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Cyberpunk in *Blade Runner* and *Detroit: Become Human*

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Abstract:

This dissertation's aim is to compare the first film of *Blade Runner* and the videogame *Detroit: Become Human* in terms of the Cyberpunk genre. It describes how the futuristic setting and the characters provide the ideal context for a Cyberpunk story in which themes such as post-humanity and the pursuit of a sense of self are present through the whole narrative. At the same time, some of the features that these works portray can be extrapolated to real life, and they are also analyzed in relation to the film and the videogame.

Resumen:

El propósito de este trabajo es comparar la primera película de *Blade Runner* con el videojuego *Detroit: Become Human* en términos del género Ciberpunk. Este trabajo describe como el ambiente futurista y los personajes proveen el contexto ideal para una historia Ciberpunk en la que temas como la post-humanidad y la búsqueda del sentido de identidad están presentes por toda la narrativa. Al mismo tiempo, algunas de las características que estas obras presentan pueden ser extrapoladas a la vida real, y son también analizadas en relación a la película y el videojuego.

1. Introduction: How are *Blade Runner* and *Detroit: Become Human* related to Cyberpunk?

Blade Runner and *Detroit: Become Human* share a great variety of features that relate them to the cyberpunk subgenre. Both the game and the film raise questions regarding the moral implications of creating artificial intelligence and its consequences. They also portray instances of social inequality, tensions between humans and technology and political unrest. Both worlds also depict how, despite the fact that technology is quickly developing, the quality of life is as poor as ever, being poverty, crime and social divide strong consequences of these technological advances.

Moreover, the characters of these stories are antiheroes who want to escape the established order and break social conventions to seek their own identity. Both the androids and the replicants had fixed roles that they had to fulfill, but they decided to break free to find their own destiny. The same is the case with Deckard, who also ponders about whether he is doing the right thing or not, along with other characters from the videogame such as Hank.

These themes, along with many other features of cyberpunk such as gloomy city landscapes, postmodernism, feelings of pessimism and skepticism towards technological development, and the style and aesthetics that represent the rebellious tone of the genre (Collado Rodríguez, 8), are what make these two works Cyberpunk. The aim of this dissertation is to compare *Blade Runner* and *Detroit: Become Human* in their portrayal of the cyberpunk subgenre and how it relates to real life, specifically in terms of technology, social division and the exploration of humanity and identity.

2. The Setting.

The setting of *Blade Runner* and *Detroit: Become Human's* is an important element that contributes to the cyberpunk atmosphere of the stories. Both works portray a world in which modern technology has drastically changed the social and political environment, creating a dystopian society in which the government and large corporations hold the majority of power.

In *Blade Runner*, the action takes place in Los Angeles in 2019, a futuristic-looking city with enormous buildings and neon-lit streets covered with thousands of

giant advertisements. However, the majority of the population lives in poverty with a low life quality, and the city is afflicted by pollution, deterioration, and overcrowding. The Tyrell Corporation, which creates the replicants, is the most powerful organization in this world, and its influence is felt far outside the metropolis.

Due to pollution, the city lives in a permanent state of obscurity, as the sun can no longer reach the earth surface. The constant rain that never ceases to fall, apart from contributing to the noir feeling of the movie, can also be considered one of the main evidences of the state in which the environment is. Moreover, due to radiation, most of the animals that used to inhabit the planet have gone extinct or endangered, and now almost all the animals are artificial. The remaining real animals and the materials they provide are now highly expensive.

This perpetual rain can be extrapolated to the state in which humans that are still on earth find themselves. There is a problem of inefficiency, and there is nothing that technology can do to make anything last for much longer, and everything will be lost. The rain is no longer in charge of the cycle of growth and rebirth. It rains with no real purpose, which furthers the deterioration of the already broken environment.

Likewise, *Detroit: Become Human* takes place in a futuristic Detroit in the year 2038. The city is shown as a huge metropolis with huge disparity between the rich and the poor. The government has little influence over the actions of the city's most influential corporation, Cyberlife, which is in charge of creating the androids. Technology has rapidly developed, but there are many unemployed and homeless people, and there is widespread pollution and deterioration, just as in *Blade Runner*.

The setting in *Blade Runner* and *Detroit: Become Human* creates a sense of tension and unease. The rapid advancement of technology has led to a world that is as interesting as it is dangerous. The cities portrayed are dystopias rather than utopias, where the use of modern technology has not necessarily resulted in advancement and wealth for everybody. The government and the corporations have complete control over all facets of life, while the people themselves have little or no agency. Overall, these works highlight the dark side of technological development and its impact on society and environment.

3. Characters and their Struggles.

Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford), the lead character in *Blade Runner*, is a retired Blade Runner who is called back to work to find and "retire" four replicants who have gotten away from an off-world colony and returned to Earth. Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer) is the leader of the replicants, who are looking for a solution to increase their limited lifespan as well as their level of autonomy. In addition to locating and eliminating the replicants, Deckard must also deal with the issue of what it means to be a human and the nature of his own identity.

The identity crisis Deckard faces is central to the plot of *Blade Runner*. He starts to doubt his own humanity and whether he is different from the replicants he is seeking as he pursues them. He develops feelings for Rachael (Sean Young), a replicant who is unaware of her artificial origins and she thinks is a human. Through their meetings, Deckard starts to recognize the replicants humanity and questions if they should be granted the same rights and respect as people.

Additionally, Deckard's struggle brings attention to the conflict between personal choice and social conventions. As a blade runner, he has to follow the orders of a society that considers replicants to be harmful and disposable. However, as he becomes more aware of the replicants situation, he starts to consider the larger implications of a society that creates sentient beings for the sole purpose of serving the humans, as well as the morality of his own conduct.

Similarly, in *Detroit: Become Human*, the player controls three separate androids, each of whom have different separate stories with different challenges that they have to face. There is also a number of Non Playable Characters (NPC's) who are also important in the development of the story and can be used to explain how they represent different parts of society and their struggles.

The first android is Connor (Bryan Dechart), a detective android sent by Cyberlife in order to help the police solve cases of deviant androids who go against their programming. He defines himself as 'A machine designed to accomplish a task', with no emotions. At the beginning of the game he is assigned to Hank (Clancy Brown), an experienced human police lieutenant who had remarkable feats in his career in the past. However, Hank started to drink and having suicidal thoughts after his son died in a medical operation that was carried out by an android. Connor struggles to maintain a productive relationship with Hank, since he is not fond of androids and he would like to go back when there were no androids.

They are tasked with the mission of finding the reason why androids are going deviant (i.e. an android that becomes sentient), and through the course of the story they have to face situations that might or might not change their perspective about things, depending on the player's choices. Both of them struggle with their sense of identity: Connor is split between his programming and becoming deviant himself and Hank struggles to accept that androids are also capable of being sentient beings and refuses to overcome his hate towards them.

The second android on which the story focuses is Markus (Jesse Williams). He is also a very advanced android model, who was gifted by the former owner of Cyberlife to Carl Manfred (Lance Henriksen), an old artist with whom he lives. Carl treats Markus as if he was his son, and encourages him to think as if he was a human. His role, together with that of Connor, is central to the development of the story, as he is in charge of leading the android revolution to be recognized as sentient beings. Within all the androids that he gathers to protest against the humans, there is a reduced group of 3 androids who have different views as to which approach should the androids take in order to succeed. Markus struggles are related to which actions and words he has to choose in order to maintain his leadership and lead the androids to victory.

The third and last android that the players are able to control is Kara (Valorie Curry). She is a housemaid android, and her first appearance is in an android shop, where she had just been repaired and got her memory wiped. Her owner is Todd (Dominic Guold), a divorced man who lives with his daughter, Alice (Audrey Boustani), who is later revealed to be also an android that is unaware of her artificial origin, like Rachel in *Blade Runner*. In the final stages of the story, it is revealed that Todd bought these two androids to replace his family, who abandoned him due to his behavior.

Kara finds out that she needed to be repaired because Todd had beaten her. Todd's behavior is very dangerous for both Kara and Alice, since he is mad at all times and consumes drugs. When Todd is about to beat her daughter too, Kara becomes deviant and faces Todd. This results in a fight between the two of them that can result in Todd's death depending on the player's choices. Regardless of the outcome of the fight, Kara runs away with Alice in order to protect her. Kara's story is different from that of Connor and Markus. Her objective is to run away from the police, leave the country and go to Canada, where she can hide among humans and provide a safe future to Alice.

4. Social Division and Distribution of Power.

Some of the major themes of *Blade Runner* and *Detroit: Become Human* are the social division and distribution of power. The gap between those in positions of power and those who are oppressed and marginalized is evident in both works. Replicants and androids, who are developed as a subordinate class and are denied the same rights and freedom as humans, contribute to further this division. Moreover, the existence of these machines that are meant to carry out tasks that were commonly assigned to humans contribute to social inequality among normal people too, since the corporations in charge of the replicants and the androids can extract more money from that at the expense of creating unemployment and poverty among the rest of society. This is the case especially in *Detroit: Become Human*, where androids can be found in every possible job.

Both works portray a world in which androids are at the service of humans, creating a division between the two groups. This division is enhanced by the fact that both androids and replicants are seen as property rather than autonomous beings and they are oppressed in many different ways, such as having a limited lifespan in the case of replicants or being treated as if they were a mere object in the case of the androids in *Detroit: Become Human*. Additionally, both androids and replicants are designed to be superior to humans in many different ways, such as in strength and intelligence. This creates a sense of insecurity in society, as it is seen as a direct threat to human supremacy, and this sense of insecurity and fear is used to justify their oppression.

The reason why the androids of *Detroit: Become Human* become deviant is usually triggered by an emotional response to danger or other negative conflictive feelings. In the first scene of the game, for example, Connor had to face an android that turned deviant because he found out that he was going to be replaced by a better model. This can be extrapolated to real life cases, in which people in positions of power can freely replace their subordinates without considering how that might affect them.

Social division and inequality can be seen in *Detroit: Become Human* through the characters of Todd, Kara's owner; and Carl, Markus' owner. Todd lost his job as a taxi driver when vehicles no longer needed a driver. He started to acquire new jobs, but due to the invention of androids he lost every one of them because he was replaced by them. Eventually he started to recur to illegal businesses such as drug dealing, and he also became addicted, turning him into an aggressive man who ended up losing his

family. He is the representation of the lower class, and lives in a poor neighborhood next to a factory. In spite of that, he owns Kara and Alice, two expensive androids.

'Life's funny... I lost my job cause of androids... then when I need somebody to take care of this goddamn house, what do I do? I go out and hire a fucking android... What a joke! Course, androids are so fucking wonderful... They never fail, they're never tired, never sad... They're so fucking perfect they ruined my fucking life.' (Detroit: Become Human)

He treats Kara and Alice as if they had no emotions or thoughts. He feels superior to them, and canalizes his anger and his problems towards them. After being exposed to his behavior for a long time, Kara becomes deviant in the face of danger.

Carl Manfred, on the other hand, is far from being impoverished. He is an old man that has gathered a fortune thanks to his paintings, and does not have to worry about anything similar to what Todd suffers. As stated before, the former owner of Cyberlife, Elijah Kamski (Neil Newbon), gifted him a very advanced android model, Markus, to take care of him. Carl treats Markus like he would treat a human, and encourages him to do different activities such as playing chess, playing the piano or reading cult novels.

In one of the most famous scenes of the game, Carl asks Markus to do a painting himself: 'Try to imagine something that doesn't exist. Something you've never seen. Concentrate on how it makes you feel and let your hand drift across the canvas' (Detroit: Become Human). Eventually Markus creates an impressive work of art in which he portrays his thoughts. In terms of social structure and since Carl and Markus live in the wealthy side of Detroit, the hierarchy seen in Todd's house between humans and machines becomes blurred, as they are treating each other as equals.

In these two works, the android and replicant struggle can be seen as a metaphor of the struggles that some of the most vulnerable people of real-life society have to still endure. The fact that some groups and collectives are subordinated to another one, whether androids, people of color, women or homosexuals, is the main cause of having an unequal society in which these groups are denied the same rights and freedom of the dominant group. The struggles that androids and replicants have to endure in *Blade Runner* and *Detroit: Become Human* can be seen as a reminder of the fact that social division is not only an issue confined to the world of movies or videogames, but current troubles that have to be dealt with in real life.

5. Corporations and Government

The power dynamics and class conflicts are rendered stronger in both *Blade Runner* and *Detroit: Become Human* by the governments and companies' creation and maintenance of oppressive systems.

The replicants in *Blade Runner* were developed by the Tyrell Corporation, and they are used in colonies in other planets for military and sexual purposes. Profit is the Corporation's driving force, and the production of the replicants is considered as a way to boost profits. At the same time, the replicants are oppressed by the government because they are considered as a danger to human supremacy fundamental rights and freedom. The oppression of the replicants furthers the government's fundamental goal of preserving the present power structures.

Similarly, in *Detroit: Become Human*, the androids are created and sold by a corporation called Cyberlife. The corporation is motivated by profit as well, and the constant creation of new models of androids is seen as a way to increase their income. The only protection that androids have is an economical fine to those who damage them, as they are seen as properties. This can be seen when a group of people manifesting that they want to get androids banned from society assault Markus for being an android, and a police officer tells these people to stop or he will have to fine them.

Despite the fact that the creation of androids and replicants is highly dangerous for human beings, as they pose a threat to overpopulation and conventional hierarchies, these corporations are still producing androids and replicants in mass scale. In this context, *Blade Runner* and *Detroit: Become Human* offer a view of society in which commodifications have been vilified. It is a subversion of the paradigm, since what used to be a society created for the benefit of humans, in which they should be included, has turned now into an oppressive society threatened by a superior form of sentient beings in which common citizens have to defend themselves, in most cases in vain.

Some of the fears that people had at the time *Blade Runner* came out can be seen through the landscape of Los Angeles in the movie. One of the most prominent ones is the fact that the city has turned its way of functioning into the way of a third world country due to the consequences of monopolistic corporations. There was a widespread fear towards Asian people when the movie came out, because people thought that, since they were constantly arriving to the country, they would eventually take over. The portrayal of Los Angeles in *Blade Runner* is directly inspired from the streets of Hong

Kong (Yuen, 1): Overcrowded streets with people from many different backgrounds (especially Asians), filled with neon lights and thousands of advertisements in every possible place. The most prominent advertisement is a giant led panel showing an Asian woman advertising a Coca-Cola.

In the same way, recurrent concerns about our future today can be seen in *Detroit: Become Human*. Throughout the game, the players can find different newspapers which explain the situation in the 2038 Detroit. One of them talks about how Cyberlife might be using androids to listen to conversations of people owning them. This is a direct violation of people's privacy, and problems such as this are also a widespread belief today in real life. For instance, each time a person accepts the 'cookies' of a website, they are allowing this website to acquire information about him to gather a registration of their preferences. Accepting the cookies sometimes is mandatory in order to enter these websites, but it is also a direct threat to privacy (Soltani et al., 161).

In both *Blade Runner* and *Detroit: Become Human*, companies are constantly bombarding people with ads in order to make them purchase things. In the case of *Blade Runner*, there are so many advertisements in the streets that it is impossible for people to not see something they would buy. In *Detroit: Become Human*, corporations know what each person wants thanks to the androids, and they can sell that information to third parties to show personalized advertisements. What corporations are achieving with these tactics of retrieving personal information in is to transform knowledge into profit, substituting its 'use-value' for 'exchange value'. (Sol, 219)

Another behavior typical of corporations that appears in the game is how easily and carelessly they can replace their workers. There are several instances in the game where Connor can die. However, since he works for Cyberlife, his memory is uploaded to another android that is exactly as the previous one. This can be extrapolated to real life in the sense that, when workers fail at doing their job, the company can fire them with ease and immediately find another person to do the job. When Hank sees Connor walking to him after seeing him die, Connor simply responds with what seems a programmed response made by Cyberlife to justify the incident: 'My predecessor was unfortunately destroyed, but Cyberlife transferred its memory and sent me to replace it. This incident should not affect the investigation'. Hank does not take this very well, and Connor says that 'a machine was destroyed, and another machine was sent to replace it.' (*Detroit: Become Human*). This interaction can be interpreted as a metaphor of how

corporations might see their workers: as mere tools that need to complete a specific task as if they were machines.

6. Humanity and Identity

Both works suggest that the struggle for liberation is inextricably linked to the struggle for autonomy and self-determination. Since they are viewed as possessions rather than independent persons, both the androids in *Detroit: Become Human* and the replicants in *Blade Runner* are denied fundamental rights and liberties. The fight for liberation includes a battle to be recognized as normal human beings that deserve the same rights and liberties as other members of society and to understand how to define their sense of being in relation to others and acquire an identity. Similarly, human characters such as Deckard or Hank, experience changes in their views towards replicants and androids, shaping as well their identity and their ideas of what it means to be human.

Replicants in *Blade Runner* were originally devoid of identity, as their purposes did not require them to have one, and, as a result, they had no emotions. However, during the course of their lives they can start to develop emotions and thus acquiring a sense of identity, which would ultimately lead them to question human orders. This poses a problem, and that is why their lifespan is only of four years. Roy Batty and his group of replicants realize that they will soon die due to this, and they rebel against humans and go to earth in order to extend their lifespan.

The solution to that problem of rebelliousness is Rachel, a replicant that, as mentioned before, is unaware of her artificial nature. The following quotation is a conversation between Deckard and Eldon Tyrell (Joe Turkel), the CEO of Tyrell Corporation, after running the Voight-Kampff test on Rachel to see if she is a replicant:

D: She doesn't know.

T: She is beginning to suspect, I think.

D: Suspect? How can it not know what it is?

T: Commerce is our goal here at Tyrell. More human than human is our motto. Rachel is an experiment, nothing more. We began to recognize in them strange obsession, after all they are emotionally inexperienced with only a few years in which to store up the experiences which you and I take

for granted. If we gift them with a past, we create a cushion or pillow for their emotions and consequently we can control them better.

D: Memories. You're talking about memories.' (Blade Runner, 00:21:50)

By introducing false memories into the replicants, they also acquire a false sense of identity; an identity in which the replicant does not feel any kind of rebellious desire towards humans because they think that they are humans. When Deckard realizes that she is not human, he stops referring to Rachel as 'she' and starts using 'it', conveying that he considers her an object.

Being a blade runner, Deckard is expected to retire any replicant which poses a threat to humans, and his sense of identity is shaped by that reality. However, after telling Rachel that she is a replicant, she starts to cry and show emotions that are similar to that of humans. Later in the movie, Deckard is searching for one of the replicants, Leon Kowalski (Brion James), and he has been told to retire Rachel as well. However, when Leon is about to kill Deckard, Rachel saves him using his own gun. Deckard promises not to hunt Rachel down, as he feels in debt with her, showing how he has slightly changed his perspective towards replicants.

Deckard is totally changed when he is hunting down Roy Batty. In the final fight, when Roy is already starting to shut down, he has the opportunity of killing Deckard, who has already retired the rest of the replicants. However, he decides to save him to prove that he, too, can feel compassion and that he can have human emotions other than anger. Roy sees himself in Deckard when he is hanging at the edge of the building and saves him. He proceeds to give his famous speech: *'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. Time to die.'* (Blade Runner). This speech can be interpreted in many different ways. The most recurrent interpretation points to the fact that Roy has emotions similar to that of humans in spite of being an artificial creation; he wants to be remembered, but he acknowledges that death is inevitable and so is the fact that his memories will be lost. When he shares his memories with Deckard, he defies the idea that humanity is only a human feature, and demonstrates that replicants are capable of valuing life and have experiences in their own way.

At the end of the film, Deckard no longer wants to hunt down replicants, and he flees away with Rachel. He changes his perspective, and believes that replicants are also

capable of behaving and feeling like humans do. His ultimate test of identity is seeing a unicorn made of paper left there by another character, Gaff. Through the course of the movie, Deckard has a recurrent dream of a unicorn running in a forest, and the fact that Gaff leaves an origami unicorn in his apartment can point to the fact that Gaff knows about Deckard's implanted memories. Although this is never clarified in the original movie and is left for the audience's interpretation, it would be the definitive proof to demonstrate that replicants and humans are not so different.

These questions about what it means to be human appear in similar ways in *Detroit: Become Human*. The main conflict of this question is mainly represented through the relationship between Connor and Hank. Hank, like Deckard, is tasked with the mission of ending the threat that rebellious androids pose, with the difference that he is accompanied by an android, Connor, to fulfill that task. As previously mentioned, Hank is highly skeptic towards androids, since he blames them for the death of his son, and treats them as mere objects. As the story advances, and regardless of how the player decides how to play Connor, Hank starts to change his perspective towards androids after two critical events of the story.

The first event takes place in Eden Club, where androids can be rented for sexual purposes. Hank and Connor have to find a deviant that is hiding there, and when they do, they realize that there are actually two deviants. After a short fight, the deviants claim to be in love, and that they became deviant because they were tired of being used like sex toys. After that conversation, the player can choose to spare the deviant androids. Regardless of what Connor does, Hank starts to show empathy towards androids and also tries to prove Connor that he can have emotions too, questioning his predefined mechanical features:

'Those two girls... they just wanted to be together... they really seemed... in love. What about you, Connor? You look human, you sound human, but what are you really? You've could have shot those two girls but you didn't. Why didn't you shoot, Connor? Hm? Some scruples suddenly enter into your program? (Detroit: Become Human)

Later in the game, they visit Elijah Kamski, the one who invented the androids, in order to ask him about deviants. Kamski decides apply the 'Kamski test' to Connor, which is used to prove if a machine is capable to feel empathy. He puts a normal

android in front of Connor, gives him a pistol, and tells him that he will only answer their questions if he kills that android. Whether he kills it or not, Hank finds this test horrible, and prefers to leave empty-handed before shooting an android in cold blood.

Connor's identity is shaped by the fact that he is a detective, but he is constantly put to the test of whether he should be hunting down deviants or joining them. In the same way, Hank is expected to carry out his duty and treat androids as if they were mere tools, but he treats them as if they were humans.

In both *Blade Runner* and *Detroit: Become Human* the main characters are expected to fulfill the role that society has imposed them. However, as they shape their identity and see that what they thought to be real was not, they break from the conventions, turning themselves into rebel individuals that go against the system. These kinds of characters are closely related to Cyberpunk, as they face the challenges and pose the dilemmas typical of that genre.

7. Post-Human Condition

Both works feature machines that are designed to look and act like humans, blurring the line between the two categories. The replicants in *Blade Runner* are created to be nearly indistinguishable from humans, whereas the androids in *Detroit: Become Human* are created to look and behave like people, but can be distinguished from them thanks to their clothes and a circular light that they have in the right side of their faces. These works also portray machines that show emotions and self-awareness, questioning established ideas about what it means to be human. The fact that these machines have human-like emotions makes it hard for the rest of the population to tell them apart from humans, and if they are provided with false memories as in the case of Rachel it is even harder.

The morality of creating beings that are so close to humans but are denied the same rights and liberties is another issue raised by these two works and something that human characters like Deckard or Hank question. The replicants in *Blade Runner* are viewed as less than human and are not given the same freedom and liberties as humans. Similarly, in *Detroit: Become Human*, the androids are treated as property and are denied basic rights such as freedom and self-determination.

Despite the fact that *Blade Runner* and *Detroit: Become Human* represent post-human themes in slightly different ways, both of them have similar themes and ideas

about how the lines between humans and machines are becoming increasingly blurred, how machines may one day be able to feel emotions and self-awareness, and the moral ramifications of creating beings that are so similar to humans but are not given the same rights and freedom.

Outside the world of science fiction, humanity is far from creating androids or replicants similar to those of *Blade Runner* or *Detroit: Become Human*, but many of the dilemmas that these works pose can be addressed with examples from real life. According to Rocío Carrasco-Carrasco, ‘the science fiction genre—especially literature—has long speculated on the post-human condition by offering scenarios and bodies that question the humanist paradigm’ (170). She argues that, when it comes to represent the post-human, it is often portrayed as ‘the other’; a figure that represents fears and anxieties. In the case of *Blade Runner* and *Detroit: Become human*, those fears and anxieties appear in the form of replicants and androids, who are threatening the way of living of thousands of people by stealing their jobs, overpopulating the world, interfering with their private life and even killing them.

Tihana Bertek argues that ‘movements that predict the advent of superintelligence speak to an anxiety over the exponential growth in various technologies and the uncertain future of human race’ (2). The most recent example is Chat GPT, an artificial intelligence capable of generating text similar to that of a human that has been trained to gather information from internet and thousands of works and data.

Human anxiety towards technology is a repetitive issue throughout history. Artificial Intelligences (AI), although some people can find them useful, generate anxiety among society due to the fact that it accelerates changes in the world. This creates a general unrest that stems from the uncertainty of what to expect of the future, because technology is rapidly taking over every aspect of life and it is impossible to know how things will work 30 years from now. AI is different from the previous technologies created by humankind due to the fact that it can make decisions by itself. Previous tools and technologies were under the control of humanity because it was the humans themselves the ones who decided which was the course of action. However, now it is the technology the one that may decide what to do with itself. For instance, a hammer cannot decide by itself that it is going to hit a nail, but the AI can decide for ourselves and make decisions by ourselves (Phillips-Wren et al, 2). Furthermore, AI is also capable of creating new ideas, texts, music or images departing from existing ones.

For the time being, these AI creations can be easily distinguished from human creations, but it still generates anxiety about how that ability to create new works can evolve in the future and if it will eventually replace human beings.

Such technology can take power from humans, and that fear is present both in science fiction works like *Detroit: Become Human* or *Blade Runner* and also in real life. Markus, for instance, is able to create new pieces of music, analyze books and create paintings, which can be seen as something inoffensive. However, when reading the newspaper, the player can find that there are also androids who take important military decisions. Due to bad decisions made by humans, technology ends up threatening the status quo instead of benefiting society.

There are other fields in which post-humanity can be seen through the use of technology. ‘*These are technologies such as neural networks, nanotechnology, genetic algorithms and artificial life*’ (Pepperell, 6). Pepperell states in his book *The Post-human Condition* that the emerging technologies are changing the balance of power between humans and machines. Although they are far from behaving like humans and taking over the world, it is a fact that many people are losing their job, replaced by machines that can do their job more efficiently. He believes that the distinction between humans and machines is becoming less clear, and he provides a number of contemporary developments to prove his point, such as virtual reality, genetic manipulation or robotics and prosthetics. All these new technologies enhance human capabilities beyond their biological limits, entering thus an era of not human beings, but post-human beings.

8. Conclusion.

What this dissertation has tried to prove is that *Blade Runner* and *Detroit: Become Human* are two works that can be considered part of the Cyberpunk genre. The first and most noticeable characteristic of it is the setting in which it takes place; a futuristic society in which the irresponsible use of technology has created a dystopia. The protagonists of these stories are rebels who go against the purpose that society gave them. They have to challenge a system in which large monopolistic corporations are constantly taking advantage of the lower classes in order to gain more money, making the gap between the rich and the poor wider. Through their quest, the characters develop a new sense of self that gives them a new perspective of reality that challenges their previous way of thinking. Finally, like in many other pieces of Cyberpunk works, *Blade*

Runner and *Detroit: Become Human* raise philosophical questions about what it means to be human through the use of androids and replicants. By analyzing these two works, many issues from real life can also be addressed, and they provide a pessimistic example of what the use of technology can cause if it is used irresponsibly and blindly.

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