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**TITLE:**

**PHILIP K. DICK AS A SOURCE OF DYSTOPIAN PLACES  
AND FUTURES IN SCI-FI FILMS.**

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## **Abstract**

There is a general perception in the audience of Science Fiction films that most of the films' directors in this genre have rather shown preference for offering dystopian futures than utopian futures. Hence, the aim of this research paper is to analyse how dystopian futures appear in three distinct films which have been directed by different directors but are based on a selection of works by the same author, *Philip. K. Dick*, a writer whose novels and short stories have been the basis of many Sci-Fi film adaptations. In order to do so, I will analyse the main recurrent interests and ideas which can be drawn from *Philip K. Dick's* novels and stories and establish a link with the film adaptations. Furthermore, I will also analyse the films to set their similarities and differences with the novels and observe if the main dystopian ideas are still kept in the adaptations.

**Key words:** dystopia, recurrent interests, film adaptation

## **Resumen**

Hay una percepción general en el público de las películas de ciencia ficción de que la mayoría de los directores de este género han mostrado preferencia por ofrecer futuros distópicos en lugar de futuros utópicos. Por lo tanto, el objetivo de este trabajo de investigación es analizar cómo aparecen los futuros distópicos en tres películas distintas que han sido dirigidas por diferentes directores pero que se basan en una selección de obras literarias del mismo autor, Philip. K. Dick, un escritor cuyas novelas e historias cortas han significado la base de muchas adaptaciones de películas de ciencia ficción. Para ello, analizaré los principales intereses e ideas recurrentes que se pueden extraer de las novelas e historias de Philip K. Dick y estableceré un vínculo con las adaptaciones de la película. Además, también analizaré las películas para establecer sus similitudes y diferencias con las novelas, y observaré si las principales ideas distópicas todavía se mantienen en la adaptación.

**Palabras clave:** distopía, intereses recurrentes, adaptación cinematográfica

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## **EPIGRAPH**

“Utopia and dystopia designate the human dream of happiness and the human nightmare of despair when these are assigned a place (topos) in space or time. Since narrative literature "is essentially an imitation not of persons but of action and life, of happiness and misery," utopian and dystopian inventions are mere extremes of literature's ongoing story.”

(Ehre, M. 1991)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Science fiction films have always been one of the cinematic genres that have shown more interest in topics such as the future, the development of new technologies such as androids, artificial intelligence, or spaceships, and this type of cinema has shown especial concern about the relationship that humankind could establish with such new technologies and futures. Moreover, these interests do not exclusively belong to cinema, so they are shared by science fiction literature which is often the main source of many sci-fi films.

As the world undergoes daily transformations via the development of techno- science in every imaginable aspect of life, (and, more important, as people become aware of these transformations) sf has come to be seen as an essential mode of imagining the horizons of possibility. However, much sf texts vary in artistic quality, intellectual sophistication, and their capacity to give pleasure, they share a mass social energy, a desire to imagine a collective future for the human species and the world. (Csicsery-Ronay, Seven Beauties 1). (Schmeink, 2016, p. 19)

The American writer Philip K. Dick (1928-1982) would be an example of the relationship between sci-fi cinema and sci-fi literature, and this paper will analyse three films, *Blade Runner* (1982), *Total Recall* (1990), and *Minority Report* (2002), which are all based on short stories and novels written by Philip K. Dick, so it is also compulsory to analyse the short stories *Minority Report* (1950s), and *We can Remember it for You Wholesale* (1966), and the novel *Do androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) to understand the relationship between these films and books.

Furthermore, the films and books that I am going to analyse have some common topics which I would like to highlight in order to understand the differences and similarities between the author and the different directors who adapted his novels into films. Thus, one of the main characteristics that are common to Dick's novels and stories which is going to be part of the paper's study is that he always describes dystopian futures where people and society are often ruled by corporations which have the control of the technological and human development of society; consequently, it leads to another recurrent idea that seems to be one of the main interests in Philip K. Dick's stories and novels:

the way in which society and individuals react to the control of technological and scientific development, and whether this has any kind of influence on the definition or question about what makes us human.

Since Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) which is considered the very first science fiction film, through another famous film directed by Fred M. Wilcox and called *Forbidden Planet* (1956), and until our current days with films such as *Interstellar* (2014); during the last decades, we have witnessed an increase in the number of science fiction films. However, what drew my attention is that despite this increase and having nowadays a significant number of science fiction films, during the last 40 years I still can find several films based on Philip K. Dick, who seems to be an important source for many film directors. It is also important to highlight that despite the fact that it was during the decade of the 60s when Philip K. Dick wrote most of his works that have become the main source of films such as *Total Recall* and *Blade Runner*, he is still an important reference for science fiction filmmakers.

Hence, by comparing both films, novels and shorts stories, the paper will focus on the main characteristics that are common to dystopian futures; and afterwards, it will analyse how these dystopian futures described by Philip K. Dick in his novels and stories are represented in the film adaptations, in order to highlight their similarities and differences, and establish which are the recurrent ideas and interests of Philip K. Dick.

### *1.1 Objectives of the Paper*

Science fiction is a literary and cinematographic genre that generally focus its attention on describing the future of the world and of humanity, which it does by presenting such future to the reader and audience in an either utopian or dystopian way. This paper is going to focus on how dystopian futures are shown in three different films which have a common reference in the American writer Philip K. Dick, who has become an influential author of Science Fiction books and stories, which have also become references for many different film directors.

Hence, I will start stating which are the main characteristics of a dystopian future; then, I will highlight some relevant aspects of the Philip K. Dick's biography, since I will work on three books written by the same author. Likewise, I will analyse his books, which are the referents of the film adaptations I will analyse in this paper, and finally, I will compare the films and the books to critically highlight and analyse their similarities and differences.

## *1.2 Methodology*

To start with, due to the fact that the main aim of my analysis has to do with dystopian futures, I will provide a definition of what is considered a dystopia, and all the concepts which are included and linked to the concept of dystopia; moreover, I have based this part of my work mostly on the PhD by Lars Schmeink, since he has done an extensive research work, though I have also worked with other publications on this subject.

Thereupon, since this paper includes an analysis based on three different films, I will proceed with the study of dystopia as a cinematic element in Science Fiction films, and what it means in this cinematographic genre. However, we must not obviate that the films are based on three different books by Philip K. Dick; thus, I will write a brief biography of the author in order to understand both himself and his work, so that through understanding Philip K. Dick, I will be able to draw the key interests that are recurrent in his novels and stories.

Hence, it will lead to the following and final step, which is studying the novels and films which are the central part of this paper. In order to do the analysis, I will discuss both the films and the novels, and from there I will organize the analysis following this structure: firstly, I will contextualize the films and give some basic information such as the director, release date, or cast; secondly, I will talk about the book or story by Dick which is pertinent for each of the films; then, I will describe how the dystopian future is presented in the film compared to the book itself; and finally, I will emphasize the key elements and recurrent ideas that are present in Philip K. Dick's work and how they are used in the film.

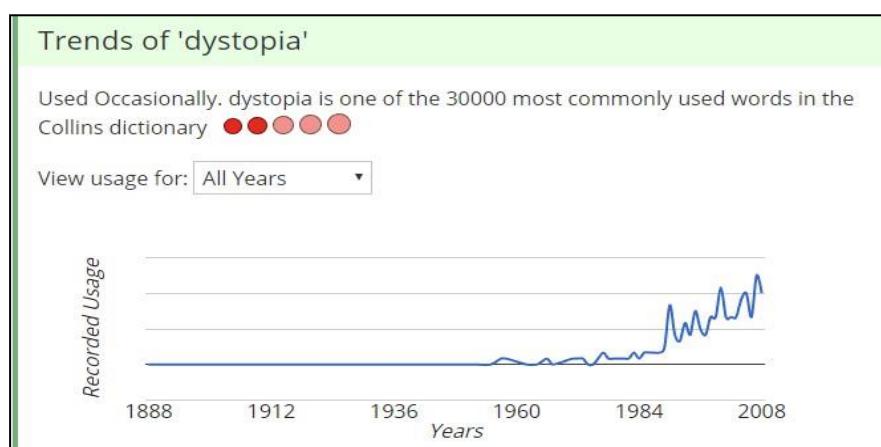
Finally, I must state that this analysis will be structured following the chronological order of the literary works and not the film adaptations; so that, I will start with *Minority Report* which is based on a short story published in the 1950s in a magazine called *Fantastic Universe*; I will continue with *We can remember it for you wholesale* published in 1966, and I will finish with *Do androids dream if electric sheep?* published in 1968. Besides, the study and analysis will be based on watching the films and reading the original books, but also on a reliable and pertinent critical bibliography and research.

## 2. CONCEPTS AND APPROACH

### 2.1. Definition of “Dystopian Futures”

Science fiction usually talks about future societies and states placed somewhere and somewhen in the futures, and when writers and film directors of Sci-Fi decide to talk about these futures, they must decide if they are going to explain a story set in a utopian or a dystopian future. This paper will focus its attention on novels and films that describe dystopian futures, therefore it is necessary to define the main characteristics of this type of future; nevertheless, since utopia and dystopia are opposites, to understand the meaning of dystopian, firstly, I must define the concept of utopia.

Let's read the definition we can find in the Collins Co-build Advanced Learner's English Dictionary about utopia: "If you refer to an imaginary situation as a utopia, you mean that it is one in which society is perfect and everyone is happy, but which you feel is not possible." (Sinclair, 2003, p. 1610). Consequently, since dystopia is a word formed by the prefix *dis-* or *dys-*, which is used to describe the opposite, and the word utopia, so that we conclude that dystopia refers to the opposite meaning of utopia and entails negative connotations. Furthermore, other definitions of dystopia that we can find in the online Collins dictionary, it describes dystopia as "an imaginary place where everything is as bad as it can be.", and "a hypothetical place, society, or situation in which conditions and the quality of life are dreadful.", and linked to these definitions we find an interesting statistic graphic which shows how this word has undergone a process of increase in its usage.



Therefore, according to the definitions provided by the dictionary, dystopian futures deal with places or situations in the future in which society is miserable, and all the human imperfections are brought to the forefront. However, whereas these definitions of dystopia as something negative and pessimistic are provided by the corpus of a dictionary: Is this point of view supported by other sources such as books or essay studies? The answer is that after reading some essays about this topic, it seems that the same idea about dystopia is constantly reinforced, so as an example of that, I would like to emphasize two excerpts from two different writers and books: one from the book *Biopunk Dystopias* written by Lars Schmeink:

Whereas the eutopian form wants to set examples, informing the reader about alternatives for a better life, the dystopian form is ‘pessimistic in its presentation of projective images’ (Vieira 17) and uses a similar didacticism rather to warn readers about their responsibility to ensure that things do not turn out the way depicted. (2016, p. 65)

And the other one from Richard Phillips’ *The Dialectics of Utopia and Dystopia*:

Derived from the Greek *dys* (bad, diseased, inverted) and *topos* (place), dystopia is conceived as a bad, diseased or inverted place (Elwood, 1976). It is all that utopia is not. Utopias are characterised by positive attributes such as natural abundance and beauty, sensual gratification, moral order, and social harmony; dystopias by the absence or opposite of these things. (2002, p. 190)

Hence, from the definitions and the excerpts stated above we can conclude that dystopian futures must include some characteristics which totally differ from the utopian point of view; thus, dystopian futures must be negative and pessimistic, society must be unhappy and miserable, moral order and social harmony must be in jeopardy, and these futures must be possible or at least plausible.

## 2.2. “Dystopia” as a Cinematic Element in Science Fiction Films

Regarding the description of the meaning and characteristics of dystopian films, I must emphasize the cinematic elements that are common in Sci-Fi films.

Firstly, I should mention one term that could help to understand why science fiction, as a film and literary genre, has become more relevant and more admired throughout the years. Therefore, before science fiction was culturally considered, many literary and film critics used to classify films and written stories that imagined future societies whose technological development may include spaceships and journeys through space; as *Space Operas*; however, this term used to entail negative connotations.

As David Hartwell and Kathryn Cramer explain in their introduction to *The Space Opera Renaissance*, the term ‘space opera’ has shifted in meaning from Bob Tucker’s original pejorative dismissal of it as ‘hacky, grinding, stinking, outworn space-ship yarn’ (cited in Hartwell and Cramer 10) to become a nostalgic and even praiseworthy term that today usually refers to ambitious sf speculations. (Schmeink, 2016, p. 20)

Thus, to avoid this original pejorative connotation, the term *Space Opera* was restricted in its use and the term Science Fiction began to be more frequently used, especially because it gained a higher cultural acceptance:

Consequently, the science-fictional has become ubiquitous in much of our everyday culture, from newspapers and political discourse [...] to the use of sf elements in global media ‘outside of traditional venues’ (Bould and Vint 202), and its proliferation in circles of high culture. (Schmeink, 2016, p. 19)

Once I have made a distinction between Science Fiction and *Space Opera* which are terms that are usually wrongly used; I want to turn to how dystopia is applied in science fiction as a cinematic element, and referring to the characteristics defined in the previous section of this paper, I must mention as the most important feature, the question of possibility. Therefore, one essential element in Sci-Fi films is the creation of possible future worlds.

In modal logic, possible worlds are formal constructs, bare undifferentiated sets that have no structure whatsoever, while, in semiotic and narratological studies, possible worlds have substantive nature, they are “overfurnished sets” (Eco 1978, 27), of which one must know acting individuals and properties that make them different from the real world. (Bertetti, 2017, p. 48)

Therefore, the definition of these possible worlds allows the writer and the directors to tell stories set in a different future context, making it possible to redefine the properties of these worlds, which will generally include references to their people, society, technology, and government. Nevertheless, since we talk about dystopian futures, these possible worlds must contain a society which lives miserably despite any technological and scientific development.

### 2.3. Philip K. Dick's Brief Bibliography

According to the biography provided by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt publishers, Philip Kindred Dick was born the 16<sup>th</sup> of December of 1928 along with his twin sister Jane Kindred Dick who died in 1929. His parents Edgar Dick and Dorothy Kindred divorced in 1932. In 1938 he published *The Daily Dick*, and in 1940 he wrote the poem *Dead*. Therefore, we could infer from these facts that he had to face some traumatic events in his life even at an early age, and these experiences could possibly explain his preference for dark stories as reflected and suggested in the fact that with only 12 he wrote a poem which both the title and main topic is death. This hypothesis would be asserted by the events which happened in 1944 when he was diagnosed with potential schizophrenia, as well as suffering extreme vertigo, depression, agoraphobia and claustrophobia; however, during this year he also begins to work at University Radio Shop and later Art Music, and continues publishing short stories for the *Berkeley Gazette*, the magazine with which he started publishing short stories in 1942 at the age of 14. In 1946 he is diagnosed with tachycardia, and in May of 1948 marries his first wife who gets divorced just six months later.

Hence, we can see that during the first 20 years he has been diagnosed many severe medical problems such as schizophrenia or depression, as well as

having some conjugal problems like the divorce of his parents and his first divorce, so this could help us to understand Dick's character and tendency to talk about dark subjects in his stories and novels.

In 1950 Dick marries his second wife, and they will be married until his second divorce in 1958. Meanwhile, during this marriage Philip K. Dick experiences many changes in his career, and in 1954 meets A. E. Van Vogt at a Sci-Fi convention; Van Vogt convinces him to focus on novels instead of short stories because it allows to earn more money, so in 1955 he publishes his first novel *Solar Lottery* with Ace Books, and starts a prolific career that as HMH publishers says, it meant that between 1955 and 1970, Dick wrote more than 100 short stories and an average of two novels per year. In 1959 he marries his third wife, and on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February of 1960 his first daughter Laura Archer is born. In 1963 Dick wins the Hugo Award for his novel published in 1961 *The Man in the High Castle*, and in 1964 Dick divorces Anne. In 1966 he marries his fourth wife, and his second daughter Isolda Freya is born in 1967.

Therefore, we see that the following 20 years, Philip K. Dick has had many marriages and divorces, but also his first successful moments in literature. So now in 1968 at the age of 40, Philip K. Dick starts his problems with drugs, and begins taking methamphetamines to keep his vivid writing rhythm. In 1972 he gets divorced, and in 1973 marries again, and his first son Christopher Kenneth is born. In 1974 Dick suffers some episodes of hallucinations which affected him and his writing, and it was reflected in *Exegesis* which is an 8,000-page journal talking about this experience and his thoughts. In 1975 he wins the John W. Campbell Jr. Award for *Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said* (1974), and in 1978 he gets divorced of his fifth wife. In 1980 he writes *The Divine Invasion*, and as HMH publishers states, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February of 1982 he suffers several strokes, and dies five days later, on March 2, at the age of 53 after being disconnected from life support. In 1982 the film *Blade Runner*, which is based on his novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), is released.

Regarding HMH, during the following years after his death, we can find that seven of Dick's novels and short stories were adapted to films: *Total Recall* (1990); *The Truman Show* (1998); *Minority Report* (2002); *Paycheck* (2003); *A*

*Scanner Darkly* (2006); *Next* (2007); and *The Adjustment Bureau* (2011). Finally, in 2005 Philip K. Dick was inducted as a member of the Science Fiction Hall of Fame in Seattle Washington, and in 2007 he became the first Sci-Fi writer to be canonized in the Library of American Series.

#### *2.4. Philip K. Dick's Key Interests in his Novels*

For example, Philip K. Dick's novel *Ubik* (1969) is based on at least three variants: i) the presence of individuals with parapsychological powers, belonging to organizations that fight each other, who are sometimes powerful enough to change reality and undo events by changing the past, ii) the possibility for civilians to travel to the Moon regularly, iii) the "moratoria", a condition whereby the deceased are kept in a state of "half-life", lost in their inner realities, but still have the ability to communicate with the world of the living. The structural difference of *Ubik*'s fictional world arises from the intertwining of these themes. (Beretti, 2017, p. 54)

Reading the novels written by Philip K. Dick, we can find that there are some ideas which are recurrent in his production. From the excerpt above, as an example, we can highlight some of the main recurrent ideas and interests which are present in the novels and short stories written by Philip K. Dick. Hence, we have the importance of the individual who struggles against an organized and restrictive society, which in the case of *Ubik* have parapsychological powers, but we also have other examples in the novels which are object of these paper, and for that reason we can mention Rick Deckard from the novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* or Anderton, from the short story *Minority Report*.

It seems that the reason for writing a story around these isolated main characters would be to use them as examples of individuals who fight against the organizations that rule and control the society in which they are living. It leads to another idea often present in Dick's stories, which is showing the existence of corporations that control the world in such manner that they become the real government and the ones who establish the rules and the laws for their habitants. Therefore, we have the examples of the Rosen Corporation in *Do*

*Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? Or the Commission of the Crime and Precrime in Minority Report.*

Nevertheless, to emphasize that the importance of the individual and the role of corporations in Dick's novels are systematic in his writing, and this is not exclusive of all Sci-Fi literature, let's compare with what happens with other authors such as Rucker Gibson, who is mentioned in the study of Lars Schmeink:

In Gibson's fiction there is therefore absolutely no critique of corporate power, no possibility that it will be shaken or assaulted by heroes who are entirely part of the system and who profit by their mastery within it, regardless of their ostensible marginalization and their posturings about constituting some form of counterculture. (230)" (2016, p. 23)

Finally, another cyclic idea in Dick's novels is analysing what makes us human, and it highlights two important features which are thinking and memory. Ergo, this is the reason why Dick shows interest in technological and biological development, so in his novels, such as *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* We have the Nexus-6 androids, and in *Minority Report* the Precogs. The mere existence of these characters, who could be artificial or having some outstanding abilities such as predicting the future through prophecies, allows Dick to question what makes us human. Thereby, following the philosophy of Descartes about reason as a trait that makes us human:

Neil Badmington explains Descartes's humanist philosophy quite ingeniously and defines the key argument: 'Reason belongs solely to the human and, as such, serves to unite the human race. "We" may have different types of bodies, but because reason is a property of the mind, deep down "we" are all the same' (*Posthumanism* 4). (Schmeik, 2016, p. 30)

This becomes uncertain when the artificial human beings such as the Nexus-6 are described with human characteristics and the capacity of thinking and memory, even if this memory are implants, so once again what makes us humans is questioned by Dick, and if we accept that because of thinking and having memories about ourselves, automatically, this makes us human; hence, the androids and other creatures described in his novel that have the same human

characteristics, they would be classified as human as well. Therefore, these questions would also generate an interesting debate about what we could define as real, which is another of the main interests in Philip K. Dick's novels.

Thus, if we read the following fragment of the novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* We could see an example of how if androids are able to think, and even better than real humans, and having memories; then, what makes us human? In this excerpt we also have the answer that suggests Philip K. Dick, and this answer would be empathy and emotions, so that to be able to identify artificial creatures such as the Nexus-6, they have invented the Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test.

The Nexus-6 had a choice of ten million separate electrical pathways in its brain; in less than a second these androids could react in one of at least fourteen different ways. They were more intelligent than some classes of human specials, so no intelligence test would trap them. The only hope of recognizing them was by using the Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test. (Dick, 2001, p. 8)

### **3. DYSTOPIAN FUTURE IN “MINORITY REPORT” (2002)**

#### *3.1. Contextualizing the Film*

The original title of the film is *Minority Report*, it lasts 145 minutes and it was released in the USA in 2002, it received a PG-13 certificate. It was directed by Steven Spielberg and the script, which is based on the short story *We Can Remember it for You Wholesale* by Philip K. Dick, was written by Scott Frank and Jon Cohen. This film is classified as a Sci-Fi, action, crime and mystery film, and its starring cast is formed by Tom Cruise, Colin Farrel, Max von Sydow, and Samantha Morton. It is interesting that the film was released in 2002, one year after *Artificial Intelligence A.I.*, which was also directed by Spielberg, so that these were two consecutive Sci-Fi films directed by Steven Spielberg.

#### *3.2. Based on the Short Story “Minority Report” (1956), From the Magazine “Fantastic Universe” (1950s)*

The film is based on a short story titled *The Minority Report*, which was included in the *Fantastic Universe* magazine, which is one of the different magazines such as the *Berkeley Gazette* in which Philp K. Dick used to publish some of his works during the late 40s and the 50s.

*The Minority Report* is structured in ten chapters. The first one introduces the main characters of Anderton, “The first thought Anderton had when he saw the young man was: *I’m getting bald. Bald and fat and old.* But he didn’t say it aloud.” (Dick, 2013, p. 314), and Witwer, ““Witwer?” he asked, managing to make this query sound gracious. “That’s right,” the young man said. “But the name’s Ed to you, of course.” (Dick, 2013, p. 314); however, the most important thing is that in this chapter the *Precogs* are introduced, as well as *Precrime*:

The three gibbering, fumbling creatures, with their enlarged heads and wasted bodies, were contemplating the future. The analytical machinery was recording prophecies, and as the three precog idiots talked, the machinery carefully listened. (Dick, 2013, p. 317)

The following chapters show a similar conflict to the one which is performed in the film; however, despite the fact that Anderton in order to prove his innocence is also a fugitive in most of the story, it differs in some aspects such as no frenetic chasing as it happens in the film, and more reflection about the moral implications that entails *Precrime* through dialogues with other characters such as Kaplan.

Hence, the following fragment shows this conflict of declaring people as potential murderers even before committing any crime, and this subject is shared with the film adaptation in which this theme is perhaps the central plot of the film, and as it happens in the adaptation, Anderton is forced by the circumstance to prove being innocent.

The Precrime Agency of the Federal Westbloc Government is in the process of locating and neutralizing its former Commissioner, John Allison Anderton, who, through the methodology of the Precrime system, is hereby declared a potential murderer and as such forfeits his rights to freedom and all its privileges.” “It didn’t take him long,” Anderton muttered, appalled. Kaplan snapped off the radio and the voice vanished.  
(Dick, 2013, p. 330)

Moreover, the following excerpt deals with what happens when technology fails, and an assumed infallibility turns into an absolute failure. Thus, this is another aspect of the story which is present in the film.

Of course, he didn’t. Look at it this way. If Kaplan gets hold of that tape, the police will be discredited. Can’t you see why? It would prove that the majority report was an error. Ed Witwer is absolutely right. You have to be taken in—if Precrime is to survive. (Dick, 2013, p. 346)

The last chapter concludes what was central in the short story and in the film adaptation. It is the reflection on how controlling society and trying to prevent future events such as avoiding different crimes, can put our life and free will in jeopardy.

‘It can happen in only one circumstance,’ Anderton said. ‘My case was unique, since I had access to the data. It *could* happen again—but only to the next Police Commissioner. So, watch your step.’ Briefly, he

grinned, deriving no inconsiderable comfort from Witwer's strained expression. (Dick, 2013, p. 366)

To sum up, we have found many common features between the short story written by Philip K. Dick and its 2002 film adaptation. Nevertheless, despite some formal differences such as the relationship between Anderton and Witwer, which is richer in dialogues in the short story, and the most reflexive portrayal of Anderton in the short story. The essence of the story was maintained in the film, and the ethical issues raised by *PreCrime* were kept as the main key element of both artistic expressions, the cinematic one and the literary one.

### *3.3. Description of the Dystopian Future in the Film*

Following the dystopian characteristics and the key elements which are recurrent in Dick's writing style, and as we defined in the chapter *Philip K. Dick's Key Interests in his Novels*, we see that the film is set in a near future, which seems to be utopian since crime has been eradicated during the last years; however, we will see that in fact the future is a dystopian one.

We are placed in Washington DC in 2054, and the main character of the film is Chief John Anderton, who is the one representing the individual who will fight against the society of his era. The future appears to be a technologically advanced society, which through the work performed by the *Commission of Crime* and *PreCrime*, it has been able to erase crime from their streets by preventing murdering in advance using the *PreCogs*, who are three human beings with prophetic capacities. Nevertheless, the fact that a police organization could have the power to predict crime is seen for some people such as Witwer as something dangerous; therefore, Witwer, who works for another *PreCrime* headquarters, goes to John Anderton's office to investigate if they are committing any kind of abuse of power. Therefore, this would be the dystopian element about how dystopian societies are usually under the control of corporation, societies or commissions, which in fact are the ones that rule the world.

Other important element that is emphasized in the film is constituted by the technologies of communication, so we can see personalized advertisements and publicity, which are addressed to people because of an eye scanner. This is clearly shown in the scene where Anderton is escaping using the underground, and we see how he is surrounded by eye-scanners which scan his eyes constantly, and without explicit permission; so, it leads to result in how his society is under control, and how they have turned down their freedom for safety and commodity. This scene helps to understand the decision Anderton makes that leads him to ask for illegal eye surgery, and replacing his eyes for another eyes, so we can read this act as a rebellious act against the society he used to embrace.

Hence, people have sacrificed their privacy for safety, and this is something that could sound familiar to our current times; thus, on account of this, the film follows another pattern for dystopian futures: It is showing a possible future, and consequently, we can see how some aspects of its technology are already present in our time.

In *The Lawnmower Man* (1992) and *Minority Report* (2001), diegetic prototypes of embryonic computer-based technologies directly resulted in funding opportunities and the ability to construct real-life prototypes. Audiences could see with their own eyes 'real' people effortlessly interacting with these futuristic computer technologies.” (Kirby, 2010, p 47)

Summing up, the film follows how Witwer and the old John's team-mate pursue Anderton because he has been accused of being a future killer by the *Precrime* system of justice, and we see how Anderton must escape from this charge to prove his innocence. However, through this escape, he will discover some dark secrets that could confirm, as Witwer suspected, that *Precrime* could be not reliable, and it would be possible that the very same *Commission of Crime* and its director, could know about it.

Thus, the film with John Anderton as the individual who fights against the corporations and organizations that rule and control society, as well as presenting a possible future where people is not as happy as it seems at the beginning of the film; it clearly accomplishes the patterns of a dystopian future.

### 3.4. Philip K. Dick's Key Elements in "Minority Report"

Thereby, after analysing both the story and the film adaptation, we can write a list of what constant key elements of Dick's writing style we have found. So, in order to do that, let's read the following fragment of the short story:

It will end the check and balance system. Precrime will no longer be an independent agency. The Senate will control the police, and after that— ” His lips tightened. “They’ll absorb the Army too. Well, it’s outwardly logical enough. *Of course*, I feel hostility and resentment toward Witwer—*of course* I have a motive. (Dick, 2013, p. 324)

This fragment is representative of the key elements and interests of Dick's narrative. We can check how the society depicted and its government, despite the problems which have happened in the story, still want to maintain the control over society, so we read how The Senate will control the police because while they were controlling *PreCrime*, this was put in jeopardy. Furthermore, this fragment also illustrates the importance of the individual as a powerful motor of change, in the case of *Minority Report*, John Anderton is the one who causes the changes in society.

Another key element which we have seen in both the story and the film, is the portrayal of the characters of the *PreCogs*; they are the tool used by Philip K. Dick to question what makes us human. Thus, since they have the power of predicting future crimes; therefore, it entails that humanity would not have free will, and it creates the perfect environment for talking about our freedom, which would be linked to the other important component of Dick's narrative and manifested in the film and the story; it is the power of corporations, commissions, and associations to control each aspect of life of their citizens.

## **4. DYSTOPIAN FUTURE IN “TOTAL RECALL” (1990, 2012)**

### *4.1. Contextualizing the Film*

The original title of the film is *Total Recall*, it lasts 113 minutes and it was released in the USA in 1990, it received a R (+18) certificate. It was directed by Paul Verhoeven and the script, which is based on a story written by Philip K. Dick, was written by Ronald Shusett, Dan O’Bannon, Jon Povill, and Gary Goldman. This film is classified as a Sci-Fi, action, and thriller film, and its starring cast is formed by Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rachel Ticotin, Sharon Stone, Ronny Cox, and Michael Ironside. In 2012 it was released a new version of the film with the same title but directed by Len Wiseman. This version maintained some of the original script writers such as Dan O’Bannon, Jon Povill, and Gary Goldman, and added Kurt Wimmer and Mark Bomback. The film has two versions, the theatrical one that lasts 118 minutes, and an extended version that lasts 130 minutes. This Sci-fi, action, mystery and adventure film stars Colin Farrell, Kate Beckinsale, Jessica Biel, Bryan Cranston and Bill Nighly.

### *4.2. Based on the story “We can Remember it for You Wholesale” (1966)*

*Total Recall* is the title of the 1990 film, which clearly reflects a fundamental element of the novel, which is the enterprise specialized in implanting artificial memories; however, the original name of the story in which the film is based is *We can Remember it for You Wholesale*. Both, the title of the story and the one from the film, manifestly refer to recalls, and as it was analysed in the chapter focussed in what are the habitual elements in Dick’s novels; we find out that memory is an essential one.

Let’s see the very beginning of the written story to understand why Philip K. Dick plays with the concept of memory, and what kind of possibilities it could involve:

HE AWOKE—AND wanted Mars. The valleys, he thought. What would it be like to trudge among them? Great and greater yet: the dream grew as

he became fully conscious, the dream and the yearning. He could almost feel the enveloping presence of the other world, which only Government agents and high officials had seen. A clerk like himself? Not likely. (Dick, 2013, p 453)

Hence, the story begins describing the main character, Mr. Quail, who has dreamt of Mars; however, he feels that this could not be just a dream, and he is quite certain that he has been there before. Thus, Dick uses memories to talk about how diffused the line between dreams and reality is, and how we can remember both, but we cannot be sure if what we have experienced was real or just a dream. Therefore, Mr. Quail decides to go to the enterprise called *Recall*: “Good morning, Mr. Quail.” “Yes,” he said. “I’m here to see about a Rekal course. As I guess you know.” “Not ‘rekal’ but *recall*,” the receptionist corrected him. (Dick, 2013, p 455)

The fact that he decides to go to the enterprise is because he is not sure if what he dreamt was based on something real, or if it was just simply a dream. Nevertheless, the story shows that this fact really does not matter, because there is the possibility to create your own memories and having an experience which in fact is totally artificial, but still you can feel it as it would be real, and as if it had happened before.

To this point, the story plays with this dichotomy of reality and dreams, and we are invited to share the journey of confusion and uncertainty that takes control of Quail’s life.

Quail said, “I never made any trip. It’s a false memory-chain improperly planted in me by McClane’s technicians.” But then he thought of the box, in his desk drawer, containing the Martian life-forms. And the trouble and hardship he had had gathering them. The memory seemed real. (Dick, 2013, p. 470)

We are also witnessing another recurrent idea of Dick’s novels and stories, which is also present in this story. This is the interest of Philip K. Dick to show that society in dystopian futures are always under control of governments, corporations, or enterprises.

But apparently, he doesn't recall it otherwise. Someone, probably at a government military-sciences lab, erased his conscious memories; all he knew was that going to Mars meant something special to him, and so did being a secret agent. (Dick, 2013, p 460)

#### *4.3. Description of the Dystopian Future in the Film*

The film stars Arnold Schwarzenegger, who at the time of release was already famous for having done many films such as *Conan the Barbarian*, *Commando*, *Predator*, or *Terminator*; though these films could be classified in other genres such as adventure, thriller, and science fiction, most of them were mainly classified as action films.

Therefore, we expect that *Total Recall*, despite being a science fiction film, will include a lot of action, and in fact it does. However, focusing on the Sci-Fi and dystopian elements in the film, we can find the following ones:

The film's opening scene follows the beginning of the written story, that is Quaid's dream of being in Mars, but when he wakes up, we find out that in fact he is on Earth living with his wife Lori (Sharon Stone). The importance of the scenes on Earth is that they show a technologically advanced city, but its buildings, streets, and train stations are made of massive concrete blocks, making the city an inhospitable place. In addition, another important subject of the fragment of the film that is set in our planet, is the scene where Quaid goes to *Recall* to order a memory package about Mars, so this scene prepares the film for the following events that will happen on Mars.

Therefore, when the film is set on Mars, it is when it becomes more an action film than a science fiction film. It is because the scene on Mars is basically Quaid escaping from his prosecutors who are trying to kill him. Nevertheless, we also have many sci-fi elements of dystopia in this fragment, and I would like to highlight the following ones:

Firstly, Mars represent an outer colony which is ruled by a despotic man who rules the colony as an enterprise which looks only for benefit, and this is one of the key interests we can find in Dick's novels and stories. Furthermore,

another element to emphasize, which is shared with the written story, is the importance of memory as a human feature that may help us to define ourselves as humans; nevertheless, this story goes beyond this question of what makes us humans, and explores if reality is in fact real, or we are just living a dream.

Precisely, this question is the one that the ending of the film suggests, because during Quaid's quest for recalling, we are not assured that all the events in the film, could have been just the experience created by the implant of memory that Quaid ordered at the beginning of the film. In addition, this idea is also supported by other authors such as Glass.

The happy endings of NBF films tend to be un-believable and forced, especially given the internal logic of the genre. They only work because their audiences accept the convention that most movies, and certainly action-adventure films, have happy endings [...] A fourteen-year-old son of a friend of mine informed me that his discussions in school with his friends mostly revolved around the question of whether or not the entire movie was a dream. Plenty of evidence in *Total Recall* supports such a position. The opening shots take place on Mars in Quaid's prescient dream, which we learn is merely one of a series he's been having. (1990, p. 11)

#### 4.4. Philip K. Dick's Key Elements in "Total Recall"

Hence, focus on the key elements of Dick's writing and reflected in the film, we can emphasize the following ones:

The first one would be the importance of memory as an element that defines us, so that without remembering events, feelings and experiences of our past, we cannot define ourselves as living creatures. Furthermore, memory also allows Dick to play with the concepts of reality and unreality, which entails dream; thus, let's read the following excerpt of what is said by Glass about the film:

At the beginning of *Total Recall*'s complicated plot, construction worker Douglas Quaid (played by Schwarzenegger), experiences an inexplicably powerful longing to go for a vacation on Mars in the year 2084. When his

wife [...] re-fuses to go, he follows the advice of TV commercials and enlists the aid of a company, Recall, Inc., specializing in the implantation of vacation "memories" into its clients' brains. (1990, p. 4)

Thus, it may explain why the feeling that Quaid experiences after his dreaming is so strong, and why since he cannot go to Mars because of his salary, he is longing to order an artificial implant of memory to *Recall*.

The second element to emphasize, which is shared with the other stories which are being studied in this paper, is the importance of advertisements and publicity in these dystopian societies. Thus, as it happens in *Minority Report* where we see personalized publicity all around the city, or in *Blade Runner* with massive lighted signs; it also happens in *Total Recall*, and publicity surround the city. In fact, the reason why Quaid goes to *Recall* is because of an advertisement he sees in the city; let's read the following excerpt from Glass:

*Total Recall*, Verhoeven uses advertising iconography in a high proportion of scenes, but plays it, for the most part, absolutely straight. They are just oppressively there, the actual logos for today's corporate products, as inescapable for the mutants as cigarette and booze billboards for inner city dwellers in America." (1990, p. 4)

This excerpt highlights the power of advertising as something oppressive, that at the same time allows corporations to control society. Therefore, it shows that in the film there is also the key element of Dick's novels about how corporations can rule the world.

Summarizing, the main key element that stands out in *Total Recall* is implanted memories, and how this involves doubting between what is real and what is not real; additionally, as Glass states in the following excerpt, this is a common feature that is shared with another remarkable story written by Philip K. Dick.

This aspect of *Total Recall* recalls *Blade Runner*. The replicants' "memories," implanted at "birth," establish lives they've never lived, right down to photo albums of family and friends who have never existed. (Glass, 1990, p. 6)

## **5. DYSTOPIAN FUTURE IN “BLADE RUNNER” (1982)**

### *5.1. Contextualizing the Film*

The original title of the film is *Blade Runner*, it lasts 117 minutes and it was released in the USA in 1982, it received a R certificate. It was directed by Ridley Scott and the script, which is based on a story written by Philip K. Dick, was written by Hampton Fancher and David Webb Peoples. This film is classified as a Sci-Fi and thriller film, and its starring cast is formed by Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer, Sean Young, Edward James Olmos, Daryl Hannah, Joe Turkel, Brion James, and Joanna Cassidy. This data belongs to the original theatrical version of 1982; however, it is important to highlight that the film has undergone several revisions such as the 1992 version called the *Director’s Cut*, or the 2007 called the *Final Cut*. This version had two main changes which dealt with the erase of the thoughtful dialogues uttered by Rick Deckard as a voice over, and omitting the happy ending released in the version of 1982, and replacing it with a more abrupt and open ending.

### *5.2. Based on the Novel, “Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?” (1968)*

The very same title leads to the key questions of this novel: Do androids have the capacity of dreaming? Therefore, is there something beyond mechanisms and artificial implants of memory? And do androids have empathy and feelings?

The reason why Philip K. Dick chose this title was not arbitrary, and as we learnt after reading his biography and highlighting the main habitual interests of Dick in his novels, we have seen that questioning what entails being human, and emphasizing the pros and cons of technology; these are subjects that he always have shown interest in using it in his novels and stories.

Hence, focused on the novel, we are introduced to Rick Deckard, who is a police officer specialized in being an android killer, and he works in the city of San Francisco, which differs from the film adaptation in which the story is set in Los Angeles. As we can see in the following excerpt:

The morning sky was grey with radioactive dust and he could smell death in the air. But it was not so bad now. People like him who had lived through World War Terminus were the strong ones. The dust continued to have its effects on their minds and their bodies. (Dick, 2001, p. 3)

From the very beginning, the story describes a very dark and discouraging future, which clearly places the narrative in a dystopian future; furthermore, it mentions that the society and its cities are the result of a previous World War, which have caused an environment disaster. This is an important fact because it helps to understand the relevance of the mechanical animals which are constantly cited in the novel, as exemplified in the following paragraph from the novel, and another excerpt from the article *Blade Runner's humanism: Cinema and representation* by Joshua Foa:

'I want a large animal,' Rick answered. 'I had a real sheep once, but it died.' If he killed five androids, he thought, he would get a thousand dollars for each on top of his normal salary. (Dick, 2001, p. 6)

Dick's obsession with animals lingers in the film if one knows to look for it: the artificial owl owned by the Tyrell corporation that manufactures replicants; the animal market that Deckard walks through on his way to a bar; the fact that the Voight-Kampff test used to detect replicants (spelled 'Voigt-Kampff' in the book) is still largely composed of animal questions. (Foa, 2015, p. 106)

The relevance and presence of animals in the novel is one of the main differences between the novel and the film adaptation. This is because in the film, we only find veiled references in the dialogue between Leon and Holden at the beginning of the film. When the last one is applying the Voigt-Kampff test and asks a question about a turtle, and Leon answers that he has never seen any, or the manufactured animals, such as Zhora's snake, which are sold in the animal market of Chinatown. Therefore, animals are also a symbolic element that help to understand the current situation of the Earth, where most of the real animals are extinct, and they have been replaced by artificial animals; so similarly, it could happen with human beings; however, we find out that human-

like androids have been created, but not to substitute real humans, but to work as slaves in out-world colonies.

Therefore, at this point of the novel, we are introduced to the Nexus-6 androids, and it is precisely through the story about Deckard chasing these androids, which are declared illegal on Earth, when Philip K. Dick invites us to debate about what makes us human, and if these androids have empathy, feelings, and experience life as real human do; then, should we consider them humans as well? Philip K. Dick clearly states this idea in the following paragraph, when he makes us take position between the statement uttered by Deckard, or by what we deduce of the android's behaviour.

The only hope of recognizing them was by using the Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test; only humans were capable of feeling empathy with other life forms. Rick, and other followers of Mercerism, had no problem experiencing the feelings of other living creatures. Humanlike androids did not have this quality. (Dick, 2001, p. 8)

Hence, empathizing with the Nexus-6 or not, it depends on the reader, because we are clearly guided by the biased point of view of Deckard, and since he is in fact an android's killer: "Rick stared at him. Resch is a good android killer, he said to himself. But am I? Suddenly, for the first time in his life, he was not sure." (Dick, 2001, p. 55), we only read the observations about the androids, and about the dystopian reality of the story and its society, through Deckard's eyes. Moreover, we find out that the real and only motivation of Deckard for being an android killer is money, "Six today. And now it's finished, and I can go back home to Iran and the goat. And we'll finally have enough money." (Dick, 2001, p. 91-92), and note that he names himself a killer and not an assassin, which would entail being a professional of murdering, which in fact he is.

All things considered, there are many differences between the novel and the film adaptation. Firstly, in the novel we read Rick Deckard as a dehumanized android killer, who sees this as a simple job to earn money to buy an animal, whereas in the film he shows more doubts about his profession, as well as dealing with the controversy of how he should define the Nexus-6 he is looking for: so, should he look at them as machines, or as living creatures? Secondly,

the setting of the novel does not mean a relevant difference, because the pollution of the city, and its insane atmosphere are maintained in both the novel and the film; however, one big difference is that in the film we see a crowded city, whereas the novel describes more empty places, and more depopulation. Finally, the other characteristics that differ between the novel and the film are that in the cinematographic version, the fact that there was a World War is not shown implicitly, and the relevance of the mechanical animals is more emphasized in the novel than in the film. To conclude, we should mention that most of the names of the characters in the novel such as Rick Deckard, Rachel, Roy, or Pris are kept similar in the film, but with some differences regarding the personality of the characters, or names such as *The Tyrell Corporation* for the film, and *The Rosen Corporation* in the novel.

### 5.3. Description of the Dystopian Future in the Film

Since this film has undergone many revisions, and there are seven different versions of *Blade Runner*; we will focus on both the original theatrical version of 1982, and the final version released in 2007.

One of the main and most important differences we find in the 1982 version in comparison with the original work by the author is centred in the voiceover uttered by Rick Deckard, and the happy ending which was included after production, which shows Rick and Rachel driving to a better place represented with images of a forest, and the vision of what I would define as a sort of a heavenly sky, - both recycled images from *The Shining* (1980) - These elements are not found in the *Final Cut* (2007); where the voiceover was deleted (it was already deleted in the *Director's Cut* (1992)), and the ending omitted the happy ending, and as a result we see a more abrupt scene in which we are invited to speculate on what could happen after they are escaping. The fact that Ridley Scott decided to review his film and introduce these changes in the 1992 version and keep it in the 2007 version shows the controversy that surrounded the film's production, and how some decisions made in 1982 did not please the director, and therewith, it led to the current fact of having seven versions of *Blade Runner*.

There is another aspect that I would like to emphasize about the differences and similarities between the novel and the film. The first aspect we should highlight is the language used in the film, which differs from the one used in the novel; hence, it is interesting to mention how the novel refers to the Nexus-6 as *Androids*, whereas the film uses the word *Replicants*. It is because the novel shows the *Androids* as mechanical creatures with human appearance, but like robots they have complex inner mechanisms and gears “The bullet hit the android in the head and the android's brain box burst. The Nexus-6 controls blew into pieces which fell on Rick [...] 'Tell Bryant that I got Polokov,'” (Dick, 2001, p. 36), whereas the film describes the *Replicants* as living creatures with human appearance, but genetically designed in different laboratories. Hence, the choice for the word *Replicant* instead of *Androids*, was not arbitrary, and it seems that Ridley Scott was interested in using this term because of its ethical and controversial connotations, because if *Replicants*, as the very same word says, are practically identical to real human beings; thus, it appeals to the recurrent idea we find in Dick’s novels and stories about what defines us as human.

Still regarding the language used in the film, most of the names of the main characters are very similar or equal to the ones in the novel; however, there are other characters which only appear in the novel, as can be read in the following paragraph where Pris talks about her friends, who are also androids, “It's very nice of you, J.R. Isidore,’ Pris said. 'But if the killers got the others -got Max Polokov and Garland and Luba and Roy Baty ... Oh, Roy and Irmgard Baty are my best friends.” (Dick, 2001, p. 57). Besides, another interesting subject is how these characters differ in their personalities; therefore, as it is exemplified in the following excerpt:

I need bed rest, he told himself. The last time I was in bed was with Rachael Rosen. Sleeping with ~111 android -against the law, here and on the other planets. She must be in Seattle now with the other Rosens, humans and androids. If I had killed her last night, my goat would still be alive. That's when I made a wrong decision. (Dick, 2001, p. 98)

We find out that he does not care about the relationship he had with Rachel, and he sees her just as a simple machine which has an assigned serial number – 111 android – that was probably created in an assembly line, and therefore, it is seen only as an object. Thus, in the novel, Rick Deckard is essentially a cold-hearted assassin, who does not care about the androids, as well as being shown as a dehumanized individual. On the other hand, we see a very different Deckard in the film, and whereas the one in the novel is ruthless, and shivers for being a good androids' killer, the one in the film, despite *Retiring* (this is how it is called in the film) *Replicants*, he shows doubts about his work and even disdains it; moreover, showing feelings for Rachel to the point of falling in love with her, along with manifesting empathy with the situation of the *Replicants*.

Finally, I would like to emphasize one last aspect from the film in comparison with the novel, which is its imagery and iconicity. Hence, *Blade Runner*, which has been considered a masterpiece of science fiction because of its design, cinematography, iconic images, environmental sounds, music score composed by Vangelis, among other outstanding characteristics is set in a crowded, chaotic and multicultural city of *Los Angeles* in the year 2019, whereas the novel is set in the city of *San Francisco*, which is also polluted, but rather empty; nevertheless, there are many images which are iconic in the film, which seem to have been inspired directly by the novel. Thereby, we could emphasize the iconic scene where the police car called *Spinner*, makes its approach manoeuvre to the parking of the police tower, and as we can read in the following excerpt, “Rick Deckard parked his police hovercar on the station roof and went down to Inspector Bryant's office.” (Dick, 2001, p. 31), the scene is clearly inspired by the text written by Philip K. Dick; furthermore, there are more evidence of that in another iconic scene where the *Spinner* makes another approach manoeuvre to the *Tyrell Corporation*:

When Rick landed the police hovercar on the roof of the Rosen Corporation Building, a young woman was waiting for him there. She was a thin woman with black hair, and she was wearing thick glasses to protect herself from the dust. She did not look happy to see him. 'I'm Rachael Rosen,' she said. (Dick, 2001, p. 11)

Moreover, this fragment from the novel also reveals that the film and the novel could differ in many aspects, but they are also closely linked in other aspects to the point of being nearly a calque as in the scene of the owl in the *Tyrell Corporation*: "Would you really like to own an owl?" Rachael asked Rick." (Dick, 2001, p. 17).

#### *5.4. Philip K. Dick's Key Elements in "Blade Runner"*

*Blade Runner* is considered an iconic film which has exerted an important influence in the genre of Science Fiction, and that the cinema presents dystopian futures.

This film contains many of the distinctive elements that belong to the writing style and plot interests of Philip K. Dick; therefore, regarding dystopias, the story is set in a plausible future, which is characterized by being noxious, inhospitable, and inhabited by people whose acts and lifestyle show that they have undergone a process of dehumanization. McNamara in his article "*Blade Runner's*" Post-Individual Worldspace" highlights these elements, and he focusses his vision on how this dystopian environment affects humans, as stated in the following excerpt:

Set in a post-nuclear world that is being reassembled elsewhere in the solar system as the double of its pre-detonation self, Philip K. Dick's novel 'Do Androids Electric Sheep?' (1968) registers its protest against the dehumanizing effects of bureaucracies and technology as it follows bounty-hunter Rick Deckard on what begins as a search for six renegade androids and becomes a quest for an uncontested essence of human being that separates "us" from the ever more human-seeming androids. (1997, p. 422)

Hence, it is precisely the subject of humanity that is underlined in *Blade Runner*, so this element becomes central in both the film and the novel, and consequently, the recurrent interest of Philip K. Dick questioning what makes us human is perhaps the key element of *Blade Runner*. This is due to the fact that the presence of the *Replicants*, who are as the very same word says, very similar copies, - with some improvements -, of real human beings, entails examining some aspects such as empathy, memories, or feelings, all of which

are ideas frequently explored by Philip K. Dick in his novels. Therefore, as regards empathy, what Vinci says in the following excerpt of his article, "Posthuman Wounds: Trauma, Non-Anthropocentric Vulnerability, and the Human/Android/Animal Dynamic in Philip K. Dick's "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" could help to understand how empathy is defined in *Blade Runner*.

The post-apocalyptic culture depicted in the novel is based upon anthropocentric values constructed in such a way as to belittle and disempower human and nonhuman others ("specials," androids, ersatz animals) by defining the human as a specialized category of being that has exclusive access to empathy (Vinci, 2014, p. 92)

As stated in the previous fragment, empathy is considered something exclusive and intrinsic to humans, so there is no reason to link this concept to the nonhuman others; however, since this is a distinctive characteristic of Dick's literature, its presence in the novel and in the film is complete, and we find this component in the scene where the Voight-Kampff is applied, or especially in the acts of the *Replicants*, who show a strong desire of living and lasting more than just four years.

Ergo, all that surrounds the *Replicants*, involves dealing with questions such as whether memory and the feelings that it originates are exclusive of humans, or on the contrary it is also possible in the *Replicants*, so that if they can do so one is invited to wonder the extent to which they may be considered to be human, and consequently the question arises as to whether they have the same rights.

To sum up, *Blade Runner* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* comprehend once again the presence of an individual whose personal situation and his environment, which is characterized by a multicultural society and surrounded by high technology, force him to doubt about his beliefs, and about himself concerning his humanity. This is caused by the contraposition between Deckard and the *Replicants*, which is exemplified in the following excerpt:

Thus, *Blade Runner* shades into a meditation on the transience of not so much life as existence, the existence of everything, animate and inanimate. These two categories, like human/machine and hero/villain, also break

down, until both have equal weight and value. This is the ultimate significance of Scott's frame-packing style" (Dempsey, 1982, p. 38)

It leads to create a diffused boundary between different dichotomies such as human versus artificial humans, or who can be labelled as the protagonist and the antagonist. Besides, we must mention that as it is constant in Dick's novels, there is always a corporation, *The Tyrell Corporation* in the film, which is the one who really rules the world.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Summarizing, the aim of this study has been to show the interest of science fiction in dystopian futures, describing their characteristics, and displaying how these futures have been represented in some films, short stories and novels. For that reason, I have made a selection of films, which share the interest for dystopian futures, at the same time as being based on stories written by Philip K. Dick.

The fact that all films were based on Dick's stories has been quite revealing, because it has allowed to compare them, state recurrent ideas and interests of this author, find differences and similarities between both the films and the stories, as well as emphasize some distinctive characteristics regarding dystopian futures. Hence, it is interesting to see how we can highlight Dick's interest for questioning several issues such as reality, which I would link to the concept of memory, humanity, isolation, empathy, technology, and society controlled by enterprises, corporations, and mass media.

Therefore, regarding reality, we find that Philip K. Dick is always questioning the very same concept, so that we are not able to distinguish if what we consider real, is in fact real. A good example of this game on what is real is exemplified in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, and in *We can Remember it for You Wholesale*; so, both start with their protagonists waking up:

Rick Deckard woke up to the sound of the alarm from the mood machine beside his bed. He got up and stretched. In her own bed, his wife Iran opened her sad, grey eyes, frowned, and then shut them again. (Dick, 2001, p. 1)

HE AWOKE—AND wanted Mars. The valleys, he thought. What would it be like to trudge among them? Great and greater yet: the dream grew as he became fully conscious, the dream and the yearning. (Dick, 2013, p. 453)

It entails that perhaps they are not living their own lives, and I would consider that Dick's intention could be showing the reader that we are just puppets living a fiction which is called life. This concept is closely related to another recurrent idea in Dick's stories and also in the film adaptations, which

we have analysed and highlighted in this paper; thereby, we must emphasize the role of different types of organizations such as corporations, enterprises, or mass media, which become the real government of dystopian societies; so, these governments are exemplified by *The Tyrell Corporation* in *Blade Runner*, which is called *Rosen Corporation* in the novel, *PreCrime* in *Minority Report*, and *Recall* in *Total Recall*. Besides, in all these films and stories, we find an important presence of mass media which surrounds everything, and therefore, we find how publicity, media, or even offers for the citizens such as entertainment or journeys to outer space, among others, become ways to control society, which as another repeated idea in dystopian futures, people have renounced some of their rights, and especially exchanged their freedom for safety.

Consequently, to achieve this control we find technology; thus, this is another element we have found recurrent, and essential in science fiction stories, and analysing Dick's books and film adaptations, we can conclude that he was very fond of exploring the pros and cons of technology. Hence, Philip K. Dick shows the dystopian idea of how technology is used to control society, such as it happens in *Minority Report* where society has accepted to sacrifice their freedom for safety, after accepting the *PreCrime* division, which can arrest people before committing a crime, or another example in *Total Recall* where the possibility to create and manipulate peoples' memories, allows the control over their personalities.

Furthermore, regarding the concept of memory, all films and stories consider that this is an important and central idea. For that reason, we can highlight how memory has an essential role in giving us previous experiences which can define our personality and behaviour, helping us to socialize with other people, empathizing, and fundamentally defining us as human beings. Therefore, Dick defines memory as a controversial trait, which is also closely linked to the concept of humanity; thus, we find that in *Blade Runner*, and in *Total Recall*, the possibility to create memory implants, blurs the division between real humans and artificial human-like beings, which especially happens in *Blade Runner* where *Replicants* have their own memories, which in fact define their personalities.

Hereby, I have concluded that the most important element in Dick's stories and in their films adaptations is the concept of the human being, so that through the idea of feeling empathy, Dick brings new evidences that empathy and feelings such as fear, love, or friendship are not restricted traits to what we could call real people, but they are also shared by the artificial ones; furthermore, this is especially exemplified by the *Replicants* in *Blade Runner*, and the *Androids* in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Therefore, we find that artificial forms become more human than humans themselves, and as a result, they have undergone a process of *Dehumanization*. This idea is perfectly summarized in Vinci's article:

As Jill Galvin contends, "what passes for empathy among humans derives far more from a cultural construction than from any categorical essence" (415). Thus, Dick's humans have become what they most fear and despise: "androids" incapable of feeling for or with others. (2014, p. 92)

All things considered, the analysis of Dick's stories, as well as their film adaptations, have allowed to realize how dystopia in science fiction is used to talk about some deep concepts such as what makes us human, whether technology will suppose an advantage or a drawback for people depending on its use, and if future societies will fight for their freedom, or will accept more control. Therefore, I think that this fact rises in value the genre of science fiction, which allows film makers and writers to explain stories, which opposite to what generally occurs in the utopia, in dystopian futures always deal with controversial topics, which lead us to wonder about humanity, the responsibility that entails sharing our life with artificial forms of life, what we would like to do with our technological development, or whether we accept being controlled or free citizens. Moreover, I consider that science fiction is not only an entertainment, but also entails some philosophical issues due to the fact that dystopia creates possible and plausible futures, so that it causes that perhaps those futures imagined by Philip K. Dick in the 1950s and the 1960s are already happening in our current times. Thus, the questions generally linked to the dystopian genre become more relevant, so that we should start looking for answers to the questions generated by those dystopian stories.

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