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(Article begins on next page)

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Sponsored Things: Audiences and the Commodification of the Past in *Stranger Things*

Antonella Mascio

Stranger Things, with its extensive references to 1980s culture, could be considered a true repertory of this decade. The show's nostalgic aesthetics and mood has secured the attention of Generation X and encouraged a contemporary retrieval and revival of pop texts, fashion and music from the decade. The fans of this generation have shown their attachment to *Stranger Things* through appropriation and textual enhancement practices, by publishing memes, wearing T-shirts and posting images of vintage objects referencing the '80s. This is something you can mostly see online, where users post images and texts testifying their affection to the TV series. Halloween costumes and outfits inspired by *Stranger Things* characters are mainly present, for instance, in Generation Z users profiles. Comments related to the soundtrack, or to the habits of teenagers appearing in the story, are instead part of the discussions in online forums, where closest users to Generation X generally participate. In both cases, these are nostalgic references emerging and being valued in different ways, by distinct generational groups.

Drawing on the theoretical framework of nostalgia studies, this chapter examines the way in which the narrative of *Stranger Things* encourages a commodification of the past, actively engaging its cult audience of fans in consumption through its specific focus on retro culture.

Starting from text analysis, using Umberto Eco's concept of *model reader* (1979), we can trace two different and possible reading paths of *Stranger Things*, connected with X and Z generational cohorts. Specifically trying to reach audiences belonging to them, we adopted two different methodological tools. The analysis will assess the results of a questionnaire and a series of interviews conducted with a sample of the show's viewers to investigate its influence as a product of nostalgia marketing. The questionnaire, administered to a group of 20-25 year

olds, and the interviews, conducted with individuals aged 46 to 54, will be used to explore the ways in which the show's links to 1980s pop culture are experienced and accessed by different audience demographics. In particular, the analysis will consider how the show's nostalgia, skilfully embedded at narrative level, plays specific roles not only to create an emotional effect between the text and the audience, but also with the aim of creating marketing opportunities in partnership with several brands.

Stranger Things, cult television and nostalgia

Stranger Things' articulation of its storytelling and development and its 'cinematic' modes aid us in classifying the show as a 'complex' text (Caldwell, 1995; Dunleavy, 2017). Its 'density of visual texture' (Nelson, 2007, 113) invites the viewer to linger over the composition of the mise-en-scène, infused with nostalgic references to create an 'authentic' version of the 1980s. As Brett Mills reminds us, 'the cinematic can be seen to delineate programming that prioritises the visual more than what is assumed to be typical for television, offering audiences both narrative meaning and pleasure in the imagery that appears on the screen' (2013, 58). Mills' remark is useful to understanding how these kinds of texts present multiple layers of interpretation and enjoyment. It is also this 'narrative complexity' (Mittell, 2015) that ties the show to the cult television paradigm. Matt Hills observes that there are often some textual commonalities to cult television texts, including their generic affiliation to science fiction, horror and fantasy, and their inclusion of a 'hyper-diegesis' – a new narrative world for the show's audience (Hills, 2002). *Stranger Things* is arguably unique in that it also presents its 'telefantasy' narrative through a second magical hyper-diegesis for its fans: the 1980s.

Stranger Things presents this decade as a universe of references for its cult audience, activating its sense of nostalgia (Mathijs and Mendik, 2008). Following the aesthetic dynamics brought into play by the text and relating to the historical period being considered, it is possible

to trace two outlines set for the reading and interpretation of the series. One concerns all those who, through narration, experience a world they have never known directly, while the other considers viewers who have experienced that world firsthand. At first glance, *Stranger Things* may appear to speak to the lucrative cult teen market (Davis and Dickinson, 2004; Ross and Stein, 2008) through its central focus on a 'coming of age' narrative for its group of leading tweens. In reality, however, the show also facilitates a second reading path, addressed to an anagraphical older audience. *Stranger Things* is, above all, a nostalgic product, and its narrative construction helps us to understand why it has become a cult hit for audiences belonging to diverse generational cohorts.

Nostalgia, in effect, involves a feeling and desire for a past which some have never encountered, while others have experienced it and left it behind. It is a longing that finds its linchpin in *loss*, around which a range of feelings and emotions can emerge: 'Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy' (Boym, 2001, xii). The feeling of nostalgia also belongs to a shared experience in its referring to common historical events which have marked past epochs and are increasingly being brought back into the present moment via media storytelling. It is through its contemporary reawakening that *Stranger Things*' evokes what Tom Vanderbilt (1994) defines as 'displaced nostalgia' and for Janelle Wilson 'refers to nostalgia for times which were not known to us firsthand' (2014, 32). Nostalgia, therefore, is a complex mood, induced both by specific and well-defined signs anchored in the past and by situations, objects and habits, thus working as a time simulacrum that no longer exists. Its evocative (melancholic) and – at the same time – projective (and sometimes optimistic) power is increasingly used in media productions (Loock, 2017; Tsapovsky and Frosh, 2015; Garner, 2016). Thus, nostalgia has indeed emerged as one of the dominant aesthetics of our time (Niemeyer 2014; Wetmore, 2018) and TV series such as *Stranger Things* are a substantial part of this.

The show presents an imaginary story set in a past which is defined by its cultural references, thus charging the narration, characters and objects appearing on screen with specific aesthetic connotations. Through its plot, protagonists, set design and costuming, *Stranger Things* is configured as a possible world that uses a recognisable cultural background. The nostalgia induced by the show not only refers to viewers in their forties and fifties, but it also includes the new generations who can enjoy that world alongside and as a part of their own contemporary existence. As Niemeyer and Wetz argue, 'nostalgia is a powerful way to create this bond' (2014, 129), as it provides 'a specific function for media, where the evoking of nostalgic emotions, the symbolic charge of things, aims at turning those things into desirable commodities' (133). The 1980s serves here as a repertoire of styles to draw on, enabling a functional use of intertextuality through which nostalgia is used both as a mechanism of contemporary cult television and as an effect to obtain a relationship that ties the viewer 'passionately' with the text (Pezzini 1998). In this way, nostalgia becomes a device within the text capable of triggering an intense tie between the narrative and its viewers. The show thus immediately activates cult followings in different audiences: it is both the preserve of a 'golden age' rebuilt in retrospect for those who experienced the decade first hand and an object of desire for contemporary audiences.

***Stranger Things*, Gen X and retro-marketing**

By drawing on a repository of cultural – and above all medial – scenarios from the 1980s, *Stranger Things* functions as a stage for props and products that make up the show's 1980s hyper-diegesis. These products are charged with values (passionate, cognitive, cultural, and social) deriving precisely from the nostalgic discourse. For this, we find in them an overlapping of the levels of meaning: these are objects where the values of the past have been inscribed as they derive from the historical period being considered, but they are also endowed with

meanings linked to their placement in the plot and therefore connected to their presence in the text. The objects are thus provided with *more* possibilities of meaning: it is the viewer-consumer who attributes a value to them, based on their own experiences. This was certainly evidenced within my interview responses collected from the sample of Gen X viewers.

For instance, for some of the interviewees, characters' using a certain wardrobe recalled clothes they wore in the 80s. For many of them it was above all the rituals performed by characters creating a connection with their past: the sense of friendship between teenagers as well as their way of spending time together, without technological tools aid. By referring to a past that adults can remember and staging stories full of quotes from popular culture in those years, the show has become for many a cult text that concerns *their own* generation, because it offers a 'pop' cross-section of the eighties.

For many of the respondents, watching *Stranger Things* meant thinking back to their adolescence, finding themselves again in their bedrooms with movie posters on the walls, and feeling moved by the songs in the soundtrack. As one respondent shared, 'It is a sort of an emotional nostalgia of myself as a little girl'.[1] The show's landscape and its mood thus work as mechanisms triggering the strong participation of audiences, recalling a familiar experience, located in a historical past. Statements like, 'I found my adolescence back in the soundtrack', or, 'It brought my mind back to the jumpsuit I had in my closet', or again, while 'watching *Stranger Things* I recalled the days spent playing with my friends, riding our bicycles', are just fragments of the interviews administered to the Gen X fans group, showing the impact *Stranger Things* was having on them. This creates new relational modes between the text and its viewers: the viewing framework recalls meta-reflexive modes of fruition. The text takes up, therefore, the role of activating links between fictional stories on screen and the possibility of grafting them into one's own personal memories.

As Ugo Volli writes (2002), in TV programs the cult includes intertextuality and citation, features that are present in *Stranger Things*, as we have already seen. In the TV series, there are not only simple connections with a historical memory generally linked to pop culture: the plot uses pop cults from the past, thus showing their importance at the time when they were taking hold. For example, the impact that *Ghostbusters* (1984) has for the group of friends in *Stranger Things* evokes in adults the winter when the movie hit the cinema halls and the great resonance it had, together with personal memories linked to this event. For these groups of viewers, the kind of loyalty-building produced by *Stranger Things* is therefore linked to the cults from the past. All that contributes to the pleasure induced in the viewer by the text (Barthes, 1973) and nostalgia is part of this pleasure.

The show's depiction of daily life in the 1980s is specifically conveyed by the staging of habits and objects rich in meaning, like the boys' bicycles, LEGO, Eggo waffles, and the 1980s video games that they play. These are a focal point for the show's activation of personal nostalgia for the show's older audience. All this refers to a positive association between the objects from the past and the ways they were used, which cross-reference with a system of instructions specifically linked to those objects (affordances). For example, Wulf et al. argue that regarding video games, 'remembering gaming experiences can create nostalgia and that competence and relatedness fulfillments within memory connect to nostalgic reverie […] nostalgia contributes to self-continuity' (2018, 62). However, it cannot be denied that these objects were prized commodities in the 1980s (as they are for the tweens within the narrative), and thus they are turned into merchandise for the show's contemporary audience, facilitating a consumer-based engagement with the show's retro-culture.

The presence of a great quantity of objects from those years, playing relevant roles in the narrative, and the attention paid to their detail (the stripes of some T-shirts, or some sneakers, for example) cannot go unnoticed. All of the narrative, from the first to the third

season, is interspersed with *products* of 1980s pop culture, from the posters of hit movies hung on the kid's bedroom walls to music clips and walkie talkies. This has long been a feature of 1980s fantasy movies. As Angus McFadzean reminds us, 'multinational capital […] manifests itself in the representation of the corporate business world, or more specifically, the force that produces the commodities that clutter suburbia' (2019, 94). The bikes and video games are intertextually important, as they link the show to its 1980s cinematic counterparts, but they also link to consumption practices and what is on offer on the market. The TV series is comprised within this framework, so much so that many games based on the TV series are typically 1980s: graphics are retro in their aesthetic, serving to reinforce the authenticity of *Stranger Things* as a 'true' 1980s text.

Figure 1. Online https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bonusxp.legend&hl=it

The presence of products of 1980s pop culture pushes Gen X viewers into a game of recognition and makes forays into the territories of intertextuality. Such experiences are common for cult television audiences who are targeted to buy the merchandise that accompanies these kinds of narratives (Abbott 2010, 1). This was also evidenced through a

survey carried out among the show's younger audience, which involved a questionnaire administered to 350 university students aged 20 to 25 and will be explored in the next section of this chapter.[2] Alongside films like *E.T.* (1982), *Ghostbusters* (1984) and *The Goonies* (1985) which featured in many answers, other intertexts which seem further removed from the core themes of *Stranger Things* were also referenced. These included *Flashdance* (1983), *Star Wars* (1977) and *Magnum PI* (1980-88), which, although produced and featured during the 1980s, are not mentioned explicitly in *Stranger Things*. The show therefore not only triggers the identification of those intertextual references which are evident and explicit for older audiences; it also constitutes a type of connection with a period that hasn't been experienced directly for younger viewers but which is charged with known cultural products. They become a focus of the discourse and part of a contemporary shared cultural capital for the 1980s among the show's extensive cult fan base.

Millennials to Gen Z: *Stranger Things*' younger audience

Despite the show's reverence of the 1980s, the show also uniquely grounds itself within the contemporary moment, speaking directly to the show's younger audience. Most respondents of the survey distributed to 20-25 year olds confirmed that although the setting seems to represent a distant period, the topics being explored are understood as close and often referring to one's own life experience. For example, certain fears presented in the plot (fear of diversity, of the unknown, of bullying) are considered entirely relevant to contemporary life. For some respondents, the actions and dynamics in *Stranger Things* are placed in an idealised historical period but are presented anew with contemporary relevance.

One crucial way in which the series invests its 1980s setting with contemporary relevance is through the specific *timing* of its story. Each season references a major holiday or event, reminding viewers of their chronological situation and of the new seasons' distance from

the first series' narrative development, but also forging a tangible link with the present. *Stranger Things*' first season is set at Christmas, *Stranger Things 2* during Halloween the following year, and *Stranger Things 3* over the 4th July weekend the year after. Jenner reminds us that such timings also often coincide with the show's release date on Netflix, a further ploy in creating social media hype for the show (2018). These events themselves remind viewers and audiences of the composition of their yearly calendar, centred on consumption, and yet also encourage a backwards glance infused with nostalgic sentiment. The show has also created its own 'holiday', marking November 6th '*Stranger Things* Day'.

As well as evoking self-referential nostalgia within the life of the show, reminding viewers of the date that the character of Will Byers disappeared from Hawkins, the event serves to carve out a space in the calendar for cult followers of the show. The setting of a date marking the anniversary of the main event in the storytelling works perfectly as a marketing ploy for the TV series. November 6th has therefore become the day when fans celebrate the show, with exclusive material released on the show's social media channels for fans through the hashtag #StrangerThingsDay. Fans also post pictures, creating memes, dressing (cosplaying) TV series inspired clothing, and publishing videos depicting themselves re-enacting scenes from all three seasons. Especially on Tik Tok there are plenty of clips dedicated to *Stranger Things Day* whose protagonists are mainly young users (Gen Z) playing TV series' moments. In 2019 the third season bloopers were screened through social media platforms. All of these activities, both those devised by the production team and those enacted by fans, further expand the visibility and the importance of the *Stranger Things* universe, assigning to it specific meanings and rituals which have resulted in establishing a sort of social media 'tradition' linked to the TV series. This also has strong implications for marketing. In this way, the nostalgia in *Stranger Things* is intrinsically combined with the notion of cult. There are many online fandom groups, thus confirming the strong social aggregation generated by a cult television

show. This is especially important when one considers the viewing experiences of *Stranger Things*' younger audiences.

Stranger Things forges a strong sense of community in the show's fan base, creating online events and using retro-style products to unite its dedicated followers. In the survey, most respondents admitted to watching the series alone (78%) and a smaller percentage with friends (15%). However, for many (47.3%), the fruition of the television product is further enhanced by the participation in social media. 66% of respondents use Instagram, Facebook and Twitter profiles linked to their favourite shows. 55.8% also enjoy chatting with friends while watching individual episodes, enacting what Jenner has termed a 'second screen' for their engagement with the show (2018). Respondents also identified *Stranger Things* within a wider body of cult television shows prominent within the contemporary television landscape. Teen dramas showed a large following – from *Gossip Girl* (2007-2012) to *Pretty Little Liars* (2010-2017), *Riverdale* (2017-) and many others. Alongside them, TV series for older audiences were referenced, such as *Black Mirror* (2011), *Narcos* (2015-2017), *Better Call Saul* (2015-) and *La Casa de Papel* (2017-). Others noted were period dramas such as *Downton Abbey* (2010-2015), sci-fi series including *Doctor Who* (2005-), *Sense8* (2015-2018) and *The Handmaid's Tale* (2017-).

Together with its episodes and seasons, *Stranger Things* introduces itself to audiences through a system of widely marketed commodities, present primarily in social profiles and online environments. These represent complementary contents, capable of involving large sectors of audiences as well as enthusiastic fans, often drawn in by particular elements of the story (soundtrack, characters, locations, love stories, etc). They carry out an important function in the creation of different forms of engagement, as they create and amplify meanings which provide a substance to the 'DNA' of the media product by interweaving together their promotional and narrative functions (Grainge and Johnson, 2015).

Stranger Things offers itself to its viewers as a text presenting a narrative universe with a modular or 'reticular' form (Perryman, 2008), easy to recognise even outside the television framework where it is initially placed. In doing so, it takes up the features of a real brand similarly to many other successful cult TV series. As the next part of this chapter demonstrates, the assimilation between series and brand becomes an important asset for the marketing operations linked to the promotion of the show's seasons and its overall success.

The wardrobes of *Stranger Things*: between past and present

The large pool of contents, archetypes, symbolic images and everyday objects characterising *Stranger Things* is configured as materials available to users who may appropriate it in many different ways. In the characters' wardrobes, Gen X respondents use to recognize many of their teenage years styles, even if they won't feel the desire to wear that type of clothing again. For that group, outfits represent only one among many connections that the text is proposing with their past. Something that is well placed in their memories and that makes no sense bringing back into the present. For Gen Z, on the other hand, clothes worn by *Stranger Things* characters get other values: first of all, they are aesthetic and taste proposals, with a retro flavor. Also, they refer to a sometimes idealized and not lived past. Finally, they work as connections with an outside the present placed imaginary.

The aspect related specifically to the show's clothing emerging more than others from the results of the questionnaire. *Stranger Things*' costumes are often mentioned as the winning factor of the television offer: connected to a 'vintage' past, they reproduce an aesthetic which garners the audience's attention. In many instances, the clothes and outfits used on screen become 'must-have' merchandise. For these reasons, part of the research focused on the use of Instagram by audience-fans in order to understand how much and in what contexts *Stranger Things* outfits are appreciated.[3]

Even if *Stranger Things* is not a TV show where the fashion discourse is overemphasised, as it is for other teen dramas, such as *Gossip Girl* (2007-2012), clothing still seems to play a relevant role in each season. As a result, there are many references to *Stranger Things* clothing styles in social media profiles. In some instances, they refer to Halloween costumes or 'cosplay' attires, so they are characterised by the evident connection with a world of fiction. In other instances, however, users show outfits in their Instagram profiles which visibly incorporate explicit references to the show. For example, the use of 1980s jeans or shirts from the same period, together with ponytails and other popular 1980s haircuts demonstrate a clear homage to the show. In some cases, the clothing consists of merchandising items such as T-shirts or sweatshirts marketing the *Stranger Things* brand, recognisable by the show's logo. In others, however, cosplay is overtaken by the opportunity to enact character experience.

In particular in the third season, the importance of clothes is further stressed by the central setting of the Starcourt Mall – a hub for consumer activity for the show's young leads. The narrative works to create a sense of wonder and magic for Eleven, played by Millie Bobby Brown, (and for the show's audience) as they experience the sights and sounds of the 1980s mall. Max (Sadie Sink) introduces Eleven to the pleasure of consumerism, through the experience of buying, based on the choice of garments through personal taste (Bourdieu 1979; Wilson 2003). Eleven and Max shop in 'real world' shops such as The Gap, and these outfits were immediately made available to fans of the show (Stiegman 2020). It is specifically within this third season that contracts between Netflix and several fashion brands have multiplied and occupied different spaces, both online and offline: from H&M, which dressed some of the protagonists in specific scenes and then dedicated a capsule collection to the show,[4] to Levi's, Havaianas, Nike, Primark, and Pull N Bear, which produced clothes inserted in specific scenes and subsequently featured them in their stores. The companies' garments have been linked to *Stranger Things* by following the dynamics of a real operation of co-branding,[5] with an added

value to all involved stakeholders. Such placement has enormous power for cult fans as it 'indicates that the protagonists are living in the same worlds of merchandise and branding as the audience' (McFadzean 2019, 95). It brings fans closer to living within the world of their favourite TV show.

Although characterised as retro, as was evident for the video games mentioned above, the *Stranger Things* style hits the mark, drawing the attention not only of audiences but also of companies.[6] In the fashion world, there are many examples of strategies put in place by brands to utilise the show's success or build collaborations. One example is Louis Vuitton. On 23 September 2016, during Paris Fashion Week, the young cast members of the show met with creative director, Nicholas Ghesquiére, and were photographed with him. These photos were immediately posted on the Instagram profile of the well-known designer.[7] The following year, again during the Paris Fashion Week, Louis Vuitton showed a T-shirt dedicated to the show on its runway.[8] Gucci has also featured *Stranger Things* T-shirts and sweatshirts, this time inserting stylised images of the characters, dressed in the brand's jackets.

Figure 2. From Louis Vuitton official Instagram profile (https://www.instagram.com/p/BKtUf2lA2fy/)

In this way, for the brands, the TV show has been configured as a lucrative platform in which to display their garments, exploiting the potentials offered by *Stranger Things*' extensive transmedial storytelling strategy where the narration includes the use of multiple online platforms, such as websites and official social profiles (Jenkins, 2006; Ford and Green, 2013). On the other hand, through these collaborations, *Stranger Things* was able to extend the scope of its influence beyond the television narrative, emerging from a purely fictional framework to become part of the territory of the daily and real-life experiences of its audience-fans. By inserting *Stranger Things* in everyday products, the show has secured a more persistent presence within the lives of its cult followers.

Nostalgia marketing: the commodification of the past

All of the above demonstrates the ways in which nostalgia embeds within the show's complex narrative and intertextual mechanisms. For 76% of the survey sample, *Stranger Things* is based on a reconstruction of the past removed from one's own experiences, but linked to a much wider range of media texts, some of which are also contemporary. For these reasons, the show is considered 'close' to experiences of the present, and therefore capable of generating the kind of nostalgia that Appadurai (1996) considers as detached from any specific past. In *Stranger Things*, adolescents watch "a world they have never lost" (Appadurai, 1996, 30), because it has never been experience by them first hand. For Appadurai, this is a paradox of the politics of global cultural flows: it is a 'nostalgia without memory' (30) rooted in media experiences. From this point of view, *Stranger Things* shares a narrative strategy with many other recent productions, such as *Mad Men* (2007-2015) and *The Americans* (2013-2018). It is based on cross-references considered part of a shared culture of the past.

By taking advantage of the device of nostalgia within a regime of affective economy, *Stranger Things* has been able to involve even those who have never experienced the past to

which the nostalgia refers. Nostalgia, as stated by Wilson, 'is, of course, created in the present, and thus the displaced nostalgia (as well as the myriad of other examples of nostalgia that abound) can be viewed as a commentary on life in the present' (2014, 101). In fact, co-branding products are aimed not only to adults, but, above all to a younger audience, recognising the importance of nostalgia as a positive attribute in its being connected with a cultural tradition. The use of nostalgia as a process of connection with an idealised past therefore works on several levels: for the recognisability of the historical context being used, but also for the creativity with which this context is brought back into the present. The respondents of the conducted questionnaire clearly recognised a principle of authenticity producing an additional added value for the branded products and objects associated with *Stranger Things*.

Nostalgia thus becomes an important framework, not only to draw the attention of the audience, but also to transfer this attention onto the marketplace. Nostalgia, in other words, enables objects to hold on to the values already acquired in the storytelling, while changing the context of reference, shifting from the TV show to advertising, e-commerce websites, and the physical high street or shopping mall store. As nostalgia marketing tells us, brands can entice consumers with a story of a brand's past by exploiting – in a positive fashion – the brand heritage, as is attempted by Eleven's shopping at The Gap (Cui, 2015; Hartmann and Brunk, 2019). The brands, however, can also invent a story from their past, as is the case for H&M with its produced line of garments inspired by 1985. These brands 'can become dear to consumers when they manage to integrate contradictions between past and present, such as juxtapositioning new features with nostalgic associations' (Hartmann and Brunk, 2019, 670). As we have seen, this is exactly what happens with *Stranger Things* where the use of objects and atmospheres evoke different modes of nostalgia, appealing to diverse consumers and audiences.

For this show, nostalgia is configured as a historically-embedded consumer cultural phenomenon, rather than a purely individual phenomenon. The *Stranger Things* Day belongs to this context in its establishing forms of ritualism typical of a cult. The cult also contaminates the narrative world where the story develops, by becoming part of the many merchandising strategies growing around the title-brand of the show. These objects contribute to bring the story of the TV series closer to its fans: the type of merchandise available enables audiences to physically own something coming from the story.

Stranger Things, therefore, is projected as a brand capable of creating a double movement on the time axis. It presents an imaginary story set in a past which is defined every season by its specific reference year, thus charging the narration, characters and objects appearing on screen with specific aesthetic requirements. In the same way, the show points towards the present, serving as a focal point for the *Stranger Things*' contemporary commodification of the past. Through *Stranger Things*, objects are placed in a context of '(re-)enchantment' where 'past-themed market resources render a past condition as a site for hedonic, ludic, playful, and ironic engagement' (Hartmann and Brunk, 2019, 679) by establishing a re-appropriation of the product by the audience. In *Stranger Things*, the devices of nostalgia enable stories, products and *topoi* from the past to enter into today's mainstream culture.

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[1] Interview with Paola (invented name), 57 years old (March 15, 2020).
[2] The questionnaires were administered to students of Bologna University. Most of the sample was made up of Italian respondents (64.3%) together with Chinese, Albanian, Russian, Ecuadorian, and Ukrainian.
[3] This part of the research is still ongoing. At the present time of writing, 500 posts have been analysed, linked to several hashtags (for example #strangerthingsfashion; #strangerthingsstyle; #strangerthingsmood).
[4] There are many references, just to mention a few here: *Cosmopolitan*: https://www.cosmopolitan.com/it/moda/a27431658/hm-stranger-things-estate-2019/; *Vogue* https://www.vogue.it/moda/article/strangers-things-la-collezione-di-netflix-e-hm-costumi-tshirt; *Amica*: https://www.amica.it/2019/05/08/hm-e-netflix-stranger-things/.
[5] In this online case as well, there are different references: *Corriere dello Sport*: https://www.corrieredellosport.it/news/sport-e-style/moda-e-tendenze/2019/07/10-58787590/stranger_things_3_e_le_capsule_collection_di_moda_in_pieno_stile_1985/; *GQ Italia*: https://www.gqitalia.it/moda/article/nike-stranger-things-anni-80; *Nike*: https://www.nike.com/it/launch/t/cortez-stranger-things-hawkins-high; *Levis*: https://www.levi.com/IT/it_IT/stranger-things/c/levi_collections_stranger_things?camp=DRSearch_Levis_IT_IT_GOO_Generic_Dynamic_Search_Ads&gclid=Cj0KCQiA4NTxBRDxARIsAHyp6gCpFbf4WNRimc0k9ekGUcMnF1nZXY-3VJjC_v6wP7rXHwtZZisKthkaApD1EALw_wcB.
[6] See, for example, Tom Fordy (4 July, 2019): https://www.fashionbeans.com/article/stranger-things-fashion/
[7] See Harper Bazaar: https://www.harpersbazaar.com/fashion/designers/news/a17835/stranger-things-kids-visit-louis-vuitton/
[8] As reported in *Vogue*: https://www.vogue.com/article/nicolas-ghesquiere-stranger-things-shirts-louis-vuitton-spring-2018