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Trabajo Fin de Grado

The Phenomenon of Nostalgia in *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Blade Runner 2049* (2017)

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Abstract

The purpose of this work is to examine the phenomenon of nostalgia in *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Blade Runner 2049* (2017). The concept of nostalgia is explored, and distinction is drawn between the terminology introduced by Svetlana Boym of reflective and restorative nostalgia. Examples of nostalgia in both films are provided. This paper illustrates how restorative nostalgia is employed especially for the aesthetics of both films, adopting several forms such as ‘pastiche’, ‘simulacra’ and ‘retrofuturism’, in order to reproduce the immoral and decaying society of film noir. Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner* utilizes the formal qualities of the postmodern science fiction genre and the cyberpunk. Denis Villeneuve’s *Blade Runner 2049* operates as a sequel and, at the same time, may function as a remake of Scott’s film. Tellingly, both films introduce reflective nostalgia with the intention to interact with the past, in order to establish an alternative present in a new future.

Keywords: nostalgia, *Blade Runner*, *Blade Runner 2049*, postmodernism, science fiction.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nostalgia has proven to be an extremely common element in contemporary society. Academic studies examining the phenomenon from all types of disciplinary lenses are innumerable. However, it seems remarkably difficult to draw conclusions in absolute terms when it comes to nostalgia. As stated by Svetlana Boym, one of the most recognized contemporary theorists concerning nostalgia, “[n]ostalgia remains unsystematic and unsynthesizable; it seduces rather than convinces” (*The Future of Nostalgia* 13).

In the past decades, there has been a particular fascination with revisiting the past. Expressions of nostalgia have multiplied, especially in the media. In cinema, several aspects and elements may function together to create or reinforce a sense of nostalgia in a movie. This is the case with both *Blade Runner* (1982) and its recent sequel, *Blade Runner 2049* (2017). The first, directed by Ridley Scott, is considered a cult film and a masterpiece within the science fiction genre. Its continuation, Denis Villeneuve’s *Blade Runner 2049* (2017), despite being a box office failure and receiving mixed reviews, is widely considered to be a more than worthy continuation of Scott’s film.

In the following pages, several concepts in relation to the different aspects nostalgia may adopt in a film will be examined, such as the terminology introduced by Svetlana Boym of reflective and restorative nostalgia; pastiche, a work of art that consciously imitates the style of another author; simulacra, a representation or image of someone or something; retro film, the recreation of different cultural experiences of specific periods; cyberpunk, a subgenre of science fiction depicting a new dystopian world emerged from post-industrial development; and film noir, a genre which usually described a sordid society in moral decline.

Blade Runner has been analysed from a multitude of points of view. The film can be seen as a quintessential example of the postmodern science fiction and cyberpunk style and theme. Despite being relatively recent, its sequel has received great scholarly attention in works such as *Lacanian Perspectives on Blade Runner 2049* and *Blade Runner 2049: A Philosophical Exploration* as a subsequent discussion addressing the great themes of its predecessor: subjectivity, identity, morality and empathy. However, few studies analyse both films in terms of their nostalgic component. This work intends to fill that gap, analysing the role of nostalgia in both films and the dialogue established between *Blade Runner 2049* and its predecessor concerning the main topics previously mentioned.

This paper takes as a theoretical basis different scholarly lines: first, the most recent and influential works on nostalgia: Svetlana Boym’s *The Future of Nostalgia*, Christine Sprengler’s *Screening Nostalgia* and Thomas Leitch’s “There’s No Nostalgia Like Hollywood Nostalgia”.

In addition, scholarly studies focused on Postmodernism in relation to cultural phenomena are used, such as Fredric Jameson's postmodernist theory, Steven Connor's *Postmodernist Culture*, as well as works in this line focused on the analysis of the selected corpus, such as *Lacanian Perspectives on Blade Runner 2049*. Drawing upon this theoretical basis, this work illustrates how restorative nostalgia is widely employed in *Blade Runner* and *Blade Runner 2049* with the intention of illustrating the corrupt and immoral society of film noir, adopting several forms in both instances, such as 'pastiche', 'simulacra' and 'retrofuturism'. Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* employs many characteristics of the postmodern science fiction genre, whereas Denis Villeneuve's *Blade Runner 2049* functions as a sequel and, at the same time, may operate as a remake of Scott's film. In addition, reflective nostalgia is introduced in both films in order to interact with the past, thus designing a different present in an alternative future.

This paper is structured as follows: firstly, a theoretical framework, where an introduction, classification and historical account of nostalgia are provided, alongside a psychological approach of this phenomenon, a concise analysis on the relation between nostalgia and media and a brief analysis on the multiple ways beyond visual recreations of the past nostalgia may adopt in cinema. Drawing upon this theoretical basis, this thesis will address the nostalgic and postmodernist elements in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* and the main nostalgic and dialogic components in its sequel, *Blade Runner 2049*. A final section will focus on the main conclusions reached after the analysis, alongside the limitations of the work and new possible lines of research.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 On Nostalgia

The term "nostalgia" typically refers to positive images from previous times. However, nostalgia originally indicated a medical condition. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term as an "acute longing for familiar surroundings, especially regarded as a medical condition; homesickness." The acceptance of nostalgia as a disease predominated until the twentieth century, when it was de-medicalized. Therefore, nostalgia has moved from a disease to "an emotion of longing for the past" (Wilson 36).

According to Davis, nostalgia "is much more likely to be classed with such familiar emotions as love, jealousy, and fear than with such 'conditions' as melancholia, obsessive compulsion, or claustrophobia" (5). Nostalgic memories can imply pleasant times of the past. However, the individual may develop both sadness and a sense of loss due to the distance from such ideal situations.

There is no cure for nostalgia. Neither the place nor the individual are the same as the nostalgic reminiscence once he or she returns to the longed place. In addition, the relationship between nostalgia and time is even more complex, since it is not possible to go back. Even if this were possible, "life experiences and subsequent changes in the self would render the nostalgic memory inapplicable" (Wilson 22). According to Jan Morris, however, nostalgia can be gratified since "we cannot return to the past, but we can go home again" (137). This suggests the issue of whether contemporary nostalgia is related more to time or place. As stated by Boym:

At first glance, nostalgia is a longing for a place, but actually it is a yearning for a different time—the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams. In a broader sense, nostalgia is rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress. The nostalgic desires to obliterate history and turn it into private or collective mythology, to revisit time like space, refusing to surrender to the irreversibility of time that plagues the human condition. (*The Future of Nostalgia*, Introduction).

In this regard, Hutcheon comments the following: "Time is irreversible. Nostalgia becomes the reaction to that sad fact." By the end of the nineteenth century, nostalgia was not merely referred to homesickness, but increasingly became related to time, rather than place. The meaning of nostalgia, therefore, began to be characterized as grief at the passing of time. Additionally, as reported by Wernick, the longed time "might be individual, but it also might be collective and historical. Hence the term's further extension as a mildly contemptuous

descriptor for golden age myths of all kinds.” (219) Thus, nostalgia implies the revision of time as myth.

Mills and Coleman describe nostalgia as “the bittersweet recall of emotional past events. Nostalgia is a type of autobiographical memory” (209). The term, however, is not exempt from certain contradiction and ambiguity. As stated by Harper:

Nostalgia combines bitterness and sweetness, the lost and the found, the far and the near, the new and the familiar, absence and presence. The past which is over and gone, from which we have been or are being removed, by some magic becomes present again for a short while. But its realness seems even more familiar, because renewed, than it ever was, more enchanting and more lovely (120).

This combination of bitterness and sweetness makes nostalgia an eminently contradictory term. Moreover, the individual may experience nostalgia for a past that did not exist in the sense our memories suggest, therefore adding even more difficulty when it comes to delimiting nostalgia. In addition, nostalgia combines the emotional and the rational. As reported by Wilson, “nostalgia realigns cognition and emotion to produce comfort and security” (23). Hence, nostalgia may be a paradoxical and confusing emotion that “encompass a wide spectrum between almost pure grief and this pervasive wistfulness” (Howland 198).

If we deepen into the meaning of the concept, nostalgia is distinguished from other terms such as “reminiscing” or “sentimentality” due to its complexity. According to Davis, words such as remembrance, reminiscence, recollection and recall “denote the mental state of a sentient being looking back in time” and “yet none conveys quite the same feeling tone as does ‘nostalgia’” (13). Moreover, as stated by Wilson, “nostalgia connotes emotion” (25) and extends beyond reminiscence and sentimentality. Experiences and expressions of nostalgia require an emotional component. Hence, nostalgia demands an active reconstruction of the past in terms of longing.

As Chilton argues, “nostalgia could be very valuable in helping us figure out what people want - their positive goals” (qtd. in Wilson 26). Nostalgia may have a higher meaning for the individual, a purpose. What makes us nostalgic reveals what we consider valuable and relevant. Moreover, through nostalgia, the individual recreates positive images from previous times, and we could face limitations in the present, but not in the past. As reported by Smith:

[W]e should recognize that remembering positive aspects of the past does not necessarily indicate a desire to return there. Remembering the past should instead be seen as a way to express valid desires and concerns about the present - in particular, about its relationship (or lack of relationship) to the past (523).

Contemporary nostalgia owes much of its significance to its role as leisure. Nostalgia “constitutes a form of leisure that need not necessarily take much time or require many resources” (Wilson 29). In hectic times, nostalgia might function as a slowing mechanism or escape. As Cameron and Gatewood suggest, nostalgic enthusiasm is due to “a psychological adaptation to circumstances of rapid culture change during which individuals fear becoming obsolete” (30).

Furthermore, nostalgia is deeply ingrained within popular culture as a marketing strategy. The consumer is invited to participate through all kinds of nostalgic or vintage artefacts. Within the entertainment industry, television shows that appeal to nostalgia and remakes are common. As Boym states, “[p]opular culture made in Hollywood, the vessel for national myths that America exports abroad, both induces nostalgia and offers a tranquilizer” (33). Moreover, as Wilson notes, “nostalgia is prepackaged and sold as a commodity” (30).

Tellingly, according to Harper, “in days of heady crisis for civilizations as well as for individuals, when men feel cut off from a future that has promised adventure and advancement, they can survive, at least for a time, as long as they have a past to return to” (32). Thus, nostalgia might function as a way to survive and fight despair in times of crisis. By looking into the past, the individual may understand better his or her present. Therefore, we can conclude that in a progressively impersonal society, nostalgia can fulfil quite significant functions for the individual.

2.2 Classification of Nostalgia

Svetlana Boym proposes a typology between two main types of nostalgia: restorative and reflective: “In my view, two kinds of nostalgia characterize one’s relationship to the past, to the imagined community, to home, to one’s own self-perception” (*The Future of Nostalgia* 41). This classification is concerned with the different ways the individual makes sense of nostalgia and his or her relationship with the longed home, distinguishing between individual and collective memory. According to Boym, this distinction is not about “absolute types, but rather tendencies” (*The Future of Nostalgia* 41) and the different ways of giving sense to longing.

2.2.1 Restorative Nostalgia

Restorative nostalgia focuses on *nostos* (home) and attempts to transcend historical boundaries in the reconstruction of the lost home (Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Introduction). Deeply related to tradition, restorative nostalgia defends an absolute truth. This

type of nostalgia is responsible for religious and national revivals. The return to origins, conspiracy and therefore reconstructing rituals, emblems and homeland myths are essential parts of restorative nostalgia. Hence, it is distinctive of several cases of contemporary nationalisms.

Nostalgics of this type do not consider themselves nostalgics; they firmly believe that their intention, their ambition, corresponds to the absolute truth. However, as Boym suggests, we should distinguish “between the habits of the past and the habits of the restoration of the past” (*The Future of Nostalgia* 42), between “age-old ‘customs’ and nineteenth-century ‘invented traditions’” (Hobsbawm 2). After all, customs were not invariable.

Invented or restored traditions refer to those practices composed of tacitly accepted rules and symbolic rituals which apparently inculcate certain values by repetition. New traditions are, however, richer in symbolic ritualization than the actual ancient customs they replicate. They develop a sense of cohesion, offering a comforting collective scenario for individual longing.

Restorative nostalgia takes care of displacement and temporal distance through the availability of the desired object and returning to the collective home. However, rather than the longing, what truly inspires restorative nostalgia is concern for those who cry out for historical incongruities, questioning the integrity and continuity of the restored tradition. Countries such as Russia under Vladimir Putin’s government, with limited discourse in the public sphere, are compelling evidence of restorative nostalgia. The political elites promote nostalgic discourses that eventually are reproduced by the public (Morenkova 40), using myths about the Soviet period and rewriting and trivializing a traumatic history of political crimes. Thus, nostalgia is included into national identity and is monopolised by the Russian state in order to encourage citizens’ perception of the past (Kalinina and Menke 59).

2.2.2 Reflective Nostalgia

Differently from restorative nostalgia, reflective nostalgia focuses on *algos* (longing) and is based on the ambivalences of longing and belonging (Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Introduction). It is related to details, not symbols, and values any shattered memory fragment, temporalizing space. Reflective nostalgia is concerned with individual and historical time, with the passage of time and a process of reflection on history. As stated by Boym, reflective nostalgia is “more oriented toward an individual narrative that savors details and memorial signs, perpetually deferring homecoming itself (*The Future of Nostalgia* 49).

Reflective nostalgia reveals that critical thinking and longing are not opposed terms. Its intention is not to rebuild the longed home. After all, it cherishes the distance. “This type of

nostalgic narrative is ironic, inconclusive and fragmentary” (Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* 50). This category of nostalgics are aware of the gap between resemblance and identity. What is more, reflective nostalgia grants nostalgics to discover the relationship between past, present and future. The past will insert itself into the present, opening up plenty of possibilities. Reflective nostalgia, therefore, can awake several planes of consciousness. Identity is not recovered through homesickness; the modern nostalgic can be sick of home and homesick at the same time.

Collective memory is an essential part of reflective nostalgia. It constitutes shared social structures of individual reminiscences. Reflective nostalgia is thus understood as the common marker of everyday life and multiple individual recollections. In contrast to national memory, shared collective memory structures offer us proofs for individual reminiscences, suggesting multiple narratives with different plots.

2.3 History of Nostalgia

Johannes Hofer, a Swiss medical student, coined the word in his dissertation in 1688. “Nostalgia” comes from two Greek roots: *nostos* (“return home”) and *algos* (“longing” or “pain”). Incidentally, *nostos* is also a subcategory of Greek literature, to which belongs the *Odyssey*, and *algos* derived from *Algea*, a common classification of a variety of maladies. Nostalgia, therefore, means pain and longing associated with home, or more familiarly, homesickness.

Hofer used the word to name an apparent new malady he had noticed especially among young Swiss soldiers fighting abroad. For him, the word defined “the sad mood originating from the desire to return to one’s native land” (381). On the report of McCann, this illness presented similarities to other afflictions observed in different countries, such as *Schweizerkrankheit* in Germany, *malatia del pais* in Spain, or *mal du pays* in France (165). The Swiss medical student, however, was the first to explicitly define this condition as an illness.

Nostalgia was said to produce “‘erroneous representations’ that caused the afflicted to lose touch with the present” (Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* 3). The patients were obsessed with their native land and showed indifference towards everything else. They confused the real and the imaginary, the present and the past. The disease also affected the body. Nostalgia caused sadness, anxiety, cardiac arrest, insomnia and high fever, among other symptoms (McCann 165). In brief, every aspect of everyday life was related to this obsession, making nostalgia akin to paranoia, and causing both physical and psychological distress. Nostalgia was considered a

dangerous disease; nevertheless, it was a curable illness. Leeches, emulsions, opium, purging the stomach and especially the return to the longed home was the most accurate treatment.

According to Hofer, nostalgia was as a “cerebral disease” resulting from “the quite continuous vibrations of animal spirits through those fibers of the middle brain in which impressed traces of ideas of the Fatherland still cling” (387). Other physicians of the time offered divergent causes. For example, Scheuchzer proposed “a sharp differential in atmospheric pressure causing excessive body pressurization, which in turn drove blood from the heart to the brain, thereby producing the observed affliction of sentiment” (qtd. in Routledge 4). According to Scheuchzer, this would explain why nostalgia particularly affected soldiers who were fighting abroad, since they were in lower altitude regions. Furthermore, other physicians proposed that the cause was “the incessant clanging of cowbells in the Alps” (Routledge 4). After all, at the time nostalgia was still considered a Swiss disease.

The symptoms previously mentioned were remarkably similar to those of melancholia and hypochondria. The former used to be considered a disease that affected the blood producing several emotional and physical symptoms such as vertigo, headache, sorrow, discontent, and anxiety. As stated by Boym, “in melancholia, thinking and feeling, spirit and matter, soul and body were perpetually in conflict” (*The Future of Nostalgia* 5). Melancholia was the ailment of philosophers and monks. On the contrary, nostalgia had a rather public extent, since it affected soldiers, sailors, or country people equally. Every person far from home could suffer from nostalgia.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the epidemic of nostalgia spread across Europe, enforcing and at the same time challenging the emerging idea of patriotism. As stated by Boym, “it was unclear at first what was to be done with the afflicted soldiers who loved their motherland so much that they never wanted to leave it, or for that matter to die for it” (*The Future of Nostalgia* 5). In this sense, in some countries, such as Russia, radical and even violent treatments were applied, based on pain and fear, to confront the new disease that afflicted especially the armies. The executions for complaining of nostalgia proved to be remarkably effective:

In 1733 the Russian army was stricken by nostalgia just as it ventured into Germany, the situation becoming dire enough that the general was compelled to come up with a radical treatment of the nostalgic virus. He threatened that “the first to fall sick will be buried alive.” ... This punishment was reported to be carried out on two or three occasions, which happily cured the Russian army of complaints of nostalgia (Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* 5).

In America, however, it was not until the Civil War (1861-1865) that the first cases of nostalgia began to be reported. Two centuries after Hofer, an American military physician named Theodore Calhoun considered that nostalgia revealed a distinct lack of manliness, and was an illness of rather weak wills.

Any influence that will tend to render the patient more manly will exercise a curative power. In boarding schools, as perhaps many of us remember, ridicule is wholly relied upon.... [The nostalgic] patient can often be laughed out of it by his comrades, or reasoned out of it by appeals to his manhood; but of all potent agents, an active campaign, with attendant marches and more particularly its battles is the best curative. (Calhoun 132).

Public ridicule, bullying, more battles and manly marches, personal hygiene and an occasional furlough; those were some of the new methods proposed by Dr. Calhoun to treat nostalgia. For him, both social background and strength of character played a crucial role in resisting nostalgia. Calhoun realized that, in America, the most susceptible to the disease were soldiers from rural areas, while boatmen, train conductors or merchants from the same or other fields were more likely to resist nostalgia.

The disease became incurable. According to Boym, “by the end of the eighteenth century, doctors discovered that a return home did not always treat the symptoms” (*The Future of Nostalgia* 6). The target of longing was not always the motherland. The doctors tried in vain to locate the locus of the desperate longing, both in body and in mind. However, in most of the world nostalgia went from being a treatable illness to an incurable disease.

Doctors believed that progress and medical improvement would eventually cure the disease. Meanwhile, nostalgia increasingly became the object of study for poets and philosophers. Its dangerous symptoms turned into welcome signs of sensibility or patriotism. Nostalgia ceased to be an epidemic that had to be eradicated and became a blessing that had to be spread. From an apparent convalescence, it now turned into a romance with the past.

In response to the Enlightenment, Romantic nationalism became one of the great allies of nostalgia and national awareness was especially common among those who travelled abroad. “The nostalgic is never a native but a displaced person who mediates between the local and the universal” (Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* 12). Every emerging nation insisted on their cultural singularity, and romantics began to celebrate its uniqueness.

By the mid-nineteenth century, it was common to appreciate nostalgia in museums and memorials. The past was no longer unknown and unattainable, making way to historicity.

Nostalgia grew inexorably alongside Romanticism and the birth of a new mass culture where incompleteness and memory were cherished. As stated by Boym:

It began with the early-nineteenth century memory boom that turned the salon culture of educated urban dwellers and landowners into a ritual commemoration of lost youth, lost springs, lost dances, lost chances. With the perfection of album art, the practice of writing poems, drawing pictures and leaving dried flowers and plants in a lady's album, every flirtation was on the verge of becoming a memento mori. (*The Future of Nostalgia* 15).

Nostalgia was firmly rooted in both the public and private spheres. However, the word itself was acquiring a certain pejorative sense, as something unscientific and outmoded. Progress and the new advances in psychology had no time for old nostalgia. Industrialization and the rapid modernization increased the yearning for calmer past times. Furthermore, several emerging nations such as Russia and the USA decided to distinguish themselves from aging Europe and elaborate their identity based on new premises, thus developing a clear sense of anti-nostalgia.

With the beginning of the twentieth century, with the development of psychology as a science, scholarly interest in nostalgia increased. For psychoanalysis, nostalgia was rather similar to depression, representing an “acute yearning for a union with the preoedipal mother, a saddening farewell to childhood, a defense against mourning, or a longing for a past forever lost” (Kaplan 466) or even “a subconscious yearning to return to one’s fetal state” (Fodor 25). Therefore, psychology continued the tradition that viewed nostalgia as an illness, in this case, a disorder of the mind. However, psychologists also commenced distinguishing nostalgia from homesickness. Until then, the object of nostalgia was the longing for home. This new approach, on the contrary, was focused on any aspect of the past. Yearning could be for something concrete like people and objects, or even something more abstract like childhood.

By the late twentieth century, however, nostalgia was no longer considered akin to depression. It was viewed as a bittersweet and even a pleasant feeling. For scholars, nostalgia reflected idealized past experiences, thus generating present positive feelings. Nevertheless, they assumed that nostalgia also included a sense of loss and longing. Hence, “this broader consideration of nostalgia as pleasure mixed with pain began to emerge, the view of nostalgia as a mental illness started to lose ground” (Routledge 4).

The positive aspects of nostalgia commenced to gain relevancy, and it began to be valued as an important asset especially within the field of psychology. For example, Davis proposed that nostalgia could be helpful for people who had experienced major discontinuity

changes in their lives (35). Hence, nostalgia began to be considered as a possible therapy for certain psychological disorders. Mills and Coleman (13) argued that nostalgic reminiscences could improve some cases of dementia among older adults. The reputation of nostalgia was definitely changing; however, further scientific proof about its consequences and true value was still needed, especially within the field of sociology.

Interestingly, in the late 1980s, nostalgia became a relevant issue within the field of marketing, as it was discovered that many users showed preferences for goods or products they had consumed during their youth. For instance, people displayed a marked preference for movie stars and films they watched in their youth or the music that was popular during their adolescence (Holbrook and Schindler 29). This type of studies began to show certain aspects of nostalgia hitherto unknown.

Media consumption and aesthetics preferences can also be significantly influenced by nostalgia. Companies tend to infuse a large number of their products with nostalgia, as well as countless movies and television series try to capitalize on it for past decades (Brown et al. 19). The scientific literature suggests its effectiveness. Tellingly, according to Pascal et al., nostalgia often increases the positive views of a brand (39).

All in all, research has shown that consumers are usually influenced and interested in advertising and marketing campaigns that make use of nostalgia. This area of research continues evolving and analysing the different effects of nostalgia and marketing on consumers. Studies from the field of marketing suggest that it is an enjoyable feeling. Nostalgia is, therefore, a desired state. "People want to mentally time travel to the past" (Routledge 7). From being viewed as a disease to being a tool to sell products, nostalgia has experimented a fascinating journey, raising many questions along the way, and it is now, in the early twentieth-first century, that we begin to have all the answers.

2.4 Nostalgia: A Psychological Approach

As it was explained above, in the past, nostalgia was considered a disease. Eventually, scholars and the general public began to perceive it as something natural and even pleasant. Once nostalgia commenced arousing the interest of psychologists and researchers in general, we began to understand it more in depth, as its essential characteristics and properties were revealed.

2.4.1 Perception of Nostalgia

There are several studies on how people perceive nostalgia today. These studies analyse, for instance, whether people still tend to associate it with a disease or vulnerability, whether they have a negative and unpleasant view or oppositely a pleasant and positive one, or whether people still do not have a clear sense or opinion about what nostalgia is. Hepper et al. (102-119) conducted a series of studies to answer these questions about how we tend to perceive nostalgia, in order to determine if there is a general consensus about its universal features. First, participants had to list the characteristics they believed best describe and define nostalgia. The study's ultimate goal was to generate a list of words or phrases concerning the fundamental characteristics people attach to nostalgia.

After a series of subsequent studies in which the first impressions were delimited and corroborated, the results were as follows: there is general consensus on how people understand nostalgia and its fundamental characteristics: "Memory/memories", "remembering", "the past", "childhood/youth" and "longing/yearning" were some of the words or phrases most commonly used. Even though each individual may have his or her own notion and perspective on nostalgia, in general, the vast majority consider that it shares a series of characteristics. Therefore, we can conclude that "Nostalgia is a universally understood concept" (Routledge 14).

In short, Hepper et al. showed that people view nostalgia as an experience related to fond and past memories. Frequently these memories belong to our childhood or youth. In addition, nostalgia has a social nature, being deeply tied to close relationships. In general, it tends to be associated more with meaningful and positive feelings than with negative ones. Finally, nostalgia is also associated with a sense of loss and longing and a desire to return to the past.

2.4.2 The Experience of Nostalgia

The research on the perception of nostalgia proved the general consensus on its fundamental characteristics. What had to be solved now is how people experience nostalgia, as well as the essence of nostalgic memories. Holak and Havlena (380-386) carried out one of the first studies aimed to analyse the experience of nostalgia within the field of marketing. The participants had to write about different nostalgic experiences related to people, objects and events. After analysing the results, it was unequivocal that the most prominent theme of nostalgia is relationships. Whether participants wrote about events, people or objects, relationships always tended to emerge. Family and friends, therefore, were quite common themes concerning nostalgia, since "nostalgia is often about those most dear to us" (Routledge

15). Photographs, for example, were a recurring object among nostalgic memories, usually involving close relationships. Thus, objects from the past frequently remind us of people.

Events that make us feel nostalgic are also often associated with relationships and have an interpersonal nature. Family vacations, religious ceremonies, weddings, and reunions of all kinds are usually events that generate nostalgic remembrances. In short, this analysis of nostalgic memories suggests that nostalgia is about relationships or objects and events that we relate to or that remind us of close people.

Researchers within the field of marketing found that nostalgia plays an important role in consumer preferences. However, many aspects related to its psychological characteristics and consequences were still unknown. Another large psychological study, Wildschut et al. (1995-1993) sought to shed light on certain nostalgia details. The researchers asked students of a university in England to write about their nostalgic experiences to analyse and classify the different themes that emerged and their prevalence.

The results showed that there are indeed specific themes that stand out in nostalgic memories. First, people were the most common objects of nostalgia. Family, romantic partners and friends are strongly related to our nostalgic memories. As the second most common element, we encounter important events or specific moments, among which, as in Holak and Havlena (1980), we can find weddings, family reunions, trips with friends, etc. Thus, essentially nostalgia consists of evoking pleasant experiences that we shared with close ones.

Additionally, the self had a prominent role in nostalgic narratives, usually occupying a main or protagonist part. It rarely occupied a minor or secondary role, and seldom appeared alone. We reflect past experiences through our own lens. Hence, nostalgic memories usually involve other people, but normally the self is the protagonist. As stated by Routledge, “the memory is our own” (1980).

Regarding emotions, the positive aspects of nostalgic narratives were clearly more prominent than the negative ones. Nostalgia, therefore, is a rather bittersweet emotion where the sweet is more significant. Moreover, many narratives tend to follow a redemptive sequence, that is, negative feelings or events end up giving way to an emotionally positive conclusion. In short, in nostalgia, positive emotions eclipse the feelings of sadness.

2.5 Nostalgia and Media

In the past couple of decades, there has been a particular fascination with returning to the past, to the “good old days”. However, who would have imagined back in the 1990s, when what was expected was a future full of technology, that actually it would be full of nostalgia?

Expressions of nostalgia have multiplied since the beginning of the twentieth-first century in both objects and media content. In social networks like Facebook or Twitter, for example, there are countless groups and accounts dedicated to certain areas of nostalgia: old television series, vintage clothes, music from other times, etc. In other social networks, such as Instagram or Snapchat, it is also quite common to find photos edited to give them a touch of antiquity or to resemble those of Polaroid. In general, the web is saturated with elements that are usually referred to as retro or vintage.

In cinema, movies like *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* (2019) or *Midnight in Paris* (2011), and TV series like *Mad Men* (2007), *Boardwalk Empire* (2010) or *Strangers Things* (2016) explore the social life and aesthetics of past decades. Moreover, the overabundance of revivals, remakes and reboots indicate that Hollywood tries to make profit of these nostalgic times. Additionally, advertising, as mentioned before, is not exempt of it; actually, it is quite the opposite. The same applies to fashion, music or video games, also immersed in this recent wave of remakes.

Nevertheless, nostalgia is not only a trend; it expresses something more profound, concerning negative and positive relations of time and space. Nostalgia is a way of living, a way of imagining and reinventing the past, but also the present and the future. In addition, the recent nostalgia boom has also unleashed wide interest in the scholarly world, being studied from several points of view, such as the media obsession (Hutcheon), waves (Davis), modes (Jameson), or as a companion of progress (Boym). This emerging wave of nostalgia could indicate several issues, being the crisis of temporality (Boyer 69) one of the most appealing arguments. The increase of expressions and nostalgic worlds would indicate a strong reaction to new technologies, in a vain desire to slow down, as well as a firm desire to escape this crisis through travel and nostalgia. Thus, nostalgia can present several elements of progress, but also of crisis.

Furthermore, as sociologist Zygmunt Bauman suggests, in today's world, the individual would have forgotten the significance of privacy and the importance of solitude ("From Privacy to Publicity"). We are not used to being alone anymore, without media, and it can often seem frightening. In addition, due to our fear of being alone, we go out into public more frequently and more informally. Thus, publicity becomes essential to us. The possibility of never being alone, the possibility of escaping reality at any moment and going into the 'online world', paradoxically leads to the dreaded loneliness from which we genuinely pretend to escape. As stated by Bauman, we are a "collection of loners who are constantly in touch" ("From Privacy to Publicity"). In any case, we live in a new era in human history and the change that is currently

taking place towards the greater importance of media, in conjunction with the increasing possibility of collecting, evaluating and monitoring our data, is probably more significant than the change brought about by the invention of the printing press.

2.5.1 Nostalgia, Media and Memory

The past is represented through the present, which at the same time contrasts parts of the past and can include imaginations of the future (Niemeyer 3). This way of understanding time is strongly related to the concept of memory. Our ability to remember the past is inevitably related to the human mind's limitations, including, sometimes voluntarily, falsified or embellished memories. History and memory are therefore not the same, either socially or epistemologically. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between them due to memory is essential for "historical elaboration" (Le Goff 281).

Frederic Jameson argues that media are the agents responsible for historical amnesia (19-20). Other scholars suggest that the acceleration of history is due to "media-narrated events" (Niemeyer 4). The present takes place in a critical period in terms of historical reflection, especially due to the news media, and particularly the live news broadcast. This involves a rather difficult relationship between memory, media and history. Moreover, "media have always been part of historiographical processes" and "can activate and render memory shareable" (Niemeyer 3).

Nostalgia is associated with the concept of memory since it evokes places and times that no longer exist or are out of reach. Therefore, nostalgia offers a "special significance for memory studies" (Atia and Davies 180). In addition, media can provoke two types of memories: simple recalls by effect, and reminders or researches related to temporal distance (Ricoeur 22). Consequently, nostalgic feelings and expressions are linked with the concepts of memory and media, and media participate in the development of nostalgic remembering. In short, nostalgia, media and memory are interwoven in intriguing and ambivalent ways.

2.5.2 Times and Spaces for Nostalgia

As it was explained above, the marketing of nostalgia is prosperous, "playing with the nostalgic emotions of potential consumers" (Niemeyer 4). Historical locations and monuments converted to facilitate tourism and merchandising, as well as objects and media fabricated for a merely nostalgic purpose are extremely common in today's society. However, considering the vast amount of studies from a multitude of points of view that we can find on nostalgia, to reduce it to a social and regressive phenomenon of popular culture, to mere marketing or

historical amnesia would be something quite simplistic. On the contrary, we should consider a broad social, historical, economic or even political context, when it comes to understanding nostalgia. Nostalgia, therefore, could be interpreted as an ambiguous phenomenon combining complex psychological and emotional structures, as well as social, cultural, political and economic ones. In this sense, rather than offering a classification of nostalgia in terms of media, we could use the notion of *nostalgias* (Niemeyer 6).

Media can function as a producer of narratives and nostalgic content but also as a trigger for nostalgia. The new technologies operate as tools and platforms of nostalgic expressions, and they may even become nostalgic for themselves, for their past and their past contents and structures. In this sense, we must bear in mind their perpetual change. The relation between media and new technologies is, therefore, severely nostalgic. Consequently, the development of new technologies, especially in communication, has caused media content to become a fundamental element of nostalgia.

Literature on nostalgia has focused especially on diagnosis. In recent times, however, we have appreciated several studies that approximate nostalgia in terms of its curative or therapeutic characteristics. As Dames argues, nostalgia should be considered with “the freedom to treat it not as a symptom that *explains* something, but as a force that *does* something” (271; emphasis in the original). Thus, its relationship with the media could imply an endless number of temporal experiences. Consequently, nostalgia would be able to transform the past using imagination. As an example, we could consider the movie *Good Bye Lenin* (2003). The movie’s main character creates an idealized German Democratic Republic to hide all that has changed since 1989 from his communist mother, in a coma since the fall of Berlin Wall. He uses media discourses, objects and different rituals. At the end of the film, he realizes the potential of nostalgia, feeling overwhelmed in his own strategy (Niemeyer 10).

Overall, we should not consider nostalgia as something we simply feel. In the same way, we should not consider it as a mere cultural product. Instead, nostalgia could be something we do in multitude different ways, especially in the field of media.

2.6 Nostalgia in Cinema

Nostalgia and cinema are related in multiple ways beyond visual recreations of the past. Interestingly, nostalgia has permeated many facets of cinema, and various components may function together to create or reinforce a sense of nostalgia in a film.

2.6.1 Beyond the Film

Nostalgia as a feeling or mood can be triggered in several ways by the cinema. Considering Boym's classification of nostalgia, we can distinguish a version of restorative nostalgics among those who seek to live in certain filmic worlds and the personality of characters and actors, or more typically a combination of both. This type of nostalgia seeks to restore vestiges of cinema's past. In these cases, "nostalgics seek to reproduce what they perceive to be the essence of these lost and, in many cases, impossible objects" (Sprengler 69). In addition, nostalgia's industry and fan organizations encourage and support these seemingly fruitless impulses.

Similarly, reflective nostalgia is also structured within the different ways in which cinema and people's commitment can be related. In its psychic and physical form, cinema may function as object of this type of nostalgia. For example, it is worth noting the debate that often provokes the demolition of old cinema theatres. Particular architectural value and social significance are often attributed to buildings and settings of public or community nature, such as fairgrounds or sports stadiums. Efforts to preserve such sites can be observed since the mid-twentieth century. In these cases, nostalgia performs an essential role, since this type of buildings tend to be seen as containers for memories and therefore, its demolition would imply detachment with these memories.

Audience past experiences and old movie theatres are just two examples of cinema objects that can produce longing. There are numerous forums, websites or fan clubs, for example, that attempt to recapture or at least recall these or other practices concerning cinema. Old-fashioned acting styles or genres may provoke both reflective and restorative nostalgia in ways that the distinction between the two tends to blur. Hence, beyond the individual filmic text, cinema generates a series of memories, feelings and practices of great importance for the individual.

2.6.2 Narrative

In classic Hollywood, nostalgia's narrative involved an apparently ideal present state that is eventually lost. Such loss initiates the state of longing and attempts to retrieve the past ideal condition. Despite the numerous changes the narrative has experienced, this structure is still considerably common in contemporary Hollywood. Typically, the story is presented as a state of equilibrium. This original state is disturbed and threatened, making the characters restore the order in their lives. However, the original state is rarely recovered by the ending credits; the final scenes often present a different and even evolved world from the first. Thus,

“the original state of equilibrium is akin to nostalgia’s object” (Sprengler 73). The ideal and the equilibrium state both inspire attempts and searches to recover places or times supposedly better than the present.

In the same way as narratives structured by nostalgia, narratives about nostalgia may also adopt several forms. A recurring variation consists of involving the protagonists in nostalgic longings for their childhood once they return their childhood home. These sites often function as portals that provide some type of access to the past. Nevertheless, eventually these characters come to comprehend that the past is irretrievable. As stated by Sprengler, “pilgrimages to rediscover these places provide opportunities to physically and, by extension, mentally, inhabit these objects of nostalgia, ones shaped and interpreted by memory and the imagination” (74). Whether accessed mentally through flashbacks or physically, these nostalgic objects are often represented as motifs of past manifestations. These sites are described and depicted within the film as being of great significance. However, although memories generated by these sites function as the motive for the protagonists’ journeys, their rediscovery seldom provides the expected transformative and enlightening experience. Instead, it is the journey itself that assumes most of the narrative importance, often leading to such transformative experience, self-discovery and concluding that, although the past cannot be revisited, memory may function as a model to achieve a better future.

Another variation of nostalgia’s narrative would consist in revisit the past not mentally but physically, usually through some method of travelling to the past, such as a time machine. Science-fictions films like *Terminator* (1984) or *Back to the Future* (1985) are fuelled by nostalgic negation, that is, to improve the present by changing the past. Nevertheless, the differences between returning to the past and doing it in memory are substantial. Tellingly, returning to the past physically transforms the present. On the other hand, returning to the past through memory transforms the characters’ minds and their interpretation of the present. In addition, “while the return to the past is fuelled by nostalgia, the past returned to is not a nostalgic construct” (Sprengler 76). The narrative’s world may appear as a nostalgic object. However, the character’s present-self experiences it as its present. Thus, it does not implicate memories of a past self.

Furthermore, nostalgic reminiscences are structured and filtered by the present. In other words, they originate in the present of the character. This is often supported through voice-overs, maintaining the presence of characters who interpret the past through memory. Therefore, nostalgia may provoke physical returns to the past and flashbacks depicting

memories of the past, but only the latter works as a “nostalgic construct for both the protagonist and the spectator” (Sprengler 76).

2.6.3 Music

Similar to the narrative, music may also be closely related to nostalgia within cinema. According to David Shumway, popular music on film soundtracks may trigger longing in the listener and “constantly keep the viewer located somewhere else” (42). The songs may function as memory catalysts, recalling experiences from when the song was first heard or a time when it was heard frequently. Thus, due to music’s ability to arouse both deep memories and emotions, films often use famous songs to cause nostalgic responses in specific moments in the narrative. *Forrest Gump* (1994), for instance, uses this strategy in which several fragments of very famous songs are used at specific times to create an aural montage that leads to different interpretations of the scene. The sequences that occur during the Vietnam War are accompanied by excerpts from *All Along the Watchtower* (1968) by Jimmy Hendrix, *Volunteers* (1969) by Jefferson Airplane, *For What it’s Worth* (1966) by Buffalo Springfield and *Fortunate Son* (1969) by Creedence Clearwater Revival, most of them explicitly anti-war songs, thus reflecting the countercultural movements of the late 1960s. However, the film uses specific excerpts that, out of context, darken the political message. Hearing only the first verse of *Fortunate Son* while showing camaraderie images in a platoon implies support rather than critique. After all, one of the film’s premises is to evoke nostalgia for mainstream U.S. and, at the same time, ridicule several historical events and the counterculture of the second half of the twentieth century. As stated by Sprengler:

Using popular music to evoke nostalgia for personal experiences while illustrating the Vietnam War is tantamount to requesting that spectators suspend their critical faculties and indulge in private reminiscence during the representation of a horrific event in which the hero of the film (mainstream America as embodied by Forrest Gump) is implicated. (77).

Furthermore, the nostalgia suggested in many Hollywood film scores tends to be subtle, working subconsciously. Nevertheless, these scores function with various cultural codes to evoke different film genres or Hollywood eras. There are specific scores for particular genres. Moreover, a simple series of bars may evoke even a specific narrative event. The ability of certain arrangements to express particular emotions emerged from constant repetition since the Golden Age of Hollywood. As Sprengler suggests, “when associated with other cues, they are particularly adept at confirming a film or scene’s engagement with nostalgia” (78).

2.6.4 Opening Sequences

Music is also an indispensable element in numerous opening sequences of films that occur in the past. Typically, a series of flash clips or photographic shots are shown along with the opening credits and a particular musical selection, generally representing the social environment of the filmic world. In several cases, they refer to the material culture and historical events of a specific era to place the film in time and illustrate the social position of the characters.

L.A. Confidential (1997), for instance, uses its introductory sequence to foreshadow the film's message. Using Johnny Mercer's song *Accentuate the Positive* (1944) ironically, what at first appears to be a nostalgic construction of 1950s Los Angeles, turns into an indictment of the corrupt powers that control the city. By the end of the opening sequence, the images and the lyrics are far apart, offering a harsh and ironic juxtaposition that set the film's message. In this case, in the first part of the opening sequence, a voice-over describes how jobs are plentiful, the land is cheap, and families are happy, while images of orange groves and sandy beaches are shown. It continues with images of movie stars like Frank Sinatra and Marilyn Monroe, praising Los Angeles as a land of opportunities and a paradise on Earth. These fragments, extracted from home movies and newsreels, appear in different types of black and white and colour, thus maintaining the aesthetic signs that identify them.

In the second part of the opening sequence, the images offer an entirely different vision of Los Angeles as a city where organized crime is rampant. The narrator suggests the disparity between the image they are trying to sell and the reality. From here, the documentary footage is interspersed with images from the film's reality, introducing several characters and their crimes. These last sequences are clear and crisp, thus lacking the typical marks of past technologies. Hence, the film's reality becomes more authentic than the documentary sequences, which function as a representation of false and nostalgic images. At this point, *Accentuate the Positive* is contradictory, in terms of content and musically, due to continuous flashes of bloodied bodies, thus contrasting with the first part and its function as a nostalgic construct.

2.6.5 Period Casting

In the neo-noir *Sin City* (2005), the director Robert Rodríguez praised actress Carla Gugino's role because she seemed "displaced in time". In other words, the actress somehow resembled those of 1940s film noir. Thus, the actress's appearance was relevant in giving authenticity to the film, and Gugino had the image that Hollywood promoted at the time. As

stated by Sprengler, period casting is “the part of selecting actors based on their resemblance to film stars of times past” (80). There are several factors by which an actor can be associated with a specific period. In the case of Carla Gugino, her body type and her face showed a close resemblance to the beauty construct of the femme fatal, especially relevant in post-war film noir.

Furthermore, the voice may also serve to place an actor in a past era. David Strathairn (*L.A. Confidential*) has both an appearance and voice that can easily be associated with the decade of the 1950s. Similarly, Cate Blanchett may definitely emulate actresses such as Ingrid Bergman, Greta Garbo or Katharine Hepburn, as she already did in *The Aviator* (2004). Moreover, makeup, costumes and even hairstyles are especially relevant when making an actor look like a star from the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s and so on. Consequently, period casting may help situate a film in a certain period by recalling genres, performances, or stars from the past. Through his or her voice, appearance and even his or her gestures and movements, the actor may be fundamental when evoking nostalgia for different facets of cinema’s past and the historical realities it represents.

3. THE PHENOMENON OF NOSTALGIA IN *BLADE RUNNER* (1982) AND *BLADE RUNNER 2049* (2017)

3.1 Nostalgia and Postmodernism in *Blade Runner* (1982)

Postmodern science fiction genre has connected past and present into the future and, at the same time, future into the present. Modernism examined different ways of understanding the real. Modernist science fiction authors and film directors experimented with ways of explaining the real. However, as Connor suggests, postmodernism science fiction “has experimented realistically with forms of reality themselves” (134). Writers such as Jules Verne and H.G. Wells and directors like Christian Nyby (*The Thing from Another World* 1951) and Fritz Lang (*Metropolis* 1927) inferred a future from their present through a logical progression, thus establishing a fictitious distinction between present and future (Connor 135).

Modernism’s duality of human and nature, absent or artificially shown in most postmodern science-fiction film, established an anthropocentric world. As stated by Ross, “to be ‘human’ and ‘modern’ is a triumph over nature” (2). Nevertheless, World War II could function as a watershed within human development. The destruction of entire cities in few seconds impaired humanity’s determination to affect the future. Science fiction was a celebration of human development, concerned with the impact of progress. It observed the triumph of humanity over nature through advanced technologies, such as the rocket ship, the submarine or the time machine. Moreover, fiction was focused on the subject, indifferent to history. There was “no undermining of the underlying unity of self. Subjectivity was relatively coherent, relatively centred and stable” (McHale 254). The First World War undermined modernist confidence in the human race’s capacity to restrain nature, but it never completely broke it. Science was still an element of good. However, McHale suggests a certain degree of crisis in modernist science fiction where “perspectivism does exert considerable centrifugal pressure on self and there are tendencies in modernism fragmentation and decentering” (255).

Postmodern science fiction is based on the different modernist concerns about progress and technology. Among its most characteristic elements are globalization, the influence of multinationals, information technology and the media, bioengineering and several apocalyptic visions of the future, especially those including biological weaponry and nuclear holocaust. Furthermore, the science-fiction genre is one of the most prominent within postmodernism. Indeed, science fiction is the only genre with the essential characteristics to explain the drastic transformations technology has accomplished in post-industrial society.

The term “Cyberpunk” was coined by the editor Gardner Dozois and is characterized for deriving several elements from postmodern science fiction. Cyberpunk directors and authors

developed a new dystopian world emerged from post-industrial development. This new world was distinguished by the dissipation of all hope deposited in the human race. As an example, the dominant classes tend to be cyborgs, computers or authoritarian elites. Moreover, cities cease to be clean and gleaming metropolises and become dystopian labyrinths of poverty and chaos, depressing metal cages or sterile and gloomy wastelands. In certain instances, multinationals have supplanted governments. These text and films emphasize the lack of space and consequent claustrophobia in crowded and cramped cities such as Los Angeles 2019 (*Blade Runner* 1982). Furthermore, cyberpunk combines the futuristic with the mundane. This complex union of temporal modes suggests an exhausted and obsolete future of “technological hyperdevelopment and decrepitude, a sense of simultaneous expectation and exhaustion” (Connor 135). Similarly, themes tend to be confusing and complex: symbiosis between computers and humans, omnipotent organizations or bioengineering, all combined in an urban and post-apocalyptic environment.

Postmodern science fiction authors and directors present an obvious sense of nostalgia for the past. Scepticism for progress, science and class struggle lead to a “decentering displacement of the subject in postmodernism” (Ross 7). In response to these phenomena, nostalgia occurs for what was considered genuine and real. Therefore, the postmodern style consists of a combination of multiple opposing styles. The set of dislocated histories and styles results in nostalgia or ‘retro film’, inducing the recreation of different cultural experiences of specific periods rather than historical settings. As stated by Connor, “what is being evoked is not an actual past but the cultural experience of a particular period” (199).

Blade Runner (1982) is one of the greatest examples of ‘retrofuturism’. The film employs both visual and narrative codes from the past in its depiction of a dystopian and post-apocalyptic future. Directed by Ridley Scott, the film is a nihilist, grim and futuristic tale set in Los Angeles in 2019. The protagonist, Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford), is a futuristic cop whose job is to find and “remove” (terminate) replicants: bio-engineered humans used as slaves in the “off-world colonies”. Bryant (M. Emmet Walsh), the cool-blooded captain of the Blade Runner unit, compels Deckard to accept one last assignment: retire five replicants who have hijacked a spaceship and returned to Earth. The opening titles of the film read as follows:

Early in the 21st Century, THE TYRELL CORPORATION advanced Robot evolution into the NEXUS phase - a being virtually identical to a human - known as a Replicant. The NEXUS 6 Replicants were superior in strength and agility, and at least equal in intelligence, to the genetic engineers who created them.

Replicants were used Off-world as slave labor, in the hazardous exploration and colonization of other planets.

After a bloody mutiny by a NEXUS 6 combat team in an Off-world colony, Replicants were declared illegal on earth - under penalty of death.

Special police squads - BLADE RUNNER UNITS - had orders to shoot to kill, upon detection, any trespassing Replicant.

This was not called execution.

It was called retirement.

In *Blade Runner*, Scott presents a mighty futuristic world. Vangelis's memorable music opens over a grotesque and sinister city of oil factories and refineries. Los Angeles 2019 has become an industrial wasteland replete with fire and smoke-belching towers. Through the use of music and image, Scott introduces an uncomfortable and looming world of blackening nature.

Once the camera zooms to ground level, the viewer witnesses a crowded and chaotic futuristic vision of civilization. Unlike today's cosmopolitan metropolis, *Blade Runner's* Los Angeles depicts a society juxtaposing decadence and opulence, outdated and advanced technology, eastern and western culture, giving the film a disturbing contradiction of extremes. In addition, as Ross argues, "within this chaotic mash of image and scene, nostalgic references to the past enable the viewer to more readily identify and link the issues and ideas Scott presents" (10).

Blade Runner combines the characteristics of several film genres, among which science fiction and film noir stand out. The latter, of great relevance during the 1940s and 1950s, described a sordid society in moral decline. Film noir was characterized by tough detective's tales inspired on the stories of writers such as Dashiell Hammett or Raymond Chandler. As an example, *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) or *The Big Sleep* (1946). Tellingly, Scott's film deliberately employs restorative nostalgia in his representation of the numerous thematic and visual peculiarities of this genre, thus depicting a dark, alienated and decaying society in a not-so-distant future. Film noir was the genre Ridley Scott needed to portray his futuristic vision of a corporate and immoral future where humanity is questioned. As Gaff (Edward James Olmos), the police officer who escorts Deckard during his investigation says, "It's too bad she won't live, but then again, who does?" (*Blade Runner* 1:48:54-1:49:00), what could be interpreted as a gloomy recognition of the cruel reality human beings suffer in such a corrupt and dirty environment.

Detective films of the 1940s and 1950s were characterized by their grim and bleak style. The plots included private investigators or police officers exhausted of living in a corrupt society that they were trying to protect nonetheless. Having a code of honour as pillar of their lives, these characters were tough and cynical men who had emerged from painful experiences. In the same way as the protagonist of *Blade Runner*, the film noir hero knows the streets and their backgrounds, probably drinks too much, is attractive to women, and is prone to explaining himself through voice-overs. Hence, Rick Deckard is not significantly distant from the great characters of film noir played by Humphrey Bogart. Consequently, the main character of *Blade Runner* possesses all the conventions of a film noir hero. Deckard follows mysterious clues to his objective, saves damsels in distress, and encounters strange characters on his path.

Rachael (Sean Young), the replicant created by Eldon Tyrell (Joe Turkel), has an image remarkably similar to several movie stars from the 1940s or 1950s, such as Lauren Bacall and Greta Garbo. Her conservative hairstyle and dress code distinguish her from the two female replicants, Pris (Daryl Hannah) and Zhora (Joanna Cassidy), the ‘basic pleasure models’. In addition, she is the only one among the replicants who is originally unaware of her true identity. Her memories are implanted, thus making her the perfect image of Tyrell's motto, “More human than human”. Moreover, the sinister Gaff is an evident example of retro fashion in the form of a hat, vest and bow tie typical of the 40s. On the contrary, the replicants Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer) and Pris have a distinctive 70s punk style, giving the film part of its cyberpunk aspect. As stated by Ross, most of the film characters “provide a spectrum of cameo representation” (11). Thus, Scott establishes a “substitution of history with an idea of past difficulties in naming a present, of knowing and mapping our post-modern condition” (Brooker and Brooker 21).

Nostalgia in postmodern science fiction performs a significant role beyond making links between past, present and future, and is not exclusively composed of outdated items and images. According to Fredric Jameson, science fiction is the heir and functional equivalent of historical fiction (“Postmodernism and Consumer Society” 116-117). As Ross argues, “in literary historical terms, science fiction takes up just where and when the historical novel leaves off” (12). Furthermore, as McHale suggests:

Science fiction accomplishes for our imaginations the sorts of things that the historical novel used to accomplish; in particular, it helps us to historicize our present by reimagining it as the past of a determinate future, just as historical fiction once helped us in a similar way by reimagining the present as the future of a determinate past (238).

Postmodernism has been a significant part of the mass culture within post-industrial society. Tellingly, it functions as popular entertainment. Science fiction often operates in the

market through “pastiche” or blank parody. Pastiche is a work of art that consciously imitates the style of one or more authors. *Blade Runner* is an obvious example of pastiche of ‘40s and ‘50s noir stylings. In addition, it is worth noting the difference between parody and blank parody, since pastiche is essentially employed as a nostalgic resource, especially within science-fiction cinema, and lacks the humour commonly associated with parody. In fact, melancholy tends to be a frequent characteristic of this type of work. Hence, through pastiche, postmodern directors and authors demonstrate a longing for bygone times and lost styles.

According to Jameson, parody is one of the forms nostalgia may adopt within postmodernism (“Postmodernism and Consumer Society” 116). Parody imitates other styles and exploits their uniqueness, appropriating their mannerisms to manufacture a product that will basically ridicule the original. However, Jameson argues that the satirical impulse is not always consciously present in parody. Frequently, there will be some degree of sympathy for the original product (“Postmodernism and Consumer Society” 113). Moreover, far from being a mere satire of “such dead forms” (“Postmodernism and Consumer Society” 116), pastiche satisfies the yearning to experience them again. For many, it will be a completely new adventure. For others, it will gratify the nostalgic ambition to relive a specific period through old aesthetic artefacts. As stated by Jameson, “by reinventing the feel and shape of characteristic art objects of an older period, it seeks to reawaken a sense of the past associated with those objects” (“Postmodernism and Consumer Society” 116).

In addition, Jameson criticizes the aspect of contemporary fiction by which cinema seeks to blur the immediate contemporary reference in order to receive it as a nostalgic product, “as if the narrative is fixed in some indefinable nostalgic past, stuck in an eternal past beyond history” (“Postmodernism and Consumer Society” 117). According to the literary critic, it seems that we are “unable today to focus on our own present, as though we have become incapable of achieving aesthetic representations of our own current experience” (“Postmodernism and Consumer Society” 117). Furthermore, considering that postmodern science fiction does not seem to represent the current experience meticulously, it is questionable if it will be able to imagine a future with a certain degree of conviction. However, it should be noted that science fiction remains that, fiction. Hence, the great themes and concerns frequently discussed are “timely comments on our present” (Ross 18).

Blade Runner makes an emotional commentary concerning genetic bioengineering and the essence of being human. Ridley Scott examines the concept of being human and the superior race. The election of Rutger Hauer as the leader of the replicants, Roy Batty, does not seem casual. Batty is blond, strongly built and extremely intelligent, thus recalling certain stereotypes

of the superior race promoted by the Nazis. It is worth recalling Tyrell Corporation's motto, "More human than human". Thus, the English director blurs deliberately the distinction between humans and replicants, obliging us to redefine our humanity. Interestingly, the viewer will be reflected in the replicants, who despite their more than questionable acts, demonstrate more humanity than Tyrell or Deckard himself.

Blade Runner's main character, Rick Deckard, has virtually no history. Barely few superficial details about his life are known. The character played by Harrison Ford is a retired Blade Runner who lives alone in a shady apartment. He asserts his wife left him for being a "cold fish". In fact, this last detail is part of one of the deleted scenes from *The Final Cut*, the last and definitive version of *Blade Runner*, more in line with the intentions of Ridley Scott. Tellingly, the lack of history and superficial representation of certain characters is another form nostalgia adopts within postmodern science fiction cinema: simulacra. First theorized by the sociologist Jean Baudrillard, a simulacrum is based on the ability of the media to counteract disagreement by merely representing it. As Connor argues, "nothing can resist the conversion of reality into empty signs" (55). In contemporary times, signs do not need to have any verifiable relationship with what they theoretically represent. According to Connor:

The fading out of the real, is a compensatory attempt to manufacture it, in 'an escalation of the true, of the lived experience'... As a result of the loss of the real a panic-stricken production of the real and referential is produced which results in manufactured objects and experiences which attempt to be more real than reality itself - or 'hyper real'. (56).

Simulacrum is a widespread element in *Blade Runner*. For example, the sordid owner of the club where Zhora works, Taffney Lewis, represents the mafia of the '20s and '30s in the United States. Similarly, the club itself and the characters the spectator find in it, through their hairstyles and costumes, are reminiscent of the cabarets from the same era. Moreover, simulacra may also be found in architecture. In Scott's film, huge buildings remarkably similar to Aztec temples rise into the dark sky. Likewise, the crowded and multicultural maze of streets below may be reminiscent of a bazaar in a prominent Middle Eastern city.

Photographs are a recurring motif in *Blade Runner*, being utilized to demonstrate a past and, therefore, an identity. For example, Rachael tries to prove Deckard she is not a replicant by showing him a photograph where she appears with her allegedly mother. However, her history and memories are implanted (Doll and Faller). Leon records their own existence through a collection of photographs depicting an artificial past. Afterwards, Deckard will use these photos to track down and eliminate the replicants. In addition, the Blade Runner owns a collection of ancient portraits on his piano. Despite being one of the few elements offering

information about the character, the identity of the people appearing in the photographs remains ambiguous (Doll and Faller).

During the film, numerous narrative and visual techniques are utilized to draw parallels between the replicants and Deckard. The director's intention to recognize the protagonist as a replicant is well known, despite the apparent indifference of the main screenwriter, Hampton Fancher, and the refusal of the lead actor, Harrison Ford. In addition to the unicorn dream and the added glowing eyes effect in successive versions of the film, Rachael is frequently framed to resemble the photographs Deckard keeps on his piano. Moreover, during the film's final chase, Roy breaks several of Deckard's fingers, to later put a nail into his palm when he feels his joints numb as his expiration time approaches. Shortly after, Deckard is about to fall from the building, and Roy saves him in the last moment. It is the second time in the film Deckard has been saved by a replicant, since Rachael, in her role as femme fatale of film noir, shoots Leon shortly before he murders Deckard.

Furthermore, there are obvious parallels between Deckard and the leader of the replicants. Tormented in character, both are perfect killing machines. In Batty's case, he also personifies several religious motifs. The replicants search for their creator so that he can grant them greater life expectancy. Once they face Tyrell, the magnate refers to Roy as his prodigal son: "The light that burns twice as bright burns half as long. And you have burned so very, very brightly, Roy. You're the prodigal son". Before killing his creator, the replicant recreates the kiss of Judas. Moreover, in the final encounter, Roy strips off part of his clothes, with injuries in his head and hand. Afterwards, the replicant exemplifies Deckard's spiritual salvation by releasing a dove. Hence, Roy Batty's quest to escape slavery can be examined in quasi-religious terms.

According to McHale, postmodernism not only employs structures, styles and references from the past, but also stands out for the looping with other works (235). Cyberpunk borrows styles and models from mainstream postmodern writers. These, in turn, drew on the styles and structures of other authors. In the case of *Blade Runner*, the title originates from a text and script named "Blade Runner (a movie)" written by the Beat generation author William Burroughs in 1979. This text was intended to adapt Alan E. Nourse's science fiction novel written in 1974, *The bladerunner*. Eventually, director Ridley Scott would ask Burroughs for permission to use the name in his loose cinematic adaptation of Philip K. Dick's science-fiction novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (1968).

Cyberpunk is the product of an unstable and uncertain society. The social impact of globalization has genuinely influenced both culture and art. The unpredictability of the future

and the uncertainty of the present are some of the premises of postmodernism. As Jameson argues, we are unable to deal with history or time, “we are condemned to seek a historical past through our own popular images and stereotypes about that past, which remain forever out of reach” (“Postmodernism and Consumer Society” 118). As previously explained, postmodernism makes considerable use of pastiche. According to Jameson, artists lack originality and advocate for a “cannibalization of all the styles of the past” (*Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* 30). Tellingly, the recycling of numerous styles originates a feeling of nostalgia and longing for the past. In addition, the civilization described in *Blade Runner* represents a true dystopia of pollution and absence of nature. Science fiction warns of this degradation. Thus, nostalgia may function as a representation of a better time threatened by science.

Blade Runner is a science-fiction film in which the viewer will experience empathy for the cyborgs. Humans, on the other hand, do not provoke such sensation. Eldon Tyrell owns a corporation that has permeated every aspect of life and cruelly uses technology for his own benefit. The magnate defines Rachael as “an experiment, nothing more” (*Blade Runner* 22:04-22:06). The callous Bryant is not interested in the means but the end. Moreover, Rick Deckard is little more than a bounty hunter. Despite the duality of the character and the feeling of guilt, the Blade Runner is a cold-blooded killing machine working for a cause he no longer believes in. In *Blade Runner*, it seems only replicants are capable of showing empathy. During the film, they kill for survival. Replicants seek to extend their extremely short life expectancy. Their leader, Roy Batty, repeatedly demonstrates a vast depth of feeling. His words, moments before he dies, are incredibly emotional: “I’ve seen things you people wouldn’t believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser Gate. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain” (*Blade Runner* 1:46:23-1:47:05). Blade Runners like Deckard are assigned with keeping replicants away from Earth, thereby alleviating human guilt and fear, and keeping intact the notion of being human. Noticeably, in their final confrontation, Roy provokes Deckard: “Quite an experience to live in fear, isn’t it? That’s what it is to be a slave” (*Blade Runner* 1:45:15-1:45:23).

In this line of thought, the parallels between *Frankenstein* (1823) and *Blade Runner* are undeniable. Mary Shelley’s work has inspired countless films. The majority of them, science-fiction films in which creating a cloned or biologically manipulated being is ultimately a moral failure. The eventual purpose of this type of films is to question artificial life, how what at first seems to be the culmination of human intelligence concludes with fear and the sentiment of human’s guilt. These types of works tend to resolve that humanity, through excessive

manipulation of technology, has the potential to destroy nature. In the case of *Blade Runner*, the film presents through restorative nostalgia the aesthetics of film noir in combination with recognizable motifs from science-fiction cinema: the futuristic urban landscape and the probable over-population, advanced technology as part of everyday life, and the flagrant absence of nature and real animals. Scott portrays a science-tainted nature in a corrupt and immoral reality, riddled with publicity and controlled by omnipotent multinationals. A true dystopia. In addition, the possibility of being replaced or destroyed by machines constitutes another of the great threats concerning technological and scientific advance. One of the great principles of science fiction suggests a society where technological advance implicates an excessive dependence on machines and a consequent loss of control. In *Blade Runner*, the replicants exempt humans from the degrading and most precarious works in the off-world colonies. Nevertheless, its mere existence implies a major threat to the human race. In case they were integrated into humanity, replicants could erase every distinction between human and machine. This loss in the distinction between natural and artificial entails the consequent loss of identity. Therefore, by embracing the past, the film delves into the dire implications future technology could have on both the environment and society. Consequently, Ridley Scott introduces reflective nostalgia in *Blade Runner* with the purpose of interact with the past in order to manufacture an alternative present in a new future.

In conclusion, nostalgia is an essential aspect within postmodern science-fiction cinema in general and *Blade Runner* in particular. As seen above, it can take numerous forms of representation. Simulacra, pastiche, or images and references from other times are merely some methods director Ridley Scott employs to revisit the past. Tellingly, *Blade Runner* offers a shocking vision of the future to which it adds memorable images from the past, thus creating a brilliant and captivating social commentary on our present.

3.2 Nostalgia in *Blade Runner 2049* (2017)

Blade Runner 2049 (2017), directed by Denis Villeneuve, functions as a sequel to Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) and at the same time as a remake. Villeneuve's film revisits the dystopian world created by Scott. The story continues decades later with Ryan Gosling as K, a replicant Blade Runner who stumbles upon a potentially uncontrollable mystery. In the same way as its predecessor, Villeneuve's film revolves around the theme of identity, memory, ontological reality and subjectivity, including in this instance, longing for parental bonds.

Differently from replicants in *Blade Runner*, in Villeneuve's movie replicants do not have an artificially short lifespan, and what's even more important, they obey. The opening titles read:

Replicants are bioengineered humans, designed by Tyrell Corporation for use off-world.

Their enhanced strength made them ideal slave labor.

After a series of violent rebellions, their manufacture became prohibited and Tyrell Corp went bankrupt.

The collapse of ecosystems in the mid 2020s led to the rise of the industrialist Niander Wallace, whose mastery of synthetic farming averted famine.

Wallace acquired the remains of Tyrell Corp and created a new line of replicants who obey.

Many older model replicants - Nexus 8s with open-ended lifespans - survived. They are hunted down and 'retired'.

Those that hunt them still go by the name... Blade Runner.

In Villeneuve's film, the replicant Blade Runner K discovers the skeleton of a female replicant who died giving birth, thus proving that replicants can reproduce biologically. Lieutenant Joshi (Robin Wright), the superior officer of K, orders him to find and eliminate the replicant's son to prevent another rebellion. However, K identifies the bones as Rachael's, and gradually will convince himself that he is the missing son. He will try to locate Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford), who has been disappeared for years and he believes is his father. Therefore, the trajectory followed by the film's protagonist reverses that of its predecessor. In *Blade Runner*, it was contemplated that the main character, a killer of replicants, was himself a replicant. By contrast, *Blade Runner 2049* offers hints until the end of the film that its protagonist, a replicant Blade Runner, is actually a human being.

In this line of thought, Joshi entrusts K to eliminate the replicant's son since he supposes a potential threat to the prevailing social structure. Should the secret of the replicant birth come to light, the ontological difference between human and replicant would be further diminished, "the wall separating humans and replicants would collapse" (Shanahan "What Am I To You?" 230). Once every ontological difference was erased, class inequalities would no longer be justifiable. Hence, Lieutenant Joshi feels the imperative need to eliminate all traces of this birth. "This breaks the world" (*Blade Runner 2049* 50:48-50:50). Thus, Villeneuve's film expands the premises of the original film by further questioning the distinction between human and machine, and therefore, the essence and significance of being human. As stated by Bove, "*Blade Runner*

2049 is more of a Frankenstein story, a story of the creation of a creature that can procreate” (141).

Blade Runner 2049 is nostalgic for its predecessor. In Scott's film, Rachael (Sean Young) was a replicant who yearned to believe she was human. In the same way, in *Blade Runner 2049*, K yearns to believe he is human. In both films, implanted memories are indispensable to “making them nostalgic for a past they never truly experienced in the first place” (Leitch 11). Furthermore, as stated by Leitch, “like all sequels and remakes, the film is a return-with-a-difference to an earlier film it nostalgically valorizes even as it attempts to revise and improve it by deepening its moral sensitivity to the pathos of replicants” (11).

The film shows the complexities of reflective nostalgia, “the audience’s longing for a past that at some level they know perfectly well never existed” (Leitch 12). Nevertheless, the disruptive dystopia created by Scott and increased by Villeneuve constitutes a complex mix of both reflective and restorative nostalgia. According to Leitch:

Its thematic focus on both the indispensable and the untrustworthiness of the audience's most treasured memories, including their memories of the original *Blade Runner*, goes far to indicate why reflective nostalgia, so central to the American cultural experience, is so often complicated still further in American cinema. Eluding the categories of both the restorative nostalgia of heritage cinema and the reflective nostalgia of American literature, the film fuses the pleasure and pain of a perceived alienation from a homeland both idealized and dystopian that is at once a mourning of self-alienation and a cautiously reconstructive celebration of a self that may never have existed. (12).

The sense of restorative nostalgia in *Blade Runner 2049* may be overwhelming. Dennis Villeneuve’s film is presented as a conscious “replication” of its predecessor. As a sequel, it obviously involves a number of cohesive elements and continuities, both narrative and visual: retrofuturism noir, replicants and implanted memories, Blade Runners following mysterious clues, off-world colonies, a new version of Eldon Tyrell, and Rachael, the sinister Gaff (Edward James Olmos) and Rick Deckard himself relatively resuming their previous roles. Villeneuve uses numerous visual and sound references to Scott's film. For example, both the confrontation between waves of K and Luv (Sylvia Hoeks) and the opening hand-to-hand combat between the Blade Runner and Sapper Morton (Dave Bautista) may recall the final showdown of the 1982 movie. The bees that K encounters in Las Vegas recall one of the questions Deckard asked Rachael during the Voight-Kampff test. Both the colour palette and the noir lighting are reminiscent of its predecessor. Moreover, the architecture of the Wallace Corporation reinterprets that of Tyrell’s pyramid. In both films, we encounter close-ups on the eye in the

opening sequences and the replicant doxie Mariette (MacKenzie Davis) has a remarkably similar appearance to the replicant Pris. Additionally, the composer Hans Zimmer deliberately recalls certain bars of Vangelis's music, utilized in especially significant scenes.

The retrofuturism of Villeneuve's film also nostalgically alludes to specific moments in the United States history. Joi (Ana de Armas) is a digital companion designed by the Wallace Corporation to satisfy consumer's needs. The protagonist of the film acquires Joi so he can feel human. In her first scene, she greets K in a way that is highly reminiscent of a housewife in the mid-20th century. As Frank Sinatra's *Summer Wind* (1966) plays, Joi pretends to prepare a home-cooked meal, offering to mend K's clothes, who has just returned from work. The hologram Joi wears a lace blouse, a short apron, a petticoat, and a bun hairstyle. In this case, this representation of gender roles "points toward the simulacrum of simpler times, all made possible by the film's (retro) futuristic promise of digital technology" (Schmeink 136). In addition, Joi is presented as the perfect companion. Tellingly, the product slogan is, "Everything you want to see. Everything you want to hear". This is precisely what Joi does for K. The replicant confides Joi his suspicions of being Rachael's lost son, and Joi will do whatever she can to further this belief. She will even give him a name, "Joe", and therefore an identity. Furthermore, as the movie advances, Joi seems more autonomous and self-aware. The digital companion seems to be able to learn and evolve in response to different experiences. Contrary to Mariette's comment to Joi before leaving K's apartment, "I've been inside you. Not so much there as you think" (*Blade Runner 2049* 1:32:03-1:32:07), the viewer's conclusion will be probably the opposite. Nevertheless, K eventually encounters a giant advertising hologram of Joi that tells him "You look like a good Joe" (*Blade Runner 2049* 2:17:25-2:17:28). Hence, Joe is "the only male name she's programmed to say" (Kunle 219). At this moment, the film protagonist seems to realize that everything was a lie and merely part of her programming. However, it should not be discarded the possible fact that Joi had evolved from her limitations. During the movie, there are hints she may be an artificial intelligence that has been able to become something beyond her programming. As stated by Shanahan:

We are not given nearly enough information to know one way or the other. But there are clues. The most telling clue might be the holographic steak dinner Joi super- imposes on K's unappetizing bowl of noodles. The steak is utterly fake, yet K is happy to indulge in the fantasy because, sometimes, the truth is just too unappetizing to swallow. ("We're All Just Looking for Something Real" 19).

Furthermore, *Blade Runner 2049* offers a nostalgic and post-apocalyptic vision of Las Vegas. Arguably, the U.S. city most associated with leisure and technological spectacle, is

captured in the film devastated and in ruins. As K approaches the casino where he will finally encounter Deckard, the replicant confronts collapsed statues of naked women on his way, symbolizing a past of consumption and excess. Afterwards, in the showdown with Deckard inside the casino, a glitching hologram shows projections of Marilyn Monroe, Frank Sinatra and Elvis performing at the zenith of his career. As stated by Kunkle:

By embedding a future (the post-apocalyptic zone of Las Vegas, where concrete was the medium of reference) as the past of another future (the virtualized world of simulated images where K lives and works), the director allows us to see not simply a nostalgia for an era that has passed, but a loss of the Real around which nostalgic images and narratives circulate and are passed down. (213).

The movie continues many of the film noir characteristics of its predecessor. For example, when K discovers that a replicant mother has miraculously given birth, clues begin to emerge suggesting that it is K himself who was born. The object that is haunting him, a black toy horse, is carved with the same date he discovers inscribed on Rachael's grave. In the same way as a film noir detective, the *Blade Runner* follows the clues of what he believes to be his path, or in this case, his birth. However, in a film noir in the form of the original film, the narrative loop tends to close in on itself. That is, the protagonist discovers what he always was. In this case, Villeneuve's film deviates before reaching that point. In *Blade Runner 2049*, K discovers what he is not. As stated by McGowan, "instead of recognizing what he didn't know about himself, K finds out that he isn't what he thought he was" (69).

The protagonists of both films are haunted by the image of a specific animal. In Deckard's case, a mythological one, a unicorn, while K is haunted by the image of a wooden toy horse. Both images point to the central question about their own identity. In Scott's film, Gaff leaves an evocative origami unicorn for Deckard. This act suggests Gaff knows the object that haunts Deckard, which would only be possible if this object were implanted. The clue Gaff offers to Deckard is also the most revealing evidence to the spectator, suggesting Deckard himself is actually a replicant. In *Blade Runner 2049*, Gaff continues collecting paper animals, leaving K an indicative origami sheep. Moreover, the character played by Ryan Gosling eventually finds the toy horse of his memory. The fact that K finds the fantasy object leads the *Blade Runner* to think that it represents a real memory and not an implanted one. In Scott's film, the fantasy object or animal reveals Deckard's subjectivity. In *Blade Runner 2049*, the fantasy object is real. However, it implies K's confusion concerning his own subjectivity. K discovers his own identity once he recognizes the false condition of the object. On the other hand, Deckard seems to realize who he really is when he discovers the true condition of the

fantasy object or animal. As McGowan argues, “both subjects find the truth of their subjectivity, but they do so in opposite ways because they confront different ideological structures obscuring their subjectivity in opposite ways” (70).

In this line of thought, the film deeply reflects on the significance of memory. Memory plays a significantly more crucial role than the mere ability to remember the past, being essential in the process of creating one’s own identity. The replicant K commences his journey of self-discovery fuelled by his memory. Despite knowing that it is an implant, K is emotionally attached to this memory and frequently talks about it with Joi. Once he discovers that it was Dr Ana Stelline (Carla Juri) who experienced the events related to the toy horse, the replicant comprehends this memory makes him somehow emotionally connected with her, and therefore with Deckard, thus deciding to reunite father and daughter. That memory, despite being an implant, a shared memory, is an integral part of his own identity. As stated by Heersmink and McCarroll, “identity depends not on memory *per se*, but partly on what we use memory for” (88).

Villeneuve’s film continues the postmodern terms of its predecessor, which featured pastiche for the 1940s and 1950s noir genre and blank parody of historical moods. Hence, it implies a new reiteration of the same premises, functioning as a copy of a copy. The film shows the influence of the digital to implement “acts of manipulation and recombination, and efforts aimed at further ‘perfecting’ and simulating the already mediated” (Darley 75) in pursuance to gratify this visual nostalgia. Nevertheless, *Blade Runner 2049* seems to avoid the existential dilemma Scott’s film presented. The question of Deckard’s true identity is deliberately eluded. In fact, the question is diverted towards his dog: at one point in the movie, K asks the retired Blade Runner if his dog is real or artificial, to which he replies, “I don’t know, ask him” (*Blade Runner 2049* 1:52:07-1:52:10), thus “rejecting the question of origins once and for all in favor of the simulacra” (Tyrer 32).

Blade Runner 2049’s nostalgia and sense of replicant logic encounter its peak with Rachael’s brief appearance towards the end of the film. The main uniqueness of the film is produced by introducing specific elements in Scott’s narrative that provide retroactive continuity to the story. In Niander Wallace’s chamber, the scientist and replicant manufacturer suggests that Deckard and Rachael’s first encounter was not casual, but premeditated and designed for them to fall in love and eventually conceive a child. After appearing first as a box of bones and later as a voice recording in Tyrell’s archives, a new version or clone of Rachael returns to life as a bribe to Deckard in the case the retired Blade Runner decides to betray his son. Her hairstyle and dress, of conservative and noir style, are the same as in the 1982 version.

However, Deckard is aware of the senseless of this nostalgia, thus rejecting this new version of Rachael while pointing out its inauthenticity, “Her eyes were green”, in what arguably functions as metacommentary of the film itself.

Blade Runner 2049 is, in the same way as *Blade Runner*, a work of restorative nostalgia, which is utilized extensively throughout the film essentially to emulate the aesthetics of Scott's film. Similarly, by functioning as a remake and presenting and even expanding the same themes as the original film, *Blade Runner 2049* also offers reflective nostalgia by dialogically interacting with the past in order to build a new future.

4. CONCLUSION

Nostalgia has proven to be a term that has aroused considerable interest and division within the academic world. It has been defined in a multitude of ways. However, despite being a contradictory term that tends to combine both bitterness and sweetness, it usually refers to positive images from earlier times. Today, nostalgia owes much of its relevance to its role as leisure, since it can function as an escape mechanism. Furthermore, it is deeply ingrained in popular culture as a marketing strategy. Interestingly, nostalgia might function as a way to survive in times of crisis. Revisiting the past can make the individual to comprehend his or her present. Thus, nostalgia may fulfil quite significant functions in an increasingly impersonal society.

Svetlana Boym differentiates between two types of nostalgia concerning the relationship with the longed home: restorative nostalgia, which focuses on *nostos* and proposes to restore memory gaps by rebuilding the lost home; and reflective nostalgia, which focuses on *algia*, in longing and the process of reminiscence. In addition, regarding the history of nostalgia, the acceptance of the term as a disease prevailed until the 20th century, when it was de-medicalized, thus moving from being a disease to an emotion which usually implies a longing for the past. Nevertheless, contemporary researches have proven that people normally perceive nostalgia as an experience related to fond and positive past memories.

Nostalgia should not be considered as something we simply feel or as a mere cultural product. Instead, it could be something we do in a multitude of different ways, especially in the field of media. In the past decades, expressions of nostalgia have multiplied in media content. For example, in cinema, the overabundance of revivals, remakes and reboots indicates how Hollywood tries to make profit from these nostalgic times. What is more, nostalgia has permeated many aspects of cinema, and several components may function together to create or reinforce a sense of nostalgia in a film.

Considering Boym's classification of nostalgia, a version of restorative nostalgics could be distinguished among those who seek to live in certain filmic worlds and the personality of characters and actors. Even though reflective nostalgia is structured within different ways, cinema and people's commitment can also be related to it. Moreover, in Hollywood, narratives about nostalgia are quite common and tend to involve an apparent state of equilibrium eventually lost. Furthermore, the music of a film may trigger longing in the listener, thus functioning as memory catalyst. Similarly, the opening sequences of a film can function as a nostalgic construct, usually representing images of the past. In addition, through their voice,

appearance and even their gestures, actors may help situate a film in a certain historic period, thus evoking nostalgia for different historical realities of the past.

Nostalgia is employed extensively in both *Blade Runner* (1982) and its sequel *Blade Runner 2049* (2017). In the first instance, the film directed by Ridley Scott is considered one of the most remarkable examples of postmodern science fiction and cyberpunk. Postmodern science fiction authors and directors present an obvious sense of nostalgia for the past, thus combining multiple opposing styles. The set of dislocated histories and styles results in nostalgia or ‘retro film’, which in the case of *Blade Runner* functions as ‘retrofuturism’, employing visual and narrative codes from the past in its depiction of a dystopian and post-apocalyptic future. Furthermore, nostalgia is evoked in the film through pastiche, a work of art that consciously imitates the style of another author, and simulacra, a representation or image of someone or something, thus demonstrating a longing for bygone times and lost styles. The film presents through restorative nostalgia the aesthetics of film noir in combination with recognizable motifs from science-fiction cinema. Ridley Scott deliberately employs numerous thematic and visual peculiarities of film noir, thus depicting a dark and decaying society in a not-so-distant future. Tellingly, *Blade Runner* utilizes reflective nostalgia with the purpose of interacting with the past in order to build an alternative present in a new future.

In the case of *Blade Runner 2049* (2017), the film directed by Denis Villeneuve functions as a sequel to Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner* and, at the same time, might function as a remake. The movie offers numerous similarities and contrasts with its predecessor, thus demonstrating nostalgia for Scott’s film. The film shows the complexities of reflective nostalgia and through restorative nostalgia is presented as a conscious “replication” of its predecessor. Villeneuve’s film continues the main features of the original film, that is to say, retrofuturism, film noir and pastiche, including numerous visual and sound references to Scott’s film. In addition, the film presents and expands several of the major themes of *Blade Runner*, such as the question of memory and identity. Hence, *Blade Runner 2049* operates as a new reiteration of the same premises, functioning as a copy of a copy.

Finally, concerning the limitations of this work, it would be advisable in further research on this topic to include additional information with regard to nostalgia’s relevance in times of crisis, to expand the different forms nostalgia may adopt within cinema and to examine the impact it has had on Hollywood in recent years.

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