

EDITORIAL

Back to the Future. Or the perpetual future nostalgia

The emergence of stories about the world to come and about hypothetical futures must surely be symptomatic of times of crisis... In the same way, so is, perhaps, the tendency to look to the past with rose-tinted glasses on, eulogising the utopia's ruins or archaeology. Through the broad idea of the future and the current interest in futurology, we can discern the potential of what is 'possible' or of imagined pasts as a focus for critical reflection. An interesting exercise, then, is to discuss the links that are being established between the past and the future as a phenomenon in, and of, itself that emerged strongly at the outset of the modern age. Today, these time tunnels once again cut through many phenomena, both in academia and society, as seen in artistic and media practices. In this edition of *Artnodes*, we will see how these futurologies are supported in certain artistic and social manifestations. We frequently come across products that, in their speculation about possible worlds, point to dystopic futures where the excesses of technoscience offer us a social order that is almost always subjected to new forms of authoritarianism and surrounded by the chaos of environmental disaster. Other times, the myth of triumphing over death and genetic manipulation emerges so as to pave the way for questions on ethical character. This urge to think about the future through our ability to exploit physical or human nature is nothing new, and is today represented as the catastrophic consequence of our present. It is difficult to find fantasies of a happier, fairer world, something that was once turned into a literary genre in novels such as Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), curiously labelled as *utopian romanticism*. Following in the slipstream of science fiction and futuristic narratives, there continues to be a wealth of televisual manifestations of dystopia such as the *Black Mirror* series, the Brazilian *3%* or the recently released *The Handmaid's Tale*, based on the book of the same name by Margaret Atwood (1985), a writer so often linked to the speculative fiction genre. In this regard, the genre and fantasies are expanding exponentially, whether by means of new paths such as transhumanism or from the pre-eminence of the feminist position, in order to speak about our current and future oppressions.

But what remains of utopian romanticism? What is new today in this perpetual updating of the Frankenstein myth that first emerged in the mid-nineteenth century and what keeps returning? Is it looking to the past from a future perspective, perhaps? In view of the closeness of that future, it is our actual and temporal rapprochement to premonitions of dystopia that is causing the greatest fear... but perhaps the sudden appearance of nostalgia and the desire to update the past again has something to contribute here. Alongside the multiplicity of stories of imagined futures also appear regressions to the promises of the twentieth century; we return to landscapes that today look like fresh ruins. In the face of this nostalgia, we ask ourselves what drives our relationship with time and how relevant time really is to us.

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