royale, c'est celle de l'avenir qui se subordonne les deux autres et les destitue de leur autonomie. Car la première synthèse ne concerne que le contenu et la fondation du temps; la seconde, son fondement; mais au-delà, la troisième assure l'ordre, l'ensemble, la série et le but final du temps. Une philosophie de la répétition passe par tous les "stades", condamnée à répéter la

[35] Deleuze's synthesis of time and its implication on time in series fiction is developed in more detail in Chapter 5.

> répétition même. Mais à travers ces stades elle assure son programme: faire de la répétition la catégorie de l'avenir – se servir de la répétition de l'habitude et de celle de la mémoire (Deleuze, 1968, 125).

Regarding the latter, a strong degree of expectation is established through series fiction. Victor Watson terms this expectation "readerly desire" (Watson, 2000, 206) explaining how the author recognises this expectation and responds by providing more for the reader. In turn the reader responds to this authorial "promise" (Watson, 2000, 206) by remaining faithful to the series. Through past habitual reading of the series, an expectation develops in the reader that projects the continuation of the series into the future.

It is presumed that the implied reader contemplating adolescent series fiction has an inexperienced, developing mind. This can lead to concern from critics that the repetitions in series transform him/her "into a homogenized reader" (Zipes, 2001, 8). The reader relies on the framework of a series to provide predictable character and familiar plot devices, and is homogenised through that very expectation. When considering *Gagne!*, *Danse!* or the *P. P. Cul-Vert* series, these concerns may appear justified. Within every series, however, there is an impetus towards the future, and "in the struggle to make it different from the past and the present, there is an implied sense of the possibility of [...] difference" (Williams, 2003, 102). This may appear superficial for the experienced reader, but should not be used to deny the possibility of the power of the return of difference for the inexperienced reader, which, according to Deleuze, validates all repetition for itself.

In the *Nils Hazard* series, Nils is depicted as having a highly flirtatious character. It is possible to study his character over the course of the series and look at each instance of his flirtatiousness comparing it to the last and focusing on the difference *between* each occurrence. With each repeated instance, a general picture of Nils can be established: he is a rather lecherous womaniser. Moving away from an analysis of difference *between* to one which incorporates these elements of the synthesis of time and expectation changes the perspective of Nils's character and provides further depth to the experience of pure repetition. Each occurrence of Nils's womanising triggers a

repetition of memories of his past flirtations. The repetition is contracted in the past and projected through the present into future volumes with the expectation that this characteristic will persist. This occurs on a multitude of levels, from the textual to the extra-textual. When Catherine describes Nils as a "sale vieux garçon égoïste et drageur" (Murail, 1997, 206) she is evoking memories of Nils's exploits for both herself and Nils: his past seduction of female students and his current frequentation of nymphomaniac top models. The expectation this produces is realised when he finds the nurses hard to resist when hospitalised in the final volume. The contemplating mind of the reader, recognising this repetition, defines the experience. Intensities flow, as the reader experiences the return of personal memories of past instances of Nils's behaviour, combined with his/her own worldly experience. As such, the reader's mind does not simply return textual repetitions, but a "further infinite series of other repetitions that the particular [reading] abstracts from" (Williams, 2003, 12). This multiplicity is necessarily extra-textual and highly subjective. Intensities produced will vary from reader to reader, dependent on background and experience. The reader is not merely comforted by a predictable character and recurring traits, but the experience of pure repetition from these recurring elements transforms the previously considered sameness into one of intense experience and unlimited potential.

The experience of repetition is not confined to an individual text or series. For example, the reader of both the *Emilien* and the *Nils Hazard* series may recognise repetition of characterisation across these series. Nils's girlfriend, Catherine Roque, is the youthful maturity to reflect Nils's older immaturity; the '*roque*' counteracting the '*hazard*'. Martine-Marie, Emilien's girlfriend, is mature beyond her years and is a form of surrogate mother figure to Emilien. Martine-Marie provides the responsibility Emilien does not find in his mother, whilst Catherine is the mother Nils never knew. Murail repeats the motif of a strong female mother figure across her two series. Recognition of this cross-series repetition enhances and intensifies the meaning derived from both series and ultimately may lead to future expectations about Murail's characterisation.

A further example of how extra-textual repetition within the reader may function is offered by the *Samuel* and *Maxime* series with their unusual sequencing. These series are published over three consecutive age ranges. The initial volumes are in

the *Ecole des Loisirs*'s *Mouche* collection, aimed at 7 – 9 year olds; the middle volumes appear in the *Neuf* collection, aimed at 9 – 12 year olds, and the final volumes are targeted at a reader aged 12 – 16 within the *Médium* collection. Gradual character maturation thus correlates with the maturation of the implied reader. Assuming the novels are read as the reader falls within the target age range of each, then reading the second volume as a nine year old returns the memory of the initial volume as read by the seven year old self, reflected through the mind of the now nine year old reader. Similarly, progression to the subsequent volume of the series and the final age range adds further layers of abstraction to the returned memories. Marie's teddy bear, Peluche in the *Samuel* series is symbolic of childhood and his place in the narrative heightens the intensity of the already returning earlier childhood memories. Marie turns to her childhood companion, because she needs to escape the pressures and emotions of adolescence. Peluche offers regression to an earlier, uncomplicated childhood, both for Marie and for the reader.

Further levels of complexity are found on the Pauline branch of the *Samuel* series. There are three events in *Qu'aimez-vous le plus au monde?* which exemplify this complexity. The first is the evening Pauline spends with her brother, which is interrupted by the telephone ringing. Samuel answers, but only the audible parts of the conversation are provided. The second is when Pauline overhears her brother leaving the house in the middle of the night. The third concerns the painting Pauline receives from Monsieur Zsylin, her elderly neighbour to whom she confides her concerns about Samuel. In the next volume, *Une Bentley Boulevard Voltaire,* these three events recur. The reader learns that Samuel's friend Gabriel has disappeared in search of his father, and Gabriel's girlfriend, Laura has gone to find him. Samuel's full, albeit brief, telephone conversation is provided: he is talking to Laura, who asks him for help. Samuel disappears in the night to take her the clothes and food she requires. On his return, he meets Monsieur Zyslin, who gives him a painting for Pauline and tells him of his sister's worries about his odd behaviour. The publication of these two texts in collections for different age ranges makes it quite feasible that a reader may discover the second text some time after the first. In this respect and in consideration of the subtlety of the repetition, Smadja complicates any appreciation of it. This may, however, have the converse effect for the reader who recognises the subtlety, as the intensity of the

returning power of difference increases with the distance covered by the repetition. This intensity also induces a certain complicity between reader and author by having been afforded "glimpses" of "a much larger story which remains hidden" (Schmidt, 1989, 163).

Considering another example of the combined functions of the synthesis of time and of expectation at work within a series, *Une Bentley Boulevard Voltaire* acts as the linchpin between the two branches of the *Samuel* series and as a result not only provides a synthesis of the past events from its own branch, but also because it synthesises the events from *J'ai hâte de vieillir*. In *J'ai hâte de vieillir* there is a brief allusion to the meeting between the old school friends, Samuel and Karim, at the concert and it closes with the future hope of a date between Marie and Samuel. In *Une Bentley Boulevard Voltaire* this meeting between Samuel and Karim is recounted in detail and this volume closes with start of the date and the expectation that this time they will fall in love. In this expectation at the closure of *Une Bentley Boulevard Voltaire* and the start of *J'ai rendez-vous avec Samuel* the return of difference is implicit. Marie's past encounters with Samuel have passed away and are forgotten. There is a sense that a relationship may potentially grow from their next meeting. The return of difference is affirmed through the negation of past experience and is projected into and expected in the future. Such abandoning of past experience plays a crucial role in Deleuze's interpretation of the eternal return. He states, "[l]e génie de l'éternel retour n'est pas dans la mémoire, mais dans le gaspillage, dans l'oubli devenu actif" (Deleuze, 1968, 77). The negation of previous experiences, of not carrying them forward, affirms the returning power of difference. This concept of active forgetting perhaps underlies one of the motivations for reading series fiction. On each occasion a reader returns to a series, previous memories of the series may unconsciously be relinquished to allow for the affirmation of difference.[36]

Analyses of series which focus purely on difference *between* therefore deny the possibility for pure repetition. There may indeed be very little difference between the Edouard of *Gagne 1* or the Edouard of *Gagne 6*, but focusing solely on the generalities of his unchanging character denies the transforming power of pure repetition. Simply by being encountered again, Edouard is no longer the 'same' character. In each encounter

[36] The idea of gap between volumes and its effect on active forgetting is explored further in Chapter 4.

with Edouard intensities are triggered both textually and extra-textually. The reader returns memories of past instances of Edouard and his characteristic behaviour and expectation is produced for his future behaviour. Such repetitions require the reader, however "to begin again, to renew, to question, and to refuse remaining the same"(Colebrook, 2002, 8). Each recurrence of Edouard's character trait is not just a comfortable and reassuring sameness, but it goes beyond familiarity and transforms the background and perspective of that trait, by sparking an infinite series of other repetitions. In short, for Deleuze, "the *only* thing that returns or is repeated is the power of difference"(Colebrook, 2002, 60).

Becoming

In the experience of pure repetition the reader is drawn into the text and into the repetition itself, rather than remaining an exterior observer of the repetition in the texts. A parallel to this phenomenon can be found in another repeated medium: the television situation comedy. Situation comedy functions on "the viewer's sense of inclusion, [...] the affirmation of communal bonds between text and reader. There is a demarcation between those viewers on the inside, who get the joke, and those on the outside who are excluded" (Morreale, 2003, 281). This difference between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' corresponds to Eco's concepts of 'naïve' and 'smart' readers:

> the latter evaluates the work as an aesthetic product and enjoys the strategies implemented in order to produce a model reader of the first level. This second-level reader is the one who enjoys the seriality of the series, not so much for the rerun of the same thing (that the ingenious reader believed was different) but for the strategy of the variations (Eco, 1985, 174).[37]

A dedicated fan of the sitcom is able to predict the turn of events accurately and is satisfied with his/her ability to do just this (Eco, 1985). Such a 'smart' reader is rendered powerful by the discovery that he/she knows more about the character than the character himself (Liebes, 1990). The culmination of this is "une expérience que tous les téléspectateurs éprouvent à un moment ou à un autre: un sentiment de

[37] Eco's use of 'same' and 'difference' do not refer to the Deleuzian sense of the terms.

familiarité inexplicable, mais pourtant profondément ressenti" (Pasquier, 1999, 80). It is clear from the work on the sitcom that a feeling of inclusion and a profound sense of intimacy with the repeated characters are motivations for returning to a series or sitcom. Victor Watson, Umberto Eco and Christine Heppermann refer to this phenomenon of rediscovering a "room full of friends" (Watson, 2000; Heppermann, 1997; Eco, 1985) when re-entering a series. Drawing on a Freudian notion of cathexis, Hugh Crago suggests the analogy of falling in love is more appropriate in describing a reader's relationship to series characters (Crago, 1993).

Considering the Deleuzian concept of becoming, however, affords another perspective on this relationship with the characters of series. Throughout *Plateau 10: 1730: Devenir-intense, devenir-animal, devenir-imperceptible..,* Deleuze and Guattari provide ways of thinking *devenir* as a coming-together or a "symbiose" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 291) of two heterogeneous parts. To elucidate this concept, Deleuze and Guattari provide the example of the wasp-orchid. In order to reproduce successfully, the orchid relies on the wasp for pollination. Conversely, the pollinator wasp depends on the orchid's nectar for its own survival. Both the orchid and the wasp are crucial to each other for the survival of the other and when both parts meet, they fuse to form a new *agencement*: the wasp-orchid. Bruce Baugh notes that "*agencement*, for which the standard translation is 'assemblage', carries the connotation of 'agency', not in the sense of individuals having intentions, but in the sense of 'a cleaning agent', i.e. something capable of doing something, of producing an effect" (Baugh, 2000, 54). The assemblage created out of the coming-together of two heterogeneous parts produces sensations and is therefore *intensive.*

Extrapolating this idea to the coming together of the adolescent reader and the series book character expands understanding of this intimate and symbiotic relationship between reader and character in series fiction. The reader is deterritorialised by being freed from the actuality of the real world and is projected into the imaginary literary world of the book and character. The reader undergoes a *becoming-character*, enabling him/her to enter the imaginative, virtual world of the book, to meet (again) the character friends, and to act alongside them, or as Angela McRobbie writes to "become part of the spectacle" (McRobbie, 1997, 216). The reader is not alone in his/her

becoming: in this twofold dynamic of becoming the character undergoes a *becoming-read* and is transformed. No longer just a collection of black and white words on the page, the character is 'animated' through being read. There is a fusion with the character as the reader becomes an insider, as the series book creates "a framework for the reader's own imaginings. The real protagonist of such a tale is the reader" (Greenlee, 1996, 17). In a reciprocal movement, a new assemblage is created: the read(er)-character. Both parts of the assemblage are inextricably entwined. It is not that the reader has remained the same and acquired the additional properties of the character or vice versa, nor, returning to the example of the wasp-orchid, is it a question of *transformation into*, as Deleuze and Guattari point out throughout the plateau (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 291, 335, 339). The wasp does not (and of course cannot) transform itself into an orchid; similarly the reader does not 'really' become the character. Both participants come together or *become* as they enter this new assemblage, as Deleuze states, "à mesure que quelqu'un devient, ce qu'il devient change autant que lui-même. Les devenirs ne sont pas des phénomènes d'imitation, ni d'assimilation, mais de double capture, d'évolution non parallèle, de noces entre deux règnes" (Deleuze, 1996, 8).

The way in which the reader chooses a character with whom to become is extremely personal, but can be textually manoeuvred. The series characteristic of naming the hero in the title may contribute to a reader's choice, for example. It is also common in series with a named protagonist to have first person narration, which also positions the reader closer to the protagonist, seeing through the hero's eyes and following his/her thoughts and actions.[38] Whether that character is the main protagonist or not, for Deleuze and Guattari there is always one character that stands out for the reader. They call this character "un individu exceptionnel" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 297) and it is with this exceptional individual that becomings occur. This character is not necessarily exceptional for what s/he is or for what s/he represents. As I discussed in Chapter 2, adolescent fiction has a tendency of being 'narcissistic' thus reducing the possibility for truly 'exceptional' characters. What is important, however, is that the character with whom becomings occur "ne porte que des affects" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 299). S/he is chosen, not because of what s/he *is*, but because of the unique possibility for intensities s/he makes with the reader.

[38] This is considered in Chapter 6

The recurrence of characters over the course of the series facilitates this becoming. As reading progresses, and "as the reader passes through the various perspectives offered by the text and relates the different views and patterns to one another he sets the work in motion, and so sets himself in motion, too" (Iser, 1978, 21). A succession of other becomings may follow this initial catalyst, as the reader, transformed by his/her reading, continues to encounter the protagonists, minor characters, settings and themes of the text. The reader is changed through each encounter, as that which the reader encounters is transformed through the reader's creative act of reading.

To explore the implications of Deleuze's concept of becoming more fully, it is worth elaborating what becoming is *not*. In a non-Deleuzian sense, becoming is often considered as *coming to be*, entering a stable state or condition (*Oxford English Dictionary*). There are periods of human life where this appears more intense than others. Childhood and adolescence epitomise two such intense, dynamic periods and are synonymous with ideas of transition and of growth: the infant becomes the child becomes the teenager becomes the adult. Adulthood appears to be the ultimate goal, the definite, stable state of being. Indeed the desire to grow up and become an adult is not uncommon in many young people and most definitions of adolescence focus on the not-yet-adult-ness of the teenager (Kimmel, 1995; Muuss, 1996; Gullotta, 2000).[39] A reflection of this preoccupation can be seen in Daniel Pennac's *Kamo et Moi* (and similarly in *Messieurs les enfants*) in the characters' overnight transformation into adults. Deleuze rejects this facet of becoming, arguing that "true becoming does not have an end outside itself" (Colebrook, 2002, 145). Deleuze's philosophical works encapsulate a reversal of Platonic being: "[t]he supposed real world that would lie behind the flux of becoming is not, Deleuze insists, a stable world of being; there 'is' nothing other than the flow of becoming. All 'beings' are just relatively stable moments in the flow of becoming-life" (Colebrook, 2002, 125).

Deleuze and Guattari go on to question where becoming leads. Their answer is "vers un devenir-imperceptible. L'imperceptible est la fin immanente du devenir, sa formule cosmique" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 342). For Deleuze and Guattari the ultimate becoming is that of approaching a state which is before perception. To interact

[39] This is explored further in Chapter 5.

with a physical object, it is first perceived by the senses, and it is the perceived object that is interpreted and categorised. The act of perception itself transforms and reduces the object from one that is not bound to one limited to perceptive and interpretive capabilities. Giving a prosaic, descriptive label to a volume of the *Danse!* series for example is, as we have seen in the discussion on intensities, not particularly difficult: each book tells a story about ballet dancing. Before reaching such an interpretive description, the thought of reading the book may provoke reactions: it may trigger varying sensations (discovery, exploration, adventure, and so on). A volume from the *Danse!* series may, for different readers, conjure more specific sensations (the freedom of dancing, the dream of succeeding or achieving a goal, the memory of past dance classes and so on). Becoming removes the reliance on perception, and points to the unbound state before perception. Through becoming, the object can be experienced virtually, in a non-interpreted/interpretive way. The reader of the *Danse!* series does not need to interpret the volumes of the series by asking 'what is it?' or 'what does it mean?'; the reader may become with the unopened volume of the *Danse!* series on the bookshelf or become with the character, Nina, to form a whole that exists in a state of pre-perception: the becoming-imperceptible.[40] Deleuze does in fact tie the pre-perceived to pure difference, it being the ever changing flux that perception tries to reduce to interpretable states.

The way in which a specific reader responds to a given text is determined with reference to his/her personal "treasure-house of experience" (Iser, 1978, 24). Indeed Hugh Crago considers that a reader's choice of text demonstrates his/her "emotional investment" (Crago, 1993, 281) in a narrative. He argues that a reader's choice of literature "matches" his/her "'self narrative', that is, the shadowy concept most of us have about who we are, why we act the way we do, and the sort of 'history' we have had in the past and expect to have in the future" (Crago, 1993, 280). The self narrative of a *Danse!* reader, for example, may be dominated by a passion for ballet. She may attend dance classes herself or may wish to do so, or may have a circle of friends who are also interested in ballet. When the matching of a *Danse!* volume and the self narrative works, the reader may be left wanting more. Victor Nell's gluttonous re-consumption of a

[40] Other factors which may be a catalyst for becoming other than character are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

favourite book captured in Chapter 1, or "willed repetition ("revisiting" the same story again and again)" (Crago, 1993, 281) is, according to Crago, a strong indicator of good matching at work. Crago considers that the occurrence of "compulsive rereading means that the story and the person reading it have temporarily fused into a single emotional unit; the inner narrative and the outer have become one" (Crago, 1993, 281); or in Deleuzian terms, a becoming has taken place. The reader of the *Danse!* series does not need to resort to re-reading (s/he may of course choose to, however): as the series numbers no less than thirty-three volumes, the reader can simply read on. Sequels in the *Danse!* series 'guarantee' similar pleasures and the reader can expect to find repeated and recurring elements. This expectation may even change the way the reader approaches the text. In her book *The Reader, The Text, The Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*, Louise Rosenblatt postulates that it is possible to assume different reading positions according to what is required of a text. She suggests two distinct positions: efferent and aesthetic, the former being for critical, scientific reading, where retention of information and detail is required and the latter being reading for pleasure and entertainment (Rosenblatt, 1994). It follows that series readers may equally adopt a stance appropriate to its form. The reader of any series, for example, will logically expect recurrences, even at the most basic of levels. Adopting such a position then facilitates the becomings that follow because the reader is aware that s/he has already encountered the characters before and expects them to appear again. Series fiction may sate the desire for more, without necessarily having to resort to rereading, and Crago believes "the existence of "series" fiction enables us to chart with considerable precision where the sources of emotional investment may lie" (Crago, 1993, 281). The intensities created by becoming-character keep the reader coming back for more, and familiarity is raised to new levels, both in becoming and through repetition.

In their anti-hermeneutic approach to literature, Deleuze and Guattari allow for the act of reading to fail, however, "[s]i ça ne fonctionne pas, si rien ne passe, prenez donc un autre livre" (Deleuze, 1990, 17). This philosophy is particularly pertinent for young readers, who try different books to find something that 'works for them'. It is a personal and temporal approach:

> [t]he encounter between reader and literary work thus depends on the reader's sex, gender, class position, language, level of education, historical situation and so on, but also on how these aspects of the reader are being affected by other circumstances. Consequently, a work may work for a reader at some times and not others, and whether and how a work works depends on the forces and resources the reader brings to the encounter (Baugh, 2000, 53).

This sentiment is reflected in David Rudd's introduction to his *Enid Blyton and the Mystery of Children's Fiction*:

> I have a distinct memory of reading the *'Famous Five'* books in bed at night. [...] I can also clearly remember when I stopped reading Blyton, at the age of 11, reading her *The Castle of Adventure* in a boarding school 'dorm' by torchlight. Although I was only about halfway through, I distinctly recall putting the book down and never going back to it. I remember thinking that I didn't really care what happened to Jack, Lucy-Ann, Dinah, Philip, and Kiki (Rudd, 2000, 2).

At this point Blyton no longer appealed to David Rudd, the intensities he had previously experienced through becoming with Jack or Lucy-Ann no longer flowed. Blyton no longer "worked for him." Similarly, Bruce Baugh remarks on his experience of reading Proust,

> [t]he much bally-hooed epiphany occasioned by the narrator of *In Search of Lost Time* eating a madeleine and drinking herbal tea has always left me standing outside, like an observer; throughout the whole novel, I feel like a tourist in a foreign country, observing the strange and rather quaint customs and manners of the locals, and never fully understanding them (Baugh, 2000, 53).

No matter how heady and exciting the narrated experiences are, when the intensities disappear, or never happen in the first place, the reader is left cold. Repetitions and recurrences are then only to be observed and the intensities that pure repetition should evoke are not accessible. Repetition becomes a comparative exercise and readers may become bored with a series as a result of this. When approaching new fiction there is

therefore this risk that the reader will be 'left standing outside' in the cold and for a young reader this may potentially be off-putting. Series fiction reduces the risk to some extent. As Christine Heppermann writes, "any reader, novice or pro, can identify with the delicious greed of wanting a story about someone they like, someone with whom they have connected, to go on and on and on." (Heppermann, 1997, 433) and series fiction satisfies that desire. Rather than considering series fiction as predictable and therefore negative, it can be re-thought as essential to the intense experience. Critics baffled by the popularity of a series, which on the surface appears banal and stereotyped, need to look beyond the standard criteria for judging and interpreting fiction and instead look towards what series fiction is creating, what intensities it is producing in the reader.

Deleuze and Guattari's approach to literature allows critics to move away from terms like Eco's 'smart' and 'naïve' readers. These terms have repercussions in the field of juvenile series fiction, as the implied reader of such fiction is by his/her very nature nascent and consequently naïve. S/he may not have acquired the skills necessary to deal with series fiction or be able to see through the structure of the series and take pleasure in the strategies employed. S/he may also become too reliant on the framework of a series which provides predictable characters and familiar plot devices and be homogenised through that very expectation. To move away from such a hermeneutic approach and focus on what fiction triggers for the reader helps explain, to some degree, the unique appeal of literature to individual readers, which from traditional perspectives should have little appeal. In entitling his work 'the mystery of children's literature', David Rudd articulates the essence of the dichotomy between child and adult opinion. Deleuze and Guattari in providing an alternative way of thinking the reader's inclusion and involvement in the text, go some way to unravelling that mystery. The deep sense of familiarity acquired in the pursuit of a series can be expressed through the concept of becoming. Characters in adolescent fiction may not simply appeal because they are designed to reflect an authentic image of the adolescent reader, but may also appeal because the familiarity established through repeatedly encountering the characters is intense and becoming with them allows the flow of affects to the reader.

The Simulacrum

Adolescent fiction is said to mirror society and to produce an authentic replica of the current concept of adolescence, as Eccleshare suggests.[41] This primacy of the adolescent in adolescent fiction and the self confirming nature of the fiction sit uncomfortably with Deleuzian thought, however. This latter point renders it highly *majoritarian*: when adolescent fiction merely represents and asks no questions, it opens up no possibilities for becoming.[42] Claire Colebrook posits that

> Deleuze's empiricism implicitly and explicitly makes a clear difference between what is *really* literature and what merely circulates as banal popular culture. For Deleuze, literature is not the repetition of already formed generalities. The Mills and Boon romance that I read to confirm the sense and possibility of true love and whose female heroine I recognise as 'just like me' is *not* literature (Colebrook, 2002, 84).

When Jack Zipes writes of his concerns about the 'homogenising' effect of 'manageable' and 'comforting' fiction, this reaffirms Claire Colebrook's assertion: adolescent fictions which project a 'just like me' image are indeed not Literature. There is, however, a disquieting and potentially *deterritorialising* side to the striking familiarity presented in these series, which Cedric Cullingford describes as "if [they] had been written with knowledge from the 'inside'" (Cullingford, 1998, 145).[43] In this respect, adolescent fiction bears similarities to Fredric Jameson's example of photorealism, where a painting is created not directly from reality, but from a photograph, which itself is already abstracted from the original (Jameson, 1984). It is not a direct copy of the reality of adolescence itself, but that of a once-lived reality, abstracted from the original by the time and memory of the author. This is in turn shaped and distorted by further images of adolescence, provided by the media and elsewhere. The media appear concerned with providing "distressing statistics on teenage pregnancy, crime, runaways, drug use, and weakening family standards – suggesting that adolescent tyranny is the norm" (Newman, 1985, 636). This rebellious and traumatic 'norm' is in itself an abstraction

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[41] See Chapter 2.
[42] Deleuze's major and minor modes are discussed in Chapter 6.
[43] Deterritorialisation is discussed further in Chapter 5.

from reality, and is more in line with "the stereotypes of youth in the adult world" (*A Dictionary of Sociology*, 1998, 7) than reality itself. For Jean Baudrillard this supremacy of the copied image is symptomatic of the hyperreal contemporary world. The copy is everything in this age of technological overproduction.

From Baudrillard's standpoint, series fiction could be considered as exemplifying this overproduction of a copy.[44] An adolescent series is not just a copy of the abstracted reality of adolescence, but each subsequent volume is a copy of that copy. This potentially infinite reproduction of the copy gives rise to Baudrillard's "precession of the simulacrum" (Baudrillard, 1994, 1), where the copy no longer stands for the real, but refers to nothing but itself. Readers allow themselves to consider this self-creating world as 'real' because as Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short write "the only thing which matters in fiction is the *illusion* of real experience" (Leech and Short, 1981, 152). Fiction is not and cannot be a perfect copy of a world, no matter what degree of verisimilitude there is or how much detail the author provides: "any description of a state of affairs must use language, and language by its very nature is a vehicle for abstraction and differentiation" (Leech and Short, 1981, 151). Considering the *Danse!* series: Anne-Marie Pol tries to provide this illusion by producing a copy of the adolescent world of ballet classes in her series. She creates this copy from her remembered desire to become a ballerina as a child, from her knowledge of classical ballet and from her observation of adolescence around her. Time and memory provoke further levels of abstraction and her copy is also shaped and distorted by further images of adolescence, provided by the media and elsewhere. Each volume reproduces this abstraction. The real world of ballet and the adolescence of the protagonist have been usurped by the "reality" of the copy itself. In this generalisation through copies, order becomes arbitrary and exchangeability surfaces. In her desire to get closer to the reality of ballet, Pol could be said to reduce it to fit her perspective on the world of ballet. Walter Benjamin suggests the reader's role in this reduction by considering

> *the desire of the present-day masses to "get closer" to things, and their equally passionate concern for overcoming each thing's uniqueness by assimilating it as a reproduction.* Every

[44] Deleuze's concept of the simulacrum pre-dates that of Baudrillard. The comparisons between the two concepts are therefore not presented in Deleuze's work in any way.

> day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at close range in an image, or, better, in a facsimile, a reproduction (Benjamin, 2002, 105 emphasis in the original).

Fred Inglis identifies this in the series fiction of Enid Blyton:

> with Enid Blyton, the one-dimensionality of the reflection guarantees a happily and safely unimaginative world where there is neither thought nor action but only the representation of an image with which you can do what you like. It is a paradoxical way to put the point, but I would say that children read Enid Blyton in order to *avoid* 'using their imaginations' (Inglis, 1982, 190 emphasis in the original).

Baudrillard's copy is therefore anti-becoming: there is a recoiling from new perceptions in the attempt to make everything resemble. Only the copy or image prevails and it is only this that can be understood. "A circuit has been created between the real and the imaginary, therefore reality has imploded into the undecidable proximity of hyperreality" (Massumi, 1987). Any volume is exchangeable for any other, leading to total exchangeability and obscurity, as the original is destroyed.

This notion of substitution and resembling is at the heart of Baudrillard's simulacrum. Deleuze's concept of the simulacrum, however, is very different: it consists in "dénier le primat d'un original sur la copie, d'un modèle sur l'image. Glorifier le règne des simulacres et des reflets" (Deleuze, 1968, 92).[45] He pushes the notion of a copy of a copy to the extreme, to the point at which "elle change de nature et se renverse en simulacre" (Deleuze, 1969, 307) and at this point "ressemblance enfin [...] fait place à la répétition" (Deleuze, 1968, 168). Unlike Baudrillard, who has

[45] In Plato's allegory of the cave, prisoners watch shadow play on the walls of the cave and, because they know nothing else, assume the figures and images they see to be 'reality'. Only if a prisoner were to escape and discover what is beyond the cave and then return to it to enlighten his fellow prisoners would any knowledge of another reality come about. For Deleuze, however, behind every cave is a deeper cave. There is no way of telling whether the new reality is any less illusionary than the last. Such a dilemma was recently portrayed by the film Matrix. Images of Plato's cave can also be found in children's literature: in *The Subtle Knife* Mary Malone has a computer called the Cave which always tells the truth (Pullman, 1998, 92); and in *The Last Battle*, when Digory explains that the old Narnia was a mere shadow this new 'real' Narnia, he says: [i]t's all in Plato, all in Plato: bless me, what *do* they teach them at these schools" (Lewis, 1956, 160).

resemblance lead to the destruction of the original, by the model first resembling then replacing the source, the Deleuzian simulacrum resembles nothing. As I have previously discussed, resemblance destroys difference, and conversely by turning away from resemblance the simulacrum can internalise pure difference. The simulacrum is not about forcing all copies onto a model, "mais de renverser toutes les copies, en renversant *aussi* les modèles" (Deleuze, 1968, 3). It does not destroy the original but becomes an entity distinct from it. Each copy is also consequently distinct from any other. Deleuze turns to Andy Warhol's Pop Art to elucidate his concept. A simulacrum is not defined in recognising differences *between* Warhol's serial images, that *Marilyn 1* is different from *Marilyn 2* in *x* or *y* respect. Each image is itself an original and an expression of difference in itself. Actual difference is only a trigger for an infinite series of virtual differences and repetitions.

A series from a Deleuzian perspective is not just a series of copies but a series of originals or simulacra. Transposing the idea of the Andy Warhol image onto the *Danse!* series, for example, shows how the copy of reality in the *Danse!* series produces something new. If the volumes of the *Danse!* series are considered in this way, it is not sufficient to recognise differences between volumes in this or that respect. Each volume becomes an expression of difference in itself, it does not minimise difference but rather maximises it through pure repetition. Anne-Marie Pol tries to produce a detailed and precise copy of the adolescent world of ballet classes and all the teenage ups and downs that go with it for her young readers to recognise and participate in. The reader of the *Danse!* series attempts to appropriate this image of adolescence and ballet by reading. In doing so, the reader does not discover characters which are real but characters which whilst potentially starting as copies of an adolescence, are abstracted at various levels by the author. The reader is thus projected into the domain of the Deleuzian simulacrum. In this realm there is no alternative but the creation of the new: the reader cannot simply mimic or copy, because the characters are not grounded on anything except themselves. Anne-Marie Pol is not homogenising the reader in her *Danse!* series, but is allowing the reader to experience her own adolescence and knowledge of ballet differently through the Deleuzian simulacra that are created. In addition, when the reader approaches an initial *Danse!* book, her own expectations and experience of the world of ballet are brought to it. Through this first reading, those

expectations may be extended by the new perception afforded the reader. A subsequent reading or volume brings, through the synthesis of time, the original and new expectations, which are both open to further extension in this second original. In addition the experiences unique to the first book, which may consist of, for example, encounters with the characters and setting, are themselves potentially extended through the second original. Subsequent copies continue this explosion of projection. In this there is the potential for new perception and becoming.

This concept can of course be expanded to all series. All adolescent series are expected to portray adolescence, through character traits, settings or through the adolescence of the characters themselves. The simulacral power of adolescent series fiction lies in the reader's ability to use it to perceive their own adolescence from a perspective that is not their own. What a series offers over an individual work, when it 'works for the reader', is the sense of becoming an insider that enhances intensities in any repetition. Whilst commonality with the characters or themes has been shown as a possible entry point, it is in fact the differences and their coming about through repetition that allows the reader to become. Only then does the Deleuzian simulacrum come into its own and lead to "the simulacrum's own mad proliferation" (Massumi, 1987) of difference.

The way forward?

To date, analyses of series fiction have focused on search for generalities, and resemblance between series has been emphasised. These are often called repetitions, but are not *pure repetitions*. Volumes in a series are always compared to each other or to an original volume and only difference *between*, or lack of it, is highlighted. Deleuze offers a way forward for series fiction which escapes the nihilistic return of the same through his work on pure difference and pure repetition.

Focusing on pure repetition necessarily puts intensities to the fore. Intensities flow between text and individuals, and looking for what form they may take facilitates an understanding of what makes series fiction appeal to readers. In this, it is a virtual analysis, moving away from considering what a series actually *is*, and looking at where

the reading of series might take a reader in terms of deeply felt sensations. In such fiction, intensities may be guaranteed to a certain extent because the reader has previously visited the series. Rather than considering this as predictability, becomings demonstrate how intensities might be created through the reader's bonding with a specific character with whom they repeatedly enter a series. Of essence in these becomings is not a change in state or a mimicking of character traits but the change in perception to which they lead. Repeatedly reading same book or repeatedly returning to a series can show where readers are emotionally involved in a series. Series reading could be likened to a game: the reader expects the author to produce more, and when reading, adopts a position that makes him/her aware of possible repetitions and even actively look for them. At the same time, the reader playfully abandons or actively forgets previous experiences to allow for the affirmation of difference.

The notion of the simulacrum is helpful in untangling some of the problems with the primacy of the adolescent in adolescent fiction. The emphasis on the adolescence of readers and characters and mirroring of society it tries to create is uncomfortable for critics. This mirroring is in itself misleading, however. Adolescent literature is not a copy of reality and Deleuze's concept of the simulacrum frees it from this trap. For Deleuze, the simulacrum is not reductive and it does not minimise difference like Baudrillard's simulacrum; instead it flips all copies over into originals and thereby opens up potential for becomings. Considering a series from this perspective makes it a series of originals not a series of copies.

This interpretation of series reading provides an alternative to traditional analyses that focus on the 'same', by highlighting both the need for repetition in adolescent reading and the non-formulaic nature of that pure repetition. The following chapter considers other assumptions that are made in relation to the sequencing and order of series and posits a new way of understanding the connectivity between volumes of a series.

4 - Sequence and Resolution

Ways of reading

> every act of reading a text in any conventional language is still [...] a word-by-word linear process (Drucker, 1997, 104-105).

> [a] simple, straightforward plot has long been considered a necessity for those learning to read, as well as for older readers; not surprisingly, the structure of literary story for youth usually displays a basic linear pattern – the story has a beginning and proceeds to an end, or at least a logical stopping point [...] Virtually all story in this literature has the vision of "moving forward" (Dresang, 1999, 232).

In Western culture, both literature and the act of reading are established around a progressive linearity, as both Johanna Drucker and Eliza Dresang suggest. When an aesthetic reading stance is adopted, it is assumed that the reader begins at the beginning of a literary work and moves on logically towards the end.[46] It is taken that the sequence and order of events within the novel give sense to the narrative and help the reader derive meaning from the text.

Series fiction extends and projects this progressive linearity over the multiple volumes that comprise it. Despite the numerous beginnings and endings of each individual volume in a series, there is typically a distinct starting point or first volume to a series and a final concluding volume. Certain series obligingly number volumes to clarify this and help the reader navigate between them. What is typically highlighted in series reading, therefore, is the continuity between one volume and the next and the flow of strands running across the series. Focusing on this aspect alone, however, can lead to the expectation that the series is a 'whole', reducing individual volumes to mere

[46] Louise Rosenblatt's aesthetic reading position introduced in Chapter 3 can be contrasted to reading for pure information when indexes are used, for example and books are dipped in and out of.

'parts'. Closure or resolution at the end of a series would then appear to override the intermediary closures achieved in each individual volume.

In the previous chapter I demonstrated how series reading functions on instances of pure repetition and the release of intensities and showed how active forgetting is necessary in this experience to allow for the affirmation of pure difference. This chapter explores how these notions of pure repetition and active forgetting fit into the sequencing of the series form. In order to understand the roles of sequence and resolution in series fiction, this chapter considers traditional interpretations of both, and identifies some of the contradictions they provoke. I then suggest a new interpretation using Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the *rhizome*, which stands as a model for the connectivity within series fiction. The rhizome helps overcome the reliance on a linear interpretation and at the same time highlights the potential for becomings in rhizomic reading. This chapter then examines closure, and in so doing, demonstrates its value as a means to connect and to open series to the outside. Before considering such alternatives to linearity however, I will firstly look more closely at the implications of linear reading on series fiction.

Progressive linearity

In line with the importance of linearity in Western culture, it is typically assumed that series fiction should be read sequentially. This may indeed be one possible source of the appeal of series fiction, as Margaret Mackey notes,

> there could be a kind of intellectual satisfaction in the reading of series books which adults may often overlook. At least in those books where the heroes and heroines progress through time, there is an element of piecing together the pattern which may offer great rewards to the young reader. A very rich and methodical child, with access to a bookstore that never had problems with stock, might be able to read through each series consecutively, pursuing each heroine (or less often, hero) chronologically (Mackey, 1990, 487).

Failure to adhere to this prescribed order may lead to "frustration or bewilderment" (Campbell, 2002, 6) on the part of the reader and series that do not rely on such strict logical progression are often considered in lower esteem (Schmidt, 1987). There is such an emphasis on complete, linear reading because, in addition to the narrative of individual volumes, a series is often considered to have a supra-narrative that weaves together the threads of these volumes. In analyses of series fiction, it is usually considered that it is not so much the appreciation of individual volumes which is important, but the culmination of reading experience over its duration, as Gary Schmidt writes, "it is the cumulative change achieved by the end of the series that is most significant in terms of the meaning of the whole" (Schmidt, 1987, 36). Series reading allows both retrospection of past volumes and a forward projection into future volumes and Perry Nodelman considers series fiction as

> the same picture seen in increasingly sharper focus. Each repeats the situation of the one before it in a way that makes that situation more obviously meaningful, so that one can look backwards and interpret the older books in terms of the meanings of the newer ones (Nodelman, 1985, 8).

Maintaining such an emphasis, however, diminishes the importance of the individual parts of the series. If this cumulative effect of reading the whole is paramount then Umberto Eco's question, "how would we read a "piece" of a series, if the whole of the series remained unknown to us?" (Eco, 1985, 184) is germane. Similarly we may ask, 'what happens if a part is missing from that whole?'. Some critics overcome this problem of reading a 'piece of a series' by considering series as books with parts. The Laura Ingalls Wilder *Little House on the Prairie* series, for example, is typically considered as a "seven-volumed novel" (Mackey, 1992, 61; Smulders, 2003).[47] In such a case, it would seem unreasonable to read one volume, because the reading would be incomplete. When considering such notions of the whole, there is a risk that the individuality of the parts may get subsumed into the supra-narrative of the series through the mechanisms of generalisation and resemblance.

[47] The *Little House on the Prairie* series was published between 1932 and 1943 by Laura Ingalls Wilder (1867-1957). The series gives a child's perspective on life in the American Mid-West. Wilder herself referred to her series a "seven-volumed novel". Two additional volumes were added to the collection: *Farmer Boy* (1933) describing her husband's childhood and *The First Four Years* (1971) describing the start of her married life.

Returning to Deleuze's notion of the *actual* and the *virtual* allows this idea of the subsumption to be explored further. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Deleuze demonstrates how difference is not usually thought for itself, but has traditionally been thought in terms of the identical, the similar and the equal (Deleuze, 1968, 180). Analyses which focus purely on the *actual* do not allow for Deleuzian *difference in itself*, because they deny any possibilities beyond what is already given: all possibilities are equal to what has gone before. Such interpretations are highly transcendent, which is a philosophy that Deleuze repudiates. Transcendence is the branch of Western thought that posits the existence of a 'being' above and beyond the limits of experience. This equivocal position "that there is a moral hierarchy of more than one type of being: a God outside the world who truly *is*, with everything else existing by lesser degrees or by 'analogy'" (Colebrook, 2002, 95) restricts possibility, as all permutations of possibility are contained within and not beyond the being, and destroys the power of *difference in itself*. Considering the *Danse!* series, for example, in an *actual* way means that it is only moving towards the given end of expressing a passion for ballet. Future occurrences of that passion are limited in number and are drawn from what already exists. Traditional thought would expect the final volume to have something of the other volumes within it. Differences can only be expressed *between* volumes through subordination to likeness.

To put pure difference to the fore, Deleuze commits to *transcendental empiricism*. Empirical philosophies foreground experience and the importance Deleuze attaches to such experience and experimentation is clear from his work. He recommends experimenting with literature until a book can be found that 'works for you'. For Deleuze, literature is about playing with text to see what affects it produces without being restricted to 'meaning' or by what the author intended. The intensities resulting from experimentation with literature should not merely be accepted as 'sensed', as Levi Bryant writes, "the conditions of experience are not themselves given in sensible experience" (Bryant, 2000). In referring to sensible experience, Bryant is not talking about 'common sense', but is alluding to sense in terms of perception. The affects produced by literature may be sensory, but experience should not stop at what can be sensed or observed. Experience cannot truly occur without going beyond perception. Deleuze writes,

> l'empiricisme devient transcendantal [...] quand nous appréhendons directement dans le sensible ce qui ne peut être que senti, l'être même du sensible: la différence, la différence du potentiel, la différence d'intensité comme raison du divers qualitatif (Deleuze, 1968, 79-80).

Deleuze's empiricism becomes transcendental because of the emphasis he places on experience beyond perception. Becoming-imperceptible is therefore crucial in Deleuzian philosophy because it is not possible to experience only through perception. If experience is not pre-ordained or already given, it too must be explained. For Deleuze, transcendental empiricism allows the hierarchy of what *is*, and the notion of a privileged other beyond all others, to be rejected, and shifts the focus to what *becomes*. For Deleuze the ultimate use of becoming is to become-imperceptible, unrelated to who we *are* and detached from our senses. Of interest in the *Danse!* series from such a perspective is not its reduction to a general theme (what it is), but the infinity of links between volumes and the external environment and how the virtual journey triggered by the reading of it moves to change our perception and ultimately go beyond it.

The notion of a 'whole', supra-narrative meaning to be derived from a series is unimportant from a Deleuzian perspective. Keith Ansell-Pearson writes, "[t]he whole does exist for Deleuze, but the whole is 'virtual'. The importance of this emphasis on the virtuality of the whole is that is allows for genuine becoming" (Ansell-Pearson, 1997, 8). Traditional analyses of series fiction do not typically take into account this 'virtuality' of the whole and this can be seen through an insistence on the linear progression of series and on the unavoidable march towards a given end which will ultimately provide a culmination of reading experience and meaning. In such an approach, series fiction becomes fixed in the domain of the actual.

A Deleuzian perspective removes dependency on a linear and whole reading. Mackey suggests that

> given the realistic constraints of book supply [...] most readers will approach a series on a more piecemeal basis; and it could be that in that fact lies one source of the appeal of these books (Mackey, 1990, 487).

While certain readers may read a series logically and methodically, such a perfect linear reading is hard to achieve. Readers may need to wait for a volume to be published, or wait for its return to the library, or wait for a friend to finish reading it before it can be borrowed. The publishing order of a series may equally not be consistent with the chronological order of the narrative, or lack of popularity for a particular volume may result in it being taken out of print. While these factors may affect the integrity of the series as a whole, they also provoke suspense and expectation. Although a methodical approach to series reading may appeal to some, this 'piecemeal' approach is perhaps more in line with 'real' reading experiences which are disruptable and often disrupted.

In the light of these constraints, series reading needs to be rethought. Johanna Drucker argues that the age of hypertext allows reading to move away from its traditional linear constraints and indeed Renée Riese Hubert suggests that, in this age, "we have to redefine reading and the reader" (Riese Hubert, 1997, 7). Such a redefinition of the reading process is not only necessary when dealing with new technologies and their impact on texts, but also when considering series fiction. Claire Féliers suggests "que la lecture de séries demand[e] probablement qu'on lise autrement" (Féliers, 2002) and reading series from a Deleuzian perspective does indeed lead to a *different* reading. Such a reading should not rely on following a pre-destined route through the series to a complete and whole experience, but should take into account that "children are great dippers" (Moss, 1974, 67) and enjoy delving more randomly in and out of series. Usually, when there is no requirement for sequential reading imposed by the text, this is regarded as a shortcoming for the series form. Victor Watson suggests, however, that "the greatest series seem [...] to constitute not a linear sequence of fictions but a kind of extended narratorial map of the imaginative life of the author, charting a complex landscape of culture, literature, childhood and values" (Watson, 2000, 207). From a Deleuzian perspective, breaking away from linearity has more positive connotations: series reading should be a *virtual* experience.[48] For Deleuze, it is not the points on the map that are of relevance, but the flow of intensities in the movement between points, from one volume to the other, in no particular predefined

[48] Indeed all reading can be considered as a virtual experience, as Aidan Warlow comments: "[o]nly by committing himself unreservedly and uninterruptedly to the hypotheses of the author has the reader been able to feel the impact of a 'virtual experience' in literature. Children, even more than adults, share D. H. Lawrence's view that 'We judge a work of art by its effects on our sincere and vital emotion, and nothing else.'" (Warlow, 1978, 96).

order. Deleuze and Guattari provide a concept which facilitates thinking this infinite number of links between series volumes and reader: the rhizome.

The Rhizome

Deleuze and Guattari draw their concept from the botanical root system. In contrast to the root system of a tree, which descends vertically into the earth and whose hierarchy of roots nourish a single plant, the rhizome is a continually growing subterranean stem which expands laterally by putting out adventitious roots at intervals.[49] A rhizome does not support a single shoot, but an abundance of individual plants. For Deleuze and Guattari,

> [u]n rhizome ne commence et n'aboutit pas, il est toujours au milieu, entre les choses, inter-être, *intermezzo*. L'arbre est filiation, mais le rhizome est alliance, uniquement d'alliance. L'arbre impose le verbe "être", mais le rhizome a pour tissu la conjonction "et...et...et..." (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 36).

Deleuze and Guattari say of their work *Mille Plateaux* "[n]ous écrivons ce livre comme un rhizome. Nous l'avons composé de plateaux" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 33). Deleuze and Guattari continue to describe the links between the plateaux in their work as "des colonnes de petites fourmis, quitter un plateau pour gagner un autre" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 33). The structure of a series can also be described in this way: the series is the rhizome and each volume forms a plateau within it, with multiple plateaux existing within each volume. In series fiction there are lines running from one particular volume to all the others it links with: each plateau communicates with the others across the interstices of the series. In her book *Radical Change: Books for Youth in a Digital Age*, Eliza Dresang draws on this concept of plateaux. She writes,

> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari speak of "plateaux" or "layers of meaning" that are reached one after the other in reading a book. This kind of reading

[49] Eliza Dresang considers literature for young people as rhizomic. She writes in her book *Radical Change: Books for Youth in a Digital Age*: "I think of the entire body of existing literature for youth as a sort of rhizome (a horizontal, root-like structure), from which new developments emerge in a random, spontaneous manner" (Dresang, 1999, 4). She describes how she draws her concept of 'radical change' from the Latin origin of word *radical*, *radix*, meaning root.

> journey, one with plateaus rather than a "no rest-stop path", calls for a high degree of cognitive interactivity with the text [...] for youth, this is a more complex kind of fiction, and, with few exceptions, a recently-developed kind of reading. The form of the text is rhythmic, looping back on itself in patterns and layers that gradually accrue meaning, just as the passage of time and events, or the gaining of perspective from plateaus, does in a lifetime (Dresang, 1999, 230).

Dresang's emphasis on the creation of plateaux within texts as a means to pause and assimilate meaning is intrinsically at odds with Deleuze and Guattari's anti-hermeneutic stance. Plateaux are nodules of the rhizome and what is important is not the pause that occurs whilst resting on the nodules but the movement between them. A plateau is not a space for calmly pausing, as Brian Massumi remarks in his foreword to the English translation of *Mille Plateaux*, "a plateau is reached when circumstances combine to bring an activity to a pitch of intensity that is not automatically dissipated in a climax" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003, xiv). Plateaux and the movements between them are dynamic, creative and above all, intense.

Series possess many rhizomic qualities, despite their apparent chronological and linear structure. While certain readers may read (or attempt to read) logically and methodically, a linear reading may be more difficult to achieve, as has been suggested for practical reasons of book supply. As a result the chronological reading order of the series may be disrupted and readers may have to move to another available part of the series and compensate for the gaps in the narrative. It is not always possible to read a book from cover to cover without being interrupted, let alone an entire series. Although Eliza Dresang considers that "an increasing number of books in the digital age have formats designed to encourage Net Generation children to make choices about where to start reading and what to read" (Dresang, 1999, 104), it would seem that series have been doing this for some time.

In the *Danse!* and *Gagne!* series there is a seemingly interminable "logique du ET" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 37) in the simulacral proliferation of these series: *Danse!* currently numbers thirty-three volumes and *Gagne!* ten. Each volume adds its instalment of action-packed adventure and suspense to the previous volumes. Of importance is

that the readers are always in the middle of this addition and this is particularly clear in the *Danse!*, series, where each book provides a summary of the previous volume and a taster extract of the next, followed by a list of titles in the series. Taster extracts also appear in the *Kamo* and *P. P. Cul-Vert* series. Such devices could be seen to foreground the linearity of the series and although Deleuze and Guattari are trying to overcome linearity with their concept of the rhizome, they recognise the possibility for linear structures to exist within it. They write, "[i]l existe des structures d'arbre ou de racines dans les rhizomes" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 23). Linearity can, in this respect, be regarded as no more than a subset of the rhizome. The use of footnotes throughout the *Danse!* series, either to provide specific information about ballet such as historical facts or references to specific steps and positions, or to refer to previous volumes, similarly places readers permanently in-between. Footnotes also occur in the *P. P. Cul-Vert* series and to a lesser extent in the *Kamo* series and in the final volumes of the *Emilien* and *Nils Hazard* series. Considering the thirty-first volume of the *Danse!* series demonstrates the extent of the cross-referencing possible. The pre-textual summary refers to *Danse 30*, the taster extract to the forthcoming *Danse 32*. Footnotes refer to *Danse 9*, *11*, *19*, *22-25*, *28*, *29*, and *30*, although not necessarily in order and often repeatedly. Projecting this across the entire thirty-three volumes of the series creates an overwhelming rhizome of interlinking. Even a linear reading of the *Danse!* series places the readers in the middle, with this tangled web of referencing between texts. No matter which volume the reader is currently reading, s/he is regularly reminded of other volumes within the series.

The use of footnotes may be designed to help readers remember previous texts (or make them go out and buy the texts if they have not already done so). They are reassuring and comforting and to some degree reduce the amount of reflection readers need to bring to the text themselves. Readers are able, through the use of footnotes, to follow the links the author wishes to point out. One of the reasons critics typically denigrate series fiction is because of the homogenisation of experience they lead to. The use of devices such as footnotes may deny readers the possibility of recognising or exploring links for themselves. It may also force them to follow paths prescribed by the author, which then restrict the possibilities of linking between texts. Focusing on footnotes from a *virtual* perspective, however, reveals them as a means to experience intensities. For experienced readers they may be unnecessary, but for less experienced

readers, they provide the chance to experience links that may otherwise have remained unnoticed.

In the *Kamo* series, *L'évasion de Kamo* is the only volume in which footnotes appear. At the start of this volume, Toi is trying in vain to persuade Kamo to ride the bicycle Pope has repaired so that Kamo will be able to join in their annual cycling holiday in the Vercors. Toi is initially surprised that Kamo appears to be afraid of cycling and does not even know how to ride a bicycle. Kamo reassures him, however, that there are "un tas de choses que je ne sais pas faire. Je ne connaissais pas un mot d'anglais, l'année dernière, tu te rappelles?" (Pennac, 1992, 7). This statement is accompanied by a footnote, which refers the reader to *L'agence Babel* in which Kamo was able to improve his English by corresponding with a penfriend. Later in *L'évasion de Kamo* and still on the subject of fear, Pope, claiming he has never been afraid of anything, is corrected by Moune: "Pope avait la phobie de Crastaing, ton prof de français quand tu étais en sixième, tu te souviens?" (Pennac, 1992, 15). This comment references somewhat loosely but without a footnote on this occasion *Kamo et Moi* where Pope displays an irrational fear of Crastaing. Both references are accompanied by the phrase 'tu te rappelles?', 'tu te souviens?'. 'Do you remember when...?' can be a recurrent question when individuals reminisce about a shared memory. If one individual does not remember, s/he may require further prompting and when supplementary information is supplied, a connection may finally be triggered. Intensity flows as 'the penny drops', as the connection is made and the memory shared. Footnotes may have a similar function: they can be considered as a textual 'do you remember?' It is not how the link is made but the fact that it is experienced which is paramount and the experiencing of that link that leads to intensity.

More experienced readers may not need to resort to footnotes but may be capable of recognising and following their own path of links. When, in *L'évasion de Kamo*, Moune evokes Pope's fear of Crastaing, the reader may also make a link to *Kamo, l'idée du siècle* in which their *instituteur*, Monsieur Margerelle, mimics the different teachers they will encounter in the *sixième*, including Crastaing, in an attempt to prepare them for the transition to the *collège*. Links to readers' own phobias and frightening events in their lives, their own experience of similarly frightening teachers and memories of the *sixième*

may also be made. In Alice van de Klei's article on hypertext and the reading process, she writes, "on the web, we are in between texts, in search of links" (van de Klei, 2002, 49). Like the surfer of the internet, the series reader surfs the texts in search of connections between the volumes of the series. These connections may be laid bare through footnotes or summaries or through the series technique of 'recapping' previous volumes in the thoughts of a character. The *Kamo* series provides one particularly succinct example of this latter technique. When Kamo is hospitalised in *L'Evasion de Kamo*, Toi and a mutual friend, Le Grand Lanthier, decide to think about Kamo to draw him out of his coma. In the bath that night Toi conjures images of Kamo:

> [l]es dernières, bien sûr, arrivèrent d'abord: images de vacances, longues conversations nocturnes, les recettes de Kamo, le parfum du poulet aux écrevisses, Kamo et nos sacoches de facteur, tout cela en vrac, batailles de polochons et balades en montagne... Puis [...] il me fallut "organiser ma mémoire", reprendre tout depuis le commencement: notre rencontre à la crèche (où nous étions tous les deux amoureux de la même créchonnière qui s'appelait Mado-Magie, et qui secouait des hochets sous notre nez pour gagner sa vie d'étudiant), puis ce furent la maternelle et le cours préparatoire, et le cours moyen où notre maître, M. Margerelle, nous préparait à entrer en sixième en imitant tous les profs que nous y trouverions, l'admiration de Kamo pour Margerelle en prof de maths rêveur, si différent de Margerelle en prof de français grincheux, et Crastaing, un an plus tard, justement Crastaing, le prof de français de sixième, dont tout le monde avait une peur atroce, tout le monde sauf Kamo, la façon extravagante dont Kamo avait appris l'anglais et fait la connaissance de Catherine Earnshaw, l'héroïne des *Hauts de Hurlevent*... (Pennac, 1992, 60-61).

In his efforts to think about Kamo, Toi firstly recalls the start of the current volume with images of their holiday in the Vercors. He then evokes their pre-series history (provided in *L'idée du siècle*) and their preparation for the *sixième* (occurring in the same volume). Proceeding through the other volumes with references to *Kamo et Moi* and the frightening Crastaing and finally *L'agence Babel* and Kamo's obsession with his literary penfriend, Toi's recapitulation creates connections for the reader. In series fiction such connections occur in the form of repetitions. There is an expectation that these

repetitions will exist and series readers may actively seek them out. In doing so, series readers not only demonstrate their involvement and inclusion in the series itself, but also "faire rhizome" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 19) with the series, which enables them to jump "between and within texts" (van de Klei, 2002, 49). Entering into a rhizome with the series does not simply connect readers with the singular text in front of them but with the entirety of the series. Encountering repetitions in a rhizomic reading allows readers to jump to previous occurrences in the series. The rhizome of a series is essentially based on these repetitions. In the jump there is a flow of intensity as readers experience the return of *difference in itself*. These jumps are not only 'between and within texts', but are also extra-textual, as readers return not only a gamut of personal memories related to previous readings but also to general culture, and as Lawrence Sipe writes, "links to the texts of popular culture, however vulgar they might seem to us, may [...] be used by children to spectacular interpretive effect" (Sipe, 2000, 81).

The idea of a gap between is implicit in thinking the connectivity of series and jumping from one text to another. As Muhar Gubar suggests "[e]ven as the multiple volume format stresses continuity, it invariably creates gaps, interstices between instalments" (Gubar, 2001, 63). Gaps are both intrinsic and necessary in reading, and specifically in series reading. Readers may be obliged to pause between volumes if the series remains incomplete or may simply require the time to acquire the next volume. Gary Schmidt writes that "whereas in a single novel gaps of any significant time are at best disconcerting, in an integrated series they are essential. Within these intervals the characters assimilate the meaning and experience of the previous novels" (Schmidt, 1987, 36).[50] The gaps between the volumes of the *Danse!* and *Gagne!* series are minute, both in terms of publishing time and the chronology of the narrative. *Danse 1* was published in January 2000 and *Danse 33* in July 2004, which implies that a *Danse!* volume is published on average every one and a half months. In this time, Nina only ages a year, which means the narrative progresses on average by eleven days per volume. With ten volumes published over twenty-two months, the gaps are equally small in the *Gagne!* series. The narrative of *Gagne 1* spans the first month at La Charmille and *Gagne 2* continues this narrative after Martin's first weekend break at home, with new academic years starting in *Gagne 6* and again in *Gagne 9* for the third and final year of training. In

[50] The assimilation that occurs in these gaps is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

these series, characters have very little time for assimilation and this may, indeed, be one cause of their "flat" characterisation (Forster, 1968, 75).

Of greater significance, however, is the possible correlation between the size of the gap and the potential for intensities within and across that gap. Where the gap between volumes in these series is small, it is possible that the potential for intensities is minimised or that the intensities experienced are less powerful. Gap between volumes may facilitate *active forgetting* which is crucial in a Deleuzian experience of difference. In their work, Deleuze and Guattari suggest how the rhizome should be thought as "une mémoire courte, ou une antimémoire" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 32). Short-term memory functions "dans des conditions de discontinuité, de rupture, et de multiplicité" and "comprend l'oubli comme processus" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 24). The gap in series fiction or the movement between volumes is curiously paradoxical: it is discontinuity of one volume and simultaneously the progression onto the next. These two principles of connecting and forgetting underlie Deleuze's work on difference. For Deleuze, it is necessary to "find ways of connecting well but the only way of doing this is by forgetting. To connect and to discard are joint actions – we cannot do well at one without doing well in the other" (Williams, 2003, 5). In entering into a rhizome with a series, readers are both connecting with the series and at the same time unconsciously abandoning past experience. Forgetting has to take place in order for *connecting* to occur. If readers do not forget, then *connecting* cannot occur, as readers remain *connected.* The instant a link has been made, the returning memories are cut away and confined to the past. Negating previous experiences, cutting them away, confining them to the past and not carrying them forward, affirms the returning power of difference. It is in this process that *difference in itself* is affirmed. In doing this, the reader creates distance from the other volumes, and the otherwise apparent two-dimensionality of the characters may be overcome as characters are encountered afresh. As I suggested in the previous chapter, these parallel actions may reveal some of the appeal of series fiction and there is something almost ludic in this. Not only are series readers entering into a contract of fidelity with the author, but they are also accepting to play the author's game. In order to progress through the series and achieve greater connectivity, past experiences must be put to one side. Just as belief is suspended for characters to appear 'real', so past knowledge is suspended for greater connectivity to be achieved. As Jean Perrot

suggests in his aptly entitled *Jeux et enjeux du livre d'enfance et de jeunesse*, this "réactivation des croyances enfantines [...] garantit l'effet de vie et la confiance accordée aux personnages et aux productions de l'imaginaire" (Perrot, 1999, 107) and is part of the game for young readers. Eco also postulates that series perpetuate "the infantile need of hearing again always the same story" (Eco, 1985, 168), implying that this game of forgetting and connecting is present in children's acquisition of narrative.

If the gap between volumes is stretched to an extreme, the rhizome of the series may potentially collapse. Brigitte Smadja's *Samuel* series demonstrates this possibility. Volumes of this series appear in the *Ecole des Loisirs*'s *Mouche*, *Neuf* and *Médium* collections. The possibility for rhizomic reading may be disrupted because its publication is aimed at three different age ranges. Readers may simply forget having read other volumes, and with this, continuity may break down to the extent that readers may no longer be able to reconnect the links and enter into a rhizome with the series. Even in a traditional analysis of such series, which relies on the cumulative effect of the narrative, seriality is lessened over such a large gap. The development of the narrative in the *Samuel* series on two distinct branches also gives rise to a wide variety of reading sequences. Readers may read uniquely the Marie branch or the Pauline branch, or alternatively may encounter books from both branches in age order, that is to say the first volume on the Marie branch, followed by the first volume on the Pauline branch, progressing to the later books on both branches. In this latter case, linking between the texts may be minimal: only the character of Samuel provides a tentative link between the two branches. This ageing of the series heightens linearity and may make it improbable that readers will move rhizomically around the series. The bifurcation of the series and the changing narrative perspective will also affect readers' becoming with the 'individu exceptionnel' of the series. Smadja's manipulation of narrative voice blurs connections between volumes on a basic level. Her progression from omniscient to first person narration, from narration of the same events from different perspective in sequential volumes on the Pauline branch, to the multi-perspective narration of *J'ai rendez-vous avec Samuel* could be seen as unrhizomic, like the segregation between age ranges. For these reasons, there is the possibility that readers will not find any links between the volumes: greater fragmentation decreases the potential for rhizome.

A similar example where fragmentation is pushed to the extreme occurs with the work of Daniel Pennac. In the series book, *Kamo et Moi*, the two boys are transformed into adults overnight. The trigger for this transformation is their *sujet de rédaction*, set by the fearsome Crastaing, which reads: "vous vous réveillez un matin, et vous constatez que vous êtes transformé en adulte. Affolé, vous vous précipitez dans la chambre de vos parents: ils sont redevenus des enfants. Racontez la suite" (Pennac, 1997, 18). In his text for adult readers, *Messieurs les enfants*, Pennac takes the 'same' starting point and develops the tale (again). A young reader of the Kamo series may rediscover Pennac's work in adulthood and may be completely unaware that s/he is reading the 'same' story. Indeed there are sufficient differences between the two books (the characters have subtly different names, Kamo's role is played by Igor, the nameless Toi becomes Joseph Pritsky; Igor's deceased father narrates; a third child, Nourdine Kader and the policeman who arrests him are both transformed) that no connections between the two books may occur. Reading may remain an intense experience but no links to *Kamo et Moi* may be made. In this case the gap between the childhood and the adult reading may not allow rhizomic repetitions and connections to be made.

Despite the degrees of fragmentation between Pennac's two works or within Smadja's Samuel series, there nevertheless remains the possibility that connections will be made. At the most basic level, connections may be noticed through the recurrence of characters (Crastaing, Moune, Pope, Marie or Samuel), or at more subtle levels, through the use of motifs like Peluche, the telephone call or Monsieur Zyslin's painting, or Toi/Joseph's insistence on Kamo/Igor's completion of the essay. It is interesting to take into account how Smadja herself considers the coherence of her series. In a biographical work produced by the *Ecole des Loisirs* for its readers, Smadja describes her initial intentions:

> "Pour cette série, au départ je voulais écrire une trilogie, explique-t-elle. Jusqu'à l'âge de seize ans, Marie n'a toujours rien dit à Samuel. Et tout à coup, Karim arrive à la fin de *J'ai hâte de vieillir*, il a revu Samuel par hasard à un concert et l'annonce joyeusement à Marie qui est restée son amie. Je me dis en moi-même: "Oh! C'est top!" Je suis surprise. Puis plus rien pendant assez longtemps. Et un jour, je fais un rêve. Je suis dans une maison, à la campagne. Assis à table, il

> y a un garçon, avec des cheveux très longs. Il me regarde. Je dis: On se connaît? Il répond: Mais vous ne me reconnaissez pas? Je suis Samuel. C'était la première fois que ça m'arrive, qu'un personnage vienne recogner à ma porte. Il avait dix ans quand je l'avais laissé..." (Chérer, 2003, 37-38).

Smadja's comments explain the publishing order of the novels (as shown in Figure 1) and the use of Marie's name in the title of initial two volumes, and suggests that Smadja intended Marie to be the eponymous heroine throughout. It also explains the branching of the series which took place after the completion of the Marie trilogy. Smadja's position shifts, however, in the brief preface to *J'ai rendez-vous avec Samuel.* She remarks "ce roman est la fin d'une longue histoire dont les deux premiers livres sont *J'ai hâte de veillir* et *Une Bentley Boulevard Voltaire*" (Smadja, 2002). This establishes the final three volumes as a distinct trilogy in their own right. It is possible that Smadja presents these three volumes in this way solely because they are marketed to the same age range. In associating these final volumes, however, the possibility for rhizome is re-established. The recognition of connectivity and repetition is both complicated and heightened by these manipulations. Pierre Lévy writes that when reading a text,

> we fold it back upon itself. We bring together the passages that correspond to each other. We take the sparse, spread-out members that are dispersed on the surface of the pages or in the linearity of the discourse, and we sew them together – to read a text is to rediscover the textile gestures that gave it its name (Lévy, 1997, 12).

If this textual sewing together occurs in the *Samuel* series or across the works of Daniel Pennac, it is richer due to the size of the gap spanned by such a connection. The gap in reading Smadja's *Samuel* and *Maxime* series in particular is likely to be significant because of their publication across the tiered collections of *Ecole des Loisirs*, but also because they are not ostensibly marketed as series. Unlike the *Danse!* series, there are no footnotes to support readers, who are instead left to create own their own links in piecing the series together. When they are subsequently found, they may be more intense than those prescribed by the author because they have been discovered autonomously. Margaret Mackey also comments that "very banal and repetitive stories can acquire additional

charm from being pieced together out of order" (Mackey, 1990, 487), but this is not a sufficient explanation for the processes at work in such reading.[51] Expectation is indeed another factor at work here.

To understand the mechanisms by which links may release varying degrees of intensity, it is necessary to reconsider how links are formed. Deleuze demonstrates how expectation occurs because of the habitual repetition of events in the past. In linear reading, expectation and synthesis of time work hand in hand. Events (A, B, C) are contracted in the past and projected through the present (D) and into the future (E). Complicating this synthesis of time with embedded levels of childhood, or altering the sequence of those events, would appear to affect this process, as can be seen when considering *Kamo* series. This series is somewhat elusive in terms of a strict linear chronology. There is a conflict between dates of original publication in the *Je Bouquine* magazine, the numbering of the *Folio Junior* volumes, the textual references and the order in which the volumes appear in the collated hors série (see Table 1). Readers could (and possibly do) start anywhere in the series. If reading follows the pattern B (*L'agence Babel*), C (*L'évasion de Kamo*), D (*Kamo et Moi*), A (*L'idée du siècle*), for example, which corresponds to the number order of the Folio imprint, this causes Kamo and Toi to move from the *troisième* in D (*Kamo et Moi*) to the *classe maternelle* in A (*L'idée du siècle*). The synthesis of time would no longer appear to function in the same way as in a conventional linear reading: textual 'future' events B, C, D are contracted in the past and projected onto the textual 'past' event A. The *Maxime* series also has a chronological inconsistency. Like the *Samuel* series, it too is published over *Ecole des Loisirs*'s three collections. Readers discovering this series may follow Maxime's maturation chronologically from *J'ai décidé de m'appeler Dominique* to *Adieu Maxime*. *Ne touchez pas aux idoles* is currently out of print and may, therefore, be discovered later, after the rest of the series. Readers are introduced to problems between Jonas and rest of the family in *Maxime fait un beau mariage*. Reading *Adieu Maxime* then clarifies these problems further. If *Ne touchez pas aux idoles* remains unavailable, the reader reads around the missing element: as Margaret Mackey suggests in her aptly entitled article *Filling the Gaps*, when a reader discovers a series in this way, out of chronological order, s/he

[51] Despite Margaret Mackey's insightful analysis of series fiction and its appeal, her view of repetition remains negative.

> is driven to make inferences, to compensate for gaps [...] when a title which fills in a missing element in the chronology becomes available, there is great excitement, and the reader pounces. Inferences can now be checked; the cross-weaving adds texture to the baldest of narrative (Mackey, 1990, 487).

If *Ne touchez pas aux idoles* is read, the reader is taken back to Maxime's parents' youth and is provided with the pre-series history, explaining the root of Jonas's hatred of Grégoire.

In such a reading of both the *Maxime* and *Kamo* series the 'future' outcomes are already known and the reader can check assumptions made and expectations formed in reading. Usually the past gives sense to the present and can lead to expectation in future but in such readings the 'future' events of the series are contracted in the past, are projected onto the missing 'past'. In these cases the 'future' gives sense to the 'past' as it is projected onto it *and* the 'past' simultaneously elucidates the already known 'future', identifying new elements in it. From a Deleuzian standpoint, however, the synthesis of time occurs within the contemplative mind, the reader of the series, and whether the textual time is 'past' or 'future' has little significance. The synthesis of time is therefore an agent in the rhizome and reading out of order or retrospectively is not merely a case of filling in a missing hole, but is an opportunity to generate more links within the rhizome. A rhizomic reading of series overcomes the need for a pre-defined linear sequence and for the logical, chronological progression from volume to volume. Not all links may be available or obvious because of missing parts, but the links for the remaining parts can nonetheless be discovered. The possibility remains that a hole will be filled in later and when a missing part is acquired, further connectivity can be explored and the rhizome reaches its greatest potential. In the case of the *Maxime* series, readers who have previously read other novels in the series may approach *Ne touchez pas aux Idoles* with unanswered questions about the family history and Jonas and an expectation that these will be answered. As a result of this expectation, any links subsequently made are potentially more intense because of this expectation that has preceded them.

Deleuze and Guattari consider that the rhizome offers another way of moving: "partir au milieu, par le milieu, entrer et sortir, non pas commencer ni finir" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 36-37). By extension the rhizome offers another way of reading and particularly of reading series fiction. This rhizomic reading overcomes the need for chronological and 'complete' reading and valorises the creation of links between the parts available. Using the rhizome as a model for the connectivity in series creates difficulties however. A rhizome has no beginning or end, and yet series clearly have both. A rhizome also functions on total connectivity and yet this appears to sit uncomfortably with the concept of active forgetting, so necessary to the experience of pure repetition. The following section explores the inherent difficulties of closure within the series form and explores how active forgetting functions within the rhizome.

Closure

Closure is the act of bringing a work to its end and through this act, a sense of wholeness is achieved. David Hult provides "a simple but useful equation: 'end' is to 'meaning' as 'closure' is to 'interpretation'" (Hult, 1984, iv). For Hult, however, the act of closure reveals a paradox: the "inner movement in the direction of unity or completeness [...] is itself a provocative form of *in*completeness" (Hult, 1984, v). In series fiction, this incompleteness comes about less because of the scope for interpretation closure inspires, but more through the fact that each individual element subverts previous closures. Victor Watson nonetheless remarks, "a series is not a serial; it has resolutions as it proceeds" (Watson, 2000, 7). Resolution is the part of a work in which the complications of the plot are unravelled; this may, but need not, occur at the end. In keeping with transcendent thought, the end of a work is often considered as its climax. It is the termination point, where conclusions have been reached and unity prevails. This sits uncomfortably with the concept of the rhizome.

How works of children's literature end, the way in which resolutions are made and their associated level of ambiguity, causes much debate. When Mark Twain wrote at the end of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*,

> so endeth this chronicle. It being strictly a history of a boy, it must stop here; the story could not go much further without becoming the history of a man. When one writes a novel, about grown up people, he knows exactly where to stop – that is, with a marriage; but when he writes of juveniles, he must stop where he best can (Twain, 1958, 256)

he articulated a difficulty that would fascinate writers and critics of children's fiction. Critics typically give greater merit to children's fiction that demonstrates "open" endings, where resolutions are more ambiguous and have more in common with endings of 'adult' fiction. This is in contrast to fiction that demonstrates fully resolved and/or circular endings (where reader and character return to their point of origin) which are often maligned. Peter Hunt sees resolutions as one of the primary difficulties in series fiction, especially in "the 'manufactured' series novels, which often have the subject-matter of the adult novel and the plot-shape (that is, resolved, or circular) of the children's novel" (Hunt, 1994, 16).[52] Focusing on this disparity alone, however, masks the fact that closure in series fiction is simply more difficult to achieve because "the series as a genre destabilizes the concept of a singular, conclusive ending" (Gubar, 2001, 61). This is particularly clear in the *Danse!* series, for example, which scholars like Zipes and Hunt might criticise for its 'homogenising' and 'manufactured' qualities, and in which resolutions are traditionally considered circular. Each attempt at closure is perpetually undermined because when the 'end' is reached, readers are immediately pushed to a point beyond and encouraged to jump. Each volume immediately opens out into the next. In this respect, similarities can be identified between this series and the *roman feuilleton* of the nineteenth century, whose nature was defined by its frenzied production and the regularity of instalments, with the potential for modification based on reader reaction (Hagedorn, 1995). The seemingly interminable production of the *Danse!* series and the *roman feuilleton* renders them always incomplete and also highly rhizomic.

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[52] Peter Hunt describes three categories of children's literature: *closed*, *semi-closed* and *unresolved* in (Hunt, 1994). Maria Nikoljeva posits similar categories of children's fiction: *prelapsarian*, *carnivalesque* and *postlapsarian* which she considers to be similar to Hunt's (Nikolajeva, 2002). Nikolajeva's categories are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5. The prevalence of fully closed plot-shapes in children's literature raises issues about the assumptions that young readers are not able to cope with more 'adult' resolution and have a "lesser" reading ability. See (Hunt, 1995, 76). Peter Hunt considers that younger children demonstrate preferences for clear, resolved endings (Hunt, 1995, 127).

The never-ending aspect of series fiction can also be seen in the renewal motif occurring towards the final volumes of the *Nils*, *Emilien* and *Maxime* series, in the form of the birth of Nils's daughter, Emilien's half sister and the future birth of Maxime's niece or nephew. In the survival of Emilien's half sister, born prematurely in *Sans Sucre, merci*, Nils's acceptance of his daughter in *J'ai Rendez-vous avec Monsieur X*, and the future arrival of Maxime's sister's baby, there is a potential for the continuation of the narrative after the closure of the series and in this respect they have a retrospective incompleteness. These series represent "un type d'œuvres qui, bien que matériellement achevées, restent ouvertes à une continuelle germination de relations internes" (Eco, 1965, 35).[53] Indeed, the narratives of these series extend beyond the physical limits of the volumes themselves. Victor Watson refers to this phenomenon by quoting Mary Norton in *The Borrowers Aloft*: "stories never really end. They can go on and on – and on: it is just that at some point or another the teller ceases to tell them" (Watson, 2000, 212) or as Margaret Mackey suggests, after the end of the book or series, "the story develops a life of its own" (Mackey, 2001, 179).[54] Series fiction epitomises this irrepressibility of narrative in its unending rhizomic flow, which is resistant to all forms of definitive closure.

The paradox of 'the end' in series fiction and series fiction's resistance to definitive closure is demonstrated well by Smadja's *Maxime* series. The first volume *J'ai décidé de m'appeler Dominique* closes with Emilie's acceptance of her brother's birth and opens the possibility for a new narrative, the story of Maxime. The other volumes in the *Mouche* and *Neuf* collection also have reassuring, happy resolutions, as befits their age range. In *Maxime fait un beau mariage*, the series appears to end definitively with Maxime's comment, as he sees his sister married: "à ce moment précis, mon enfance s'est achevée" (Smadja, 2000, 92). This is the final volume in the *Neuf* collection and would be an appropriate place to conclude the series, allowing the reader to look back over the previous volumes and consider how Maxime has developed throughout his childhood. Despite the wedding celebrations, complete closure remains elusive. The

[53] Renée Riese Hubert uses this quotation from Eco's *L'œuvre ouverte* in her discussion of *tableaux-poèmes*. She considers Eco's theories "lend themselves to the study of the tableau-poème [...] for they take into account the importance of typography, blank space, and layout" (Riese Hubert, 1984, 43).

[54] Mary Norton's (1903-1992) first book *The Borrowers* series was published in 1952 and was followed by four additional volumes *The Borrowers Afield* (1955), *The Borrowers Afloat* (1959), *The Borrowers Aloft* (1961) and *The Borrowers Avenged* (1982).

family history of a dispute between Maxime's two uncles, Jonas and Grégoire remains untold, and the tensions within the family about Jonas's homosexuality are ongoing. *Ne touchez pas aux Idoles* jumps back in time to Jonas's youth and gives some indication of the reasons for this tension. The appropriately entitled final volume of the series, *Adieu Maxime*, provides an opportunity to reconsider the function of resolution. In this volume, Maxime revisits the previous volumes, as he recounts the story so far. He touches on his infatuation with his mathematics teacher (*Maxime fait l'idiot*), his sister's wedding, and provides resolution to the plot of *Ne touchez pas aux Idoles* as he discovers that Grégoire had revealed Jonas's homosexuality to his family. From a Deleuzian perspective, it is not the meaning or interpretation that is of interest in these resolutions, but the fact that they are intrinsically pure repetitions. In revisiting the previous volumes, Maxime is not simply providing answers and his more mature reflection on past events, he is repeating. In providing answers or additional detail to a previously posed problem or event, there is necessarily pure repetition. Considering resolution as pure repetition shifts the focus from the meaning of the resolution to the intensities brought about by the pure repetition.

Despite reconsidering resolution as pure repetition, it is still difficult to move away from traditional interpretive techniques. Intermediary closures in series fiction are superseded by the climatic and revealing closure of the whole, which in turn is subverted by the irrepressibility of the series narrative itself. No matter how unattainable, closure remains the final, ultimate goal. To escape this difficulty, closure, in the same way as resolution, needs to be reconsidered. From a Deleuzian perspective, closure may be thought of as something so prevalent that it could be easy to overlook, thus reversing its epiphanic nature. Closure can be seen to exist in every instance of discarding and reconnecting, the fabric of all links. Hult's comment that the act of closure involves the "intervention of a subject" (Hult, 1984, iv) is relevant in this view because it dissociates the text from the act of closure itself and posits the involvement of the 'contemplating mind', necessary in a Deleuzian experience of pure repetition and pure difference. Returning to the *Maxime* series clarifies this process. A reader follows the *Maxime* series, playing the series game, discarding past memories of previous volumes as each new one is approached. The reader surfs the series in search of repetitions, links to other volumes. In doing so s/he is reading rhizomically, alert to the

possibility of discovering repetitions. When the reader reaches *Adieu Maxime*, for example, a rhizomic jump is triggered to *Maxime fait l'idiot* because of the resolution Maxime provides to the storyline of his crush on his mathematics teacher. In this intense jump, the reader connects or forms a rhizome with the series. Memories are recalled, not just of a past reading but also of other elements which make the experience uniquely significant for the reader. The reader then contracts *Maxime fait l'idiot* and the gamut of other related memories and projects them into the present. The instant the reader reconnects, s/he abandons these contracted memories in order for pure difference to be affirmed. In this abandoning there is closure. Every jump in the contemplative mind marks this closure.

As readers move through series and discard elements, there is a risk that they will not be rediscovered in future links. Closure in this respect occurs permanently. Jocelyn in Marie-Aude Murail's *Le Clocher d'Abgall* provides an interesting example. Jocelyn, a new boy at Emilien's school, has been rejected by his mother and lives by himself in a *foyer* with his pets for company. These pets always meet a rather gruesome end, however, and Emilien finally understands Jocelyn's motivation for letting them die: "Jocelyn achète des bébés animaux et avant que ces bêtes grandissent, il s'arrange pour qu'elles meurent. C'est cette idée-là qui me fait peur. On ne grandit pas" (Murail, 1989, 90). Later, Jocelyn himself attempts suicide. At this realisation, Emilien and his mother intervene and rescue Jocelyn. Although Jocelyn is saved, his fate remains ambiguous. Pupils are not given any information from teachers at school, Jocelyn disappears from their lives and is erased from the narrative, as Emilien remarks "c'est comme si Jocelyn n'avait jamais existé" (Murail, 1989, 158). This disappearance is twofold and contradictory. The end of Jocelyn's story is highly unresolved, from a traditional hermeneutic perspective, and when Emilien goes to see the film *Peter Pan* with Martine-Marie and her younger brothers at the end of this volume, Jocelyn's existential fate can be seen to mirror Peter Pan's. Jocelyn's suicide would have also made him a permanent child, but instead his brusque erasure from the story leaves him in a similar narrative limbo to which there is no end. The continuity of this never-ending state is undermined as the closure that his attempted suicide achieves is definitive: his story is disregarded and with it the potential for linking beyond this end is destroyed.

Adieu Maxime deliberately exposes its ending by announcing it to readers in its title. Morreale writes that "sitcoms with planned endings typically include self-referential stylistic devices in their last scenes, as a final nod to viewers before the series leaves the air" (Morreale, 2003, 276). She cites the example of M*A*S*H where a giant GOODBYE is spelt out as Hawkeye leaves the base.[55] The *adieu* in this volume works in the same way, saying goodbye to the reader and dismantling fictionality of series. The final volume of the *Samuel* series is also announced. Smadja introduces the text as "la fin d'une longue histoire" and it is dedicated to "toutes celles et tous ceux qui m'ont réclamé ce rendez-vous" (Smadja, 2002). Rather than closing the text, it opens it up to the outside. 'FIN' similarly marks the 'final' volume of the *P. P. Cul-Vert* series, preceded by Rémi's comment: "nous éclatâmes tous deux de rire avant de partir bras dessus bras dessous vers de nouvelles aventures" (Arrou-Vignod, 2000, 67) and an illustration of Rémi and Mathilde arm in arm. This volume contains a copy of P. P.'s carnets secrets which are tantalisingly marked "à suivre". The final volume of the *Danse!* similarly 'ends' with Nina realising her dream of entering the prestigious Ecole de Danse de l'Opéra. In a 'lettre aux lectrices', Anne-Marie Pol writes, "[e]lle a réalisé son rêve. Enfin. Presque. [...] Je vous remercie. Toutes. Et je vous dis...qui sait? peut-être à bientôt avec notre Nina" (Pol, 2004, 133-134) From a rhizomic perspective, the fact that such volumes are published last is immaterial, as indeed such opening could occur anywhere throughout the series: of importance is the presence of this opening itself, rather than its position.

In this new interpretation, closure is therefore no longer the ultimate goal, but rather a mechanism for disconnection and reconnection within and beyond a series. This linking process itself allows value to be found in series that are typically criticised because there is no over-arching narrative structure from which a clear meaning can be derived. The rhizome turns this *actual* view of series, where potential is limited to less than the actual, into a *virtual* view, where potential is a power separate from the actual. In such an approach, a linear path is only one amongst a proliferation of possible paths that can be explored through a series. Moving away from supra-narratives towards repetitions and links equally provides value in reading parts of a series, and points to the

[55] M*A*S*H - Mobile Army Surgical Hospital. A popular American series depicting the lives of surgeons in the Korean War which was broadcast from 1972-1983. Hawkeye is the nickname for the irreverent and talented Captain Pearce, one of the central characters in the series, played by Alan Alda.

intrinsic interest in creating links because of the potential for becomings they embody. Active forgetting is a precursor to the creation of links in the symbiosis of forgetting and connecting. Gap and non-linearity both play important roles in such active forgetting, and can both be seen in rhizomic series reading.

Rhizomic reading

Deleuze's commitment to transcendental empiricism is productive for series fiction. Firstly, it does not take experience as given, but something that needs to be explained in its own right. Secondly, it overturns the necessity for wholeness and a complete sequential, linear reading and enables series reading to be thought without relying on these concepts. Such an approach to series literature does not reduce possibility to what has gone before, but opens it up to an infinity of links to be made between series volumes and reader. Deleuze and Guattari provide the *rhizome* as a model for this linking. In a rhizomic interpretation of series, the point of origin becomes arbitrary and beginnings and endings lose all significance. Only the connectivity between the texts is paramount. It is not the points which are connected that are important but the flow of intensity between them. Reading series in a rhizomic way enhances the potential for links to be made between the volumes of the series. When the sequence of a series is disturbed, the resolutions that occur also become disordered. The analysis presented in this chapter suggests that resolution should be reconsidered in light of this rhizomic interpretation of the series form. Where there is resolution in the story, repetition is created that enables readers to jump to previous occurrences thus causing an infinite number of other repetitions, both textual and extra-textual, triggered by the jump. A necessary part of this rhizomic reading is making connections, which itself requires previous disconnection in the form of active forgetting. What returns through the new connection is not an experience of the same, but the experience of *pure difference.* A rhizomic interpretation of series fiction sees resolution as pure repetition and closure as an ever-present activity and an essential part of active forgetting. The traditional place of closure in narrative as a focal, epiphanic moment is thus denied.

This change in analysis has repercussions on concepts of growth in series fiction. Narrative closure across a series is often linked with the perceived growth of

protagonists: a satisfactory ending cannot be achieved until an element of maturation has occurred. There is a notion of an unstoppable march towards the pre-destined goal of adulthood, and closure and maturation are expected to contribute to this sense of achievement and completeness. Maturation is indeed often identified as the goal in the supra-narrative of a series, yet at the same time, there is a barrier preventing characters from achieving such maturation. As such, traditional expressions of closure often stop at this barrier. The shift in the interpretation of sequence, resolution and closure that Deleuze creates, that I have discussed in this chapter, provides a useful starting point for considering new interpretations of growth in series fiction. By reconsidering growth rhizomically, its role can be re-examined. The following chapter considers this question and explores how the Deleuzian concept of *time* can help rethink growth.

5 - Growth

Growing up

> All children, except one, grow up. They soon know that they will grow up, and the way Wendy knew was this. One day when she was two years old she was playing in a garden, and she plucked another flower and ran with it to her mother. I suppose she must have looked rather delightful, for Mrs. Darling put her hand to her heart and cried, "Oh, why can't you remain like this forever!" This was all that passed between them on the subject, but henceforth Wendy knew that she must grow up (Barrie, 1995).

The sentiment being conveyed by J. M. Barrie in the opening lines of *Peter Pan* points to one of the major issues with children's fiction, a preoccupation with the concept of growth. As Roberta Seelinger Trites writes in her recent book *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*, "the idea of growth – the investigation of which characters have developed and which have not – is one of the most common principles in the study of children's and adolescent literature" (Trites, 2000, 10). The ageing of characters is one of the benchmarks for measuring this growth: as characters age, they encounter new things, assimilate and learn from them and move onto a greater understanding of the world and how it works. Critics focus on what enables characters to grow or inversely what stops them from doing just that; on the authenticity of this growth and how far it extends. Inherent in this concept of growth is a sense of growing *towards* something, that growth has an outcome and that at the end of growth some epiphanic goal will be achieved. The goal in question is greater maturity and more specifically in the case of adolescent fiction, adulthood. Trites also asks, however,

> what children's book *isn't* about growth? Peter Rabbit grows. Max, King of the Wild Things, grows. Ramona grows. M. C. Higgins grows. Anne of Green Gables grows. Cassie Logan grows. Harriet the Spy grows. Christopher Robin

> grows. Granted, Nancy Drew and her compatriots in series fiction [...] do not necessarily grow (Trites, 2000, 10).[56]

What is particularly interesting is her hesitation over certain series characters' demonstration of growth. Series fiction has an intrinsic and unique potential for the portrayal of growth. Over the course of a series a character can age, develop and mature gradually. At any point it is possible to look backwards or forwards and observe the development in progress. When the end of the series is reached, a culmination of this growth and a successful transition to adulthood might be expected, as Gary Schmidt describes, "when the last page of the last novel is turned, the reader sees not just change in the confines of a single novel, but also change that has preceded over what might be called the lifetime of a character" (Schmidt, 1987, 37). If this is the case, the question then needs to be asked why Nancy Drew does not age and does not necessarily grow.

For growth to be achieved based on such a definition, there is one necessary condition, the progression of time. Ageing, development and growth can only occur if time progresses. Despite the numerous volumes of the *Nancy Drew* and *Hardy Boys* series, there is no apparent progression of time. Gary Schmidt remarks, "characters start at square one at the beginning of each new novel" (Schmidt, 1987, 35) and readers anticipate that they will do exactly that. "Forty volumes may pass, each with a lengthy adventure, but the characters will not age, will not change their relationships significantly, will not move to any kind of new awareness, will only be minimally affected by earlier adventures" (Schmidt, 1989, 164). Characters in series which return them to 'square one' would appear not to demonstrate any progression.

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[56] *Peter Rabbit* (1902) by Beatrix Potter. *Where the Wild Things Are* (1962) by Maurice Sendak. The *Ramona* series, by Beverley Cleary was first published in the 1950s, and is aimed at 4 to 9 year olds. *MC Higgins, the Great* (1974) by Virginia Hamilton. The *Anne of Green Gables* series by L. M . Montgomery first published in 1908. Cassie Logan heroine of the *Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry* trilogy by Mildred D. Taylor, first published in 1976. *Harriet the Spy* (1964) by Louis Fitzhugh. *Winnie the Pooh* (1926) by A. A. Milne. *The Secret of the Old Clock* (1930) is the first of the fifty-six volume Nancy Drew Mystery Stories series devised by the Statemeyer Syndicate under the pseudonym of Caroline Keene and published in hardback. Volumes 57 to 175 then appeared in paperback from 1979 onwards and innumerable spin-offs also followed.

This chapter focuses on these problems of depicting growth in adolescent series fiction and on the conflict between series characters which grow and grow up and those that do not. Through an exploration of Deleuze's concept of time and the different concepts of growth in fiction, this chapter shifts the focus of growth away from the epiphanic moment of the transition to adulthood. The following section introduces a Deleuzian view of time, from which to start this reassessment of growth.

Deleuzian time

Deleuze puts forwards a perception of time on which the entirety of his work on *pure difference* rests. For Deleuze, *pure repetition* and *pure difference* can only be understood with respect to the synthesis of time, introduced in Chapter 3. In order to understand Deleuze's notion of time more fully, it is necessary to expand on his three syntheses of time, which "constitue[nt] le temps comme présent vivant, et le passé et le futur comme dimensions de ce présent " (Deleuze, 1968, 105). In order to achieve *pure difference*, firstly there is an assumption or expectation that things will be repeated. Habitually recurring events (Deleuze's first synthesis) are contracted in the past and projected through the present and onto the future. This living present is not static however, rather one that passes away. Present instants pass away and are stored in memory (second synthesis), former presents become past and are repeated when memory is recalled. Understanding how the present passes away is highly paradoxical. Deleuze writes,

> [l]'ancien et l'actuel présents ne sont donc pas comme deux instants successifs sur la ligne du temps, mais l'actuel comporte nécessairement une dimension de plus par laquelle il re-présente l'ancien, et dans laquelle aussi il se représente lui-même. L'actuel présent n'est pas traité comme l'objet futur d'un souvenir, mais comme ce qui se réfléchit en même temps qu'il forme le souvenir de l'ancien présent (Deleuze, 1968, 109-110).

Deleuze's theories of temporality create 'the paradox of co-existence': past, present and future "implicate each other, each one of them is present in all others and all of them in each one" (Boundas, 1997, 93). This introduces the third synthesis of time, which is

"the condition for actions that drive towards the new. It has to be presupposed since its absence would reduce the drive to the new to a repetition of the past" (Williams, 2003, 102). Absence of the third synthesis leads to a situation of 'history repeating itself' without moving on, or of 'coming full circle' and is futile and ultimately nihilistic; nothing new could ever be produced as the same would be set to return infinitely. Implicit in the third synthesis is a cut in time: the present must be cut off from the past for a new future to be possible. At the moment of this cut, time is divided into a before and after, a past and future, destroying the repetitive circularity of time thus far. At this point, there is "a feeling that nothing will be the same again [...] that the past, as a whole, will not return at any part of the future" (Williams, 2003, 102). In leaving behind the whole of the past, there is the possibility for a new future. Indeed, the whole of the past *is* left behind so that the future *can* be different. Deleuze relies on the concept of the eternal return to overcome the paradoxical nature of this situation, as James Williams describes,

> [i]dentities, or the same, from the past and the present, pass away forever, transformed by the return of that which makes them differ – Deleuze's pure difference or difference in itself. As condition for the sensation of a drive into the new, eternal return cuts the past off from the future (gives time an order). It brings all of time into play because it consigns all identified events to the past and makes all of the future different from all of the past (it conjures up the whole of time) (Williams, 2003, 103-104).

Difference is necessarily repetitive, but it is never a repetition of the same. Repetition alone allows for the new, as Deleuze writes, "[n]ous ne produisons quelque chose de nouveau qu'à condition de répéter une fois sur ce mode qui constitue le passé, une autre fois dans le présent de la métamorphose" (Deleuze, 1968, 121) and the new can only be new because there is a same in the past that has been cut away. For Deleuze, eternal return is a "croyance de l'avenir, croyance en l'avenir" (Deleuze, 1968, 122). This belief in the power of repetition for itself is radical, but it is not easy to put into practical use.

To show how Deleuzian difference and repetition can be usefully applied to series fiction, and the inherent difficulties in using it, it is helpful to juxtapose other

more traditional approaches to series and the time structures within them. For Schmidt, in addition to the lack of ageing, characters in series where little growth is apparent do not change physically and they do not acquire any greater mental, emotional, social or sexual awareness. They do not experience anything new, but are condemned to replay the same adventure time and time again. Whilst Schmidt is referring to the character of Nancy Drew, the protagonists in *Danse!* and *Gagne!* also do not appear to grow substantially across each volume. It has to be admitted that a linear progression does envelop the series and the characters do age, but the growth in these series is so slow as to be barely measurable. The attention to the minutiae of everyday life in these series creates the situation in *Danse!,* for example, where it takes Nina a full thirty-three volumes to age one year. Mircea Eliade's theories outlined in *The Myth of the Eternal Return* and *Myth and Reality* provide one explanation as to why such characters are not able to change. For Eliade there are two types of time: mythical or sacred, and profane. "Myth narrates a sacred history; it relates an event that took place in primordial Time, the fabled time of the "beginnings"" (Eliade, 1998, 5), and when archaic man repeats ritualistic acts, he is projected out of his profane or everyday time and into the sacred time of myth. Profane time is only given meaning when these rituals are accomplished, and through the transference to repetitive mythic time that accompanies them. Through performing these rites and "deliberately repeat[ing] such and such acts posited *ab origine* by gods, heroes, or ancestors" (Eliade, 1991, 5-6), archaic man is initiated, and Eliade writes, "l'initiation comporte généralement une triple révélation, celle du sacré, celle de la mort et celle de la sexualité" (cited in Thaler, 1996).

Where, for Eliade, repetition is inherently positive because of the initiation it provokes, in these series of which Schmidt is critical, the ever-returning narratives would appear to shelter characters from such confrontations. With neatly orchestrated endings, characters are conveniently returned to their point of origin, leaving them trapped in an arcadia, a magical world of childhood, where ageing and initiation are not reality. This is not always the case, however. When studied carefully, the protagonists of the *Danse!* and *Gagne!* series can be considered on occasions to be experiencing Eliade's 'triple révélation'. For both Martin and Nina their quasi-religious passion for their sport and the repetitive fervour with which they devote themselves to it could be considered as initiation to the *sacré.* Death has also been confronted by the protagonists;

both Martin and Nina have lost a parent who shared their passion. These narratives are also not completely devoid of encounters with the opposite sex. At Le Camargo, Nina's ballet school, there are male dancers and Nina develops a close friendship with one, Emile. Her friendship with Emile is juxtaposed to her relationship with her female peers; Emile is a true friend and it pleases Nina "d'en avoir un qui ne soit pas une fille. Une espèce de petit frère" (Pol, 2000, 91). By *Danse 5* Nina has also acquired a boyfriend, hip-hop dancer Mo. La Charmille in the *Gagne!* series is more predominantly a single sex environment. Football is strictly for boys; the centre does not admit girls and the boys understand that "les histoires avec les filles sont strictement interdites à l'interieur du centre" (Lindecker, 2003, 62). Girls in general and falling in love are presented as factors that will jeopardise technical ability and performance, as the scene with the concierge's daughter and her friends who watch a training session demonstrates. Martin remarks, "ces filles-là, c'était un poison. Mortel, pour le jeu" (Lindecker, 2003, 29). Girls are not entirely absent in the narrative, but are only secondary plot lines to the drama of the game. Female characters tend to be mothers or sisters at home, who are only occasionally alluded to, but play little direct part in the narrative. These female characters are typically presented as binary opposites: there is a distinct contrast between Sarah, Martin's 'special', at times sisterly, friend from home, and the devilishly alluring Audrey of the centre. In the same way Mme Yvonne, the surrogate mother who looks after the boys, is juxtaposed with Monsieur Raymond's coquettish secretary Sandrine, who is ridiculed for her somewhat outrageous taste in clothes.

To help her consider growing up in children's fiction Maria Nikolajeva similarly puts forward two distinct views of time, *chronos* and *kairos*, in common with Eliade's profane and sacred time. *Kairos* is the time of myth, which is reversible and repetitive and in which the characters are brought full circle back to their place of origin at the end of the text. *Chronos*, alternatively, is measurable, progressive linear time (Nikolajeva, 2002). Nikolajeva postulates that when time is thought of in this linear way, "growing up, aging and death may cause concern" (Nikolajeva, 2002, 114). For her,

> the state of cyclical time, so closely bound up in the Romantic notion of childhood, introduces the protagonist to the sacred [...] as soon as children's

> fiction departs from the innocent idyllic state, the introduction of these two mysteries [death and procreation] becomes inevitable (Nikolajeva, 2002, 114).

She then proposes three categories of children's fiction: prelapsarian, carnivalesque and postlapsarian. Prelapsarian or utopian, magical texts introduce the sacred and are governed by *kairos*, and are thus able to overcome the fear of ageing and death because in the *kairos* all is reversible. Carnivalesque texts mix circular and linear time and allow the child, like the fool at the carnival, to pass into linear time, becoming king or adult briefly, thus "taking children out of Arcadia, but ensuring a sense of security by bringing them back" (Nikolajeva, 2002, 132). In these texts, maturation that has been possible in the interlude of linear time is negated by returning characters to *kairos* at the end of the narrative[57]. Postlapsarian texts "take their protagonists beyond the point of no return, introducing them, and young readers, to the inevitable Fall, which is a definite departure from innocence, and an entrance into adulthood, including as indispensable constituents sexuality and procreation" (Nikolajeva, 2002, 132).

For Nikolajeva, growth is only possible in *chronos*, linear time, when sacred, repetitive time has been discarded. She is careful, however, to distinguish between those texts which are clearly postlapsarian and those that nevertheless demonstrate linear time, but only in a superficial way. She takes the example of the *Little House on the Prairie* series: despite the ongoing march of linear time in this series, "there is no linear progress whatsoever, or the linear development rounds back into the circular pattern [...] the duration of profane time is exactly a year. By the end of the book, the cycle is complete" (Nikolajeva, 2002, 116). Change in such texts is purely seasonal and by inference, ephemeral. The *Danse!* and *Gagne!* series have a similar time structure to the one described in the *Little House of the Prairie* series; despite the overarching linear progression in these series, they are nevertheless dominated by circular time. The example of Martin and his recurring journeys to La Charmille provide an illustration of this. In *Gagne 1*, Martin gains entry to the elite training centre, La Charmille. His myopic uncle Henri accompanies him to the centre and a rather animated journey ensues as an accident with another student, Fabrice, is narrowly avoided. *Gagne 2* begins with Martin returning to La Charmille after a weekend at home. Uncle Henri is

[57] Nikolajeva notes that critics typically ignore this negation of growth in children's fiction.

unavailable, so Martin hitchhikes to the centre instead. After five volumes Martin has completed a year at the training centre and *Gagne 6* begins the cycle again, with Uncle Henri accompanying Martin to the centre for the start of the new year, without mishaps on this occasion. *Gagne 9* marks another new academic year and again Uncle Henri takes Martin La Charmille. Accompanied by Fabrice on this occasion both boys reminisce about their original journey. A cyclical structure is also evident in the *Danse!* series, but is considerably elongated. Nina completes a school year in thirty-one volumes and renews her initial search for a dance school in *Danse 32*. The *P. P. Cul-Vert* series is also similar in this respect. Beginning with a linear impetus, the first three volumes chart the three protagonists' progression in the *quatrième*. *Sur la piste de la Salamandre* marks the start of the summer vacation. Mathilde, who had eagerly awaited the holidays, remarks, "j'aurais tout donné pour revenir en arrière" (Arrou-Vignod, 1995, 9). Henceforth time progression in the series becomes more fluid: the 'fourth' and 'fifth' volumes are set in the holidays and the 'final' volume appears to exist in a timeless limbo. The characters are back at school, but it is not clear whether they have progressed into the *troisième*. It would appear that Mathilde had been granted her wish. From Schmidt or Nikolajeva's perspective, the texts have come full circle. Despite the passing of a year, the protagonists have not advanced. For this reason, such cyclical, repetitive texts could be rejected as incompatible for growth, and although Eliade insists that it is through repetition that profane, everyday time acquires meaning, his ultimate understanding of repetition is also nihilistic. He writes,

> it is even possible to say that nothing new happens in the world, for everything is but the repetition of the same primordial archetypes; this repetition, by actualizing the mythical moment when the archetypal gesture was revealed, constantly maintains the world in the same auroral instant of the beginnings (Eliade, 1991, 90).

To return to a less negative view of repetition, it is necessary to take a closer look at the analogies and differences *between* Martin's various journeys or Nina's search for a school, and to address the temptation to focus on just those. Returning to the example of Martin's journeys helps clarify this temptation: in *Gagne 1* he gets lost with his uncle, in *Gagne 2* he hitchhikes and in *Gagne 6* he returns with his uncle, who now

knows the way and will not get lost again. What may strike the critic (trained in contrasting and comparing, and looking for the distinctiveness of a work), and maybe certain readers, is that each journey is intrinsically the same, or in other words can be generalised such as to *resemble* each other. There is an original journey, Martin's first trip to the centre occurring in *Gagne 1*, as the numbered volume would suggest. If this journey is considered as the first and by extension the original, then "on demande si le second présente assez de ressemblance avec le premier pour être identifié au Même" (Deleuze, 1968, 377). From this standpoint, repetition can only occur after the first and in relation to it, as Deleuze writes, "la répétition reste extérieure à quelque chose de répété, qui doit être posé comme premier; la frontière s'établit entre une première fois et la répétition même" (Deleuze, 1968, 376). He goes on to add that such an interpretation of repetition "dépend uniquement de la réflexion d'un observateur" (Deleuze, 1968, 377). To remain a distanced observer is an understandable temptation, but it relegates repetition to mere analogy, destroying any possibility for the new and thereby denying the possibility for the third synthesis of time. To get closer to Deleuze's *pure repetition* and *pure difference*, it is necessary to cast aside the typical mantle of distanced observer, to step out of the *actual*, chronological, linear time of such an observer and move towards the *virtual* time of *pure difference* and *pure repetition*. This is only possible if an appropriate reading position is adopted, one which positions the reader as a series reader and creates an expectation of repetition. Deleuze's work on becomings, discussed in Chapter 3, demonstrates how this is possible: through reading aesthetically external reader and internal character are fused. In this fusion, the reader is projected into the virtual position of read(er)-character. Only by moving to this virtual position is it possible to experience *pure difference* and *pure repetition*. By undergoing a becoming, the reader fuses with the series becoming a part of repetition, no longer remaining exterior to it.

Deleuze re-evaluates time in light of this virtual position and refers to it as *Aiôn*. Aiôn is non-temporal: it is the virtual time of *pure repetition*, the time of the cut.

> Aiôn s'étend en ligne droite, illimitée dans les deux sens. Toujours déjà passé et éternellement encore à venir, Aiôn est la vérité éternelle du temps: *pure forme vide du temps*, qui s'est libérée de son contenu corporel du présent, et par là a déroulé

> son cercle, s'allonge en une droite, peut-être d'autant plus dangereuse, plus labyrinthique, plus tortueuse pour cette raison" (Deleuze, 1969, 194).[58]

Describing Aiôn as void or dead time would seem to imply that it is not dynamic, but this is true only to the extent that it does not progress like 'normal' everyday time. It is only void in being completely separate (cut away) from this everyday time: it is neither present, past nor future. Aiôn is dynamic through its connectivity. Any point on the line of Aiôn can link up with any other. In Aiôn, there is no before and after, hence it has to be considered as void or non-temporal, but there is total connectivity and this is what makes it virtual and dynamic.

Approaching *Aiôn*, time of *pure repetition*, eliminates the problems of sequencing and of the identification of the original from which all repetitions are a copy, which beset the distanced observer. Deleuze writes,

> [m]ais les choses se passent très différemment du point de vue de la forme pure ou de la ligne droite du temps. Car maintenant, chaque détermination (le premier, le second et le troisième; l'avant, le pendant et l'après) est déjà répétition en elle-même, sous la forme pure du temps et par rapport à l'image de l'action. L'avant, la première fois, n'est pas moins répétition que la seconde ou la troisième fois. Chaque fois étant en elle-même répétition, le problème n'est plus justiciable des analogies de la réflexion par rapport à un observateur supposé [...] La répétition ne porte plus (hypothétiquement) sur une première fois que peut s'y dérober, et de toute façon lui reste extérieure; la répétition porte impérativement sur des répétitions (Deleuze, 1968, 377).

The nihilistic circularity prior to the cut is decentred and stretched out only to form in the straight line of *pure repetition*, a route that is far more tortuous than the circle, because of its rhizomicity: any part of the straight line of *Aiôn* can be linked to any other at any moment. It encompasses both that which is past and that which is still to come at any

[58] What Deleuze could be referring to by the phrase 'déroulé son cercle' is the mathematical concept of conic sections and the progression from circle to ellipse, to parabola (the first cut circle) and finally to hyperbola leading to a straight line.

point on that line. In *Aiôn* there is an infinite number of links between past and future at any given moment, those links being made across all time.

A concrete example helps clarify this process at work. A reader of the *Danse!* series, for example, approaches the series aware of the fact that possible connections to other volumes exist and actively 'surfs' in search of them. In her 'surfing' for links to other volumes, she forms a rhizome with the series. The order of the volumes is superseded by the possible connections to be made between them. When she finds a link in the form of a repetition, a connection is made. In her becoming she does not need to stand back and consider the nature of this repetition and compare it to previous occurrences. Having undergone becoming through the act of reading she has been given access to Aiôn, the time of repetition for itself, and is no longer observing it from a distance but is a part of that very repetition. Nina wears a heart shaped pendant containing a lock of her deceased mother's hair. Every time she performs on stage, Nina touches her pendant to bring her good luck. When the repeated element, the pendant in this case, is mentioned, the reader both connects to it and discards it. She connects to other occurrences of the pendant (there are many). As soon as the connection is made, it is discarded or cut away. The reader is now functioning in the time of the cut, in *Aiôn*. There is no past, present or future in *Aiôn*, only total connectivity: any part of *Aiôn* can be linked to any other, and there is an infinite number of links between past and future. The reader therefore has simultaneous access to all past and future occurrences of the pendant, but what returns is not an experience of the same: the only thing that returns, or remains, in *Aiôn* is pure repetition. The repeated element of the pendant triggers other repetitions and memories for the reader: what she was doing when she was reading the other *Danse!* volumes where the pendant is mentioned, memories of her own dance classes and stage performances and so on.

Deleuze presents a "révélation d'une réalité non-chronologique du temps, plus profonde que la chronologie" (Zourabichvili, 2003, 91). In light of this assertion, it is worth considering the *Kamo* series. In this series, time does not progress as normal time should and Kamo and his friend grow (in the sense of growing up) even less than their counterparts in *Danse!* and *Gagne!*. *Kamo, L'idée du siècle* can be considered as the 'first' volume, with the two friends preparing for the *sixième*, although it is written as a prequel

and referred to as the fourth book in the series in the *Folio Junior* editions. *Kamo et Moi* and *Kamo, L'agence Babel* are interchangeable and *L'évasion de Kamo* is the 'final' book in the series and the only volume with references to the others. The notion of time is significant in each volume, from the rite of passage into the *sixième* in *Kamo, L'idée du siècle* to the transformation of Kamo and his friend into adults in *Kamo et Moi.* In this transformation, the boys and their parents are knocked out of synch with normal time: when Toi, in his father's body, goes to school to apologise for his son's absence, his classmates who have not completed Crastaing's essay remain unaffected. When Kamo writes a *corrigé* for Crastaing, both boys and adults are returned (rather in the spirit of the carnival) to their former states. In *Kamo, L'agence Babel,* Kamo is challenged to improve his English, which he does reluctantly at first and obsessively later through correspondence with his penfriend Catherine Earnshaw.[59] Toi frightened by the discovery that Kamo is communicating with the past, sets out to determine who the source of these mysterious letters is. *L'évasion de Kamo* is steeped in historical references. Whilst Kamo's mother is travelling around Eastern Europe in search of her roots, Kamo joins Toi and his family on their annual holiday in the Vercors. Pope, in preparation for this, has repaired an old bicycle for Kamo, complete with bullet-holes from the Second World War. On their return to Paris, Kamo has an accident on his bicycle and drops out of time and into a coma (with the shock from the accident, Kamo's watch stops at eleven o'clock). Whilst visiting Kamo in hospital, Toi and Le Grand Lanthier find Kamo muttering words in Russian, which they discover, with the help of their history and Russian teachers, are names from the Russian revolution. On his mother's return, Kamo, now out of the coma, learns about his great-grandfather's life. Also named Kamo, he died in a bicycle accident and his watch, which Kamo's mother gives to him, also stopped at eleven o'clock. Kamo represents the connectability of all time, bringing the past to the present and reversing the natural order of time. Kamo is *Aiôn*: he is not simply repeating history but floats 'out' of time and is the mediator between past and present.

[59] Kamo's polyglot mother creates the penfriend agency to help pupils at Kamo's school improve their foreign languages. All correspondents are fictional characters and include amongst others: John Trenchard from John Meade Falkner's *Moonfleet* and Holden Caufield from J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye.*

Involution not evolution

Considering character development, or lack thereof, from the perspective of *Aiôn* can open up possibilities other than the inevitable conclusion that there is no growth. To facilitate this, it is necessary to return to the concept of becoming, which Deleuze elucidates with respect to the wasp-orchid. To entice the wasp, he writes,

> [l]'orchidée se déterritorialise en formant une image, un calque de guêpe; mais la guêpe se reterritorialise sur cette image. La guêpe se déterritorialise pourtant, devenant elle-même une pièce dans l'appareil de reproduction de l'orchidée; mais elle reterritorialise l'orchidée, en en transportant le pollen (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 17).

Extrapolating this idea to the book and reader goes some way to answering the question of why readers are attracted to certain books. The book forms a tracing of the reader, projecting an image that entices him/her. This image may emanate from an element of the title or of the cover art in which the reader recognises him/herself or which speaks to the reader's own personal narrative. In the case of the *Gagne!* series, the cover layout and design is dominated by both verbal and iconic elements. The series title occupies the top third of the cover and acts as a 'cover line': "a teaser intended to draw the reader into the text, which its position, pointing toward the interior of the book, reinforces" (Rivett, 2002, 102). The lower two-thirds of the cover depict a photograph of the protagonist wearing football strip. This metonymic cover design gives a strong and consistent visual identity to the series. The image of the series is of young, passionate, male footballers. The imperative title also appeals directly to an individual reader, commanding him/her to *gagne!* and, with the cover art, indicates the nature of the ensuing becoming. The tracing continues in the frontmatter: the reader is encouraged with the following hook:

> [g]agner, marquer des buts, espérer, travailler, rêver... c'est tout ça, le foot. Et plus encore. Tu es partant? Alors accompagne Martin sur le terrain et partage avec lui ses tracas et ses grandes joies (Lindecker, 2003).

Of interest in this hook is the use of the infinitive, the verb form usually associated with Deleuze's concept of becoming. The infinitive is impersonal, speaking "without a subject altogether. Instead of 'I dance' or 'he dances', there is just the pure potential of 'to dance', not restricted by any agent of subject *who dances*" (Colebrook, 2002, 110). The infinitive is also without aspect, mood, number, or tense, which endows it with a latency, which is unmatched by other grammatical forms. Although the infinitive has no temporal restrictions, Deleuze and Guattari indicate that "le verbe à l'infinitif n'est nullement indéterminé quant au temps, il exprime le temps non pulsé flottant propre à l'Aiôn, c'est-à-dire le temps de l'événement pur ou du devenir" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 322).

Having been enticed, like the wasp to the orchid, the reader begins. This act of reading, the reader's interaction with the text, moves book from the *actual* to the *virtual*, changing it from mere ink on paper. The reader relates to the text, bringing his own personal narrative to it, and is deterritorialised. Deterritorialisation frees events from all time constraints and ordering and sequence. *Actual* time is no longer significant. Louise Rosenblatt describes this process as

> a coming-together, a compenetration, of a reader and a text. The reader brings to the text his past experience and present personality. Under the magnetism of the ordered symbols of the text, he marshals his resources and crystallizes out from the stuff of memory, thought, and feeling a new order, a new experience (Rosenblatt, 1994, 12).

In this 'coming-together', the reader undergoes a becoming-character, fusing with the character, whilst the character undergoes a becoming-read, animated through the act of reading. It is precisely in this becoming that growth is present. Both character and reader are changed. Deleuze and Guattari propose the following term for this change, writing, "[n]ous préférerions alors appeler "involution" cette forme d'évolution qui se fait entre hétérogènes, à condition que l'on ne confonde surtout pas l'involution avec une régression. Le devenir est involutif, l'involution est créatrice" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 292). The change or growth undergone is not simply a linear progression or evolution. When Victor Watson writes that characters are "not progressing towards adulthood; [they] are not, in one sense, going anywhere – though

that does not mean they are static" (Watson, 2000, 207) this is indicative of the situation where both reader and character are constantly *involving* through the act of reading and being read. The growth that is occurring is as significant for reader as it is for character. Typically critics focus on how characters change (or not) and extrapolate out to the reader. It is assumed that by reading about life-changing events (le sacré, la mort, la sexualité) the young reader gains experience and therefore grows too. Maria Nikolajeva's comments are indicative when she writes, "introducing young readers to..." or "to young readers, [the books] suggest that..." (Nikolajeva, 2002, 132). When nothing new is introduced, growth is subsequently said to be ruled out for the reader and it is assumed that the "habit of reading formula literature is likely to stunt children's growth" (Willett Stanek, 1986, 46). By considering the symbiotic nature of becoming, it is clearer how the reader might *involve* not merely by extension, but through his/her own active participation in the reading process and the mutually liberating process of becoming.

All *becomings* are intrinsically deterritorialising, and this concept of deterritorialisation is interesting not only because it liberates events from actuality, but also because of its similarities to traditional fairy and folk tale narratives in which protagonists leave home. In such tales, protagonists move away from their familiar territory governed by parental influence, and the possibility for growth and maturation is derived from this deterritorialisation (Bettelheim, 1991; Propp, 1994). When characters are brought back, change or growth is obvious (unlike in Nikolajeva's carnivalesque texts which negate the growth achieved). For Deleuze and Guattari, it is possible to open the circular boundaries of the home and venture out into the world because of the *ritournelle*. The functions of this refrain are threefold: it is the song the lost child sings over and over, creating a stability reminiscent of the home; it is the music that accompanies the home, the wall of sound that delimits its boundaries, its circular organising space; and it is the opening in this circle through which others are allowed into the home and the music which accompanies journeys away from home (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980; Buchanan, 1997). Deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation are permanently interlinked and the *ritournelle* or pure repetition accompanies both. In the act of deterritorialisation there is necessarily reterriorialisation: in moving away there is necessarily a return, but never a return of the same. The reader reterritorialises on the

images projected by the book, but is deterriorialised in the process of reading. The reader is then reterritorialised only by putting the book down and returning to the actuality of his/her everyday world. The reader in the deterritorialising act of reading is accompanied by the *ritournelle* resulting from this movement away from familiar actuality. In reterritorialising, leaving the book to one side, retuning to the everyday world, the *ritournelle* remains, but in this return, like the folktale characters, the reader is changed as a result of becoming: "[l]a grande ritournelle s'élève à mesure qu'on s'éloigne de la maison, même si c'est pour y revenir, puisque plus personne ne nous reconnaîtra quand nous reviendrons" (Deleuze, 1991, 181). Or put simply, the reader grows. This is an *involutionary* growth, drawing in both reader and character through mutual symbiosis, and is accompanied by *pure repetition*, which is the essential condition for the new.

Becoming represents an access point, a way of approaching the time of *Aiôn*. All *becomings* are necessarily virtual and the deterritorialisation implicit in becoming is accompanied by *pure repetition* or the *ritournelle*. The *ritournelle* is both beginning and return: "tout commencement est déjà un retour, mais celui-ci implique toujours un écart, une différence" (Zourabichvili, 2003, 75). This is all the more significant for series reading as in a series each beginning (again) is a return, but only in the sense of *pure difference*.

The Rhizome and the Simulacrum

Having approached the time of *Aiôn* through becoming, it is now important to overlay the concept of the rhizome. It has already been noted that *Aiôn*'s straightness is tortuous in its rhizomicity. Any point of the *Aiôn* may be connected to any other, but the question remains how this in turn affects the concept of growth. The rhizome by its very nature stands in opposition to forms of traditional linear growth because it confuses the notions of passing through a threshold or accomplishing rites of passage, which are typically used as markers of growth. I will now look at the concepts of threshold and rites of passage in more detail, before exploring their meaning in the domain of *Aiôn*.

Victor Watson describes "the great western cultural assumption that the *potential* adulthood of the young is more charismatic than *achieved* adulthood" (Watson, 2000, 206). For this reason series fiction often initiates characters, allowing them to accomplish or experience certain things, but compromises by letting them mature only a little, taking them to the threshold of adulthood but not letting them step into it. Emilien, Maxime, Marie and Samuel are all taken to this threshold, for example. Each experiences plenty of Eliade's revelations, but none of them age chronologically beyond their late teens. The series draw to an end with each embarking on their *baccalauréat*. It would appear that French series include a fourth rite of passage in addition to Eliade's other three in the form of the *bac de français*, which is taken at seventeen. Indeed in French society, "[l]e bac a acquis une dimension initiatique comme, il y a encore peu de temps, la communion, le certificat d'études ou le service militaire. Il est devenu un passage obligatoire pour une réussite sociale passant par des études" (Binet, 2003, 316) and this is subsequently reflected in these texts. Like the senior prom in American society the *bac* is "the near universal experience" (Hine, 2000, 13) of French youth. Protagonists feel the pressure of success: Maxime's feelings about his impending examination are representative: "je suis désemparé et je sens que je vais décevoir ma mère: j'aurai des sales notes au bac de français" (Smadja, 2000, 107).

To differentiate between fictions that take the protagonist through these thresholds and those which do not, Roberta Seelinger Trites explores the ideas of *Bildungsroman* and *Entwicklungsroman*. Although she is not specifically talking about series fiction, these concepts can be usefully adopted for the analysis of growth in series. *Bildungsromane* "allow for adolescents to overcome the condition of adolescence by becoming adult" (Trites, 2000, 19). In *Entwicklungsromane*, often referred to as "problem novels" this goal is not reached: adolescent characters develop through the resolution of a specific problem, but "because the time span of the *Entwicklungsromane* is more truncated than that of the *Bildungsromane*, the protagonist of the problem novel is rarely an adult by the end of the narrative" (Trites, 2000, 14).[60] For Trites, the reason why the goal of adulthood is not reached is because of what she considers the essential difference between children's and young adult or adolescent fiction, namely the power structures that young adult fiction addresses. Where children's fiction, in her eyes, is

[60] Trites considers many of the original young adult fictions from the 1970s to be 'problem novels'.

more about personal, self growth; "adolescents do not achieve maturity in a young adult novel until they have reconciled themselves to the power entailed in the social institutions with which they must interact to survive" (Trites, 2000, 20). These approaches are reliant on the achievement of identifiable goals for growth. In the previous chapter however, I demonstrated that rhizomic reading of series fiction can override linear expectations of sequencing and of the continuity of a series, and in the same way it could undermine the traditional notion of growth. Passing through thresholds as a marker of that growth is destabilised in the rhizome, because implicit in this concept is the idea that following a strict chronological order is not important. The possibility remains that a character's ageing may be read chronologically, if the reader happens to read the volumes in the appropriate sequence. Should the reader approach the series in a different sequence, it is possible that traditional character growth will become unrecognisable or even negated: characters may be seen to be regressing if the reader chooses a chronologically reversed path through the series. These concerns may not actually be a problem for series where there is little or no apparent growth, but where there is a clear linear and chronological progression, rhizomic reading might disguise the traditional progression and growth.

To overcome this, it is firstly necessary to reiterate how reading rhizomically can work. Of essence in the rhizome is the connectivity between points: the series reader approaches the series aware of the fact that possible connections to other volumes in the series exist and actively reads in search of them. Not only is the series reader 'surfing' for the links to other volumes, but s/he is also bringing all previous readings of the series to the current text. When a link is found in the form of a repetition or a resolution, the series reader jumps and follows that link. In the jump, the recurring past event is pushed onto the current present and what returns is not an experience of the same, but the experience of *pure difference*. Deleuze establishes his concept of *Aiôn*, which stands apart from actual chronological time, based on this ultimate linking or connecting. It is important to remember that this process of connecting is permanently interlinked to the concept of cutting or discarding. Connecting can only occur if the cut occurs: if there is no cut then there can be no (re)connection. Only in abandoning past experience is the new possible. An example from the *Emilien* series can elucidate this further: a reader may discover Emilien in the final book of the series, *Nos Amours ne vont*

pas si mal, and may then pursue the series by reading *Le Trésor de mon père*. In this sequence, the reader discovers Emilien as a seventeen year old who has just consummated his relationship with his longstanding girlfriend, Martine-Marie, for the first time. Reading *Le Trésor de mon père* transports the reader to a chronologically earlier timeframe, both Emilien and Martine-Marie are younger and have not yet embarked on a sexual relationship. From a non-rhizomic perspective, the growth that builds up in this series is reversed. Considering this reading sequence from a Deleuzian perspective of time and of *pure repetition* and *pure difference* allows this to be interpreted in another way. As I have already stated in the previous chapter, what is significant is not the 'past' or 'future' of the text, but the timeframe in which reading occurs. The synthesis of time must occur in the contemplative mind of the reader. The reader moves to his/her next volume expecting to encounter characters and locations again and actively surfing for them. When, in *Le Trésor de mon père*, Emilien states that he and Martine-Marie are like an old married couple, always arguing, the series reader may recognise a repetition and follow the link to his/her past reading of *Nos Amours ne vont pas si mal*. The reader suspends the disbelief provoked through the inversed chronology by playing the series game and actively forgetting or discarding the knowledge of this 'future' event. This 'future' is thereby cut away, confining it permanently to the past. The repetition triggers the cut, which in turn allows the reader to experience newness rather than a strange reversed chronology. In the time of Aiôn, the time of the cut, there is no differentiation between past, present and future: all times co-exist in Aiôn. Only with this cut is there the possibility for re-evaluating the already known future scene and for creating a new understanding of the outcome of Emilien and Martine-Marie's relationship.

In this case, the past no longer simply clarifies the present and provokes expectation in the future, but the future also clarifies the past as it is projected onto it. The reader has knowledge of Emilien and Martine-Marie's relationship from his/her other reading. This knowledge, although consigned to the past, nevertheless enables the reader to understand Emilien and Martine-Marie's arguments. These arguments are not a sign of the weakness of their relationship but indicate that their relationship will evolve into something much deeper. The cut also has repercussions on the understanding of prequels and the *Kamo* series provides a germane example with its prequel *Kamo, L'idée du siècle*. If this series is read in the order recommended by the

Folio editions then the reader will first read *L'évasion de Kamo* and its recapping section by Toi in his efforts to think about Kamo and in which he refers to events that are as yet unknown (namely the preparation for the *sixième*). When the reader then progresses to *Kamo, L'idée du siècle*, Toi and Kamo would appear to have regressed from the *troisième* to the *sixième*. Rather than considering such a reading sequence to negate character growth, this re-evaluation shifts the focus of the growth. The characters may not be seen to grow *up* in this particular reading sequence, but the knowledge and understanding of the characters and their situation is enhanced in a way unique to the reading sequence. The mixture of repetition and cut, of following a link and then actively discarding it allows for a unique possibility of new understanding. Growth in this context is a growth of link making rather than of mere growing up. Growth in rhizome is a complex surfing for links and jumping between repetitions, and as such is not restricted to a linear progression but is rather an infinite expansion of possibility. Growth towards maturity becomes irrelevant in the rhizome as any point in that growth can be linked to any other future or past aspect of that growth. There can be no end point that closes with the achievement of growth. In the previous chapter I argued how closure can be considered as something that occurs with every instance of disconnecting and reconnecting. To then say that growth occurs with closure implies that growth occurs every time there is disconnecting, or every time there is repetition. This may seem at odds with a traditional concept of growing up and reaching maturity, which is traditionally taken as a more definitive achievement that does not occur recurrently. From a Deleuzian perspective of the time of repetition, *Aiôn*, the accumulation of chronological ageing in an ultimate maturity is overturned. The assumption that growth is a chronological progression is misleading and denies the power of *pure repetition*. In this rhizomic growth there are no boundaries: rites of passage have no significance because of the connectivity of *Aiôn*.

Deleuze's thoughts on time have broader repercussions, including the general understanding of the stages of childhood, adolescence and adulthood. In Freudian psychoanalysis it is assumed that repressed childhood traumas repeat themselves in adolescence and adulthood. In the process that Freud refers to as *Nachträglichkeit* or deferred action, experiences from infancy and childhood recur to fit in with new experiences or the attainment of a new stage of development, of adolescence for

example (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1967, 33). For Deleuze, however, "[o]n se demande alors comment rendre compte du phénomène de 'retard', c'est-à-dire du temps nécessaire pour que la scène infantile, supposé originaire, ne trouve son effet qu'à distance, dans une scène adulte qui lui ressemble" (Deleuze, 1968, 162). His answer lies in his concepts of time and the paradox of coexistence. Childhood, or in fact any moment in time, is the communicator between the before and after; "[i]l [l'événement de l'enfance] *est* ce retard, mais ce retard lui-même est la forme pure du temps qui fait coexister l'avant et l'après" (Deleuze, 1968, 163). At any point in time there is a coexistence between "l'adulte que nous serons avec les adultes que nous 'avons été'" (Deleuze, 1968, 163).

This paradox of coexistence blurs the boundaries of the ages of life, as indeed can be seen in society's definitions of and reflections on childhood, adolescence and adulthood: in the current world of mass media some very confused messages about growing up circulate. The liminal space of adolescence is becoming increasingly attractive, as Leonardo Rodriguez postulates, "the child wants to be an adolescent as soon as possible, and the adult wants to remain an adolescent for as long as possible" (Rodriguez, 1999, 216). David Elkind's recent work, *The Hurried Child* testifies to adult concerns that young children are being propelled into more mature behaviours earlier and earlier (Elkind, 2001). In *The Disappearance of Childhood*, Neil Postman describes how children do not have access to the 'real' state of childhood (Postman, 1994) and just as children's literature is impossible, so too is the state of childhood. In a society where image is everything, the images of 'being grown-up' are highly prized. Research shows that youngsters "become part of the "teenage" market around the age of nine" as "marketers find that people under twenty buy products based on their "aspirational" age, usually about five years older than their real age" (Hine, 2000, 23). Just as young people buy 'older' products, so they buy books based on their aspirational age. Nikolajeva points to international readers surveys which "show that young adult novels are mainly read by girls in their lower teens" (Nikolajeva, 2002, 132). Paul Dean also points to a similar phenomenon with series fiction, marketed at older readers and read by younger ones (Deane, 1991, 35). Elkind points out that once these images have been acquired, youngsters are "more likely to behave as adults do, to imitate adult actions"(Elkind, 2001, 9). It is as if there has been a regression in society, as Sheila

Egoff states, "due to the mass media and the pressures of modern society, children have now rejoined the adult world from which they were separated in the previous century" (Egoff, 1969, 434).[61] This societal regression would appear to be forcing children to do the opposite, to advance beyond their years, ahead of time.

This idea that children want to acquire the image of adulthood gives rise to the situation of Baudrillard's precession of the simulacrum, however. Image is everything and has to be possessed. This eagerness to possess adult images and thereby show growth is in itself only an illusion: Newman suggests that a display of physical maturation often deludes adults into thinking adolescents are mature and possessing images of maturity can only exacerbate this situation. She writes,

> adult exasperation derives from a lack of awareness of the incompetencies of adolescents which lead to their obnoxious behavior. Adolescents are in the process of gaining new competencies, especially physically, but they lack the experience to utilize them appropriately. The competencies lead adults and the adolescents themselves to expect dramatic changes in maturity. In particular, rapid achievement of physical maturity leads adults to overlook other immaturities and incompetencies (Newman, 1985, 636).

This idea is reinforced by Elkind who writes about mistaking

> this display of maturity for true maturity rather than what it is – a kind of game. The image to keep in mind for this age group [adolescents] is Peter Pan, who wanted to assume some adult responsibilities (leadership, protection, etc.) but did not really want to grow up and take on some of the negative qualities that children perceive as characteristic of adults. Children want to play at being grown up but they really don't want adults to take them too seriously (Elkind, 2001, 210).

This notion of 'playing at being grown up' is not a new phenomenon; indeed Freud remarks that children's play "is influenced by a wish that dominates them the whole

[61] See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the media image of adolescence.

time – the wish to be grown-up and to be able to do what grown-up people do" (Freud, 1986, 227). This wish would appear to come true in Pennac's *Kamo et Moi* (and *Messieurs les enfants*), when Kamo and Toi find themselves in their parents' skin.[62] It is also reflected in a title from the *Samuel* series: in *J'ai hâte de vieillir* Marie desperately wants to be part of the 'grown-up' world of her peers, Louise and Pierre, from her new school, who treat her as a naïve and inexperienced 'petite fille'. Only after her first sexual experience does she realise that she is actually more mature than those she envied. In a scene where Pierre confronts Louise for having invented rumours about his father's obsession with her, Marie realises:

> [t]out à coup, une idée me traverse tandis que j'attends la crise de nerfs de Louise qui ne va pas tarder, une idée évidente qui balaie toutes les images de Louise: Louise déguisée en femme du monde, robe de soir noire et talons hauts, Louise et sa légende de garce, d'ensorceleuse aux cheveux roux aspirant ses longues bouffées de cigarette...Louise est vierge, aucun garçon ne l'a approchée, jamais. [...] Nous restons muets à écouter ses gémissements de petite fille. Je l'ai prise dans mes bras. Je caresse ses cheveux mouillés, je la berce, longtemps (Smadja, 1992, 176).

After her brush with 'adulthood', Marie returns home and looks for the present Samuel gave her for her sixth birthday, the diary in which she wrote "en grandes lettres tordues: J'AIME SAMUEL" (Smadja, 1992, 181). In this and her forthcoming meeting with Karim (who will reintroduce Samuel to her) she seeks the security of childhood and old, familiar friends.

Children are not alone in their aspirations to appropriate adolescence, however, as Rodriguez suggests, adults too yearn for prolonged adolescence (Rodriguez, 1999, 216). The phenomenon of these "childified adults" (Hannabuss, 1998, 431) or "*adulescents*" (Giral, 2002) exists because "in our consumers' society, even the ages of life are for sale: anyone can purchase the relevant emblems (clothes, electronic gadgets) and

[62] In *Messieurs les enfants* the true nature of this transformation is explored in greater detail. The 'child'-parents demonstrate a wider awareness than befits their age, which leads Crastaing to comment: "Soyons lucides, messieurs les enfants, je ne suis pas plus retombé en enfance que vous n'avez pas gagné en maturité, dans ce devoir. Nous sommes, comment dire... les caricatures de ce que nous fûmes tout en demeurant ce que nous étions" (Pennac, 1997, 216).

pretend to be an adolescent" (Rodriguez, 1999, 216). This in itself destroys the goal of 'being grown-up' to some extent, as once it has been reached, what has been left behind immediately becomes more appealing. Perry Nodelman sees this situation as one of the results of the Romantic period: not only were children considered as different as a result, but it made "childhood, which inevitably passes, agonizingly enticing to us – somehow better than, richer than, realer than the maturity we are stuck with. It forces us into a fruitless nostalgia – a lust for something we simply cannot have anymore" (Nodelman, 1992, 37). The desire for emblems is consequently reciprocal and thus the notion of the simulacrum shifts. With each age group wanting to possess images of the other, it is easy to lose track of who is copying whom: the confusion of children copying adolescents copying adults copying adolescents prevails and both the copy and the original on which the copy is grounded are lost from sight. As a result Baudrillard's simulacrum gives way to Deleuze's: there is a "*effondement* universel" (Deleuze, 1968, 92) and "[t]out est devenu simulacre [...] toute ressemblance abolie, sans qu'on puisse dès lors indiquer l'existence d'un original et d'une copie" (Deleuze, 1968, 95). Newness is the only outcome of this switch to a Deleuzian simulacrum and society's attempts to brand these phenomena with new labels such as *adulescents* reflect the groundlessness of their origins.

Marie-Aude Murail's *Emilien* and *Nils Hazard* series demonstrate this current tendency for such reciprocal repetition. In these series all traditional and preconceived roles are inverted: Emilien is the adolescent forced to act in a more responsible and mature way, always preoccupied with the hardships of their daily existence:

> Elle [maman] me fait peur. Des fois, je me dis qu'elle ne connaît rien à la vie, que c'est moi, l'homme de la maison, des trucs à la con qui me réveillent la nuit. On n'a pas d'argent pour nous deux. Comment on va faire à trois? (Murail, 1992, 18)

Money worries pervade the entire series: the cost of Pampers, the unhealthy bank balance, the overdue rent, the loss of electricity culminating in a visit from the bailiffs. Emilien is concerned about the things he thinks should concern his mother. He mirrors what he wants her behaviour to be. He does not copy something that exists, rather he

copies an image that he wants to exist but that does not. Emilien tries to assume the role of the experienced adult whilst his mother who 'ne connaît rien à la vie' appears inexperienced and immature. In rejecting conventional forms of 'motherly' behaviour, she assumes the more adolescent role. Like Emilien's mother, Nils is immaturity personified and yet ironically, must play the father role for Axel, the young teenager he befriends. As the adolescent, Axel should represent the inexperienced to Nils's adult experience, however the reverse is more often the case: it is Axel who is portrayed as the "vétéran de dix-neuf ans" (Murail, 1994, 197) and it is to Axel that Nils turns for guidance about his relationship with Catherine Roque. Being 'grown up' is not, therefore, a definitive achievement in Murail's series, but rather an ambiguous, transient state. Characters might pass through it and then regress again and the adults portrayed are no more adult than the adolescents adolescent.

The young (pre-adolescent) readers of these series, who are in themselves attempting to appropriate an image of adolescence by reading about characters, who in turn are emulating older behaviours with no real grounding, thus find themselves projected into the domain of the Deleuzian simulacrum. In this realm there is no alternative but the creation of the new: the reader cannot simply adopt emblems, because the emblems stand for nothing except what the reader wants them to stand for. The simulacrum stands apart from time, "[il] fonctionne sur soi-même en passant et repassant par les centres décentrés de l'éternel retour" (Deleuze, 1968, 168). The simulacrum represents in itself the pure form of time and its very nature of difference breaks down the traditional boundaries between the childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

Beyond linear growth

Deleuze presents an understanding of time which avoids the pitfalls of a nihilistic repetition, by relying on the return of pure difference when the past is cut away. His notion of time is not an ever-returning circle but a circle that has been stretched out to form an infinite line always encompassing both the past and the future, and which is highly connectable. This concept of the connectivity of time and its associated need for the return of pure difference is helpful in re-evaluating growth in series fiction: as Maria Nikolajeva notes "contemporary Western children's fiction is

written from a philosophical viewpoint based on linear time, which has a beginning and an end" (Nikolajeva, 2002, 114) and by extension analyses of these fictions are based on similar concepts. When fiction is shown to repeat or contain similarities, appears to have no beginning or end or only demonstrates time 'standing still', then it is typically rejected as inferior. It is traditionally not possible to demonstrate growth if characters are constantly repeating themselves or if there is no linear progression of time. Deleuzian time enables these concerns to be overturned.

Deleuze's insistence on *Aiôn*, the void time of pure difference, frees growth from the necessity of linear chronology. Growth is no longer about progressing logically from one point to the next, because in *Aiôn* every point has the potential to be linked to every other. A character is at every point on the line connected to what has been before and what is now. The past is cut away, however (through closure and active forgetting), to allow for the possibility of the new and the expansion of future potential. Even in the most repetitive and non-progressive of series, there is the potential for growth through the making of links on the time line of *Aiôn*. Growth consequently moves away from a linear progression to a lateral expansion of link-making. The reader, aware of the fact that s/he is exploring a series, surfs the texts for repetitions. As they are recognised, a link is made and the reader jumps to the other occurrence(s). At that instant the cut is made, the reader actively forgets or discards knowledge of that other instance to allow for the return of pure difference and a new experience. Rites of passage and accumulation of traditional experiences which are typically associated with adolescence and maturation are inadequate in the rhizome and are superseded by connectivity. The notion of thresholds is replaced by a continuity of growth without any boundaries, except that of stagnation and not making links. Furthermore, the notion of the ages of life as set chronological periods is overthrown through the Deleuzian simulacrum, in the appropriation of emblems across traditional boundaries. Growth in the rhizome is complemented by becomings, which reveal how the reader may in turn grow, not simply by inference but by the deterritorialising effect of the act of reading and the fusing with the characters encountered. The following chapter explores these concepts of becoming, the rhizome and the simulacrum, and their role in the creation of the 'voice' of the text that readers 'hear' when reading.

6 - Voice

'Hearing what we read'

> th[e] voice that speaks the text is what brings life to literature, and it is this voice that children lose as they learn to read privately. Private reading is silent reading. The reader loses the ability to hear a voice that speaks the text or the ability to call that voice out (McGillis, 1984, 24).

Roderick McGillis remarks in his paper, *Calling a voice out of silence: hearing what we read,* that the concept of voice is inherently linked with narrative and experiences of narratives. Early experiences of literature are oral and communal, actively shared and joyous. Private, silent reading for McGillis is "perfunctory" and "monotone" (McGillis, 1984, 25). He is concerned that when young readers progress towards such private reading, they may lose the ability to hear a voice in texts and as a result literature may become a mystery to them, it may no longer 'work for them'. For McGillis, "to save the reader from the reign of awful darkness and silence, we must give him voice; to save the text, we must save its voice" (McGillis, 1984, 25).

This chapter proposes that the voice that readers 'hear' in texts may be considered as something virtual, created through becoming. From a Deleuzian perspective, it is necessary to go beyond levels of discourse, to go beyond notions of narrator, author and reader and look for a voice created within and through fusion with the reader. It is the voice of the *agencement*, the voice of the read(er)-character. This voice of becoming does not belong to reader, author or character; it cannot be owned, rather it is a virtual voice, both connectable and rhizomic. It can only exist through the act of reading, when the text 'works for the reader'. In this becoming, the 'I' of the author and by extension, the 'I' of the reader and the 'I' of the character are suppressed and all that remains is the assemblage: *un agencement collectif d'énonciation.*

Opening the book to the outside

Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of *heteroglossia* encapsulates the many and competing voices within children's and adolescent fiction: there is not simply the voice of the speaking character or third person narrator to consider, but these voices contain echoes of the other individuals involved in children's and adolescent book production and provision: editor, illustrator, teacher, librarian, parent and so on (Bakhtin, 2001, 263).[63] Bakhtin considers that these voices are in constant conflict, consisting of centripetal and centrifugal forces, those trying to maintain a standard, official language and those trying to preserve unofficial forms. Before reading even begins, such voices are competing in what Gérard Genette would refer to as the "péritexte éditoriale" (Genette, 1987, 21). This is particularly well constructed in *Danse!* and *Gagne!* and also to a slightly lesser extent in the *P. P. Cul-Vert* and *Kamo* series: author biographies precede the text and, in the case of the *Kamo* series, interviews with the author and illustrator follow. Readers are not only provided with information about those involved in the production of their fiction, but they are also able to enter into communication with them. As Marie-Aude Murail writes in her aptly entitled article, *Quand l'écrivain assure le service après-vente*, "les jeunes qui lisent Morgenstern ou Smadja ont cette supériorité sur ceux qui choisissent Verne et Maupassant qu'il leur est toujours loisible de déposer une réclamation, soit de vive voix soit par courrier" (Murail, 1994, 40).[64] Series fiction increases this possibility for communication between reader and author/editor because of the duration of the series, and editors often encourage this. In each volume of the *Danse!* and *Gagne!* series, for example, the text is preceded with the following comment: "Vous êtes nombreux à nous écrire et vous aimez les livres de la série [*Danse!/Gagne!*] Adressez votre courrier à...". Such editorial interventions not only encourage communication, but also further the reading of the series. Similarly, readers of the *Kamo* series are reminded at the end of

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[63] In *Ideologies of Identity in Adolescent Fiction: The Dialogic Construction of Subjectivity*, Robyn McCallum demonstrates that Bakhtin's theories on dialogism, "that an individual's consciousness and sense of identity is formed in dialogue with others" (McCallum, 1999, 3) are particularly relevant to adolescent fiction. She shows that "ideas about and representations of subjectivity are always inherent in the central concerns of this [adolescent] fiction: that is, in the concerns with personal growth and maturation, and with relationships between the self and others, and between individuals and the world, society or the past" (McCallum, 1999, 256). She goes on to suggest that research into adolescent literature fails to address the importance of this issue of subjectivity and she demonstrates the way in which a Bakhtinian approach may be used to this end.

[64] Susie Morgenstern is a contemporary author of American origin. She is well known for her joint writing with her daughters: *Sixième* and *Terminale! Tout le monde descend* both published by *Ecole des Loisirs*. Recently her novel *La Première fois que j'ai eu 16 ans* was made into film.

the text: "Vous qui venez de lire Kamo, L'agence Babel vous le savez bien!" and are encouraged "Retrouvez vite Kamo dans d'autres aventures" (Pennac, 1992). During the series' creation a reader can write in with comments and suggestions for plot modifications.[65] Satisfying the demands of reader interest and encouraging reader fidelity reveals the potential power of the author-reader bond in series fiction and lays bare the fictionality of the series.

The peritext can be considered as rhizomic, opening the book up to the outside and encouraging the creation of links, and for Deleuze and Guattari this is indeed the function of a book. In their rhizome,

> [o]n n'a plus une tripartition entre un champ de réalité, le monde, un champ de représentation, le livre, et un champ de subjectivité, l'auteur. Mais un agencement met en connexion certaines multiplicités prises dans chacun de ces ordres, si bien qu'un livre n'a pas sa suite dans le livre suivant, ni son objet dans le monde, ni son sujet dans un ou plusieurs auteurs (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 34).

The purpose of the series is no longer to represent the world with a succession of linear sequels, but "to assemble with this heterogeneous outside, to move 'rhizomatically'" (Surin, 2000, 172). In this multiplicity of "agencement[s] avec le dehors" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 34), becoming is implicit. As two heterogeneous parts come together, they create "un bloc qui file suivant sa propre ligne, "entre" les termes" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 292). This is a block of becoming: the creative flow between two parts. To assemble with the outside, the book puts out a tracing and, as I have suggested in previous chapters, the reader may be attracted to a volume from a series by this tracing, which may entice them with the message: 'I am someone like you'. The text may provide the reader with something familiar and comforting to facilitate this movement towards it. Adolescent fiction is typically assumed to present a uniform image of adolescence, by depicting protagonists who mirror social assumptions about adolescents. Efforts are made to reduce the gap between reader and text in the

[65] Perhaps one of the most famous instances of this is the resurrection of Sherlock Holmes by Arthur Conan Doyle.

depiction of character and their entourage. Characters are often considered as essentially the 'same' as the reader, or how authors imagine the reader to be.

The voice of characters is an essential part of this tracing. To look for voice in written narrative is, traditionally, to look for the style or manner of expression that distinguishes author or character, and some of the first questions typically asked of narrative are 'who speaks?', 'who sees?', and 'whose story is it?'. The character speaks in a voice designed to resemble the reader's, and sees and experiences things that might relate to the reader. Laurence Decréau states, "sauf rares exceptions, [les séries] se réduisent à un nom. Le nom d'un personnage. Le nom d'un héros" (Decréau, 1994, 10), who narrates, focalises and 'owns' the story. The *Emilien* series, for example, is dominated by the voice of this 'eponymous' protagonist, and as such, the series could be described as autodiegetic (I use Genette's terminology with caution).[66] The narrative, focalised from Emilien's perspective, puts out a tracing to appeal to the reader, and indeed Maria Nikolajeva suggests that "young readers are normally encouraged and even trained to adopt [this] subject position of the main character, or else do it automatically [and] the first-person perspective creates a still stronger urge to empathize with the protagonist" (Nikolajeva, 2004, 15). The following passage from the *Le Trésor de mon père*, the second volume of the *Emilien* series provides an example of such positioning:

> [l]es livres sont très dangereux pour les enfants. Je parle des livres que lisent les parent, naturellement. Ma mère s'est ainsi brusquement aperçue, en refermant son bouquin de psychologie, que son malheureux fils manquait d'une façon effrayante d'un "modèle identificatoire masculin". Restons simple: je n'ai même pas une photo de mon père. La légende veut que j'aie son nez – ce qui ne plaide pas en sa faveur. Pour le reste, je dois m'en tenir aux suppositions du style: deux yeux, deux jambes. Et encore! Depuis quatorze ans que ma mère ne l'a pas revu, il est peut-être devenu borgne ou unijambiste (Murail, 1989, 9).

The reader is quickly presented with a voice. When this voice refers to 'ma mère' and 'son malheureux fils', the reader understands that this is in fact a male voice and

[66] Whilst Genette's move to abolish the difference between first and third person narrations is useful, I feel the terminology he uses cannot encapsulate the assemblage that is created during reading. I return to this point later in the chapter (Genette, 1980).

probably not an adult. The rest of the passage then creates the voice of an unnamed character (at least fourteen years old) with a slightly self-deprecating, ironic sense of humour, and who lacks a father figure. This voice is not named until the seventh page of the narrative, unless the reader has read the back cover which states, "et revoici Emilien, le jeune héros de "Baby-sitter blues", which immediately places him in a wider rhizomic context. The reader is presented with the voice of Emilien speaking from the pages. There is no photographic image to accompany this voice, unlike the *Danse!* or *Gagne!* series, but the reader may nonetheless recognise him/herself in Emilien's voice.[67] The reader may share the same age and gender as Emilien, or have a mother who worries, an embarrassing nose, or an absent father.

In series with more than one protagonist, the reader is presented with a wider variety of tracings. The *P. P. Cul-Vert* series provides an example where the perspectives can overtly be seen to change regularly, with its three alternating narrator-protagonists. Maria Nikolajeva refers to such groups of characters as a 'collective character' and identifies this as a common trope in children's literature. Collective characters can serve to attract a wide readership: as Nikolajeva comments, they

> supply a subject position for readers of both genders and of different ages. Collective characters may be used to represent more palpably different aspects of human nature – for instance, when one child in a group is presented as greedy and selfish, another is carefree and irresponsible, and so on" (Nikolajeva, 2003, 67-68).[68]

Collective characters thus give different readers something tangible to recognise and relate to in each character and each character is dominated by one particular trait:

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[67] This series published by *Ecole des Loisirs* conforms to the general design of the Médium collection. All covers are white, presenting the author's name, the title of the volume and the name of the collection, in addition each is decorated with an picture of modern art, the details of which are given on the back cover of the volume. In *Le Trésor de mon père*, the second volume of the Emilien series, an image of Francis Picabia's *Portraits en transparence* is portrayed on the cover. Unless the reader is a particular fan of surrealist art, and considers that the overlapping transparent faces depicted are representative of the multiple identities that comprise individuals and therefore stand as a metaphor for the identity quest that follows, it is hard to see how such an image may entice the reader into the book.

[68] Nikolajeva sees the predominance of collective characters in children's literature as linked to "the practice of reading aloud: a group of listening children was encouraged to empathize with the group of characters in the story" (Nikolajeva, 2003, 87).

Mathilde is never without her "caban trop large" (Arrou-Vignod, 1998, 12) and never misses "une occasion de démontrer sa supériorité sur les pauvres garçons" (Arrou-Vignod, 1998, 14); Rémi is the "redoublant [...] nul dans toutes les matières sauf en sport" (Arrou-Vignod, 2000, 13), and Pierre-Paul, the self-declared genius. This technique of using collective characters is widespread in series fiction. Recent popular examples include the *Baby Sitters Club* series and the *Animorphs* series[69]. The risk with collective characters is that their inflexible character traits may encourage the processes of generalisation and resemblance.[70] Pierre-Paul will remain pretentious, as Mathilde remarks, "[d]écidément, P.-P. Cul-Vert ne changera jamais" (Arrou-Vignod, 1995, 156) and indeed can never change otherwise he would not be Pierre-Paul. Indeed, any analysis of character traits and the voice that accompanies them risks falling into the trap of resemblance. Variations in traits or voices may be overlooked and reduced to fit a given category.

McGillis considers that "the voice that speaks from a children's book seeks to draw the child reader in by gaining her trust, by embracing her" (McGillis, 1991, 24). He continues by writing,

> the text that embraces gives pleasure. The pleasure of the embrace may be based on mutual submission: the reader submits to the text, but possibly because the text submits to the reader. In other words, the text offers the reader something familiar; it accommodates itself to the interests and experience of the reader (McGillis, 1991, 25).

His comments are particularly pertinent for series fiction, where voice is repeated over the volumes and through this becomes familiar: readers get to know it, expect it and want to hear more from it. Readers may enter into the embrace with the character more

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[69] *The Babysitters Club* series written by Ann Martin was first published by Scholastic in 1986, it "continues to be a best-seller, with 335 books published, over 172 million books in print and 12 new titles published each year. It proliferated into a television series, home videos and consumer products, as well as a website and a fan club" (*About Scholastic: People and History*). The Babysitter Club movie was released in 1995. The series was first published in France by Gallimard Jeunesse in 1997 in the *Folio Junior* collection. The *Animorphs* series by K. A. Applegate and published by Scholastic started in 1996. The majority of the books are ghost written. It charts a group of teenagers who, with the help of an alien, develop the powers of morphing to help save Earth from alien attack. This series is also published by Gallimard Jeunesse (from 1997) in *Folio Junior* collection.

[70] See Chapter 3 for a discussion of these processes.

readily through the familiarity created over the series. This embrace may, however, also provoke the concerns of many pedagogues and critics that series reading leads to addiction and the entrapment of young readers. Coming back to McGillis's comment, another way in which this familiarity is created is through the submission of the text to the reader. Behind this is the idea that the characters may be designed to resemble the reader closely. As Perry Nodelman suggests, the impression is given that "reading is primarily a matter of self-recognition" (Nodelman, 1981, 181). When Nikolajeva suggests that readers should empathise with the narrator-protagonist, there should in fact be little difficulty empathising with the protagonist. Similarly, when McGillis implies with his notion of embrace that the reader must relinquish his/her own subject position to enter the text, there is little to relinquish if the subject position of the text is aligned with the reader's. This limited perspective could tend to solipsism, as Perry Nodelman also suggests, writing,

> a doubly satisfying solipsism: the belief that our own perceptions of the way things ought to be is in fact the way they actually are, and the equally comforting belief that our own perception of the way things are is the only possible way of viewing reality. These are comfortable but dangerous delusions (Nodelman, 1988, 239-240).

Nodelman's notion of a 'doubly satisfying solipsism' reflects the idea of adolescent fiction being a "narcissistic" fiction. The self is all that matters, but it is a self mirrored. This nonetheless assumes that character and reader do indeed resemble each other.

When the tracing works and the reader is enticed towards the book, becoming may occur. Becoming, as we have seen previously, provides an access point to pure repetition. In addition to playing its part in a book's tracing, voice also has a role to play in the experience of pure repetition. Using collective characters, for example, "means that the author can, at least in a superficial way, present one and the same event from different points of view in different books" (Lassén-Seger, 2002, 164). Relying on a conventional view of repetition, Maria Lassén-Seger considers that "the shift in narrative perspective helps to make the numerous plot summaries less tedious" (Lassén-Seger, 2002, 164). The three versions of the departure of Pierre-Paul, Mathilde and Rémi on

the train to Venice in *Le Professeur a disparu* could be considered as the 'same' three times over, from three points of view, but such a standpoint ignores the subtle variations between them, glossing over Mathilde's excitement at their imminent departure, Rémi's dislike for himself (for having cheated in the competition and thereby winning the place on the trip) and Pierre-Paul's melodramatic diary entry "destiné à lui survivre pour le cas où quelque catastrophe ferroviaire le ravirait à l'affection des siens" (Arrou-Vignod, 1997, 13) . Rather than focusing on the unchanging and general voices of the collective characters, they could be considered as a means to introduce not merely repetition, but pure repetition. To explore further how this pure repetition may work, an example from the *Samuel* series is appropriate. The moment when Samuel arrives at Marie's birthday party recurs throughout the series. In *Marie est amoureuse*, the omniscient narrator informs the reader, "derrière la porte, il y a Samuel Pichet [...] Il est là, debout, dans le noir. Marie ne dit rien" (Smadja, 1992, 55-57). When, in *Marie souffre le martyr*, Marie recaps this event from her own perspective, she remarks, "J'ai ouvert la porte, j'ai vu Samuel Pichet dans le couloir et il faisait noir. A ce moment-là, je l'aimais déjà tellement fort" (Smadja, 1992, 13). At the end of the series Marie is again waiting for Samuel. Furious he has not telephoned, she takes refuge in her bedroom with Peluche. When Marie answers the ringing doorbell she finds

> Samuel est sur le palier et soudain j'ai six ans. J'ai invité Samuel le jour de mon anniversaire. Il est arrivé le dernier, à un moment où je ne l'attendais plus. Il faisait sombre et Samuel m'avait montré son appareil dentaire. Mais aujourd'hui, c'est l'été, Samuel a dix-sept ans, il a toutes ses dents et il rit (Smadja, 2002, 67).

These repetitions could be considered as the same event over and over, firstly from an omniscient perspective, then from the perspective of a 10 year-old and finally from Marie's more mature perspective. In the repetition of this event, both reader and Marie enter the time of *Aiôn* in which all times coexist. In Marie's repetition of her wait for Samuel, she is experiencing simultaneously the past, present and future possibilities of the event. The coexistence of time can also be detected in the final volume of the series, *J'ai rendez-vous avec Samuel.* This volume is organised into sections, each beginning with 'stage directions' introducing the main characters featuring in the episode, and including the time frame and location. The dominant character in each section recounts

the events from his/her perspective. When Marie and Samuel return home after having met up again, firstly the stage directions inform the reader that s/he is listening to "Marie. Treize heures. Chez elle" (Smadja, 2002, 28), and then "Samuel. Treize heures. Chez lui" (Smadja, 2002, 35). The presence of an omniscient voice, informing the reader of character, place and time, allows the reader to jump about, to move between the various perspectives. The narrator's voice, whether telling his/her own story or recounting someone else's, acts as an interface to *Aiôn*, allowing the reader to (re)experience the 'same' event. In this context, voice is the interiority of repetition, the variation that creates pure repetition.

Moi en tant que...

For Deleuze one of the disadvantages of authorship is

> de constituer un point de départ ou d'origine, de former un sujet d'énonciation dont dépendent tous les énoncés produits, de se faire reconnaître et identifier dans un ordre de signification dominante ou de pouvoirs établis: "Moi en tant que..." (Deleuze, 1996, 35-36).

Pol writes 'en tant que Nina', Murail 'en tant qu'Emilien' and so on: the adult writes in the guise of the adolescent. To some extent, links can be made here to Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of *major* and *minor* literature, which also bear similarities to Bakhtin's official and unofficial forms of language. A minor literature is achieved when the author manages to write "dans sa propre langue comme un juif tchèque écrit en allemand, ou comme un Ouzbek écrit en russe" (Deleuze, 1975, 33). For Deleuze and Guattari, Kafka epitomised minor writing. As a Prague Jew writing in German, Kafka was in this respect 'like a foreigner in his own language'. In this, Kafka was able to deterritorialise language, by abstracting it from the dominant social structures in which it finds itself. Adolescent literature is fundamentally about adolescents and is read predominantly by adolescents and pre-adolescents. Those on the receiving end of adolescent fiction, those who are invited to partake of it, are *minoritarian*, not necessarily in their numbers, but in their "deviance from the norm" (Bogue, 2003, 112) of the adult world in which they find themselves. Like Kafka, they have no language which is truly their own

(indeed Deleuze and Guattari comment "combien de gens aujourd'hui vivent dans une langue qui n'est pas la leur?" (Deleuze, 1975, 35)). Adolescent fiction is not written by adolescents themselves, but produced by *majoritarian* adults. In trying to emulate the voices of adolescence in their writing, by making it 'stutter' with *verlan* and slang, the adult writers can only produce a preconceived notion of adolescent language. They can conjure memories of their own adolescence, observe the adolescence of others around them, but they can only recreate a pseudo-adolescence. The voices they create are a majoritarian attempt at producing the minoritarian language. A true adolescent literature written by adolescents in the language of adolescence, does not exist (Zipes, 2001, 40). Majoritarian forces dominate the production of adolescent fiction giving adolescents voices to read which pertain to be their own but never can be. Perry Nodelman suggests that "the book describes, not things as they are, but things as grownups imagine teenagers think they are. That is what readers are meant to identify with" (Nodelman, 1981, 183). Authors desire to write as a young person, but can only create an "*illusion* of real experience" (Leech and Short, 1981, 152), portraying familiar and reassuring scenes and expressing generalities about the reader. In this, authors are merely perpetuating the majoritarian norm of what adults consider adolescents to be.

These majoritarian voices are a problem for juvenile fiction. Voices in children's and adolescent fiction can be highly didactic and the conveyors of distinct ideologies. Third-person narrators can clearly tell the reader what to think, and although first-person narrators can only describe what they know, they often cannot resist the urge to tell the implied reader what they have learnt (Trites, 2000). No voice is neutral, all texts are created within a specific discourse and context, and the voices found in them naturally reflect this. In addition to the voices of the narrator-protagonists, there may still be another voice that persists, that permeates other characters or that stands out on its own. Skov Nielsen argues that it is better to postulate an 'impersonal' voice of narrative to avoid "the choice between misinterpreting transgressions of the first-person narrator's limitations as either a proof of the narrator's unreliability or as a mistake on behalf of the author" (Skov Nielsen, 2004, 146). His term of an "impersonal voice" creates difficulties within the context of children's and adolescent fiction, because this voice is not detached and objective and subjectless, as his label might imply. Returning to the initial passage from the *Emilien* series demonstrates the problems with this. The

statement "les livres sont très dangereux pour les enfants" begins the passage and could be considered as an example of this impersonal voice. Devoid of narrating I, it cannot be easily attributed to a character. There is a presence of a voice, but it is not clear to whom that voice belongs. For Skov Nielsen, in written fiction the reader is able to adapt to narrative discrepancies because of this impersonal voice,

> if the breaks with the expected limits of the first-person narrator do not surprise the general reader, it seems to be because the reader has tacitly accepted the presence within first-person narrative fiction of a voice, knowledge, and other features of the narration that are not possessed by any person (Skov Nielsen, 2004, 143).

This voice is quite clearly telling the reader something, carrying a distinct warning: the very activity upon which the reader (of any age) is embarking is dangerous. Adults typically tell children what to do or not to do and advise them on dangers. Until reading continues or until the reader logically reattributes this voice to Emilien as s/he continues the narrative, an adult voice persists and the presence of the adult can still be felt. Aidan Chambers remarks that the voice heard in children's fiction is "the tone of a friendly adult story-teller who knows how to entertain children while at the same time keeping them in their place" (quoted in Cox, 1996, 40-43). The young reader is told, overtly or covertly, how to behave, conform and react to the world around. McGillis remarks that "a voice speaks to us from the pages and this voice may be an ally or an observer, someone who sides with the child reader or someone who stands aloof, perhaps even above the child reader" (McGillis, 1991, 25). This can be seen even in the apparent empathy of a character such as Emilien. The voice, despite (or maybe even because of) its resemblance to the reader's, maintains its aloofness. Mike Cadden describes narration in young adult fiction as ironic, writing, "novels constructed by adults to simulate an authentic adolescent's voice are inherently ironic because the so-called adolescent voice is never – and can never be – truly authentic" (Cadden, 2000, 146). Similarly, Trites writes, "since the characters constructing parents against whom to rebel are themselves the constructs of adults who exist outside of the text, YA novels serve both to reflect and to perpetuate the cultural mandate that teenagers rebel against their parents" (Trites, 2000, 69). There is, however, something more than ironic about

the narration and voices in adolescent literature, and Cadden's use of 'simulate' and Trites's use of 'reflect' are pertinent. Where deterritorialisation in Kafka is produced through his use of a language which was both his own and yet never could be, deterritorialisation occurs in adolescent fiction not because the adolescents are writing it, because precisely because they are not. Authors write characters to reflect their own remembered experiences of adolescence or to simulate the images of adolescence provided by the media and elsewhere. Readers are then confronted with a mirror image in reading: reader reflecting character reflecting reader. As if positioned between two mirrors, an infinity of copies remains and reader and character reflect each other.

The reader is thus projected into the domain of the simulacrum. Each copy, in the mirroring of reader and character, becomes distinct from any other. Each copy of the reader in the mirror of adolescent series fiction is an expression of difference. Each volume does not minimise difference but rather maximises it through pure repetition. Just as the 'I' of Kafka is deterritorialised through the complexity of his relationship to the German language, so the 'I' of the reader and the 'I' of the character are deterritorialised through the simulacra of the representations of adolescence. Adolescent series fiction is not a minor literature in the way Kafka's literature is, but the 'I' of the text is just as deceptive. The tracing characters emit is not reliable; characters are not who they say they are, but are rather a compounding of simulacra. In the *Kamo* series for example, the narrator is the otherwise nameless Toi, who remarks, "c'est toujours ça qu'ils m'appellent: "toi". Et je me reconnais toujours, parce qui moi, on ne peut pas se tromper, c'est moi" (Pennac, 1997, 10). There is nothing out of the ordinary about Toi; who lives with his parents, Pope and Moune, and recounts the stories about Kamo, his "copain de toujours" (Pennac, 1997, 11-12). Toi is both a nobody and an anybody; amorphous and androgynous (Toi is never referred to by a third person subject pronoun, although assumptions can nevertheless be made about his gender). In Toi's quasi-banality, a familiar and reassuring tracing is put out for the reader. Toi could indeed be You, the reader. This tracing is a simulacrum: it is both empty and groundless, and Toi is no more than a blank sheet for the reader's imaginings. Toi is, or becomes, what the reader wants him to be. At the same time, Toi is also a reflection of the person whose story he is telling. Toi is Kamo's shadow, his alter-ego. They are two

halves of the same person, impossible to separate. When Kamo and Toi fall out over Kamo's obsession with his penfriend, the Grand Lanthier, tries to reconcile them:

> la classe attribua notre rupture à la rivalité. Le grand Lanthier protestait:
> - Ecoute, tu ne va pas te fâcher avec Kamo pour une histoire de classement! Pas toi! Pas vous!
> Il tenait à notre amitié, Lanthier.
> - Kamo et toi, on en a besoin, c'est comme…(il cherchait une comparaison), c'est comme, je ne sais pas, moi, c'est comme…(et il ne la trouvait jamais) (Pennac, 1992, 53).

The reader in relating, or trying to, to one or other of the characters is confronted with further mirroring and further layers of simulacrity.

From this Deleuzian perspective, in all children's and adolescent literature, voice is necessarily unreliable, in as much as it is always groundless and always rhizomic. The 'I' of the fourteen year-old Emilien is actually an imagined 'I' (moi en tant que) created by the 'I' of the author through abstracted memory and chosen to reflect the images of adolescence Marie-Aude Murail observes around her. As her explanation of the genesis of the series shows:

> je voulais aussi prendre un héros bien représentatif de notre époque. Je vivais alors à Paris où un enfant sur deux a des parents divorcés. […] Au fil des épisodes, j'ai senti que cette famille monoparentale allait devenir une famille recomposée, à l'image de tant de familles autour de moi (Murail, 2004).

Murail (adult, writer, mother, holder of a doctorate in children's literature) could not be more abstracted from the fourteen year-old Emilien's universe she is depicting. In her efforts to produce a true reflection of society in the character and voice of Emilien, she creates a series which actually resembles nothing. The reader of the *Emilien* series who may attempt to appropriate this image of adolescence, discovers characters which are copies of an adolescence abstracted at various levels by the author. On the one hand, in this realm there is no alternative but the creation of the new: the reader cannot simply

mimic or copy, because the characters are not grounded on anything but assumptions and illusions. Marie-Aude Murail is not homogenising the reader in her *Emilien* series, but is allowing the reader to experience his/her own adolescence *differently* through the Deleuzian simulacra that are created. On the other hand, by making characters resemble a pre-defined image of adolescents, where authors may be trying to get close to the voice of the reader in their texts, this voice of the reader may in fact be lost through the layers of simulacrity created.

Maria Nikolajeva considers that "basically the author pours out a complete chaos on the pages and lets the readers sort it out together with the protagonist. This puts substantially higher demands on the readers than traditional narratives where the sorting out was done by the adult narrative agency" (Nikolajeva, 2004, 18). In order for this sorting out to occur, readers "must liberate themselves from the subject position imposed by the text" (Nikolajeva, 2004, 15). What prevails is indeed a chaos, as Nikolajeva suggested, but rather a chaotic proliferation of simulacral subject positions. It is not simply necessary to break free from a singular subject position created by the text, but to rupture the rhizome of simulacral voices. Nikolajeva's perspective of readers breaking free from the imposed subject position of the text returns us to the role of the reader in this process. For Nikolajeva, the reader cannot be involved in the text in any way if they are to make sense of it. Her stance is in direct opposition to the concept of becoming. If, as Nikolajeva suggests, it is necessary to break free from subject position to deal with the text, this implies the reader must break out of the agencement that reading creates. This could be achieved by putting the book down, by returning to the position of outside observer. Deleuze, however, provides a solution that does not require the destruction of the agencement but which reveals what exactly happens to subject position in becoming. For Deleuze, "il n'y a pas de sujet, *il n'y a que des agencements collectifs d'énonciation*" (Deleuze, 1975, 33).

Agencements collectifs d'énonciation

For Deleuze, it is necessary to go beyond levels of discourse, to go beyond notions of narrator, author and reader. Deleuze and Guattari write that Kafka would have certainly reflected on these modes before rejecting them: "sans doute, un certain

temps, Kafka a-t-il pensé suivant ces catégories traditionnelles des deux sujets, l'auteur et le héros, le narrateur et le personnage" (Deleuze, 1975, 32). To move beyond these narratorial aspects, it is essential to return to what Deleuze and Guattari consider is the purpose of the book in the rhizome, where the tripartite division of the world as reality, the book as representation and the subjectivity of the author disappears. This agencement necessitates a reconsideration of the traditional and well-known linear author-reader continuum that Seymour Chatman depicts thus:

Real author – implied author – (narrator) – (narratee) – implied reader – real reader (Chatman, 1978, 151),

and that Maria Nikolajeva adapts to include character voice, which she considers is lacking from Chatman's model:

Implied author – narrator – character-narrator – focalizer – (focalized) character – character-narratee – narratee – implied reader (Nikolajeva, 2003, 3).

The voice of becoming is all these elements in one. It destroys the continuum and re-forms as an author-reader rhizome. All elements find themselves in the middle, each connected to the other.[71] This author-reader rhizome also incorporates all the elements of the peritext that series evoke: illustrator, editor, and so on. It is the movement between these voices and the connectability of them, the fusion of all these voices and yet at the same time it is none of them.

Such a rhizome of voice and the multitude of voices it encompasses can equally lead to a reconsideration of gender issues. Indeed, the issue of gender is most relevant to address when considering voice. The series form is often dominated by gender: typically, series are divided into the crisp categories of girls' and boys' series. Apart from *Danse!* and *Gagne!*, which have a clearly targeted and gendered readership, the other series in my corpus are less easy to define as I suggested in Chapter 2. Maria Nikolajeva suggests that young female readers will easily read about both sexes, whereas young

[71] When fiction does not work for the reader, it could be assumed that the continuum remains linear, however.

male readers appear to have more rigid preferences. Rob Hardy considers the issue of readers reading against their gender in his paper entitled *The Male Readers of Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm. Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, written by Kate Douglas Wiggins and published in 1903 had a significant readership of adult male readers. Hardy argues that adult males reading about Rebecca and her girlhood were (re)connected with their lost childhood and hidden femininity. For him, "the escapist appeal of the book may have been even stronger for men, who in their working lives were further removed from the simple, idyllic community of women the book represents" (Hardy, 2004, 32). Hardy concludes that the male readers of this book "shift between wanting to *be* Rebecca, to have her visionary power, and wanting to *possess* her as the embodiment of a feminine ideal" (Hardy, 2004, 45). This puts a rather different light on McGillis's ideas of pleasure and embrace. Could this be what happens when male (pre)teenage readers read *Une Bentley Boulevard Voltaire* for example? Through the novel, Samuel idealises his friend Marie, with whom he has lost contact. He creates an image of Marie that is both sexual and innocent: Marie as he imagines her now (adolescent) and Marie as he remembers her (aged 10). With Marie positioned as sexual object, the female reader could find herself aligned with Marie as an object. When female readers read about the male protagonists, an interesting image of masculinity is presented. Nils is a flirt, Emilien, a séducteur-né, Pierre-Paul openly despises the female sex, Maxime revels in his sexual exploits with his three girlfriends. Female readers are not only reading representations of the opposite sex but also their treatment of their female entourage. In treating their female partners as objects to be seduced, despised or exploited, the female readers may remain in an object position with respect to the text.

The rhizome of subject positions overcomes problems of gender that beset series fiction, however. Voice does not need to belong in the rhizome: it can be both male and female, adult and child, exceptional and ordinary. In this rhizome of voice, the reader can move easily between female and male positions. It is no longer important that a female reader is reading a male perspective created by a female author or vice versa: each overturns the other in the rhizome of mascu-feminin-ities presented. Voices in the rhizome are both gender-ful and gender-less. Intensities occur in the movement between the voices and in the constantly shifting perspectives of the series.

In the rhizome, the sole purpose of the book is to assemble with the outside; all forms of subjectivity (the 'I' of the author, reader and character) are suppressed and only the agencement remains. Elements of the world, the book and the author come together to form this agencement with the outside (with the reader) and this creates the voice a reader 'hears' when reading:

> [c]'est toujours un agencement qui produit les énoncés. Les énoncés n'ont pas pour cause un sujet qui agirait comme sujet d'énonciation, pas plus qu'ils ne se rapportent à des sujets comme sujets d'énoncé. L'énoncé est le produit d'un agencement, toujours collectif, qui met en jeu, en nous et hors de nous, des populations, des multiplicitiés, des territoires, des devenirs, des affects, des événements. Le nom propre ne désigne pas un sujet, mais quelque chose qui se passe, au moins entre deux termes qui ne sont pas des sujets, mais des agents, des éléments (Deleuze, 1996, 65).

This is the voice of becoming. Becoming overcomes the need for empathy, for mere identification with a character and the related ease with which this may occur. Deleuze recognises identification as one of the traps of writing (and thereby reading). He writes, "[t]antôt [l'auteur] s'identifie à ses personnages ou fait que nous nous identifions à eux [...] il introduit une distance qui lui permet et qui nous permet d'observer, de critiquer, de prolonger. Mais ceci n'est pas bon" (Deleuze, 1996, 66). This distance is highly significant. If distance is created, becoming cannot function. The reader remains outside the text, an observer, a critic but not an experiencer. Becoming also overturns notions of the embrace and readerly submission to the text. Becoming is an equal balance; one part cannot dominate over the other, both parts involve in their becoming and change reciprocally. Both reader and character are fused to form the read(er)-character, an agencement. The voice that readers hear when reading does not belong to the reader, author or character, but to the agencement. Before exploring this voice of becoming further, it is necessary to take a step back and consider the collective aspect of the agencement.

For Deleuze and Guattari, major literature creates individuated enunciation: in major literature there are great masters or towering individuals who dominate, whom

others try to copy and imitate. Minor literature, however, is not about the single voice of some great master, but rather is the voice of collectivity, of the group who are detached from the norm. Minor literature therefore creates collective enunciation. For Claire Colebrook, "[i]t is in free-indirect style that literature discloses language as a 'collective assemblage'" (Colebrook, 2002, 112). Free-indirect style provides an indirect representation of characters. Pronouns and tags do not indicate who owns the narration; instead there is a distortion of character and narrator perspectives. Access to the character's mind is given but without loss of authorial control. Colebrook goes on to write that free-indirect style

> frees language from its ownership by any subject of enunciation, we can see the flow of language itself, its production of sense and nonsense, its virtual and creative power. This is why free-indirect style merges with stream of consciousness. Free-indirect style uses the third person to describe single characters from the point of view of a received and anonymous language (Colebrook, 2002, 114).

Adolescent series fiction tends to be dominated by first-person narration and, at first glance, this would appear to rule out the possibility for collective assemblages. The multitude of self-reflecting voices that compose the voice of the protagonist confuses issues of ownership of narration and creates layers of simulacrity, however, as already discussed. These simulacral voices, in the same way as Skov Nielsen's impersonal narration, are devoid of ownership. I therefore propose that the simulacrity of narration in adolescent series fiction also frees that narration from any form of ownership and thus creates a collective enunciation. In reading the *Danse!* series for example, the simulacral voice of Nina and the voice of the reader disappear. The 'voice' that the reader hears through his/her becoming with Nina is necessarily virtual, whilst also grounded in the actual of the aspiring ballerina that Nina is and in the 'self-narrative' of the reader and the significance of ballet in his/her life. Nina, as we have seen, is characterised by her perseverance and her determination which manifests itself in her motto 'quand même'. When, in reading, this motto recurs, it is neither Nina who is uttering it, nor the reader who is articulating her utterance through reading, but rather the read(er)-character who 'utters' it. The motto takes a new form in being read. It

belongs both to Nina and to the reader and at the same time to neither of them, only to the read(er)-character they become. A new voice of the agencement is created. The reader no longer needs to identify or empathise with the 'just like me' voice. Becoming goes beyond the paradigm of identification. It would indeed be impossible to identify with this voice, which is in part created through the reader and which also is simulacral, grounded on nothing.

Traditional narratological terms cannot describe this voice of becoming. Terms such as autodiegetic or homodiegetic, first- or third-person cannot encompass the dual dynamic of becoming and the twofold change it provokes, hence my earlier reluctance to use them. The assemblage is neither the 'je' of the reader or character, nor the 'il'/'elle' of the character perceived by an outsider. Deleuze suggests that "[à] la question: qui parle?, nous répondons tantôt par l'individu, tantôt par la personne, tantôt par le fond qui dissout l'un comme l'autre" (Deleuze, 1969, 166). The assemblage is this ground that overcomes all forms of subjectivity. Just as the ultimate aim of becoming is to reach the becoming-imperceptible, so the assemblage that is created through becoming is both impersonal and pre-individual. It could be expressed by the concept of the "la quatrième personne du singulier" (Deleuze, 1969, 125) that Deleuze borrows from Lawrence Ferlinghetti. *La quatrième personne du singulier* (1961) is the title of the French translation of Ferlinghetti's *Her* (1960) and more recently he incorporated the concept in his poem *To the Oracle at Delphi.* The verse in which it occurs reads,

> Far-seeing Sybil, forever hidden,
> Come out of your cave at last
> And speak to us in the poet's voice
> the voice of the fourth person singular
> the voice of the inscrutable future
> the voice of the people mixed
> with a wild soft laughter--
> And give us new dreams to dream,
> Give us new myths to live by! (Ferlinghetti, 2001).

This verse captures the essence of a fourth person voice: a multiple voice of the rhizome, of 'people mixed', creative and dynamic. Whilst Deleuze's term 'fourth person singular' is radical in itself, it is not without its difficulties and in particular Deleuze's insistence on 'singular' appears almost at odds with the inherent multiplicity of the concept. Whilst the agencement, the fusion of two separate parts to become one, may go some way to explaining this insistence on the singular, the agencement is in itself can never be that clearly and simply 'singular': it is both singular and plural. In addition, the agencement created from the coming-together of reader and character is, as I have stated, impersonal and pre-individual and therefore would seem to necessitate a more impersonal/pre-personal label. I propose therefore that the voice of the agencement be described as the 'zeroth voice'.[72] The 'zeroth voice' would both precede and supersede the other grammatical persons and would exist in the block of becoming between the two parts, in the flow that is the agencement, and forms "un nouveau type de langage ésotérique, qui est à lui-même son propre modèle et sa réalité" (Deleuze, 1969, 166), the language of the agencement, the voice of the read(er)-character, in all its combined singularity and multiplicity.

It is therefore this zeroth voice, the read(er)-Emilien voice, the read(er)-Nina voice or the read(er)-Samuel voice and so on that predominates. Whether the characters of the *Samuel* series are described in the third person or are speaking themselves is no longer relevant. That Emilien has overtones of Murail in his utterances is not important. The multiplicity of voices in the *P. P. Cul-Vert* series or the self-reflecting characters of Kamo and Toi are insignificant. All that matters in reading is that the zeroth voice is created and prevails. When Deleuze asks that the only questions we should ask of a book are, "est-ce que ça fonctionne, et comment ça fonctionne?" (Deleuze, 1990, 17), he is asking if this intense voice of becoming is created. Where Roland Barthes is renowned for requiring the death of the author and the birth of the reader (Barthes, 1977, 148), Deleuze, I believe insists on the next step, the birth of the read(er)-character. This is perhaps what McGillis desires when he writes, "what I am arguing for is a liberation from hermeneutics" (McGillis, 1984, 28). He wants readers to be able to 'call a voice out of the silence of the text'. This voice will be unique to each

[72] The zeroth law of thermodynamics was coined when a more fundamental principle was discovered, underlying the three established laws already in use.

reader, he remarks, "we will hear the voice that best catches our ear. We hear a relative voice, the tone of which we half perceive and half create" (McGillis, 1984, 26). McGillis considers that this

> involves the reader in a conversation with the text. The conversation with the text is the reader's subjective rendering of the objective voice that exists as the text, and at this level the reader objectifies his subjectivity. The reader, ideally, learns about himself as he learns about the text (McGillis, 1984, 29).

Incorporating becoming into McGillis's view changes the emphasis slightly. Becoming, the creation of new agencement, nullifies all forms of subjectivity *and* all forms of objectivity. In a basic grammatical sentence if both subject and object are eliminated only the verb remains. It is the zeroth voice that liberates this verb form from its subject-less, object-less void. The series *Danse!* and *Gagne!* encapsulate this verbal form of becoming in their titles and in the hooks preceding the text (see Chapter 5) and when read, the voice of becoming is 'heard'. When Nina is picked to dance next to the much admired prima ballerina, Eva Miller, in the film that is being produced at Le Camargo, and is asked to *do* some steps, she replies,

> Non. Je préfère danser.
> Et je danse.
> Il n'y a pas de musique sur le plateau. Mais j'en ai plein la tête, les bras, les mains, les jambes. En glissant sur ma peau, le coeur d'or l'accompagne, ma musique à moi.
> Je danse [...] C'est mon langage, à moi... (Pol, 2000, 101).

The verb of becoming in this series, danser, is liberated by the zeroth voice of the read(er)-dancing-Nina that is created through reading.

The zeroth voice

To look for voice in fiction from a Deleuzian perspective is not to look for the overtones of authorial voice or the distinct voice of a character, but to look for the

agencement between these voices and that of the reader. This chapter has demonstrated how the apparent simplicity of what is predominantly first-person narration in adolescent series fiction is in fact misleading. Characters and the voices they present are not as straight-forward as they would appear, but are rather composed of a multitude of subject-positions vying for consideration. Readers required to empathise with, or embrace this many-faced narrator-protagonist find themselves in rhizome of simulacral subject positions.

Deleuze's notions of major and minor modes of literature point towards the somewhat minor nature of adolescent series fiction; whilst such a description does not apply completely, the collective voice or agencement collectif d'énonciation, the cornerstone of minor literature, is relevant to these series. This collective agencement, achieved through the simulacral proliferation of subject positions, suppresses all subjectivity and objectivity, and leads to the pure verb form that is enunciated through the zeroth voice. Similarly to becoming-imperceptible, this zeroth voice is both pre-subjective and pre-personal. For Deleuze, it is only these agencements, necessarily collective, that create 'voice'. It is neither the voice of the character, the author or the reader, but a fusion of all of these voices in the rhizome. The voice of the read(er)-character is all of these and none of them: it is unique to each reading experience.

McGillis writes "to save the reader from the reign of awful darkness and silence, we must give him voice; to save the text, we must save its voice" (McGillis, 1984, 25). This chapter has demonstrated that the voice to be given to readers is the zeroth voice of the read(er)-character, a voice created through becoming.

Conclusions

Difference reading

The aim of my thesis has been to develop a new critical approach to series fiction for young readers that neither undermines the young reader nor the fiction s/he has chosen to read, but rather necessarily includes the reader and puts repetition to the fore. In the interpretation of series fiction I have laid out over the previous chapters, I have demonstrated that it is possible to go beyond value judgments and focus on the issue of whether a series works for the reader. In my approach to series fiction, a series does not have to comply with a list of pre-given values established by the critical elite that by its very nature it fails to meet. The point is neither whether a young reader has pre-defined competencies to deal with fiction adequately, nor whether the fiction is 'good' or not, but whether a series 'works' for individual readers by creating a flow of intensities. I have turned to the concepts of Gilles Deleuze, philosopher of *rencontres* and re-interpreter of repetition, to develop my new critical approach, which eliminates reliance on the hermeneutic and shifts critical attention to the intense experience that series reading is.

Many scholars of series fiction have pointed to the need to rectify the paucity of critical work in the field. Studies to date have tended to focus on thematic analyses of series fiction or discussions of well-known and popular series, however. Such analyses are necessary and informative but also tend towards the processes of generality and resemblance. To avoid such pitfalls and to take the study of series fiction to a more tangible level, I have focused on the 'nuts and bolts' of series, on the very thing that preoccupies critics and causes concern, namely repetition. Critics recognise that this is an essential element of series fiction, but typically do not get beyond a psychological perspective of an infantile compulsion to repeat. It has been my aim to explore repetition beyond such a perspective and seek out a theory of repetition to provide an understanding of the processes at work in series fiction. Repetition, from my perspective, is not what causes a 'good' series to decline, but is rather the necessary element of every series. Repetition, from a Deleuzian standpoint, makes the "impossible longing for a simultaneous sameness and difference" (Watson, 2000, 8) possible. Rather than being disparaged, repetition must be thought of differently.

A related problem for the analysis of children' literature, as I identified early in this thesis, is how it should be read and the place occupied by the child or young reader. Starting from the ideas of Peter Hunt, who advocates a *childist* approach to children's literature analysis, I have subsequently demonstrated that it is necessary to focus on what the reader (of any age) *becomes*, rather than what the reader *is*. Rather than attempting to read 'as' the implied child, becoming requires the reader to be an insider to repetition and to revel in variation, the interiority of repetition. Becoming is not a process that can be forced, a reader cannot make him/herself become: it either happens or it does not. The fact that becomings are unique to each individual reader does not mean that they are beyond analysis: indications of these becomings, and where a book may take the reader *virtually*, are grounded in what a book *actually* is.

Not only should children's literature be read differently but so should series fiction for young readers. Much of the work on series fiction to date focuses on how series should be read and how they can be categorised. Critics insist on the difference between 'good' series that tend to show character development and growth and 'bad' series that do not. This thesis proposes that it is unnecessary to focus on such issues of classification and problems of taxonomy, but rather that series should be read *with difference*. Indeed, Claire Féliers suggests that series should be read 'autrement': "[c]ette autre lecture, c'est une lecture en intensité: quelque chose passe ou ne passe pas. [...] C'est du type branchement électrique" (Deleuze, 1990, 17). Distinguishing between series 'types' is perfunctory; the only thing that matters is if it works for you. The intensities a series creates are not based on its compliance with some pre-defined literary standard, but are purely and entirely dependent on reader and book. Such a Deleuzian reading, a difference reading, is achieved by becoming, forming rhizomes and repeating. If becoming does not occur, then the reader remains distanced and the book cannot and will not work for him/her. This process is necessarily intense and it is what keeps readers coming back for more. In each return there is greater intensity. In becoming, readers enter into a rhizome with the series and make connections both within and without the series. In connecting there is repetition and in repetition, difference.

Linked to the desire to classify series is the notion of the progression of time in series. I propose an understanding of time which does not rely on the age of the

character and their progression and development and which equally does not concentrate on the age of the reader. The essence of time in series is the time that is created when reading; the time disconnected from the everyday, a time in which readers can 'wallow' and be inside pure repetition, the time of Aiôn. Such a time cannot be conceived from the outside, but only from within. Unlike the time of kairos or of the carnivalesque, it does not prevent change, nor does it reverse change. Aiôn is a time of involution, provoked through the agencements created.

Returning to the fundamental question of whether there is a way to approach the analysis of series fiction for young readers that does not pre-judge and that keeps the reader as an integral part of the analysis, I therefore affirm that there is. I have proposed the following Deleuzian approach that could also be called a *difference* reading. It begins with the tracing a series book emits to entice the reader. Before reading begins, an attraction between book and reader exists. The reader is drawn to the series book, like the wasp to the orchid, and the unopened book begins to transmit intensities to the reader. This tracing goes some way to explaining the attraction of readers to certain books. It explains why people collect books. The affects and percepts embodied in the book create intensities for potential readers. These intensities are present even before reading begins and for some they may suffice. The intensities transmitted by the unopened series of books on the bookshelf may not lead to actual reading. If a point of contact follows, when reader and book meet and reading begins, becoming may then follow. In this twofold dynamic, reader gives to book and book gives to reader. An agencement of read(er)-character is formed and transported to the virtual space that is reading. In this symbiosis, the reader is no longer an observer of the repetitions of a series, but an integral part of the experience of repetition itself. The read(er)-character forms rhizomes with the series, surfs for connections and develops the rhizome beyond the texts. In its repeating there is also forgetting. Recurrences must be cut away to allow for the new. Repeated and repetitive series reading is not a reading of the same but a reading of and for difference. In the rhizomic process of dis- and re-connection, the nihilistic circle of the repeated same is decentred and the time of the cut is opened up. Aiôn, the time readers enter when reading series, is ultimate connectability, the coexistence of all time. It is in this time of the cut that readers may

create the pre-subjective, pre-perceptive zeroth voice of the read(er)-character and begin to interact without the need for perception.

This approach therefore demonstrates why young readers delight in series fiction and why this genre remains popular. Series reading is not a cursory reading, but rather a complex process of dis- and re-connection. Series reading is not merely the 'same' returning ad infinitum, but a process of pure repetition that can only lead to new experiences. Instead of scorning series that cannot comply to pre-defined literary standards and belittling readers who do not have the competencies to read anything 'better', repetition in series fiction must be re-considered as fundamental to the intense experience of reading. Rather than bemoaning the repetition of the same, we should celebrate the repetition of difference.

Looking forward

The corpus considered in this thesis consists of French series from the period between the two principal waves of Anglo-American influence on the genre. This has been at least in part to avoid issues of translation and adaptation and to get close to what could be considered as an inherently 'French' notion of the series form. This thesis has not set out to explore this inherent 'Frenchness' however, but this is a field worthy of future exploration. The portrayal of national identities in French children's literature and the larger question of whether a 'French' children's literature really exists are both interesting topics for further study. In many histories of 'French' children's literature, much attention is paid to fiction for children in translation, to the extent that it would be interesting to consider if a clear portrayal of French identity exists in contemporary texts or whether there is a 'fading of French identity', whether France is increasingly depicted as a melting pot of cultures and peoples.

In my thesis, I have equally chosen not to look at series in translation. There is, however, potentially a significant body of work to be exploited here: series in translation bring images of other childhoods and adolescences to young French readers. It is possible that series in translation may help break down ethnocentrism, or they may do just the opposite. Critics of children's literature are divided between two poles of

thought. On the one hand, children's literature could be considered as moving towards what Paul Hazard described as a 'world republic of childhood' where all children have access to all texts; or on the other hand Maria Nikolajeva's assumption that children's literature 'has little in common from one country to the next' and that the number of translations are decreasing because they cannot compete with native texts, may be more accurate. The role of series fiction in this process would appear to be an important one.

To consider these issues from a Deleuzian perspective may help further the debate. To what extent are becomings, so reliant on a tracing to attract the reader, affected by the portrayal of characters who are 'other'? Can becomings work across cultures? If there is indeed a global culture of childhood, most likely imposed by Anglo-American notions of childhood, how can difference survive in such a context? Can translations, which are often considered as copies of an original text, be viewed, in light of the simulacrum, as expressions of difference in themselves? This work could also be extended into the growing field of bilingual texts, in particular picture books for young readers. How are two often very different cultures combined in one text? How can such texts be read, especially when different reading patterns are required (French, Arabic, Chinese)? Can the rhizome be a useful way of understanding such texts with complex reading structures, not just of image and text but also of image and multi-lingual texts? To extend the exploration of the concepts developed in this thesis to series in translation would also involve looking at the wider rhizome of 'texts' linked to the series and how readers of series negotiate the ever-expanding product ranges that accompany series fiction. This would then lead into a consideration of other media, such a television and cinema adaptations, audio versions and so on.

The focus of this thesis has been series reading. A future area of research could consider re-readings of a single text. Many scholars refer to this childhood tendency to re-read or re-consume the 'same' text over and over. Considering this from a Deleuzian perspective of pure difference would provide new insight into this area. Such work could also incorporate some empirical research, to confirm the findings of this thesis on a more practical level. In addition to looking at re-readings of a single text, re-tellings of a single story, especially across a range of different media, could also be explored. There are increasing numbers of film adaptations of, for example, fairy tales and nursery

stories that rely on audience familiarity and function on repetition and variation, and complex rhizomic linking making on the part of the viewer. A Deleuzian analysis of such 'texts' would prove a fruitful area of future research.

Finally, the study of children's literature in France in all its forms is very much a field in development and rich in areas of further study. When conducting this research it has been evident however that there is an absence of a thorough review of French children's literature, and French series in particular. Such a review would not only provide a cornerstone for future work in the field but would equally help valorise the richness of the genre in France.

Appendices

The following appendices provide a textual overview of my corpus. For each volume, I provide a brief synopsis and information about the collection in which it appears, as well as details of recurring characters and themes where appropriate. It would not have been appropriate to provide such detail in the body of my thesis, but the information below may be of interest to certain readers. Specifically, the reader who is unfamiliar with the texts may gain an insight into the content of the corpus which in turn may facilitate the reading of the body of this thesis. Providing such synopses is nonetheless somewhat at odds with the theory presented in the body of my thesis. Synopses are inevitably subject to the process of generalisation and they clearly cannot be taken as a substitute for a close reading of the primary texts.

Emilien

Series	Emilien	
Author	Marie-Aude Murail	
Publisher	*Ecole des Loisirs*	
Collection	Médium, reprinted in the Neuf collection in 2006	
Baby Sitter Blues	1989	
	Additional information	Livre sélectionné par le Ministère de l'Education nationale

The series opens in the kitchen with characteristic repartee between Emilien and his mother and relationships between mother and child dominate this first volume. Emilien begins babysitting to earn some money to buy a video recorder (his more affluent friend Xavier Richard has just been given one). Each family Emilien works for presents a new family relationship, characterised by its own difficulties. Dr and Madame Grumeau and their two children, Anne-Sophie and Anne-Laure, represent a 'traditional' family of mother-father-two children and provide a stark contrast to the very young Madame Durieux, who appears more interested in going to the cinema than in her baby Anthony. On his second visit, realising the baby is ill, Emilien contacts Dr. Grumeau and saves Anthony's life. Madame Aziz has two uncontrollable children, the "désobéissant" Martin and the "turbulent" Axel. Friquet Fricaire, to whom Emilien gives extra-tuition, does not conform to her mother's idea of what a daughter should be, and Amandine, Martine-Marie's cousin, only speaks of her mother with contempt. Emilien reflects that his own mother may not be able to cook but is 'géniale'. Male role models are scarce, however.

These diverse relationships are set against a theme of shop-lifting and theft. Amandine regularly shoplifts and even steals from Emilien's mother's shop. To stop Amandine from undermining Emilien's growing relationship with Martine-Marie, Emilien returns the stolen goods hidden in Amandine's attic with the help of Friquet and her father. Finally, with Christmas approaching, Emilien succumbs to temptation himself and steals a bottle of perfume as a present for Martine-Marie, only to be caught by a security guard. Emilien's mother pays for the perfume, and buys Emilien a more appropriate scent to give to Martine-Marie.

In this volume, Emilien's desire for a larger family and particularly for a brother underlies his intermediary desire for material goods.

Le Trésor de mon père	1989

Emilien's mother, concerned that he lacks a male role model, sends him to stay with her brother, Marc, for the holidays. His maternal uncle is young, handsome and sporty, his antithesis. The holidays end when his mother telephones and summons him home. On his arrival, Emilien learns that his father, whom he has never known, has died. As a result, Emilien meets his paternal uncle, Valentin, who accompanies him on a quest to find a hidden treasure bequeathed to him. On the various weekends away together, Emilien grows to appreciate Valentin. When they reach the final destination, the treasure is gone. Going down to the river where his father found much of his 'treasure', Emilien finds an old coin himself, and realises he has his father's talent. Emilien decides to follow in Valentin's footsteps and learn to draw. The succession of quests on which he embarks are metaphors for his search for identity.

Le Clocher d'Abgall	1989
The volume begins with Emilien reading *un livre dont vous êtes le héros*, whose scenarios which he transposes into reality. Such books are characterised by making decisions and there is a suggestion that life (and particularly adolescence) resembles these books: you make your own choices and decide your own fate. Comparisons are made between Emilien and Xavier and their very different ideas about girls and relationships. Xavier enjoys a succession of girlfriends whilst Emilien plans to marry Martine-Marie and form the family he currently lacks. Deeper reflections on parenting and family relationships are made with Emilien mother's relationship with, and forthcoming marriage to, Henri Leroy, and with the arrival of Joss at school. Joss tells Emilien that his mother tries to deny his existence, fearing that her boyfriends will not accept him. Emilien's own fears of how his life will change with his mother's remarriage are embodied in Joss's fate. Emilien's mother does not understand her son's reluctance to accept her fiancé until he refuses to help save Jocelyn's life.	
Au bonheur des larmes	1990
Emilien, Martine-Marie, Xavier and a group of others work as *moniteurs* at a *colonie de vacances* and have to overcome the difficulties of working together and forming a team, starting from being a set of strong-willed individuals each having their own ideas about organisation. Emilien's difficulty at being separated from his mother is reflected in the letters the youngsters write to their parents. This volume also deals with the problems of accepting difference in others.	
Un séducteur né	1991
With Martine-Marie spending the year in London with her parents, Emilien is feeling lonely. This volume covers Emilien's concern for his pregnant mother and his need to discover who the baby's father is, and the family's increasing financial problems. At Christmas, Martine-Marie returns and Emilien's family and friends are reunited. His mother has a miscarriage but then becomes pregnant again as her relationship with a new boyfriend, Stef, looks set to last. Emilien's wish for a 'complete' family is coming together.	
Sans sucre merci	1992
Life is not always sweet for Emilien. Martine-Marie is still in London, his mother is still pregnant, but has dumped her boyfriend Stef and the bailiffs visit as their financial problems worsen. When Emilien's sister, Justine, is born prematurely and is rejected by his mother, Valentin comes to the rescue. His persistence in seeing Justine annoys Emilien's mother and stirs her into seeing the baby. They all go away to Brittany together, where Emilien meets a girl called Emilie and has his first sexual experience. Justine's arrival re-introduces Valentin into their lives and creates the family unit of which Emilien has been so desirous. Against this background, Emilien completes his *bac de français.*	
Nos amours ne vont pas si mal	1993
Rivalry between Emilien's mother and Valentin over Justine continues. Emilien has discovered his vocation in life, designing BDs, and episodes of the narrative are depicted by his drawings, in particular the moment when he consummates his relationship with Martine-Marie. There are conflicting emotions when he and Martine-Marie realise that she may be pregnant and are then relieved and saddened that she is not. This volume closes with Valentin's proposal to his mother and Emilien winning a BD competition.	

Table 2: Overview of the *Emilien* Series

Nils Hazard

Series	Nils Hazard
Author	Marie-Aude Murail
Publisher	*Ecole des Loisirs*
Collection	Médium

Dinky Rouge Sang	1991	
	Additional information	Prix "Lecture Jeunesse" 1993.

Obsessed with events in his past linked with his parents' death, Nils Hazard constantly relives memories from his childhood and adolescence. Each enigma presented in this volume symbolises a moment of Nils's past. Nils's memories and the similarities between his own situation and that of the people he is trying to help allow him to solve these mysteries.

Frédéric, one of Nils's students and the brother of Catherine Roque (Nils's love interest) is inflicted with a terrible facial tic. It is Catherine's conviction that Nils will be able to discover the reason behind Frédéric's tic that gives rise to their first adventure together. Nils discovers that Frédéric witnessed a murder at the age of four and the horror of what he saw manifested itself in the tic.

Paul (Catherine's boyfriend's brother-in-law), who like Nils feels like an outsider in his own family, disappears after he discovers late in life that he was adopted as a child. Nils's task is to track him down, and in so doing, he stops him from committing a murder.

François (a doctor's son), a 'normal' adolescent, suddenly develops a stutter. Nils discovers the reasons behind this impediment: François is being forced into shoplifting and petty theft by a group of thugs.

Solange, a friend of Catherine's, has a mystery is the catalyst which enables Nils to break away from his mother's memory and pursue a life with Catherine. Solange represents a false enigma and Nils cannot find a likeness with Solange. The (dis)similarities of their situations save him from being killed.

L'assassin est au collège	1992	
	Additional information	Livre sélectionné par le Ministère de l'Education nationale Prix "Ados Ville de Rennes" 1994.

Nils and Catherine, now his secretary and girlfriend, are asked to go into a collège to discover who has been marking the history homework in blood and who has been sending death threats to the head teacher. Other incidents follow: anonymous letters, threatening graffiti on the school walls, gym equipment tampered with and one of the pupils being shot. Given a class of troisième dropouts to teach, Nils meets the orphaned rapper Axel and discovers Axel has been left a fortune by his unknown father. Axel's uncle, also unknown to him, is a sports teacher in the school and is responsible for the incidents in the process of trying to kill Axel to inherit his money. At the close of the volume, Nils becomes Axel's guardian. Nils's reluctance to be in contact with youngsters comes across in this volume.

La dame qui tue	1993
Nils joins his students on an archaeological dig in Italy, only to find their discovery is a hoax; the tomb they have opened is empty. Mateo, the 'village idiot' who cowers when he sees women in black, and is disturbed by their exploration of the tomb, is subsequently found murdered. Nils and Catherine uncover a family history of murder and deception: Angela Ducci, who murdered her husband Pietro and her twin sister Graziella (for having an affair) and then proceeded to masquerade as Graziella, bringing up her niece as her own child, then murdered Mateo, who had witnessed the first crime for fear of being discovered. Behind the mystery, Nils's attraction to his female students incurs Catherine's jealousy.	
Tête à rap	1994
A serial killer is terrorising Paris, targeting drug addicts. Axel with his pertinent rap lyrics, and Boussicot (Axel's friend from *L'assassin est au collège* who is now living in a squat) help Nils solve the mystery. Robert Larquette, who works in the Louvre, is the killer but is eventually killed himself by one of the dealers he was targeting. Boussicot, after informing a dealer that Larquette is the killer, disappears; addicted to drugs, it is probable that Boussicot has died of a drugs related illness such as AIDS. During this investigation, Nils is under pressure from Catherine's parents to propose to her.	
Scenario catastrophe	1995
Professor Harvey Liver believes the comet Swift Tuttle will hit Earth on the 14th of August 2000 and that this will plunge the world into a nuclear winter. He founds an 'association' Millénarisme A. H. L to raise money to build a survival dome for its members. Nils investigates this association, that turns out to be a sect, which Catherine and some of his other students have joined. He uncovers the truth behind the sect; their destruction of young personalities, their targeting of wealthy youngsters, and the 'suicide' of members who wish to leave. The sect leaders try to kill Nils when he finds out too much, but he succeeds in having the French branch closed down and the leaders arrested. Jealousy is reversed when Catherine appears attracted to one of the members of the sect.	
Qui veut la peau de Maori Cannell?	1997
Someone is sending exploding Bardy dolls to top models, and Nils, caught in the aftermath of one explosion, attempts to solve the mystery. Ange Morane is planning to marry Max Dedieu, owner of Top Star modelling agency. Furious that another model, Maori Cannell, has rejected Max, he is responsible for the exploding dolls. He also murders Ange's brother so that she will inherit his fortune before marrying him. Believing Nils has seduced Ange, Max then attempts to kill her too, but police intervene before he can kill her or Nils. The volume closes with Catherine announcing to Nils that she is pregnant.	
Rendez-vous avec Monsieur X	1998
Nils, finding it hard adapting to fatherhood (he actually misses the birth of his daughter Juliette) is occupied by a mystery at an IVF laboratory. His investigations lead him to believe that the laboratory is trafficking and cloning human embryos. Only when he is imprisoned with Juliette in the resolution of the mystery does he come to terms with fatherhood.	

Table 3: Overview of the *Nils Hazard* series

Maxime

Series	Maxime
Author	Brigitte Smadja
Publisher	*Ecole des Loisirs*
	Illustrations by Serge Bloch in Mouche and Neuf collections

J'ai décidé de m'appeler Dominique	1991	Mouche

Emilie (6) is told that her mother is expecting a baby and is not enthusiastic about the news. In the family discussions about the baby's name that follow, she announces that she is going to change her name to Dominique and insists on being called Dominique until a new boy arrives at school with the same name. The new Dominique cannot understand why Emilie should want to change her name (his favourite name is Emilie) and she announces she has changed her mind and suggests the new baby should be called Max.

Maxime fait des miracles	1991	Mouche

Maxime (6) and Emilie (13) are in the Dordogne so Maxime's mother can look after tante Anna, who has been taken ill. When tante Anna dies, Maxime's mother has difficulty dealing with the loss, and tries to explain the concept of death to Maxime using a cigarette. Max realises his mother does not believe in God and tries to find a way to make his mother stop thinking people are cigarettes. His firm belief that tante Anna is 'au ciel' helps his mother come to terms with her Aunt's death.

Maxime fait de la politique	1991	Neuf

Maxime's mother comes home late from work having attended a union meeting. His father asks her when she is going to stop trying to change the world. Emilie has a new boyfriend Jules. In Max's school, two *classes d'adaptation* for weaker pupils are going to be abolished and Max (10) decides to form a *syndicat* to stop this. This gets Max into trouble at school but his action provokes parental interest and the classes are saved.

Maxime fait l'idiot	1993	Neuf

Maxime (12) is about to start his *cinquième*. His *sixième* was plagued by Mme Carette, his maths teacher, who he thought hated him. She has now left the *collège* to be replaced by Mlle. Méziemski whom Max's mother knows. Strangely Max longs for this new teacher to be like Mme Carette and is disappointed that she is not. She favours Maxime until he asks her not to. He realises that Mme Carette did not actually hate him but was tough on him because she liked him. He also learns they shared the same forename. Maxime's difficulties at school are juxtaposed to Emilie failing her *bac*.

Ne touchez pas aux idoles	1994	Médium
	Additional information	Currently out of print

This volume provides the back history to Maxime's parents' relationship and his family's relationship with Jonas, his uncle. Suzanne (Max's mother) is 19 and her brother Grégoire 15 ½. Jonas is Grégoire's friend and has a brother, Paul (Max's father). Suzanne is politically motivated, opposing the Vietnam war. Grégoire believes Jonas is in love with Suzanne; he himself falls in love with Mlle X who turns out to be their French teacher's daughter, a teacher who is despised by everyone except Jonas. When Jonas eventually tells Grégoire who Mlle X is, he turns against him. Their friendship suffers irrevocably when Grégoire's new friends push the French teacher downstairs, almost killing him. These events help explain Jonas's loathing of Grégoire, which features in the other volumes of the series.

Maxime fait un beau mariage	2000	Neuf
Emilie (20) announces she is going to marry Jules, and in the family row that follows, she leaves home. Emilie's wedding exposes family tensions regarding Jonas's homosexuality and the family's aversion to addressing this. Maxime's father asks Max (13) to perform one last 'miracle' and get his mother to attend the wedding, which Maxime achieves with the help of his friends.		
Adieu Maxime	2000	Médium
The first two thirds of this volume recap past events in Maxime's life, some of which are already known from the other volumes of the series, others of which are new. Firstly Maxime considers the family holiday when he was 11, when he first realised Jonas was homosexual. Then he touches on his infatuation with his maths teacher Mme Carette and his sister's wedding, with Grégoire's uninvited arrival. When Maxime visited Jonas after the wedding, he was shown an old photograph of Suzanne and Paul. Jonas told him how he thought he was in love with Suzanne and how Grégoire told both families of his homosexuality. The rest of the volume concerns Maxime's efforts to juggle his three girlfriends and Jonas's advice to him. At the close of the volume, Jonas dies of AIDS and Emilie is pregnant.		

Table 4: Overview of the *Maxime* series

Samuel

Series	Samuel
Author	Brigitte Smadja
Publisher	*Ecole des Loisirs*
	Illustrations by Serge Bloch in Mouche and Neuf collections

Marie est amoureuse	1992	Mouche

It is the eve of Marie's sixth birthday and her mother is preparing a party for her. The whole class has been invited, even people Marie has never spoken to or likes. Relationships are drawn out by the birthday party motif:

Marie – Madeleine: Marie, the tomboy in her old trousers, refuses to wear anything new despite her mother's protests. Her friend Madeleine wears a pretty party dress. Marie feels betrayed by her as she attempts to get Samuel's attention.

Marie – Franck: Marie feels an obligation of niceness towards Franck who is ostracised by the others because 'il fait pipi dans sa culotte'. She gradually realises that he is not as everyone imagines. He spends the party sat in a corner reading. Marie finds him when she hides behind a curtain in the living room, looking for a quiet place, and realises they are quite similar.

Marie – Samuel: Marie desperately wants Samuel to attend her party. He arrives late and gives her a diary in which she writes J'AIME SAMUEL. The following day they become best friends.

Marie – her mother: Marie's mother overcompensates for her father's absence.

Marie – Peluche (teddy bear): Peluche is Marie's confidant.

Marie souffre le martyr	1992	Neuf
	Additional information	"Prix du Livre de Jeunesse" décerné par la ville de La Garde, 1993

Relationships are now more complex, drawn out by the presence of a new girl at school, Annabelle. More detail on Samuel is given: Marie has known him since the *maternelle* and has been in love with him since her birthday party. Until now, Samuel has never been in love but he has now fallen in love with Annabelle. Samuel asks Marie to talk to Annabelle and when finally she does, she thumps her rival in the stomach. Marie runs away, thinking she has killed her, but Annabelle telephones Marie later in the evening for an explanation. They become friends as Marie discovers Annabelle is not interested in Samuel.

Child – Child relationships: the difference between the nature of Marie's relationships with her male and female friends is less marked.

Child – Parent relationships: Marie develops a relationship with her mother's potential lover, a replacement father figure and has greater empathy with her absent father. She also develops an awareness of the different types of relationship between adults.

Marie – Peluche: this bond is unchanged.

Marie – Samuel: Marie is frustrated by her unrequited love for Samuel and jealous of rivals for his attention.

J'ai hâte de vieillir	1992	Médium	
	Additional information		Livre sélectionné par le Ministère de l'Education nationale

Worried about Marie's academic progress, her mother sends her to a new school. The more complex and less self-centred relationships are drawn out by the new school environment and the new friends Marie makes:

Adolescent – parent relationships: Marie looks for similarities in her relationships to those of her mother. The complexity of her parents' relationships with their new partners is developed more fully.

Marie – Peluche: this relationship remains unchanged.

Marie – Samuel: Marie is no longer in contact with Samuel, who has moved away, but he is still the focus of her unrequited love.

Marie – her new 'adult' friends, Louise and Pierre: Marie is treated like a *petite fille* by Pierre and Louise, who act in a very 'grown-up' manner. Marie has her first sexual relationship with Pierre, and realises after this experience of 'adulthood' that in fact she is more mature than those she envied.

Marie – childhood friends: after her experience with Pierre, Marie returns to the security of her old childhood friends. She meets Karim again (who briefly features in the first two volumes of the series) who has just met Samuel at a concert.

Pauline n'a pas sa clé	1994	Mouche

Pauline, waiting for her babysitter to collect her from school, becomes friends with Fabien, who is also waiting for his babysitter. When Fabien is given his own key, he does not wait with Pauline any more and goes home by himself. Pauline does not want her own key because she does not like being at home by herself, and worries about burglars. Her parents would like her to have her own key as babysitters are expensive and she would not have to wait long before Samuel was home. Fabien loses his key, which Pauline finds and keeps. Fabien's parents will not give him another key and after three days, Pauline gives it back to Fabien, who then starts waiting with her for her babysitter again. Pauline has a close relationship with and admiration for her older brother, Samuel, who she believes will become a pop star. This volume also introduces Pauline's elderly neighbours, who give her lemon sweets.

Qu'aimez-vous le plus au monde?	1994	Neuf	
	Additional information		Livre sélectionné par le Ministère de l'Education nationale

Pauline must write an essay about what she likes and dislikes the most. When writing down ideas for the essay, Pauline puts Samuel in the dislike column, and M. Zyslin, her elderly neighbour, in the like column. M. Zyslin's wife has died and Pauline visits him after school. They paint together and eat lemon sweets and cakes. Pauline no longer has a babysitter as she is in the *sixième*. Samuel is nonetheless meant to come home to look after her, but he appears secretive and distant, and arrives increasingly late. Samuel gets a strange phone call and spends the night crying. M. Zyslin is aware that Samuel has problems and speaks to Pauline about them. Pauline hears Samuel go out in the night with food and clothes. The following day when she returns home, Samuel is not there. When he eventually comes in, she asks him if he is planning to run away. Samuel assures her he is not, but cannot explain any more about his problems. M. Zyslin goes into a retirement home and leaves Pauline a painting. Pauline is then able to write her essay, with both Samuel and M. Zyslin in her favourites column.

Une Bentley Boulevard Voltaire	1995	Médium

Set in the same timeframe as the previous volume, this novel introduces Samuel's friends and in particular, Gabriel and his quest to discover what happened to his father. It is narrated in the third person until the strange telephone call referred to above, when it changes to Samuel's perspective. As in the volumes from the Marie branch, relationships dominate:

Samuel – parents: Samuel's parents are annoyed by his long hair and his lax attitude to school. Samuel is critical of his parents' relationship. Samuel's father explains what happened to Gabriel's father, whose plane crashed and whose body was never found.

Samuel – Pauline: Samuel feels ridiculous in front of Gabriel that he must babysit Pauline but feels guilty that he is leaving her longer than usual with M. Zyslin. Samuel notices that Pauline is becoming increasingly introverted.

Samuel –Gabriel: Gabriel is convinced only Samuel will understand his problems. Samuel, on his visit to Gabriel's, notices his obsession with Algeria and North Africa. When Gabriel disappears on his quest, Samuel receives a letter from him saying he has found nothing, but to meet him at the *Insitut du Monde Arabe* on the 2nd November.

Gabriel – his friends: Laura, Gabriel's girlfriend, feels inadequate when she is with him and is always questioning if he loves her. Judith is afraid of Gabriel and his lifestyle, and the complexity of her relationship with Laura and him. When Gabriel disappears in search of his father, Laura and Judith accompany him. Laura telephones Samuel (the call referred to earlier) for food and clothes.

Samuel – M. Zyslin: when Samuel returns from posting supplies to Laura and the others, he meets M. Zyslin, who is going into a retirement home. M. Zyslin tells him that Pauline is worried and gives him the painting for Pauline.

Samuel – Marie: when Samuel plays the guitar, he conjures up an image of Marie. He plays to say the things he could never say directly to her before.

Samuel – Karim: Samuel meets Karim at a concert, who explains how Marie has always been mad about him.

J'ai rendez-vous avec Samuel	2002	Médium

This volume brings threads from the *Marie* and *Pauline* branches together. Marie's old school friend, Karim, recounts the start of her relationship with Samuel. He recaps the problems with Pierre and Louise, to whom he was never introduced: he realises this would have been too embarrassing for her as he is not chic or bourgeois. Now Marie has found Samuel, these friends are no longer important to her. Karim also alludes to his own feelings for Marie.

Marie and Samuel's relationship develops and they go on holiday to Greece together where they consummate it. On their return, their romance is overshadowed by the ongoing problems with Gabriel and Judith. When Samuel tells Marie about Gabriel and the others, Marie, as an outsider, can see how Judith is obviously in love with Gabriel. In Gabriel's absence, Judith becomes more introverted and anorexic, finally attempting suicide. Samuel does not leave her side for several weeks, and Marie misinterprets this, becoming increasingly jealous of Samuel's commitment to Judith. Despondent, she seeks refuge in her bedroom with Peluche. On the 2nd November Samuel and Judith wait for Gabriel outside the *Institut du Monde Arabe*, but he does not show. As a result, Samuel misses Marie's seventeenth birthday party and Marie refuses to come out of her bedroom for the party. Karim intervenes and sends Marie to meet Samuel, who she sees ripping up Gabriel's letters. They embrace.

Table 5: Overview of the *Samuel* series

Kamo

Series	Kamo	
Author	Daniel Pennac	
Publisher	Editions Gallimard Jeunesse, *Folio Junior* collection	
Illustrations	Jean-Philippe Chabot	
Kamo, l'idée du siècle	Publications	*Je bouquine* N° 100 June 1992 Gallimard 1993, Gallimard *Folio Junior* N° 803, 1997
	Edition used	1997
	Backmatter	Table of contents Interview with author and illustrator Extracts from other volumes
	Additional information	Recommandé par le ministère de l'Éducation nationale CD audio version narrated by author

The two plots in this volume consist of Kamo and Toi's attempts to matchmake for Mado-Magie, Toi's godmother, and their imminent progression to the *sixième*. Mado-Magie is a marriage guidance counsellor. She is skilled at saving other people's marriages, but has disastrous relationships herself. Toi and Kamo write a lonely heart advertisement for her, which their *instituteur* Monsieur Margerelle confiscates. Kamo asks M. Margerelle to act the various teachers they will meet at *collège*. The first he mimics is Crastaing, the fearsome French teacher. As the charade continues, Toi and Kamo fear that their 'real' teacher has disappeared. After a *conseil de classe* in which Kamo requests the return of the real M. Margerelle, the class are relieved to find him back to normal the following morning. He recounts that on reading the confiscated advertisement, he found the description of the perfect woman. When he met her, he played different characters for her as she was unsure what her perfect man was, but in the end she fell in love with the real M. Margerelle.

The backmatter provides an indication of reading order: "Kamo, l'idée du siècle est le quatrième volume des aventures de Kamo publié dans la collection *Folio Junior*"

Kamo et Moi	Publications	*Je bouquine* N° 12 February 1985 as *La vie à l'envers* Gallimard 1992, Gallimard *Folio Junior* N° 802, 1997
	Edition used	1997
	Backmatter	Table of contents Interview with author and illustrator Extracts from other volumes, list of other Folio titles
	Additional information	Recommandé par le ministère de l'Éducation nationale Developed in Pennac's novel *Messieurs les enfants* (1997)

Kamo and Toi have the dreaded Crastaing as a French teacher in the *troisième*, who sets them a *rédaction* to do: what happens when you wake up one morning and find yourself transformed into an adult and your parents into children. In writing the essay, the transformation occurs: Toi (as Pope) goes to school to apologise for his (son's) absence, only to find Kamo, who has not written the essay, unchanged. Toi asks Kamo to complete the exercise and together they try to find how to undo the transformation. They visit Crastaing and find that he too has attempted the essay and is changed into a child, also discovering his reason for setting the essay: he is an orphan and has no family of his own. In writing the *corrigé* for Crastaing, the transformation is reversed.

Indication of reading order from backmatter: "Kamo et les autres personnages principaux apparaissent pour la première fois dans Kamo, l'agence Babel, également publié dans la collection *Folio Junior*"

Kamo, l'agence Babel	Publications	*Je bouquine* N° 36 February 1987 as *Le mystère Kamo* Gallimard 1992, Gallimard *Folio Junior* N° 800, 1997
	Edition used	1997
	Backmatter	Table of contents Interview with author and illustrator Extracts from other volumes
	Additional information	Recommandé par le ministère de l'Éducation nationale Prix Jeunesse Saint-Dié des Vosges

Kamo is doing badly at English in school and his mother keeps losing her job. To rectify both problems, Kamo's mother challenges him to learn English in three months, if she can hold a job down for the same length of time. This volume provides background to Kamo's turbulent but close relationship with his mother and his father's death some years earlier. Kamo's mother provides him with a list of penfriends and Kamo begins to communicate with Catherine Earnshaw. At first his letters are abusive, but when Catherine explains how his letter arrived on the anniversary of her father's death, this strikes a chord with Kamo and his obsession with his penfriend begins. Toi realising that Kamo is corresponding with the past, becomes suspicious and after meeting other students who are similarly obsessed by their penfriends, he tracks down the agency behind the letters. Toi takes Kamo to the agency where he meets his mother and discovers that she created it and has been corresponding with all the students. She gives him *Wuthering Heights* to read (in English), which he plunges into straight away. Kamo's mother's agency is effective: all her customers eventually find her office but only when they are completely bilingual.

Indication of reading order from backmatter: "Kamo, l'agence Babel est le premier volume des aventures de Kamo publié dans la collection Lecture Junior. Retrouvez vite Kamo dans d'autres aventures; Kamo et moi et L'évasion de Kamo"

L'évasion de Kamo	Publications	*Je bouquine* N°48 February 1988 Gallimard 1992, Gallimard *Folio Junior* N° 801, 1997
	Edition used	1997
	Backmatter	Table of contents Interview with author and illustrator Extracts from other volumes, list of other Folio titles

Toi and his parents go to the Vosges for their annual holiday, accompanied by Kamo, whose mother is retracing her family roots in Eastern Europe. Pope has repaired a bicycle for Kamo, who refuses to ride it: instead, Kamo is happy to stay in the holiday cottage and cook (he is renowned for his culinary skills) whilst Toi and his parents go cycling. Kamo is eventually forced to ride the bicycle to the nearest post office when his mother tries to contact him. On their return to Paris, Kamo is given the bicycle as a present. Returning on their bicycles from a late night showing of *Wuthering Heights*, Kamo has an accident and is taken comatose to hospital. When Toi visits Kamo, he finds him muttering words in Russian. Toi brings him the objects he asks for, and when Kamo eventually comes out of the coma, he describes his dream to Toi: a re-enactment of the Russian revolution. Kamo's mother, now returned from her travels, tells Kamo about his great-grandfather's life: also named Kamo, he died in a bicycle accident. Kamo, in his coma, had been reliving his great-grandfather's life.

Indication of reading order from backmatter: "Kamo et les autres personnages principaux apparaissent pour la première fois dans Kamo, l'agence Babel, également publié dans la collection *Folio Junior*"

Table 6: Overview of the *Kamo* series

P.P. Cul-Vert

Series	P. P. Cul-Vert	
Author	Jean-Philippe Arrou-Vignod	
Publisher	Editions Gallimard Jeunesse, *Folio Junior* collection	
Illustrations	Cover illustrations by Yan Nascimbene; black and white internal illustrations by Serge Bloch.	
Le Professeur a disparu	Publications	Gallimard, 1989, Gallimard *Folio Junior* N° 558, 1997
	Edition used	1997
	Frontmatter	Biographical information about illustrators and author
	Backmatter	Table of contents
	Additional information	Prix du collège Henri-Matisse, 1990

Mathilde, Rémi and P.-P. win a trip to Venice with their *histoire-géo* teacher Monsieur Coruscant as reward for their good results (Rémi, who does not usually do well, cheated in order to go). On the overnight train from Paris, Monsieur Coruscant disappears and Mathilde, Rémi and P.-P. arrive in Venice without money or passports. Rather than go to the police, they go in search of M. Coruscant and on the trail of the mysterious man in the Tyrolean hat, who they believe is an art thief planning on stealing a famous Longhi painting for the Swiss art collector Mueller from one of Venice's museums. In an adventure reminiscent of Emil's escapades across Berlin (from *Emil und die Detektive* by Erich Kästner), Mathilde, Rémi and P.-P. stay overnight in the museum. P.-P. is then kidnapped before the pupils are able to meet up again with their teacher. Together the others rescue P.-P. and save the painting.

L'enquête au collège	Publications	Gallimard, 1991, Gallimard *Folio Junior* N° 633, 2002
	Edition used	2002
	Frontmatter	Biographical information about illustrators and author
	Backmatter	Table of contents Interview with author about genesis of books Extracts from #1, #3, #4
	Additional information	Un livre selectionné par le ministère de l'Education Double CD audio version, narrated by Olivier Chauvel

When the school laboratory assistant is found knocked out in a locked science room, the *proviseur* decides that the culprit must logically be one of the boys from the *internat*, and with the evidence provided by P.-P, Rémi gets the blame. Rémi, who cannot believe P.-P. has betrayed him after he had helped rescue him in Venice, confronts him. Rémi's case is worsened by the fact that his torch was found in the laboratory (he had gone to look for the answers for a test and this is reminiscent of his cheating to go on the trip to Venice). P.-P. is aware that an intruder has been in the *collège* grounds, so he and Rémi explore and find a trowel marked with initials JB. These events coincide with a school reunion, and Mathilde discovers (through M. Coruscant) that a former pupil, Jacque Belette, has written a book on a crypt underneath the school. Rémi and P.-P. plan to go down to the crypt that evening to accost Belette. The boys discover the entrance in the science laboratory, but when they reach it, Mathilde and Belette are already there. Upon being caught by the headteacher, Belette admits attacking the lab technician, and Rémi's name is cleared.

Whilst in the previous adventure Mathilde was automatically included, the boys do not immediately include her in their nighttime adventures this time, where she is not a *pensionnaire*. Furious at this, Mathilde is not to be outdone and participates regardless.

P. P. Cul-Vert détective privé	Publications	Gallimard, 1991, Gallimard *Folio Junior* N° 701, 1993
	Edition used	1993
	Frontmatter	Biographical information about illustrators and author
	Backmatter	Table of contents Interview with author about genesis of books Extracts from #1, #3, #4
	Additional information	Recommandé par le ministère de l'Éducation nationale Double CD audio version, narrated by Olivier Chauvel

P.-P. and his friends go to England on a school trip. Rémi and P.-P. are housed by the eccentric Mrs Moule - a widow, whose husband died mysteriously last year, whilst Mathilde is looked after by her affluent neighbours, the Smiths. Whilst coping with the strangeness of an English environment and thinking that their hostess in a murderess, P.-P. and his friends discover that Mr Smith is a jewel thief responsible for a recent spate of burglaries. Together with Mrs Moule's policeman son they rescue Mathilde from the clutches of Mr Smith and recover the stolen jewels.

This volume reinforces the character traits of previous volumes: P.-P. is the brains and Rémi the brawn, but both rely on Mathilde, initially excluded from their suspicions, to help them out of trouble.

Sur la piste de la Salamandre	Publications	Gallimard, 1995, Gallimard *Folio Junior* N° 753, 1997
	Edition used	1997
	Frontmatter	Biographical information about illustrator and author
	Backmatter	Table of contents
	Additional information	Prix des Incorruptibles, catégorie 6e/5e

It is the end of the *quatrième* and Mathilde does not want the holidays to begin. P.-P. has a solution to the potential boredom of the holidays and wants to participate in a treasure hunt. The three friends embark on the trip to find the golden salamander. Followed by a strange man (who is actually P.-P.'s sister in disguise) and helped by M. Coruscant, they solves a number of riddles only to find a fake salamander, before finally tracking down the artist hiding the real salamander for his own gain, and persuade him to give the real salamander to a museum.

This volume contains a clear transition from the school environment in the *quatrième* to the school holidays. There is also a hint of romance, as the other pupils tease Mathilde and Rémi as 'les amoureux'. The treasure hunt provides a means to move away from their everyday environment, but the characters appear to remain unaffected by this change. P.-P.'s tendency for inventing begins to surface in this volume and at one point the friends are hampered by a new 'fuel' PP has invented for his *vespa*.

P. P. et le mystère du Loch Ness	Publications	Gallimard, 1998, Gallimard *Folio Junior* N° 870, 1998
	Edition used	1998
	Frontmatter	Biographical information about illustrators and author
	Backmatter	Table of contents Short references to #1, #3, #4, #2
Rémi and Mathilde travel to Scotland to help P.-P. unravel the mystery of the Loch Ness monster. The freedom of a large Scottish castle owned by P.P's aristocratic uncle allows P.P's imagination to run wild. He spends his time 'inventing' and having his portrait painted. Together, the friends help P.-P.'s Scottish uncle prevent the capture of the baby 'Nessie' he has discovered. In this volume there is the start of a division between P.-P. and his friends, as Rémi and Mathilde are not an integral part of adventure but are called to join in by P.-P.. The end of the volume when P.-P. expresses his only regret: "n'avoir pu m'inventer moi-même", to which Mathilde and Rémi respond: "nous partîmes tous d'un grand éclat de rire. Décidément, on ne changerait jamais P. P. Cul-Vert" (Arrou-Vignod, 1998, 137), very much foregrounds the last volume.		
Le Club des Inventeurs	Publications	Je Bouquine Editions Bayard Presse Gallimard *Folio Junior* N° 1083, 2000
	Edition used	2000
	Frontmatter	Biographical information about illustrator and author
	Backmatter	Les carnets secrets de Pierre-Paul Louis de Culbert, introduced with a note written by Rémi. Including 'Les conseils du parfait détective', 'mes recettes de cuisine', 'codes secrets' etc. List of titles in collection À suivre…
This final volume reinforces the trend of the previous volumes: P.-P.'s isolation and the pairing of Rémi and Mathilde. P.-P. engages Rémi and Mathilde for the weekend to help protect his latest invention, which he is going to present to the *Club des inventeurs*. In a kidnap attempt by the jealous organiser of the competition, his invention is destroyed. In remorse, the organiser helps P.-.P. to set up his own fan club, which Rémi and Mathilde get an invitation to join. P.-P. is left in his own world of strange inventions and self admiration, and Rémi and Mathilde are depicted arm in arm departing for new adventures.		

Table 7: Overview of the *P. P. Cul-Vert* series

Danse!

Series	Danse!	
Author	Anne-Marie Pol	
Publisher	Editions *Pocket Jeunesse*	
Frontmatter	Biographical information about author Summary of previous volume Address for reader correspondence – 'Vous êtes nombreux à nous écrire et vous aimez les livres de la série *Danse!* Adressez votre courrier à…' Hook – 'Tu danses, tu as dansé, tu rêves de danser…Rejoins vite Nina et ses amis. Et partage avec eux la passion de la danse…'	
Backmatter	Table of contents Taster extract of forthcoming volume	
General overview	The series spans a year in Nina's life from her 13th to her 14th birthday. She has inherited her passion for ballet from her deceased mother, Aurore. Nina always wears a gold heart-shaped pendant containing a lock of her mother's hair, her talisman, which she always touches before going on stage. Since her mother's death, she has a recurring dream in which she is unable to dance and cries out for her mother. During the series, she learns to appreciate her new step-mother and adores her baby half-brother who is born in *Danse! 30.* Her relationship with Zita, her best friend, crumbles as Zita becomes jealous of Nina's success, and her relationship with Mo(hammed) the hip-hop dancer from the *banlieue* grows. This relationship provides a contrast between high and low culture dance styles. Nina wins a scholarship to Le Camargo but is constantly reminded of this by other pupils and the concierge, Mme Suzette. When she has the opportunity of continuing her training in Cannes, she does not take the easy option for fear of becoming 'spoilt'. Nina's career is followed by the prima ballerina Eva Miller who agrees to help her get a place in the *Ecole de l'Opéra de Paris.* With this news, when Nina has her recurring dream, her mother appears to her and she sees herself on the stage of the opera.	
1	*Nina, graine d'étoile*	January 2000
Nina and her best friend Zita love to dance. Zita is planning to attend the prestigious Le Camargo school of ballet, but Nina's unemployed father will not be able to afford the fees. For her thirteenth birthday Zita's mother pays for the cost of the audition and Nina wins a scholarship to the school. Nina's father has reservations.		
2	*A moi de choisir*	January 2000
	Edition used	8th edition
Nina's father finds a job in Cairo and is preparing to leave with his new wife to be, Odile, whom Nina loathes. With Odile's help however, Nina persuades her father to let her stay in Paris to continue her ballet training. Nina must therefore find somewhere to stay. Zita's family refuse to take her, but her friend Emile offers her a room.		
3	*Embrouilles en coulisses*	January 2000
Le Camargo will host an end of year show and there is much competition for parts. Julie-la-peste will do anything to stop Nina performing and locks her in the changing room so she will not be able to dance. Zita does not seem to believe her when told.		

4	*Sur un air de hip-hop*	January 2000
Nina's father and Odile have left for Egypt and Nina is now living with Emile and his mother. During the holidays Mme Camargo organises a show with a school in the *banlieue*, where she meets Mo, a hip-hop dancer.		
5	*Le garçon venu d'ailleurs*	January 2000
Nina has problems with her friendship with Zita after the holidays. Zita and Alice are jealous that Nina's photograph is in the newspapers after the show. Nina turns down an invitation to Zita's to go out with Mo and lies to Emile's mother about where she is. Emile's mother discovers she has been lying.		
6	*Pleins feux sur Nina*	January 2000
	Edition used	7th edition
Le Camargo is being used for a film set. Nina meets Eva Miller, prima ballerina of the Opéra de Paris, who lends her shoes. When one of the actresses playing a young ballerina is unable to perform the part adequately, Nina is chosen to take her place, which creates more jealousy amongst her friends. Her relationship with Mo continues to develop.		
7	*Une rose pour Mo*	March 2000
Mo is taking part in a course at the school, where the boys are being taught hip-hop. A modern ballet will be performed mixing both styles. Nina is upset that Mo will be dancing with Fanny-la-rose, a 15 year-old dancer. Mo promises her they will one day dance together.		
8	*Coups de bec*	May 2000
Nina has influenza and is at home in bed. Fanny receives an anonymous threatening letter and Nina is blamed. Le bel Alex, Fanny's usual partner, is at fault however, jealous of Fanny dancing with Mo.		
9	*Avec le vent*	July 2000
The Le Camargo dancers go on an excursion to Brittany. Nina disobeys the staff and goes to see the sea with Mo and is consequently almost late for the show. Fanny (whose name has been left off the poster) refuses to dance the encore, so Mo dances the encore with Nina instead. Eva Miller, who is in the audience, decides she wants to train Nina.		
10	*Une étoile pour Nina*	September 2000
	Edition used	4th edition
Back at school, Maître Torelli, the dance teacher, is taken ill and his replacement (Piotr Ivanov) cannot tolerate Nina. Her friendship with Eva Miller helps her overcome this problem and come to terms with Maître Torelli's subsequent death. Eva Miller has enrolled her in a dance competition in Madrid and when her father comes back to Paris to see her, he gives his permission for her to take part.		
11	*Un trac de diable*	November 2000
	Edition used	4th edition
Nina goes to Madrid with Eva Miller for the competition. Zita and Alice also attend. Piotr Ivanov is one of the judges. Somebody mangles Nina's music tape so she is unable to dance and Ivanov refuses to let her use someone else's tape to compete until Eva intervenes. Zita wins the junior price, but Nina gets a *mention*.		

12	*Nina se révolte*	January 2001
	Edition used	3rd edition
Back at school after the competition, Zita tells the other girls that Nina only got a *mention* because Eva Miller arranged it. Nina's friendship with Zita that has been waning over last volumes finally reaches rock bottom. Nina then tears a muscle. The film director (from *Danse!* 6) wants to hire Nina, but her father refuses and believing she is becoming too independent for her age, demands that she come to Egypt.		
13	*Rien ne va plus*	February 2001
	Edition used	3rd edition
In Egypt, Nina and her father are at loggerheads. With her ankle still injured, he does not think she should continue to dance, but should stay in Egypt and be part of their new family. Odile is expecting a baby. Their housekeeper Zakiya takes Nina to the mysterious Dr Abdel who cures her ankle. Nina meets a new friend, Cédric.		
14	*Si j'étais Cléopatre*	March 2001
	Edition used	3rd edition
Nina and Cédric find a ringed dove and return it to its owner Harriett Duncan who runs a dance school. Her father allows her to dance but just for fun.		
15	*Comme un oiseau*	May 2001
	Edition used	2nd edition
Nina is allowed to participate in a gala at the school. Rania, another dancer, thinks that her partner will prefer dancing with Nina. Cédric wants Nina to be more than a friend. The *oiseau de la chance*, the white dove (found in *Danse! 14*), disappears. When Rania's father bans her from dancing, Harriett Duncan calls off the gala.		
16	*Un Coeur d'or*	July 2001
	Edition used	2nd edition
A storm destroys Zakiya's house. Nina decides to dance for her in the gala, the proceeds of which are given to Zakiya. With her performance of Cleopatre, dancing with the white dove, she wins her father over and he agrees to let her return to Paris.		
17	*A Paris!*	September 2001
	Edition used	2nd edition
Back at school, nothing has changed: Zita still detests Nina and Piotr Ivanov treats her as an international star, forcing her to improvise. She dances her Cleopatre routine and Piotr Ivanov is impressed. Zita's mother tries to repair their friendship and invites Nina to Zita's birthday. Nina goes and stays overnight and in the morning, Zita's mother tells her she should pity Nina. Nina overhears Zita's admission of jealousy.		
18	*Le mystère Mo*	November 2001
	Edition used	2nd edition
Zita and Alice tease Nina about seeing Mo with another girl. Piotr Ivanov seems to like Nina's work. Julie-la-peste begins to side with Nina in her 'war' against Zita. Nina falls out with Mo, who does not have time to see her due to his dancing schedule for the film he has been cast in. Emilie's mother has an admirer.		
19	*Des yeux si noirs…*	December 2001
	Edition used	2nd edition
Le Camargo is preparing a show and Zita has been chosen to dance by Piotr Ivanov. When Zita injures herself, Piotr Ivanov cancels the rehearsals until she is better, causing Fanny to storm out. Nina tries to reconcile with Zita, but she does not want to. Nina's extra lesson with Eva Miller helps her come to terms with Zita's jealousy.		

20	*Le miroir brisé*	January 2002
	Edition used	2nd edition
Nina plans to see Mo and lies to Emile's mother to do so, but is found out. On his way home, Mo is attacked in the metro and dislocates his shoulder, preventing him from dancing. Nina been chosen to replace Fanny in the show, because of Fanny's insubordination, with Alice chosen as her understudy. When she comes to perform, she finds the ribbons on her shoes have been cut, so Alice takes her place. Mo is in the audience, realising there is a problem, arranges to dance a *pas de deux* with Nina.		
21	*Peur de rien!*	February 2002
After the performance, Alice and Zita are called in to see Mme Camargo to find out who sabotaged Nina's shoes. Alice confesses, and both girls leave the school. Nina sees a notice about a summer school in Cannes but Nina's father does not want her to or cannot afford for her to go. Mme Camargo gets her a grant.		
22	*Le secret d'Aurore*	April 2002
	Edition used	2nd edition
At the summer school, Nina finds Zita is also enrolled. In the school building she sees a picture of her mother aged eighteen. Nina had not realised her mother came from the *midi*, so she decides to go looking for her mother's family.		
23	*Duel*	May 2002
	Edition used	2nd edition
In a show organised by the summer school, Nina must 'duel' Zita, as both are soloists. The real duel occurs when she finally meets Viviane Valois, her maternal grandmother, who is full of hatred for her father and who does not believe Nina is her grandchild until Nina shows her the heart pendant.		
24	*Sous les étoiles*	July 2002
Zita is jealous that Nina will dance with her new boyfriend in the show and makes a hoax emergency phone call to the doctor with whom Nina and Emile are staying. This prevents him from taking them to the port to catch the boat to go to the *Iles de Lérins* where they will perform. Eva Miller comes to the rescue, but when they get there, Zita has already been given Nina's role. Eva Miller prepares a solo dance for Nina and her grandmother is overcome with emotion seeing it.		
25	*Tout se détraque!*	September 2002
Nina goes down with appendicitis. The other dancers go back to Paris and Nina goes to convalesce at her grandmothers, after being expressly forbidden to do so by her father. Enjoying being at her grandmother's and discovering things about her mother's youth, Nina's father arrives to take her away (and, she assumes, back to Paris).		
26	*La victoire de Nina*	December 2002
Nina is taken to the Aveyron to stay with Emile's grandmother, where she receives a telephone call from Mo. He tells her his partner for the film has been dismissed and she should audition. Nina goes back to Paris to convince her father (with Eva Miller's help). Her father explains his past to her (he is an orphan) and why he is hostile to her grandmother (she disapproved of Nina's mother's relationship with him and he suspects her of fixing the brakes on his moped, causing the accident that stopped her from dancing). Nina proves that her grandmother would have been incapable of doing this.		
27	*Prince hip-hop*	January 2003
As Nina has been chosen for the role in the film, she is no longer dancing as much as she would like. To make matters worse, jealous 'friends' have attacked Mo, causing him to fall downstairs and break his leg, so he will not be able to take part in the film.		

28	*Pile ou face*	March 2003
Le bel Alex replaces Mo in the film, but Nina cannot stand working with him. Instead of embracing him, she slaps him in the face. She is dismissed and Zita takes her place.		
29	*Quand même!*	June 2003
Back at Le Camargo, everything is changing. Emile's mother is getting married and moving to the Aveyron. Emile been accepted for a *stage* at the *Ecole de l'Opéra*, so Nina must find a new family to stay with. Piotr Ivanov chooses her to dance a solo in a gala and Mo and her father come to see her perform.		
30	*Un amour pour Nina*	July 2003
After the gala, Piotr Ivanov is pleased with Nina's performance and she learns that her father and Odile are coming back to Paris definitively. Eva Miller is however being cold with Nina for having left the film. Odile's baby is born.		
31	*Grabuge chez Camargo*	November 2003
Le Camargo is closing down and Nina must find another school.		
32	*Nina et l'Oiseau de feu*	February 2004
Nina finds a new dance centre, whose concierge is remarkably like Mme Suzette from Le Camargo. At the new centre Nina meets Zita, who has finished filming. Zita tries to put the other girls off Nina but their dance teacher recognises Nina from the show she did for Ivanov and praises her for her technique. Nina's grandmother takes her to the ballet and they both visit Eva Miller in her dressing room, where her grandmother asks if Eva Miller can get Nina into the Opéra. She offers to pay if necessary or suggests that Nina could go to Cannes to study there, but Eva Miller is not very enthusiastic. Nina does not want to leave Paris and decides to go to a new Académie with Victoria and other girls from Le Camargo, but finds Zita there too. Nina bumps into Michael Denard who she recognises from a film, and who suggests she attend his lessons.		
33	*Le triomphe de Nina*	July 2004
Nina is finding it hard adapting to family life again, and her father discovers she has not been doing her CNED homework. In the new Académie, Nina continues her lessons with the Michael Denard, and tries to ignore Zita. Zita's mother attends a lesson and collapses and Nina goes to comfort Zita. Zita apologies for her behaviour towards Nina. Nina interviews Michael Denard for her homework assignment, and he and Eva Miller decide to help her get into the *Ecole de l'Opéra*. The series ends with Nina's birthday party: her family and friends are reunited and Nina is happy that her dreams may at last come true.		

Table 8: Overview of the *Danse!* series

Gagne!

Series	Gagne!	
Author	Jacques Lindecker	
Publisher	Editions *Pocket Jeunesse*	
Frontmatter	Biographical information about author Address for reader correspondence – 'Vous êtes nombreux à nous écrire et vous aimez les livres de la série *Gagne!* Adressez votre courrier à…' Hook – 'Tu es partant? Alors accompagne Martin sur le terrain et partage avec lui ses tracas et ses grandes joies'	
General overview	Martin is selected to join the prestigious football training centre La Charmille. His father, a professional footballer, died on the pitch of a sudden heart attack. Friendships and alliances are quickly established at the school. The boys share dormitories at the centre and Martin shares a room with the ever-joking Fabrice, 'la grande gueule' Nadir and the thoughtful Joe. Apart from the matriarchal Mme Yvonne, who looks after the boys at the centre, female characters play little part in the narrative. Martin's sisterly figure is Sarah, his best-friend from home, she is portrayed as a young Mme Yvonne, tomboyish and determined. Audrey the caretaker's daughter provides occasional interest. The shared dream of becoming professional footballers unites and motivates the boys, who are permanently assessed on standards of behaviour, academic achievement and team spirit. Isolated from the outside world, the topics addressed in the series mirror themes appropriate to the world of football: racism, being selected for the team, performance enhancing drugs. There are clear similarities between *Pocket Jeunesse*'s two hobby series. Whilst *Gagne!* remains unfinished, the series appears to be drawing to a close as in volume ten, the young footballers are already being spotted for clubs.	
1	*En route pour la gloire*	March 2003
Martin is one of twenty boys selected by Monsieur Raymond, the trainer for La Charmille, a specialist football training school. In Martin's first month at the centre, five pupils will be eliminated who do not demonstrate team spirit, good behaviour, or who get poor academic results. Martin nearly loses his place for his poor maths results.		
2	*Deux places pour Martin*	March 2003
	Edition used	Second edition
Martin meets Bruno hitch-hiking to the centre. Bruno uses him to get answers for a football competition. Martin becomes obsessed with winning the competition himself and jeopardises his place in the centre as a result.		
3	*Martin hors jeu*	March 2003
Martin has been left out of the team as a result of his behaviour over the competition. In a desperate attempt to get back on team, Martin colludes with the malicious Gus. Gus burns Luis, Martin's rival, with scalding water in the shower, and when Martin realises he must do the same for Gus, he backs out of the agreement. As a punishment, Martin is beaten up by Gus. Sarah, his friend from home, comes to the centre and, with Fabrice, warns Gus off.		

4	*Martin contra-attaque*	March 2003
Martin is still being beaten up by Gus, and his friends try to solve the problem. Luis returns and is told by Gus that Martin was to blame. At the end of a match, Gus, in a temper, lets slip that it was he that attacked Luis.		
5	*Drôle de match*	June 2003
Audrey, the concierge's daughter, needs someone to accompany her to a fashion show. Martin is chosen to go for making progress and showing team spirit.		
6	*A bas le nouveau*	September 2003
At the start of a new school year a new boy joins the centre. Martin believes that one of the other boys will lose his place at the centre as a result, to keep the numbers balanced. The boys sign a petition to persuade M. Raymond not to eliminate anyone.		
7	*Renvoyé*	February 2004
Nadir is finally excluded for his insolence and his friends battle to save him. They try a petition like before, but M. Raymond is not convinced. Only when they go on strike and refuse to play does M. Raymond reconsider.		
8	*Coup de blues!*	June 2004
A fake nutritionalist gives performance enhancing drugs to Gus and Martin. Gus plants a microphone on Martin to help trap the 'doctor'.		
9	*Operation oxygène*	October 2004
M. Raymond takes the boys to a fitness centre on the coast at the *rentrée*. Joe, an orphan, meets up with one of his previous *familles d'accueil*. A friendly match against a local team ends up with the boys from both teams clashing, and the police must be brought in.		
10	*L'enfer ou le paradis?*	December 2004
Martin is jealous about a possible relationship between Fabrice and Sarah. M. Raymond is sacked, and the boys, angry at this, start losing their matches on purpose. Sarah writes to Martin saying there is nothing between her and Fabrice, but leaving the door open for a possible relationship between her and Martin.		

Table 9: Overview of the *Gagne!* series

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