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In search of time: memory, nostalgia and utopia in Westworld

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Abstract

We propose to demonstrate and reflect on the articulation between past and future, having as a connecting element the ideas of nostalgia and utopia. For this, we understand that the HBO's Westworld materializes a peculiar articulation between these two terms, whose implications we will seek to delineate. In our reflective movement, we will first make a brief diagnosis of temporal experience and memory today. Next, we will seek to reflect on the potential and seemingly paradoxical association between utopia and nostalgia, observing clues that point to their complex modes of articulation. For this, we propose a revision in the crystallized forms as the concepts were classically understood.

1 Introduction

In many fictional TV series of the last years, we have seen narratives that project a possible future in a way that makes it somewhat similar to the past. *Wayward Pines*, *3%*, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Westworld*, for example, could easily be labeled as "science fiction" for how they build images of future worlds in their narratives. However, more than just imagining futures, these productions put into perspective the tensions we establish with time in the contemporary world.

For example, in *3%* there is a future world divided into two: one of abundance, and another of extreme poverty. Compared to the rich people's world, the poor one is simultaneously contemporary and a past to be overcome. In *Wayward Pines*, we see the story of a scientific experiment that takes place in 4024, and that puts people to live in an environment that was supposed to be that of a 1950s American city. This experiment – based on the kidnapping of people of our present – is carried on because of the degeneracy of the human species, which, in the future projected by the narrative, regresses to an irrational and animalistic condition. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the women of our future society are put in a condition that visually refers to medieval times because humankind has lost its reproductive capacity. Without their rights preserved, they become caretakers and mothers in the hands of a world of masculine, dictatorial and sexist interests.

Of all these series, *Westworld* is arguably one of the most acclaimed. Created by Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy, it takes place in a future of advanced technology, capable of producing robots similar to humans, and it is based, with significant changes, in a homonymous B-movie from the 1970s. In both of them, *Westworld* is an amusement park in which people seek out real experiences and the opportunity to interact with humanized robots in scenarios of the past. In the film, these scenarios were ancient Rome, medieval Japan and the Wild West. In the TV series, the entire park is a restoration of this mythology of the American foundational West identity. In both narratives, the plot revolves in the robots acquiring consciousness and autonomy, but while in the film this implies a gesture of revenge against humans, in the series this triggers a process of memory recovery and an effort to habituate oneself in that past world (or worlds) present in the future.

Built upon the articulation of distinct and juxtaposed temporal planes that are not always easily identifiable (a crucial element for developing mystery and suspense), the series presents individuals – robots and humans – seeking to habituate themselves in a history and in a collective, industrial and impersonal scenario that is standardized to a certain extent, trying to make this scenario become related to their own experiences and paths. In this context, memory allows them to give meaning to the past and is a fundamental condition for acquiring consciousness, producing autonomy and, consequently, opening futures.

In this article, we propose that *Westworld* presents itself as a sign of tensions that mark the experience of memory today and, by extension, the temporal experience of the western world. In our view, by associating future, Old West, memory and the search for consciousness and autonomy, *Westworld* articulates contemporary forms of nostalgia to manufacture the present and thereby open up possibilities to other futures. Without pretensions to present an overall reading of the series, we propose a reflective course that seeks to demonstrate and discuss the articulation between past and future, taking the ideas of nostalgia and utopia as our articulating element. For us, *Westworld* materializes a peculiar articulation between these two terms, nostalgia and utopia, whose implications we will try to delineate.

In our propositions, we will first make a brief diagnosis of temporal experience and memory today. Next, we will reflect on the potential and seemingly paradoxical association between utopia and nostalgia, looking for clues that point out their complex modes of articulation. To do this, we propose a revision in the crystallized meanings that mark how the concepts have been generally comprehended to this day. We will also reflect on the relationship between utopia and science fiction, "genre" or "field" to

which *Westworld* is associated. In this path, we will not take the series as a proper object of analysis, but as part of an effort to configure ways and to formulate questions about the relations between contemporary memory and the past, the present, and the future.

2. A luminous and somber present

In his Nobel Prize for Literature speech, in 1990, Mexican poet and essayist Octavio Paz takes up some of the subjects that have permeated his oeuvre, such as the relationship between Latin-American and European literatures and modernity as a historical and aesthetic phenomenon. What first caught our attention in his speech, which constitutes a small and interesting essay, is its title: "The search of the present". Moved by a nostalgic impulse, Paz recalls his childhood and locates it at a time when "the world was limitless yet it was always within reach; time was a pliable substance that weaved an unbroken present" (Paz, 2017, p.77). With the advent of adulthood, there is a consciousness of split – which implies, for him, a desire for unfinished and unending suture – between past and future, between individual and collectivity. This split would put us in search of the present, since it presents itself as inapprehensible, split, moving. According to Paz, we would be all "displaced from the present" and this would be neither the "earthly paradise" nor the "timeless eternity", but "real reality". Since the present is the confluence of the three times, it requires more than an answer to our immediate needs: it also demands a global and more rigorous reflection. This thought about the now, says Paz:

> ...does not imply relinquishing the future or forgetting the past (...). Neither can it be confused with facile hedonism. The tree of pleasure does not grow in the past or in the future but at this very moment (...). The present is alternatively luminous and somber, like a sphere that unites the two halves of action and contemplation (...). What do we know about the present? Nothing or almost nothing. Yet the poets do know one thing: the present is the source of presences. (Paz, 2017, pp. 90-91)

Paz's speech, in putting us "dislodged from the present" and presenting this same present as "luminous and somber", seems to go in a direction that is opposite of a set of studies that are called "presenteeistic", which postulate the present as an accessible time, defined by a huge flow of information and images, and by the erasure of links with the past and the future. For example, in Marc Augé's diagnosis, this presenteeism is linked to "a consumerism spirit that adapts itself very well to the transformation of the world into a spectacle" (2013, p. 69) and that is defined by a superficial view of the world, considering its diversity and tensions. For the French anthropologist, this superficiality articulates to an impoverishment of the imagination in its multiple dimensions (individual, collective, creative), for it is colonized by spectacular products and images.

In diagnoses such as these, the present generally presents no mystery: it is consumed, lived voraciously in the urgency of the immediate and, for that, it reduces both the past as a space of experiences and the future as a horizon of expectations, projects and/or desires (Koselleck, 2006). There is certainly a conformist, ethnocentric and conservative position in this diagnosis of an uncontrollably habitable present that is just at hand. The idea that we live "in search of the present", being split from it, is therefore something contrary to the supposed accessibility granted to the world by the globalization of images and information. In Augé, this understanding that we are beings split from the present arises, among other forms, in the disarticulation between a global, superficial and ephemeral world, and local realities and individual paths (dreams, desires, experiences). That is, the crisis of imagination identified by Augé implies the tension between the products of a globalized culture of the spectacle, which colonize and hinder the production of meaning, the imagining associated to individual experiences.

Andreas Huyssen made a similar diagnosis in the 1990s, when he reflected on "the politics of memory in our time". For the German-American researcher, the media promotes, in many ways, the

globalization and moralization of memory by applying different strategies (like the culture of remakes and the process of idealizing, aestheticizing or stereotyping historical events), which challenges us, for we face these "very real processes of space-time compression", to "ensure some continuity within time and provide an extension of the lived space in which we can breathe and move" (2014, 22). Huyssen recalls that, contrary to what cultural industry and cyberspace seem to believe, "the lived memory is active, alive, incarnated in the social – I mean in the individuals, families, groups, nations or regions. These are the memories required to create different local futures in a global world" (2014, p. 26). In this perspective, memory has a clearly political dimension:

> In the best scenario, memory cultures are intimately linked, in many parts of the world, to processes of democratization and human rights movements for expanding and strengthening the public spheres of civil society. To slow down rather than accelerate, to expand the nature of public debate, to try to heal the wounds inflicted in the past, to nurture and expand living space instead of destroying it in exchange for some future promise, ensuring "quality time" – these seem to be the cultural needs that have to be fulfilled in a globalizing world, and local memories are intimately linked to their articulation. (2014, p. 25)

It is interesting to note that such different authors proceed to similar diagnoses based on local, quotidian and political experiences of groups and individuals. In Paz, the idea of taking the present as a "source of presences" composes it with characteristics diametrically opposed to the idea of a consumable world in an incessant and disposable flow, and is also strongly related to a memory gesture. For Paz, instant is sensorial, sensual, marked by presence and by mystery as well. Presence is experience and to interpret it implies complex hermeneutical acts of multiple temporalities. That means present, as presence, is there, "within reach", but instead of dissipating, it sets us in motion, evicts us, extradites us. It makes us remind and forget, it forces us to return to the past, to desire it, as a condition for unlatching possibilities of future. This is not, therefore, a classic nostalgic movement, marked by a desire to return to the past to inhabit it again, or to produce some form of paralysis, but instead it is necessary to flavor the past ("locally", in Huyssen's terms) for the presence to acquire thickness and for the future to reopen itself as a possibility.

When we follow the stories of the two main female characters in *Westworld*, this correlation between recovering memory, granting thickness to the present, and hence enabling future, is quite strong. Both Dolores (Evan Rachel Wood) and Maeve (Tandie Newton), in spite of their different backgrounds[1], attain awareness of themselves from the moment they start remembering and, so, they gain the possibility to break with the repetitive and preprogrammed cycle of their roles in itineraries established by the park's management. It is because of the act of remembering that their present starts to acquire a different meaning and the future can now be anticipated from their desires and expectations. It is true that, in the series' complex narrative, the characters go through dissimilar processes in how they develop the articulations between personal memory, autonomy and future. However, it is significant that both processes lie within a foundational narrative (America's Wild West) and that its autonomy constitutes a moment of rupture from repetition, idealization and reification of this collective history.

It is because they can remember that Dolores and Maeve leave their pasts and reach the future, in other words, the technological present of the series' diegetic world. And it is also because they can remember – even though they do it through fragments and shards – that the two characters imagine the possibility of freeing themselves from their condition of being programmed life forms, condemned to repeat incessantly (in a temporality represented cyclically) the plot written for them. Memory is a condition for their willingness to rid themselves of humans' subjugation, embodied in the ambitious and cold administrators of the park and in the "guests", visitors who torment them in many ways and without

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[1] Dolores is a farmer's daughter and initially presents herself as the archetypical farwest maiden in distress. Maeve is a prostitute and supervises the other girls' chores in the city saloon.

any remorse.

Following this interpretation, the past – set in the American Old West – becomes, through the stories and actions of these characters, a positive and prolific condition for fabricating the present and for imagining new futures that are potentially liberating. The key that makes this change possible is the inscription in the park's nostalgic, all-encompassing and industrial narrative, and in the bodies and paths of both characters, of memory, made possible by the torturing and arduous effort of remembering. By presenting this, *Westworld* emerges as a sophisticated meditation on the role that nostalgia and utopia acquire in the contemporary world.

3. Nostalgia and utopian impulses

The term "nostalgia" first appeared in Europe in the 17th century. Medicine scholars coined it to name the diagnosis of disruptive states caused by territorial displacements. It literally meant "desire to go home". The term went through several changes until it became detached from medical discourse to enter popular vocabulary in the early 20th century (Davis, 1979; Cross, 2005; Natali, 2006; Niemeyer, 2014). Some authors understand nostalgia as a condition typical of the modernity, which, in creating deep discontinuities in life, gave rise to an awareness of the inexorable changes of the time, generating anguish against the present, experienced as a constant displacement. Modernity valued novelty and rupture with traditions, but it also produced, as one of its apparently contradictory effects, the desire to contain history and to rescue the past. Nostalgia represents, in this case, a problematic relationship with a time that is linear and intended for progress. It is a particular type of mnemonic practice, in which we think about the past as an authentic place of return, whether because of its moral, political or aesthetic values.

Because of its strained relation to modernity, nostalgia has traditionally been conceived as a feeling to be avoided, either because it is viewed as uncritical and essentially conservative, or because it is understood as a romantic and naive pursuit of a "lost time". It seems to us, however, that nostalgia, in its contemporary form, has acquired new and different meanings – as we can see in *Westworld* and other television series. Nostalgia today expresses not only a romantic and plain comprehension of the past, nor a feeling of escapism from the present. It is also fraught with tensions and ambiguities about the future and may present a certain positivity, which points to the creative and critical power of memory.

So how can we analyze the meanings produced by nostalgia today? Some authors believe that nostalgia, as well as other expressions of the culture of memory (Huyssen, 2014), is related to the so-called "identity crisis" (Candau, 2011). In a scenario defined by more fragile and provisional ties in our social and affective relationships, disbelief in the great narratives that explain the world and in transformative political projects, the desire for the past could express the collapse of our ability to make projections, our struggle to imagine "possible futures" (Hartog, 2013), which imposes itself as the only possible horizon after all. In this perspective, the past cannot be experienced through memory except as an object for immediate consumption, as a fragmented and spectacular construct. The future, in turn, would cease to be a promise (the time of projects, hope and expectation) and would come to be perceived as a threat (the time of catastrophes and fear).

When we think of science fiction audiovisual products, this is a tempting key. Much has been said of dystopian narratives, which express our discomfort with the present and offer a negative, catastrophic and threatening vision of the future. Successful series, like *Black Mirror*, seem to inevitably follow this path. We believe, however, that contemporary nostalgia even when associated with science fiction, such as in *Westworld*, expresses more than the collapse of the future and cannot be explained solely by a regime of historicity marked by presentism. We argue that nostalgia may also have a utopian dimension, insofar as it gives shape to a "desire of future", in the same way that it provides experiences of other temporalities, less instantaneous and dominated by an overwhelming present.

In his meditations on what he defined as "the age of nostalgia", Bauman (2017, pp. 7-8) used the image of Walter Benjamin's Angel of History, which, as in Klee's picture, is depicted in mid-flight. For Bauman, however, the angel changed direction: "his wings are pushed back, this time by a storm that has risen into the hell of an imagined future, anticipated and feared in advance, towards the paradise of the past". This state of affairs would conform *retrotopias*, worldviews that settle in the past instead of establishing connections to an "unborn", inexistent future. But could not we imagine that the movement that pushes the angel back is also the one that allows him to somehow march towards the future, a future that is feared, yes, but also desired in some extent? And taking these thoughts into consideration, what can we say about *Westworld*, which imagines a future and a way of experiencing the past in it?

As we have said, the series can be perceived as a science fiction story, since its narrative takes place in a time projected as a future of our present. However, before developing our argument further in this direction, we would like to bring some points of diversion, since there is no consensus on various aspects of science fiction. Seed (2011) affirms that, in addition to the very definition of the genre, and the dialogues and differences it establishes with other cultural products, there is a debate about science fiction's inaugural milestones (Western 19th century or the medieval period; this or that seminal narrative, for example, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein or the works of H.G. Wells). The discussion also comprehends science fiction's reference landmarks (which varies according to the attention given to a specific narrative tradition, especially Anglophone, French, Japanese and Germanic), as well as the very understanding if science fiction is a genre or not. Seed prefers the idea of a field, to apprehend the diversity of productions (literary, cinematographic, televisual etc.) and their many intersections. Jameson (1991) and Williams (1978), on the other hand, do not hesitate to take science fiction as a genre.

The association between science fiction and utopia seems to be peaceful at certain aspects, although marked by "deeply complex" relations, as Williams (1978) observes. After all, every science fiction offers an image of a possible future, desirable or not, to a historical present.

> More than any other literary mode, science fiction is closely associated to the future, in other words with time under its different aspects. It is above all a literature of change, and change by definition implies that the present is perceived in relation to perceptions of the past and expectations of the future which shape the present. (Seed, 2011, p. 97)

Thus, an important feature of science fiction becomes clear: its complex dialogue with temporal experience, which involves not only the projection of a future, but connections with the past and, mainly, with the present and how it understands what has happened and what are the expectations of what is to come. Jameson is explicit when he talks about it:

> The various SF historicisms – galactic Roman empires, Orientalist phantasmagoria, samurai worlds, medieval-corporate Foundations – stand on equal footing with images of this or that fantastic future; and, whatever their more fantastic details, such as the spice worms in Frank Herbert's *Dune*, they reinforce components of an essentially historical situation, rather than serving as vehicles for fantasies of power. (Jameson, 1991, p. 59)

In this perspective, there is no effective opposition between memory, nostalgia, science fiction and utopia, since all of them promote an articulation that answers, in the present, to challenges between the meanings of the past and the expectations for the future. It is important to note that both Seed and Jameson build their arguments by relying heavily on historical products. Seed tries to systematize compiled information, and Jameson anchors his analyses in the characteristics of these products (mainly novels) to develop conceptual, epistemological and political approaches. In other words, less than approaching science fiction and utopian narratives in an abstract view, both authors take them as historical products in continuous transformation.

It is important us to delimitate two fundamental distinctions: those involving the pair utopia/ dystopia and the meanings resident in utopia. By indicating a future project in the present that dialogues with the past, utopia can no longer be seen as synonymous with "nowhere" but with "other place" instead, problematized by the dialectic between identity and difference with our world. Consequently, a dystopia would be some sort of unsuccessful utopia, considering it projects a bleak, miserable, or less hopeful future than the present. In his meditations on the "archeology of the future", Jameson reclaims an important differentiation between what he calls two "variants" of utopia: the "utopian form" and the "utopian desire (or impulse)". Jameson understands that the utopian form is a completed text that consciously projects a "spatial totality", another world whose social order is at least in part distinct from (and better than) ours. On the other hand, the utopian desire is a hope of a future, an impulse that can be detectable in daily life and in social activities.

It is interesting to note that Jameson identifies the first "variety" of utopia with a commitment to the closure of meanings, to a wholeness whose primordial image would be the city, which reflects the architected cosmos in that narrative world, while the second "variety" lays its primary element in the individual. In an effort to reorganize Ernest Bloch's seminal work in his own way, Jameson notes that this quotidian "utopian impulse" materializes on three levels: body, time, and collectivity. This attention to the body represents part of an effort to correct idealisms or spiritualisms and is linked to the matter's inexorable perishability; thus, time presents itself bifurcated between existential experience (in which memory "seems to predominate") and historical time, just as the collectivity is marked by the tension between individual difference and belonging to a broader, homogenizing collective.

4. Wandering in the Western world

From Jameson's point of view, the bonds between *Westworld* and utopia must be apprehended in at least two different dimensions. As a product, or a text, the series projects a cosmos, it narratively develops a future that is an organized and "systemic" world, in which the wholeness is apprehensible through clues dropped among episodes, characters and events. This "closed world" feature maintains itself even when we recognize that *Westworld* is a television series whose development is still ongoing and may or may not be extended for years. After all, the main "structural" characteristics of this world (its "mythology", to use specialized criticism jargon) are presented to us in the first season, and are presumed to remain stable, at the risk of disfigurement.

In this world, the past is some kind of commodity that can be consumed – therefore discarded – as entertainment. *Westworld* is an amusement park that recovers the Old West not as a foundational narrative, as one might presume, but as a "lawless" land in which violence and cruelty can be practiced. Therefore, the future projected by the series is dystopian because the humans in it desire to revive the past for it retains something that is "primitive", irrational and perverse. Two categories (or castes) of individuals live there, and one of them, the robots, has in its supposed inhumanity a *passe-partout* to narcissism, arrogance and power disputes from their creators and users. In this high-tech environment, the most negative human attributes seem to predominate.

At this level, the series presents a nostalgic and trimmed configuration of the future, but distant from nostalgia's classical comprehension as well. It is not a matter of recovering the past to project a future, nor to inhabit it as a refusal of the contemporary and of what there is to come. The park and its cosmos apparently establish themselves on another category of nostalgia: commodified, seemingly futile, industrial and anonymous. But there is nothing futile about the consumption of the past that the park provides, as we can observe as the plot unfolds. The core of the plot, in fact, is precisely the commodification of the past and the idea that there are people eager to consume experiences and sensibilities marked by logics and temporalities of yesteryear. Therefore, the meaning of these experiences and sensibilities is the

great question that the series seems to pose. Is it in *Westworld*, as one of the regular visitors comments, that people find out who they really are? Or, as argued by Dr. Robert Ford (Anthony Hopkins), the scientist who created and idealized the park, is it where they actually live not what they really are, but what they could be?

Regardless of the answers, what is certain is that the characterization of human characters is replete with dystopian elements. Surrounded by a hyper-technological and controlled environment, what *Westworld* visitors want is to take shelter in a simulated past, where they can accomplish their most obscure personal fantasies – without boundaries, guilt or fear of sanctions. In this serially sold past, everything is possible: the most atrocious violence acts, the most perverse sexual fantasies. What the park managers are interested at is to satisfy their wealthy customers' desires in the most efficient way possible and thereby ensure that their business is profitable. "Guests like to be able to" says Dr. Ford. "Since they cannot have it outside, they come here. As for the hosts, the least we can do is make them forget".

On the other hand, it is with the androids, especially in Dolores and Maeve's stories, that we face an utopia of distinct quality. We are no longer in front of a closed and systemic world, instead we face an open field of possibilities, which, as we have commented, constitutes itself in the characters' effort of having hope, of projecting and desiring a future and autonomy, of breaking the cycle of automated repetitions to which they are subdued.

Therefore, in *Westworld*, nostalgia, dystopia and utopian impulse develop on simultaneity and within an interpenetration of worlds and times, between a seductive and violent past and a threatening future that is also seductive to some extent. And these worlds and times are articulated not only by the plot, but also through a complex stagecraft, which includes the use of "pastness" and "futureness" visual patterns, so criticized by Jameson (1991), that overarch scenery, costume design, soundtrack and sound editing, gestures and other components enshrined by the history of cinema and television (Sprengler, 2011). These *mise-en-scène* elements produce multiple layers of time significance, engaging the viewer in different levels and ways, contributing to increase the dramatic factor in the narrative.

The past, the Old West, is the true arena of the theme park, where visitors arrive by train, properly characterized amidst their hosts. Visually, it is not possible to distinguish between humans and replicants. Everyone dresses and behaves like in the classic western movies. Characterizations and scenarios are the usual: cowboys, outsiders, sheriffs, bounty hunters, prostitutes, maidens, dusty streets, saloons, plains, ranches. The futuristic location is the operations headquarters, where androids are built, repaired, updated and archived when no longer in use. At these facilities, Dr. Ford and the company's team of administrators, securities, scriptwriters, engineers and software analysts work. From there they can watch all steps given inside the park. In *Westworld*'s double world (consisting of a simulated past and a futuristic present) everything is meticulously controlled. After all, the park receives about 1,400 visitors simultaneously, who take part in more than a hundred connected stories.

5. Conclusions

Westworld gives form to classic confrontations between creator and creature, human and replicants, scientific reason and sensibility, capitalist ambition and humanistic values (paradoxically incarnated in the machines). These aspects found in the series, as well as the memory serving as a humanizing element for the robots, were present in other science fiction audiovisual productions of the 20th century, such as the cult movie *Blade Runner*. Not coincidentally, thirty-five years later, in 2017, in a typical movement of the culture of nostalgia, the film gained its sequel, *Blade Runner 2049*.

Despite their differences in language and aesthetics, *Westworld* and *Blade Runner* certainly have a lot in common. The most important element of similitude is probably the rupture with a core instance of power that aims to impose order and control, a rupture that occurs with the emergence of memory and

self-consciousness in robots. In *Westworld*'s first chapter, Dolores' father finds a picture forgotten by some visitor in the park. The image causes strangeness and is a trigger for the character to start questioning his reality. In parallel, other androids begin improvising in their performances. They use fragments of their previous programming for creating new lines and unexpected behaviors. After three decades of operation, some beings started to unfollow the script in the American Wild West.

In the series' first scene, Dolores, *Westworld*'s oldest hostess, goes through a test, supposedly to assess whether she can continue running or if she should be disabled. Symptomatically, the first question they ask her is: "Do you remember?" And memory, in fact, is truly one of the prime elements of the plot. Elsie Hughes, one of *Westworld*'s programmers, when talking about androids, refers to the advantages of forgetting. "Can you imagine how ruined we would be if these poor idiots remembered what the guests do with them?"

His comment is premonitory, because it will be exactly the memories of suffered violence – something that produces feelings of pain and misery – the triggering factor of the androids' humanization, as well as of their desire for change and provoking rupture with the *status quo*. In this sense, Dolores' reflection is emblematic: "You think the grief will make you smaller inside, like your heart will collapse in on itself, but it doesn't. I feel spaces opening up inside of me, like a building with rooms I've never explored".

It is curious, and certainly not gratuitous, that nostalgia in its contemporary configuration emerges in products classifiable as "science fiction", a genre or field that could be imagined as its opposite, since it projects futures and not past. *Westworld*, however, seems to be a strong indication, among others, of the tensions that define how nostalgia is lived today. On the one hand, the theme park builds the past from a nostalgic approach that is close to the classic comprehension of nostalgia, like a returnable and habitable place, that is at the same time empty, paralyzed and cruel. On the other hand, the stories of Dolores and Maeve suggest a search for the past, an effort of memory that is essential for a life (identities, people, events, locations) that acquires vitality and regeneration, for them and for us.

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