

# DARK: A REFLECTION ON TIME, SPACE AND CAUSALITY FROM THE VIEW POINT OF COMPLEXITY

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**ABSTRACT:** The aim of this article is to analyse the German series *Dark* available for streaming on the Netflix platform. Based on the combination of Charles S. Peirce's philosophy with theorists of complexity Ilya Prigogine, Mário Bunge, Edgar Morin and Jorge Albuquerque Vieira, the purpose is to develop a semiotic-systemic analysis observing how this series is structured through three integrated narrative axes: spatiality, temporality and causality. At the end of the text it is concluded that the series proposes a flow of distinct space-time experiences, recursive and retroactive. Its multimodal causal plot articulated in a recurring spatiality and immersed in disparate temporalities allows us to have a multifaceted vision about its characters. The aesthetic project would, above all, not reside in the Einstein/Rosen premise about the reversibility of time, but in human complexity.

**KEYWORDS:** *Dark*; Netflix; semiotics; complexity; streaming.

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## Introduction

CREATED by Baran Bo Odar and Jantje Friese, *Dark* (2017) is a German TV series available on the Netflix platform that tells the story of the mysterious disappearance of a young boy and how four families in Winden, a small town in the interior of Germany, are affected by this event, which, by the way, is not the only one.

*Dark* debuted in the second semester of 2017 and soon gained the reputation of being a kind of “German version” of another ma-

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major Netflix hit, *Stranger Things* (2016), created by Matt and Ross Duffer. Nevertheless, as its complex plot progresses, what is clearly observed is that its semantic matrix diverges from the cult context of the American series, bringing out different roots, rather scientific and philosophical.

If *Stranger Things* features the pop culture from the 1980s and its symbolic imaginary as its aesthetic framework, in *Dark* it is Einstein-Rosen's theory that is assumed as the aesthetic and narrative axis. Therefore, the German series focuses on the theoretical context of the time tunnels and the possibility of reversing present, past and future events. Another aspect to be highlighted is that, unlike the American series that is based on a classic linear episodic/narrative flow, structured on a chain of events that follow each other through a cause-and-effect relation, *Dark* is permeated by complex relationships resulting from three temporalities, which correlate and interdepend.

The premise of the series' plot is that mysterious events occur in 33-year cycles in the city of Winden. Such events shake the contexts of each of the three temporalities that are presented and shown (1953/1986/2019) over the ten episodes of the first season, as if these contexts/times were integrated, competed between themselves and complemented each other in a perceptible "narrative ecosystem".

Certainly, the linear cause-and-effect relations gain here an extent similar to the famous metaphor of the chaos theory: the flapping of a butterfly's wing in one temporality becomes a tempest in another. Therefore, the more the characters try to solve the plot's mysteries through time "leaps", the more time shows itself as irreversible in its unfolding and consequences. With each attempt to settle the facts, a swirl of other facts intervenes as if reverberating through all the integrated layers.

The aim of this article is to analyse *Dark* with regard to its complexity from three interrelated axes. The first part focuses on spatiality

as narrative, with an effort to observe the complex heterogeneity within the same environment that remains over different temporalities, in this case, the city of Winden. The second part examines the issue of time as an ecosystem. From bringing together the ideas of Charles S. Peirce, Ilya Prigogine, Edgar Morin, Mário Bunge and Jorge Albuquerque Vieira, it is observed that time is neither linear nor reversible, but rather irreversible and creative. Through these concepts, it becomes possible to clarify how the "time leaps" instead of solving dramatic events, only extend and expand the network of correlations. The third part focuses on analysing the multimodal causalities observed throughout the series and how an ecological mediation, through diagrams, is necessary to allow the weighting up of all the causalities that resonate within its semantic system.

## 1 On the narrative spatiality in the series *Dark*

In *Dark*, there is a clear interactive/integrative/evolutionary game being played with the narratives/temporalities involved, since each narrative/temporality weaves, in its own way, four dimensions: a) some information; b) a distinct semantic component; c) a complementary context, at once concurrent and antagonistic to what was previously seen; d) and, consequently, a different point of view on the story presented.

This circularity of perspectives amid the same macro story is not something new, since the so-called *Panoramic literature*, in the mid 19th century, had already carried out such a playful experience.

In fact, the very language of cinema – and audiovisual – drinks at this wellspring by using the multiplicity of angles and frames as a starting point in the development of a narrative. However, in the case of *Dark*, the circularity of angles and points of view is not limi-

ted to a linear narrative<sup>2</sup> of events, instead its range of action is expanded to other correlated temporalities.

Thus, facts that happen in a certain temporality resonate in another temporality, regardless of whether it happened in the past (1953/1986) or in the future (2019). Certainly, the only stable axis is that everything happens in and around the city of Winden.

In order to better understand the correspondence between *Panoramic literature* and the *Dark* series, it is necessary to pay attention to the multifaceted experience of the metropolis at the end of the nineteenth century.

In the age of the big cities, it was no longer possible to have a view of the whole scene, of everything that surrounds a passer-by, and if he just stopped searching for such an experience, he would probably be literally run over. Certainly, the metropolitan reality was not accessible through a total apprehension, but rather in the perception of its parts, which were constructed, woven, through a continuous updating, juxtaposing the present perceptual fragments to representations already mediated, as if every day there was a need for a semantic renewal in terms of space, people, goods and their advertising, etc.

[...] Whoever enters a city feels like in a dream fabric, where an event of today is articulated with the most remote of them. One house is associated with another, no matter what time layer they originate from, and thus a street appears. And further on, when this street, say, from the Goethe age, ends in another one, for example, from the Guildhermin age, the neighbourhood is formed... The culminating points of the city are its squares, where not only many streets debouch, but also the currents of its

history. (Lion apud Benjamin, 2006, p. 479)

In that phenomenologically promiscuous context, time and space were woven through a plurality of points of access, that were forged upon “small blocks of information” or fragments, that is, by historical-partial and variable micro-contexts. In this way, in that environment, the perceptual judgment was forged upon a notorious fragmentation, thus, just by slightly focusing, a place with its people was already evaluated, whether it was pleasant or not, and then it was possible to immediately change the course and leave for other places, passing by stores, and finally, a newsstand. There, in a short time, the headlines were read, and in the meantime the situation in the country, the city, a random accident and the weather forecast were already “known”. As Singer highlights: “The combination of multiple spatial-temporal perspectives in a single, instantaneous visual field (a few years before Cubism) conveys the intensity and fragmentation of perceptions of the urban experience” (Singer in Charney and Schwartz, 2004, p.100-1).

In the metropolitan environment, perceptive attention was transformed into selective action, formed by fast and moving clippings:

In this new system of objects, based on the continuous production of the new, attention [...] was maintained and accentuated by the regular introduction of novelty. [...] The vision, in a wide range of locations, has been reconfigured as something dynamic, temporal and synthetic. The decline of the classic punctual or anchored observer began in the early nineteenth century, increasingly displaced by the unstable, attentive subject [...]. He is a competent subject both to be a consumer and an actant

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<sup>2</sup> It is necessary to clarify that narrative is an action that is reported (Santaella, 2001, p.322). An action that causes effort, resistance, conflict that, as a consequence, generates facts, happenings, events, and these events move the story.

in the synthesis of a prosperous diversity of “reality effects”, a subject who will become the object of all the image and spectacle industries in the twentieth century. (Crary in Charney and Schwartz, 2004, p. 86 and 90)

Influenced by the *flânerie* and by this aesthetic of the fragment fostered in and by the metropolis, the micronarratives arise, or as Walter Benjamin called them, the *Panoramic literature*:

Panoramic literature is nothing but a short-term genre, focused on everyday life and produced in the period comprised by the July Monarchy. [...] As an established genre of modern day-to-day life, the diary of the masses plays a vital role in the processes of consumption and exchange that constitute this form of daily life. (Benjamin, 2006, p.263)

In this type of literature, no author was responsible for the entire work, on the contrary, each chapter or narrative was written by a different writer, be him real or fictional. Thus, each writer portrayed an angle of the metropolitan environment. Thereby, the book was a compilation of stories from the same space, composed of semantic fragmentariness, that is, a city mediated by several and heterogeneous points of view, some realistic, others hyper-realistic, but the same city, in this case, Paris.

Above all, those were narratives with an eye for detail, that is, they were articulated in such a way that information about the character and his environment was constructed, formatted and decanted little by little, therefore, there were different temporalities that sometimes placed the reader at one point, sometimes at another, and those points were often divergent, antagonistic.

Thus, the story unfolded amid instability, transience and fugacity, and such characteristics, above all, did not guarantee comprehension of the whole. In fact, the narratives did

not offer the totality of the metropolis, nor did they have this aim, on the contrary, in truth, the metropolitan passer-by himself did not have a total understanding of his environment, he “knew” the city in just a partial way. It was common for there to be some gaps which were totally unknown to him and this fact was not a problem for the ordinary person.

In this way, *Panoramic Literature* moved through a point of view associated to the experience of the passer-by immersed in the metropolis. It translated, through the circularity of complementary, competing and antagonistic narratives, a poetic state that was properly captured by the *flâneur* and studied by Walter Benjamin in his book *Passages* (2006).

Effectively, the complex view of reality, which could no longer be seen from one single angle, reinforced the conception of the fragment as a phenomenon, insofar as, in order to project “reality effects”, the text also had to have the same type of aesthetics and language that is found in the metropolis.

The heterogeneity of the panoramic genre only accentuates the hermeneutic complexity introduced by the lack of a point of view capable of imposing authority. The panoramic text mixes genres that are positioned in relation to contemporary reality in largely divergent ways. (Cohen, op. cit., p.267)

This hermeneutic complexity will appear in the language of cinema, with regard to the circularity of the plans and their articulation through editing, not in the so-called Precursors of film (Machado, 2008), but in a consistent and notorious way from D.W. Griffith on. Certainly, this circularity of framing – medium shots, close ups, open shots, etc. – in favour of specific dramatic articulations, give vent to the fleeting, transitory and plural – semiotic and systemic – state of the fragment of and in the metropolis.

Such circularity and variability of points of view play with imprecision, uncertainty and the collaterality of impressions, briefly, everything that the experience of *Panoramic literature* proposed while dealing with poetry linked to the metropolis. Similarly, this hermeneutical complexity is noticeable in *Dark*. For the series plays all the time with uncertainty, noise and semantic realignments for each look/character/event/context/temporality narrated there.

Certainly, the only perceptible stability in *Dark* is its spatiality, the city of Winden. It is from this small town in the interior of Germany that temporalities are woven and developed. Thus, in a panoramic way, we begin to visit: points of view, dramas, dilemmas, the enigmas of each character and their connected temporalities (Prigogine, 2011, p.46), which do not offer a total comprehension of the facts, but rather fragments, partial signs, updated with each new circularity; immersed in a Winden, at the same time, different and similar. It is necessary to say that Winden is far from being a modern metropolis, but as we integrate and intersect its temporalities, we find its semantic heterogeneity and phenomenal promiscuity.

## 2 On narrative temporalities in *Dark*

Many of the concepts we find today in modern physics were not well developed at the time when Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914) conceived his philosophy, metaphysics and semiotics. However, Peircean philosophical architecture includes concepts that converge in many aspects with those developed and accepted today in the field of modern physics.

Among these notions, there is the concept of a creative, irreversible and self-organized Cosmos. Or, as Peirce conceptualized it, within his phenomenology, there are three categories in the Cosmos: Firstness, which agrees with the idea of creativity; Secondness, which is the scope of the existing and irreversible; and Thirdness, the field of self-

organization, or better said, continuity, intellection, regularity and permanence.

Firstness corresponds to what is *first* and therefore has no relation or resemblance to anything, it is free “(...) in the sense that there is nothing behind determining its actions (...)” (Peirce apud Ibri, p.10). It is original, possessing the freshness of novelty, of genesis, of freedom. Secondness corresponds to the Other, the non-ego. It has the character of otherness, of denial, of opposing the self. It is, therefore, *a second in relation to*. From Secondness comes the notion of action-reaction, here and now, brute force, the irreversible.

We are continually colliding with the hard fact. We longed for something or passively considered it admissible and had its image in our minds, but experience forces this idea to the ground and compels us to think very differently. (Peirce apud Ibri, p.7)

Thirdness corresponds to order, regularity, continuity, permanence, habit and law. There is an order and a regularity in reality that make it intelligible. It is possible to observe the behaviour of the phenomenon and understand it from the characteristics and facts with which it is ingrained and interrelated, providing the experience of synthesis and mediation regarding the phenomenon, making it possible to predict its future behaviour. This conceptual triad pervades Peirce’s philosophical architecture, from his writings on Normative Sciences to his Metaphysics, passing through his Semiotics and classification of signs. Therefore, it was from this triad that the author conceived his Cosmology, obviously linked to his Metaphysics.

Peirce had no contact with the Big Bang Theory, or that of the primordial atom, which would have been the initiator of all things more than 13 billion years ago. Thus, the author conceived a universe in genesis (Epi, 1992, p. 278) obviously considered as Firstness: countless phenomena that appeared in time and space with no previous thing pro-

ducing them or intervening. Pure randomness, such phenomena speckled by the thousands in a permanent convulsion. Like fireflies in an open field, such events brought with them a swarm of temporalities and spatialities. Therefore, there was no environment or envelopment, as nothing remained. Everything was done and remade. An intermittent boiling. Until such events began to interact with each other (Morin, 2008a, p.72-7). Thus, the constant space-time convulsion gave way to shocks, clashes, conflicts, resistance. Once free, the universe became permeated by effort, struggle, relations of action and reaction, in short, the field of Secondness.

Blind and brute, such a universe was a summation of catastrophes happening on a large scale in all its dimensions. However, even in the midst of catastrophes and tragedies, a mediation character emerged amidst these events/phenomena making reactive actions transform into associative, symbiotic, cooperative, competitive, in short, complementary actions. The disorder of deaf interactions became the order of mutual relations and exchanges. In this way, the organization – or Thirdness – emerged in between two processes that were intertwined: the empire of creative freedom, on the one hand, and the constant barbaric attacks of reactive interactions, on the other.

The organization overcame both processes by finding, through mediations and continuities, zones of stability, stationary non-equilibrium structures (Prigogine, 2002, p.26), or homeostasis. Such zones spread and widened precisely because they promoted integrations, that is, they did not exclude creative richness, as they depended on it to overcome crises and give place to new paths, nor did they put apart action and reaction, effort and conflict, as they depended on these struggles of strength to survive.

As this universe evolved, the once free phenomena/events with their spaces and times started to join (Prigogine, 2011, p.46), associating, interrelating and resonating with each

other. Thus, different temporalities arose at different scales and different spatialities appeared in different environments (Peirce, *ibid.*, p.279). However, certain couplings did not occur in such a friendly way and catastrophes of great magnitude broke out in time and space, causing reflections of this colossal and tragic clash to gush everywhere. This is because Time, as Prigogine wrote (2011, p.64), “will never emerge from a universe governed by symmetric laws.” In this perspective, the Big Bang may have happened, indeed, given the expansion observed in the universe today (Prigogine, 2001, p.47). However, in Peirce, the character, somewhat mythological, of an “initial spark” is overcome. Especially because these catastrophic couplings can still be seen when we look at black holes and their surroundings.

As noted by Mario Bunge (2007), we have the false idea that time is something like a single, continuous flow, it is not. Bunge (*ibid.*, p.331) explains in his work “*A Flecha do Tempo*” (“The Arrow of Time”) that there are distinct arrows of time: the arrow of time of the Milky Way, of the Solar System, of Earth, of the kingdoms, of the species, of men, cells, atoms etc., they all intersect, intertwine, resonate (Prigogine, 2011, p.42) and complement each other in layers.

If we look at the world around us, as Peirce used to propose to his diligent phenomenology students, we will realize that there is indeed a variability and a plurality of temporalities and phenomena happening all the time. All integrated, but creative, that is, in a continuity of asymmetric events tending towards uniformity (Prigogine, 2002, p.44). However, these phenomonic temporalities in asymmetric diversity appear coupled one on top of the other. They are stable today due to the millions of years of mutual mediation and adjustments.

Furthermore, such adaptations – or stabilities/continuities/physicochemical laws – allowed for the emergence of countless cycles, as the regular movements of planets and suns,

the different seasons, the repetitions of alternations like day and night, the continuous flow: birth and death etc. However, this regularity – Thirdness – did not evolve as an infinite loop. On the contrary, it had to deal with irreversibility at all times, that is, times are unique (Firstness) and distinct (Secondness). They repeat, but never in the same way. It is a spiral movement, which is recursive and retro-active, and not circles repeating *ad infinitum*.

To say that Time is relative is to simplify something that is much more complex than that. Time can only be understood in its magnitude if we observe it from an eco-logical point of view (Morin, 2005 p.107). This means that temporal diversity, as well as its irreversibility and stability, unveils as a great active and self-organized system, or, precisely, an autopoietic ecosystem (Morin, *ibid.* p.286-9): creative (emerging), phenomonic (existing), generative (self-reproducing) and organized (autonomous, permanent, continuous and intellectual).

In *Dark*, this temporal ecology becomes evident as we observe that its temporalities – 1953, 1986 and 2019 – are not organized as a sequence, instead they coexist, compete and complement each other as if they belonged to the same *oikos* (Morin, 2005, p.33-4) or environment, in this case, the city of Winden. As a result, the city in the interior of Germany becomes an enclosure through which temporalities find shelter to flourish, develop and survive together. In this aspect, the temporalities are similar to the forest that grows around Winden, as they form its relief, its topology (Prigogine, 2011, p.45).

Despite having as a starting point the premise of the reversibility of Time, what we most see, throughout the episodes of the series, is its *irreversibility*; as a consequence, the actions of the characters are permanent and resonate throughout the temporal ecosystem, generating instabilities and bifurcations (Prigogine, 2002, p.22-3), or, more precisely, new semantic directions. In fact, it is in this entropic way, that perseveres far from balance,

that the plot evolves and is constructed (Prigogine, 2011, p.31). In the process, thermodynamically speaking, certain characters catalyse movements within the environment – Winden – while others try to realign or find stability.

This multifaceted game is comparable to the actions of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness in a Cosmos permanently in genesis, as mentioned above, since there is no beginning, middle and end, but multiple processes (Morin, 2008, p.266). These last are triggered by groups of characters with different interests and motivations, seeking to succeed in their purposes, but they always friction to the accommodation of competing, antagonistic and complementary purposes of other characters, to whom they may show affinity or opposition.

Perhaps the disappearance of young Mikel Nielsen (Daan Lennard Liebreuz) could be compared to an initial spark or Big Bang in the context of the plot that unfolds in *Dark*. However, this catastrophe does not start that universe, it just gushes and expands a tangle of facts, conflicts and instabilities over the temporalities. This means that other catastrophes – dramatic clashes –, of lesser proportions, already occurred before the disappearance itself and these events are more and more amplified and reverberated with each episode.

Therefore, the classic question “Who came first, the chicken or the egg?” does not even come to haunt the horizon. Because, just as Peirce’s phenomenological categories – Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness – are omnipresent (Santaella, 2001, p.36), as they evolve together, coupled one to the other, in an interdependent and complementary way, the same occurs in *Dark*, for the universe, both inside and outside the series, is only possible if there is a multiform game involving freedom/creativity, irreversibility/conflict and mediation/regularity. This means that the beginnings – the primeval ones –, the middles – the reactive ones –, and the ends – the finalities – are born, flourish and expand by operating integrations, associations, symbioses, mutua-

lisms and cooperation, that is, they are eco-dependent (Morin, 2005, p.85).

From this intricate perspective, certain beginnings are ends, certain ends are middles, certain middles are beginnings that may contain both many middles and many ends, and so on. Above all, they are multi-processes on different scales that are gushing – dissipating (Prigogine, 2002, p.21) – through different temporalities, forming a dense web of network correlations that echoes within the system.

### 3 On narrative causalities in *Dark*

The information disseminated by the series is not concentrated primarily in a single semiotic axis, that is, in only one timeline. It is rather integrated in multiple temporalities in a way that is diffused through several axes or layers of meaning. This informational design, with its range of distinct temporalities and many fluctuations (Prigogine, 2001, p.93), demands extra attention from the viewer. It requires no longer a linear mediation, but a systemic, complex one.

It is necessary to understand that the characters in *Dark* have different functions and characteristics in each space-time. Thus, in a certain temporality, a character can be the one who triggers processes that affect the contexts/temporalities all together. Therefore, the actions of those characters never remain isolated, on the contrary, they reverberate through other timelines.

In principle, an event may seem to be restricted to just one track of the continuum flow, but it is immediately perceptible that this same event resonates in the lives of others in disparate temporalities, triggering chain effects. It is observed then that the actions are more ecological (Morin, 2007b, p.41) than linear, that is, their unfoldings are not measured by simple relations of cause and effect, but, above all, are multiple causes superposed to complex consequences that recursively retrace each other in a large tangled process with many variables.

For example, the suicide of the father of

the character Jonas Kahnwald (Louis Hofmann), at the beginning of the series, is an event of different causes that intersect and that generate multiple effects, which resonate in the three temporalities/narratives and between them. It cannot be seen linearly or from one single perspective, but instead from the entire chain of events – characters, contexts and temporalities – which are integrated into the event: the suicide.

In this way, *Dark* evolves through an intricate flow of correlations (Prigogine, 2002, p.70) and it is just as the events resonate with each other that the viewer is allowed to delineate a “board” with the information distributed over the three temporalities. Dialogues, actions, scenes and characters weave a wide and complex web of inter-symbolic influences (Vieira, 2007, p.58) – or semantic influences –, which can only be visualized through a diagrammatic mediation. Actually, in a didactic way, the series itself shows these “boards” or diagrams on the walls of certain key characters so that the viewer can use it as mediation to this ongoing inter-symbolic influence.

This diagrammatic cut shown on the walls and projected to the viewer’s mind in face of the complexity of the set of correlated facts is a way of isolating, emphasizing, freezing and simplifying. Or as Edgar Morin (2008, p.188) observes: “The simple is just an arbitrary moment of abstraction, a means of manipulation torn from the complexities”.

Those highlighted moments, named *existential graphs* by Peirce, serve to make a necessary cut to the semantic bundles that are distributed and diffused. In this sense, the graphs would have the same logical functions that close ups, medium shots, long shots, high-angle shots, travelling shots etc. have in the cinema.

As in a movie, sometimes the mind spend more time looking at a diagram – a hypothesis, for example – and then, for this situation, a close up is needed. However, in other circumstances, the mind – or a group of them – needs to see these hypothetical – and explora-



tory – correlations more widely, as in a long shot. It is not by chance that Peirce compares the graphs to “(...) a moving pictures of thoughts before the eyes of the mind” (Peirce, 2000, p.180).

Thus, citing Peirce’s own words (2000, p.175), the graphs would have the function of “(...) allowing a clear view of the mode of connection of the parts and the composition of these parts at each stage of our operations on them”. This organizational feature of the graphs can also be clarified as follows:

(...) the organization links, transforms, produces, maintains. (...) It transforms a separate diversity into a global form (*Gestalt*). It creates a *continuum*, the interrelated whole, where there was discontinuity; it operates a change of form: it forms (a whole) from the transformation (of the elements). (Morin, *ibid.*, p.164)

The mapping of events (Vieira, 2008b, p.64) by means of diagrams/graphs allows the viewer to recognize the trajectories of the characters and the stories intertwined and interconnected, and to understand them no longer as isolated events, but as an ensemble. Thus, as the narrative flow evolves, many redundancies and trends (Vieira, 2007, p.75) appear, clarifying what was once random and chaotic, so the arrangements and ramifications of distinct and diffuse semantic bundles become cohesive, coherent and organized.

Actually, analysing closely the role of Jonas Kahnwald in the series, he is, deliberately, the axis to which the different temporalities converge. He is the character that connects, intersects, couples, and resonates through various spheres of meaning. This occurs because there is a lot of collaterality (Peirce, 2000, p.163) – the volume of experiences raised and merged over many scenes – linked to this character, in a way that his inter-symbolic influence spreads, branches and reverberates throughout the whole system or plot.

In short: the heterogeneous circularity through different – competing, divergent and complementary – points of view within the same space – Winden –, crossed by distinct and integrated temporalities, means *Dark* is mediated in a more complex way than the usual dichotomy between good versus evil.

For, at a certain moment and in a specific context, a character may have an evil profile, nevertheless, in the following space-time context, that same character appears with benevolent traits. Thus, sometimes we get involved through the view of a character in a specific temporality/context/profile, then we get involved from another perspective in a competing but complementary temporality/context/profile.

Effectively, we become affectionate and identify with a character and the time-space context in which he is immersed, to then immediately leap into the space and time of this character/context, thus having the opportunity to see the story from another angle, observing his motivations and reasons, quite often antagonistic to what was seen/lived/experienced previously in another temporality.

A dialogical game (Morin, 2008b, p.239) is in progress there, concerning, at the same time, a subjective understanding of the characters and their contexts in a specific space-time at a given moment, which is different at another space-time, and an objective analysis of their motivations, reasons and decision making. It is in this meta-level of semiotic and systemic interaction of connection and distance (Morin, 2007, p.112) that a complex process of awareness (Morin, *ibid.*, p.118) has place. In this we understand the multiple, the differences, the coherences and incoherencies, as all these coexist in a frank dialogic field of causalities through three temporal axes that associate, repel and nourish each other.

## Conclusion

*Dark* proposes a flow of distinct space-time experiences, which are recursive and retroactive. Its multimodal causal plot, articulated in

a recurring spatiality and immersed in disparate temporalities, allows us to have a multifaceted view of its characters. Thus, sometimes we get involved through the view of a character in 2019, in other moments we get another perspective in 1986, and lately we experience a third point of view in 1953.

The series proposes a circularity of experiences/empathies whose logic flows towards a mediation meta-level. Such a process, which is one and diverse at the same time, builds a reflective ring (Morin, 2007b, p.113) uniting the maximum of objectivity – recognizing the reasons and points of view of each character – and the maximum of subjectivity – through an affective attachment to their dramatic conflicts – in a large multimodal circuit (Morin, 2007b, p.111).

Erratic, revolving, elastic and expansive, such a reflective ring would promote a meta-point of view that would not exclude the unintelligible and nor would foster indifference, which is something noticeable when only one point of view is adopted on a given subject. It would, however, encompass a diversity of perspectives, taking multiple lessons from this semantic and affective circularity (Morin, 2007b, p.124), arising from different contexts/temporalities and worldviews.

The series' aesthetic project would not reside in the Einstein/Rosen premise concerning the reversibility of time, but rather in human complexity. By proposing contradictory experiences, *Dark* turns divergences into complementary relations. It gives way to the observation that it is necessary to understand human paradoxes, recognizing our limits and needs, and that we can be open to barbarism as much as to forgiveness. We do not just leap in time, but, above all, we leap in the diverse and complex facets of *homo sapiens demens* (Morin, 2007a, p.126).

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