



TIME TRAVEL IN ROM COMS: AN ANALYSIS

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Is the real reason why your life's quest of finding true love is so difficult because you only have one shot? Rom-coms at times have an almost disturbing pattern of characters needing several do-overs and exploring alternate realities to truly be happy with their lives. Here I explore what time travel really gave characters in rom coms and how much worse off the rest of us are living without this luxury.

THE SCIENCE (OR LACK THEREOF) OF TIME TRAVEL

There is apparently no creative boundary as to how one can travel through time. "When We First Met" features a photo booth that can inexplicably transport people to the past, "13 Going on 30" has sparkling wishing dust and in "About Time", time travel is an ability men in the Lake family possess. Only "Back to the Future" has an intentionally designed time machine, while in "Midnight in Paris" dreamy-eyed Gil is transported in time by the streets of Paris itself. So if you are wondering which object in your house you should attach yourself to in hopes of going back in time, it can be anything from your furniture to an item on your grocery list.

DID TIME TRAVEL MAKE LIFE BETTER?

This is a debatable question although in general it did bring closure if not a better reality to the characters. In "13 Going On 30", Jenna Rink has a lot of misplaced priorities like most teenagers do. Travelling to her future shows Jenna how much of a horrible person she could become and scares her into becoming a better person early on. A good scare to improve our personal relationships is something a lot of us could do with.

WAS IT NECESSARY?

In "When We First Met", Noah keeps attempting to woo Avery in every imaginable way possible only to realise (spoiler alert) she wasn't the girl who he should be pursuing. Honestly, just a bit more clarity and acceptance in real life could've showed Noah who he should be pursuing instead but hey what's a good love story without some time travel?

WHAT DID IT TEACH THE CHARACTERS?

The most valuable (and relatable) life lesson was learnt by Tim in "About Time" when he discovers that life should be appreciated each day to the fullest and we should be grateful for each person around us because we never know when our last interaction with them will be (easy to understand for a guy who keeps zapping back and forth in time repeatedly). Gil in "Midnight in Paris" of course also learns an important lesson against romanticising the past like a lot of us tend to do. We tend to think life was so much better 'x' number of years ago without realising how biased and fantastical those views are. A little trip to the past is the best trick to take the rose-tinted glasses off.

AND WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF US?

For those of us who don't get any do-overs in life, the best we can do is learn from the characters who did – we count our blessings, be accepting of our circumstances, and make sure we don't mess up our relationships.

If there's one thing time travel movies teach us is how far reaching consequences all our actions have.

Special mention: I'm still trying to figure out the science behind "17 Again" (if it was just his body that went back in time does it count as time travel? Perhaps not.)

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Ways to improve as a documentary photographer

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Documentary photography is tough to define. Every genre of photography is really documenting something. However, capturing certain people, places, events or objects with relevance and significance to history and everyday life is the base of "documentary photography". It is not only photography, rather, storytelling.

There is a reason why this genre of photography can be notably unyielding and flinty – it is time consuming, requires a lot of patience and is extremely intimidating. Nevertheless, this article solely exists so you can be a better storyteller. Here's how:

FIND THE RIGHT SUBJECT

The accurate subject can be immensely difficult to find when you're too lofty. You do not have to start off by photographing a political convention or rally, or a maximum security prison. Look within your own community or even your own home. You may find distinct stories. Carrie Mae Weems spent an entire year photographing her kitchen table, the series attained great historical significance, reflecting on womanhood, family and maternity. Nonetheless, there is nothing wrong with aiming big; Mohammad Ponir Hossain won the Pulitzer Prize after photographing the Rohingya refugees in Teknaf, Bangladesh. If you're decisive about a certain project – do it. You will never know what people may find intriguing.

RESEARCH, TAKE TIME, AND INTERACT

It's always wise to research before you photograph the subject. The vision will undeniably look clearer in your head, you will be able to prepare and think ahead for possible situations and outcomes. Dedicate plenty of time to a certain project. Documentary photographer GMB Akash said in an interview with the International Photography Magazine, "During doing any project at first

for many days I never take pictures because they would not be good. I would not know the people I met nor understand the place." When you take time, by default people will be more comfortable and natural around you. Interacting and communicating with your subject is key. At the end of the day, documentary photos are to be the closest to reality.

CHOOSE YOUR EQUIPMENT WISELY

Big and bulky DSLRs will not make you a better photographer. Sometimes, bigger cameras can be menacing, it's like pointing a gun at someone's head. It also might put you in a risky situation if you're in the middle of a crowd. They usually tend to be very unpredictable. It is always better to use smaller, easy to access essential cameras. Some examples may be the Fujifilm X100F, Canon PowerShot G7 X Mark II, Panasonic TZ200 / SZ200, Sony RX100 VI, etc. You do not have to sell a kidney to buy your camera though, with phone cameras improving every day, you may as well use one.

PRACTICE MORE OFTEN

Henri Cartier-Bresson said, "Your first 10,000 photographs are your worst." The secret of the scroll is to practice. The more you do, the more you understand about the genre. Before going into months and year long projects or more, practice a project with a week time, or forty eight hours of time. However, do not rush. The experience will improve your work, and soon, you'll find your big break. Although the process is exhausting, it is rewarding, and even if on a small-scale, changes and inspires people.

Some photographers you may draw inspiration from are Steve McCurry, Ansel Adams, Raghu Rai, Kosuke Okahara, David Goldblatt, GMB Akash, Soumya Sankar Bose, and Ara Güler.

