

# The ways aesthetic can induce nostalgia

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Nostalgia is infamously subjective, making it difficult to find a single visual and auditory stimulant that affects the mass audience, however, this essay will explore variations of nostalgia and the chosen text's similarities and differences in order to discover the most successful use of nostalgia created by a text's aesthetic choices. Within this essay will be details of three uniquely individual texts, each with separate aesthetics but each with an equally parallel purpose. To instil a reaction among their audiences that will make them yearn for a simpler time in their lives, to incur a deep feeling of nostalgia.

Firstly, the oldest and most highly renowned of the three explored texts, Cowboy Bebop. Being first released in 1998 this anime is highly regarded as a pioneer within its field of Japanese anime; both stylistically and from narrative perspective. The general aesthetic of this 26 episode series is mainly a space-western, with the main character Spike Spiegel possessing similar traits to that of western actors such as a young Clint Eastwood in demeanour, this typically means he would be laid-back and almost apathetic towards his general environment, making him a lovable and interesting character to follow. Although, in a stark turn of analysis, it is clear that Cowboy Bebop alters its genre after each unique and iconic episode, for example, the episodes "Real Folk Blues" part one and two are existential in nature and to an extent, even bleak; yet still a huge success when audiences faced them. Fortunately, this may show that the aesthetic changing as the genre does induces a feeling of nostalgia as the audience reminisce on each episode. When looking at consumer reviews on "Rotten Tomatoes" there is a consistent tone amongst many. One user said "Cowboy Bebop is now 20

years old and it is wild to think that this show, which has influenced countless artists, filmmakers, writers, and animators, feels utterly ageless.” This review shows succinctly that the text in question holds a special place in the entertainment and creative industry. It may also be fair to argue that simply the age of this beloved series may be the only thing that makes the classic space-western so involved in people’s lives, since the author of this quote prefaced the review with the age of the series. Alternatively, as if to rule this out, the author ends the quote with “ ageless” proving that it is in fact the narrative and careful aesthetic choices the creators made that cemented Cowboy Bebop in history as one of the greatest anime of its time, as well as the foreseeable future.

As an argument to aesthetic choice being the driving force in nostalgia, this essay will also discuss time as a counter, in this case, Voltron, the original series from 1983 to 1985 ran for a few seasons to great critical acclaim due to its utilisation of popular tropes and styles from other anime of the time, involving hyperbolic fight scenes and colossal mechs. However, in 2016, the series was rebooted adopting the name Voltron: Legendary Defender.

Produced by the US company, Dreamworks, the reboot was immediately loved by sceptics and loyal fans alike. A review from the IGN website by Jesse Schedeen says the following; “ The show has that winning combination of being a modernized update of a beloved ’80s property and telling a story that appeals to adults and kids in equal measure.” As this quote mentions, the 2016 reboot definitely adapted a classic to fit modern times, namely, changing the art style enough to seem cleaner but not drastically enough to edit the original character designs. Due to this, the newer series resonates

with those who may have grown up with the original run of Voltron in the 1980s.

The time frame of when a text was released or created also has an intrinsic effect on how said text looks or why it carries a distinct aesthetic, in both the eldest variation of Voltron and Cowboy Bebop the original aesthetic is similar in art-style. The visual aspect of a text allows the audience to remember it in a certain way, a nostalgic way that draws them back to texts with a style that reminds them of a time in which the audience grew up. Stranger things simulates the 80's visual aesthetic to an unexpected standard. Although the first season being released in 2016 as well as being released onto the streaming service, Netflix, means that any younger generation may not be granted a feeling of nostalgia towards the entire aesthetic of the show. " This show managed to be one of the greatest pieces of 80s culture without ever being in the 80s. The feel is so right. The music, clothes, hair, cars, talk, it's all 80s" One user wrote on Metacritic, describing a vivid memory of a time in which they experienced first hand. In this review, it is clear that the author has a very fond memories of the 80s, almost proving that the feeling of nostalgia that people get from Stranger Things is narrowed solely to the aesthetic appeal it possesses.

The results of this research found that the primary source of nostalgia within these three texts is a clear visual stimulant causing the audience to recount a time in which they experienced enjoyment, in this case that time period would be the 80's. Using sources found and written by those who would have lived through these times in their youth, it is clear that a distinct stylistic choice; prevalent in the late 20th century. Yet with its limited resources and <https://assignbuster.com/the-ways-aesthetic-can-induce-nostalgia/>

technology this period of time possessed some of the largest internationally affecting pieces of modern entertainment, titles were released that still have a place in the memories of the mass populous, titles such as Star Wars and even two of the texts referenced to within this essay. The point being that culture expanded rapidly in this period of time, all of which created an imprint of what aesthetics create a sense of nostalgia.