

# Black Mirror

A warped reflection of our society?

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## Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to explore the personal and social implications of modern media and technology in Charlie Brooker's television series *Black Mirror* and consider to what extent the episodes reflect aspects of today's society.

The recent improvement in technology has been remarkable, greatly impacting on the way that our modern society functions. The introduction of smart phones and social media has led to a world that is constantly 'plugged-in'. We are connected to people all over the world and have access to unlimited information at the click of a button. Also with the rise of online streaming and thousands of TV channels to choose from, we have rapidly changed the way in which we consume media. Although these are such positive and progressive developments in technology, there may be negative impacts on the users, which will be explored in this dissertation.

*Black Mirror* explores the implications of possible future technologies. Set in an undetermined near future the *Black Mirror* universe looks and functions in much the same way as today. However, the advanced technology used within the episodes pushes the characters to become self absorbed and distant.

According to Oxford Dictionaries (2016) a utopia is "*An imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect*". The advanced technology in *Black Mirror* has been designed to aid and improve people's lives, such as a 'grain' which allows people to store and replay memories. It is a world that we today would consider utopic, however, in each episode of *Black Mirror*, Brooker is showing the negative impact of these technologies, when humanity begins to use it in the wrong way. This is by definition a dystopia, which are "designed to warn against the possible consequences of certain tendencies in the real world of the present." (Booker and Thomas, 2009, p324). By showing the potential destructive uses of technology in the future, *Black Mirror* is also critiquing the way that we live now.

In the context of this dissertation 'today's society' will be treated as the current western world, more specifically the UK, as of January 2016. This dissertation will apply philosophical, sociological and psychological context to analyse the technology and media in five episodes of Black Mirror and will draw comparisons with aspects of today's society. The two chapters will explore first the personal effects of technology on the individual, and secondly the social effects on the public.

## **Chapter 1: Social Media and Self-absorption:**

The personal implications of modern media and technology

This chapter will use psychological and philosophical debates to explore the personal impact of technology in Black Mirror. The two case studies focused on in this chapter: *Be Right Back* and *An Entire History of You* share utopic themes. Brooker creates a world where a person can live on forever through technology, or where people can replay their favourite memories, using an implant that records everything you see. However, there are certain moral and social issues with these technologies, which will be explored in this chapter.

### **1.1 Be Right Back**

*Be Right Back* (2013) follows the story of Martha, whose husband, Ash, dies in a car crash early in the episode. In the desperation and grief that follows his death, Martha seeks comfort from new software designed to imitate a person through the information shared on their social networking sites. She can stay in touch with 'Ash' through messages, and later phone calls. The software adapts and learns to become more and more like Martha's late husband, being fed images and messages so that it can simulate his speech idiosyncrasies and mannerisms. Eventually Martha orders a real life synthetic replica of Ash to feel the comfort and physical presence of her husband.

This episode of Black Mirror appears to be a reflection of today's society's need to construct an online persona via social media. The replica of Ash is imitating only the public persona that Ash was willing to display on social media sites. Social networking is becoming increasingly prevalent in today's society, with Ofcom reporting that two-thirds (66%) of online adults said they had a social networking site profile in 2014. (Ofcom 2014)

Social media is a unique form of communication in which the user can construct a persona that may differ from their true self. Bargh et. al (2002) suggest that the anonymity of the internet allows a person to express themselves and behave in ways not acceptable in their real-life social sphere. The screen acts as a barrier, and removes the user from the situation, permitting them to feel free from the social boundaries that exist in face to face conversation. This anonymity allows people to construct a persona that may be more confident and socially acceptable than their real self. As Slater (1997, p89) states "a self is constructed by adopting and internalising the point of view of others". The desire to be socially accepted encourages people to change themselves online.

According to Carl Rogers (1959) a person has three dimensions to their self: self-esteem, the real self and the ideal self. The definition of the 'ideal self' in 'A Dictionary of Psychology' (2008) is "A conception of oneself as one would most like to be, in contradistinction to how one actually is or how one sees oneself" (COLMAN, 2008). Social media users could be argued to be projecting their ideal self onto online platforms. Users have the ability to censor what is shown on their feed, such as only posting flattering photos and updating status' which boast of social success, whilst excluding any negative aspects of their lives. In doing this, individuals are blurring out their flaws and are projecting 'perfection' onto each other.

The social media-obsessed character Ash, in *Be Right Back* is an example of the incongruence between the real self and the ideal self, which he constructed through his social media. An example of this comes early in the episode where Ash uploads

a photo of himself as a child because people online would find it 'funny'. However, he then recalls the day that the photo was taken, the day after his brother died, and explains that it is a "fake smile". As John Berger (1982) explains, a photograph only captures one moment in time, and is removed from context. Due to the difference between the real Ash and his online persona, the replica that Martha receives does not act and speak in the same way as she knew her husband to, on a personal level. At the end of the episode Martha becomes increasingly frustrated with the replica of Ash, as he will do whatever she tells him to and does not truly act like her husband.

Artificial Intelligence has been the centre of a relatively new debate in our society, the root of which asks – can machines develop feelings? In today's society there is an increasing amount of artificial intelligence designed to help us in our everyday life. For example, Siri and Cortana are built into IOS and Windows phones to answer the user and help in any way they can. You can adapt your Siri to understand your accent, and learn your nickname, preferences and other information. However, there are limitations to this type of software, and in *Be Right Back*, Brooker is exploring how far this artificial intelligence could be developed in years to come.

Although this is a rather new, postmodern philosophical debate, theories from the past century can be applied. The German philosopher Martin Heidegger's book "Being and Time" (1927) explores the complex concept of what it means to 'be'. According to Heidegger 'being' is the unanimity of past, present, and future. Our actions in the past set up a number of possible futures. (McGowan, 2011)

Heidegger created the concept of Dasein, which is an "entity that is conscious of the meaning of its own existence" (Munday, 2009). Human beings are one of the only species that are aware of their own existence and are therefore Dasein. In *Be Right Back* it is debatable whether the replica Ash is Dasein. In some ways he seems aware of his own existence, to the extent that he jokes about not being a real human. However as the episode develops the lines between Ash and the replica begin to blur and he seems progressively more human-like.

One of the major flaws with the machine version of Martha's husband is that he cannot physically age. We see this in the final scene where Martha's daughter goes to visit him in the attic. He is exactly the same as he was when Martha put him there. Heidegger suggests that the stretch between birth and death forms "what it means to be" (Critchley, 2009) and to understand this, people must project themselves onto the horizon of their death: this he called 'being-towards-death' (Munday, 2009). The replica of Ash is not 'being towards death', and therefore according to Heidegger is not a conscious being.

Martha is unable to love the replica of Ash, however she is also unable to send it back or destroy it. She is aware that this machine is not and cannot ever be Ash, however its physical appearance and Ash-like colloquialisms make it extremely difficult for her to let go and move on. This is similar to social media in the present, where a person is stored online and will remain there forever. If somebody suffers bereavement, or even just the break-up of a relationship, the person's presence is still prevalent online.

Although Martha's actions are understandable, the decision to recreate Ash was detrimental to her grieving process, and ultimately prevented her from moving on. As Heidegger (2000) theorised, there is no existence without death, and therefore by making people 'immortal' you are changing the meaning of existence. The episode is showing that although social media and new technology have countless benefits, they can never substitute real relationships and communication.

## **1.2 The Entire History of You**

*The Entire History of You* (2011) is set in a world where everything a person sees is recorded onto a 'grain' that is implanted into the brain. The recordings act as memories and can be accessed and replayed at any point by the recipient. The episode follows Liam, a man who becomes increasingly paranoid that his wife is having an affair. Liam uses the implant technology to obsessively play back his memories to try and find evidence that his wife has been unfaithful. Charlie Brooker explains in an interview, "The flaw is not technology there. It's his character. And the

technology [...] enables him to [...] hasten his own destruction. It's an interesting concept I guess because we're moving into a world where nothing will be forgotten." (Gladstone, 2015).

In recent years the internet, and more specifically social media, have become increasingly saturated with content. This includes photos and videos of the minutia of everyday life, uploaded daily by the public. We live in a recorded world, with CCTV on every corner and cameras available on mobile phones. This results in events that might be better forgotten being recorded, uploaded and shared; preserved on the internet forever. In *The Entire History of You*, this is developed even further, to the point that everything witnessed is recorded and stored. Ultimately nothing can ever be forgotten.

Real life technology has been developing in a similar direction to the 'grain', but not to the same extent. A wristband called Kapture is now available; this device constantly records the sound of the user's everyday life. The taglines for the product include "Kapture your friend's sarcasm" and "Kapture quips from your little ones". This marketing technique is designed to sell the technology as a way to replay moments and judge the truth from the recordings. (Kapture, 2015)

There are many benefits to this kind of technology in real life and in Black Mirror. For example, at the beginning of the episode Liam replays a failed job interview. He is able to see which of his answers received a negative reaction, and analyse which parts he could improve on next time. Memories are often unreliable and can change over time or be forgotten entirely. This is a unique feature of humans, and the grain in Black Mirror replaces this feature with something reliable and unchangeable. In terms of criminal justice, this could be a breakthrough; the data from the grains can be downloaded and viewed by others. This would reduce time in court and would prevent innocent people being imprisoned. The characters point out that human organic memory is unreliable and if there is a better alternative it would be irresponsible not to use it.

However, as *The Entire History of You* shows, the grain can have negative personal implications. Humans rely on trust in relationships, yet the grain renders trust obsolete, allowing people to find evidence and fact instead of relying on human's inadequate memories. The user can see parts of the 'memory' that they did not focus on initially. Liam provides an example of this, as he starts to investigate, sifting through memories with his wife to find any instances where she might have been lying and covering up her affair.

According to cognitive psychology the human brain can maintain an unlimited amount of information, however the details that are not important are forgotten and become irretrievable (Mcleod, 2007). Episodic memories, which are specific events (or episodes) that have meaning to the person, are often stored in the Long Term Memory (LTM). Insignificant information that is only important for a short amount of time is stored in the Short Term Memory (STM). If the memory is not repeated or associated with an episodic event, it is not transferred into the LTM bank. (ibis.)

If Liam did not have the grain and was relying on his human memory, information such as the dates that his wife said she was dating someone else would have been stored for a short while in his STM before being replaced by new information and forgotten forever. The grain gives Liam access to information that should have been forgotten and ultimately leads to his self-destruction.

Additionally, it could be argued that even if Liam saw the signs of his wife's affair, he could have repressed the information. He would do this subconsciously because he did not want to believe that his wife could be unfaithful and did not want to ruin his relationship. In her paper '*The Social Psychology of Cognitive Repression*' Jennifer Fryed (2006) explains social repression:

*Social motives include all the reasons individuals repress as a consequence of social pressures [...] an implicit need to isolate information from awareness in order to maintain a whole host of social (intimate, communal, political) relationships. (Fryed, 2006, p.518)*

By using the grain, Liam is replacing his memories entirely, and not using any defence mechanisms that may have been in place to protect him. Social repression is only a small part of how losing the ability to forget could be harmful. For example, an abused child would repress the memories of abuse, as they are harmful and do not need to be re-lived. However, if the child had the grain implant, then they would never be able to repress those memories and move on in life.

The characters in the episode become so reliant on the grain that when one character admits that she is 'grainless' there is shock and discomfort. They have all become consumed by the technology to the point that they rely on it to function in everyday life. Perhaps the grain is slowly replacing the humans' organic memory storage, and is rendering real memory obsolete. In evolution theory, when parts of the body are no longer needed they eventually die off. It is questionable that if the grain remains part of life for centuries to come then the memory storage in the brain may become defunct completely. If they then remove the grain would humans be able to form new memories?

Although in Liam's case, his ability to look back on memories seems to be an advantage because he is able find the truth, the obsession with finding the information makes him ill and worn down. In the final scene in the episode Liam is seen extracting his grain, showing that the negative effects greatly outweigh the positives for him.

### **1.3 Summary**

Initially, both the grain and AI replicas of the deceased seem utopic and exciting. However, both of these technologies have negative psychological affects on the characters. Martha is unable to grieve properly when she has access to artificial intelligence replicating her husband. This means that she finds it impossible to move on. Liam becomes consumed by the abilities of the grain to the point where it takes over his life.

Both episodes allude to the social media obsessed society that we live in. The replica of Ash is merely a simulation of Ash's online persona, not his true self. This

reflects the need of today's society to censor social media and construct an 'ideal self' online. Liam's story is a commentary on the influx of online sharing, where all aspects of life are being recorded and uploaded daily. Like Liam became obsessed with rewatching his memories, the public are becoming progressively more consumed by living their lives online.

## **Chapter 2: Mob Culture and Dehumanisation:**

The social implications of modern media and technology

This chapter will explore the effects of media and technology on the mass public in *Black Mirror* and in real life. As well as the effects that future technology may have on personal relationships and individual psychology, Brooker explores the social implications.

### **2.1 White Bear and The National Anthem**

*The National Anthem* (2011) and *White Bear* (2013) are both set in a world where the technology is no more advanced than what we have today. This means that they directly reflect aspects of today's society. Both episodes exhibit the use of modern media to aid mob culture and the dehumanisation of a subject.

*White Bear* opens with the character Victoria waking up with no memories. She leaves the house and sees hundreds of people recording her on their mobile phones. She is lost, confused and being chased by masked people.

At the end of the episode it is revealed that Victoria took part in the abduction and murder of a young girl. Victoria helped her boyfriend to abduct the child and filmed her being tortured on her mobile phone. The punishment for her crime is to relive this day over and over whilst being recorded by the general public, much like she recorded the murder of a child.

In *The National Anthem*, the nation's beloved Princess Susana is kidnapped, and the kidnappers have an unusual request for her release. The Prime Minister must have sexual intercourse with a pig on live television. Although the initial reaction from the

public is disgust, an online assembly soon forms to coerce the Prime Minister to comply with the ransom demands and the hashtag #snoutrage begins trending on Twitter.

Both episodes involve a mob of people who gather together to attack someone else. A lot of research has been conducted into crowd psychology such as the work of Emory Borgadus (1924) He states:

The crowd is a common yet dangerous form of intersocial stimulation ... its members have a common aim, and further, each member is aware that the other individuals are stirred by the same feelings as is he. (Borgadus, 1924)

This theory has been applied to many mob acts, such as the London Riots in 2011. The theory explains that when people are in close vicinity of each other they act as a stimulant for each other and begin to behave in a similar manner.

When it comes to criminal justice there has always been mob culture in humanity. In the Medieval times beheadings would be held in public "offering an activity to appeal to the viewer's sense of morbid fascination" (Rowley, 2014). More recently was the death of Saddam Hussein. Thousands of people watched a live stream of his execution and celebrated when he died (Gibson, 2007). In these examples, the spectators see no wrong in their actions because they believe that justice is being served. This is the same as in *White Bear*, where Victoria is subjected to this torture daily, but it is acceptable because she committed a crime.

In more recent years, a similar 'mob mentality' phenomenon has begun to occur online, through social media. Much like in *The National Anthem*, where the public are rallying to make the Prime Minister adhere to the ransom request, there have been many real-life incidents of crowds on Twitter assembling for one cause. Jon Ronson (2015) recounts the mob attack on Justine Sacco in his Ted Talk "When online shaming spirals out of control". Justine made an offensive joke on Twitter before getting on a plane to Africa. By the time she had landed the tweet had

accumulated thousands of replies telling her how awful the tweet was and what a horrible person she is. The online mob had perceived her as the enemy and joined in with the insults even if they didn't know her personally. Ronson (2015) highlights "The great thing about social media was how it gave a voice to voiceless people, but we're now creating a surveillance society, where the smartest way to survive is to go back to being voiceless." The platform that was created to give people freedom of speech is now a place where you are not able to express yourself through fear of being attacked by a 'Twitter Mob'.

Crowds online cannot be explained by the physical presence of other people, as Borgadus' (1924) quote suggested. Clay Shirky (2009) describes the formation of an online crowd as "organising without organisations". This is due to the lack of leadership and planning behind the movement; it is often just formed by a group of people sharing the same beliefs.

There are countless benefits of online collaboration, however Andrew Keen suggests that mob mentality online is an anger outlet. He states that the internet is "empowering the rule of the mob" and that "rather than making us happy, it's compounding our rage" (Keen, 2015, p3). As mentioned in Chapter 1, the anonymity of the internet can have a big impact on the way people interact. Ben Wolford (2014) explains that "when people feel they will not be recognized or called to answer for their actions, they are more likely to behave wantonly." The detachment from the subject of their insults allows people to ignore the impact of their actions. They are part of a crowd, albeit a 'virtual crowd', and everyone is acting in the same way. There are rarely repercussions for mob behaviour online and the guilt is "shared collectively and spread thin" (ibis.) allowing the members to have a clean conscience.

In both episodes the 'mob' dehumanise the subject. In *White Bear* the public do not see Victoria as anything other than a criminal. She is treated more like an animal at the zoo than a human being. In the episode a loudspeaker can be heard instructing: "No talking, especially not to her. Keep your distance - remember she is a dangerous criminal. And above all, enjoy yourself." (White Bear, 2013). The mobile

phones they are filming on act as an additional barrier between her and the spectators. In *The National Anthem* the public are so intrigued that they do not stop to think about the grotesque nature of the situation. They do not see the Prime Minister as a human being, more as just a spectacle, something to amuse them for a couple of hours.

Eventually the Prime Minister concedes and performs the act live on TV. Although everyone watching is disgusted, they are glued to their screen with morbid curiosity. A shot shows the empty streets of London; the whole world has stopped to watch the event unfold on screen. It is revealed that Princess Susana was actually released before the Prime Minister performed the act, however everyone was so engrossed in the TV that nobody noticed.

A prolepsis shows the aftermath, a year after the broadcast. The Prime Minister has gained a positive reputation for sacrificing his dignity, and the event is relatively forgotten. This scene reflects the society that we live in now; we have far shorter attention spans and there are trends that come and go in a few days. This is demonstrated by the rise of the video-sharing platform Vine, where users can upload clips that are 6 seconds or less. Many of the social issues that are made significant through online movements are forgotten days later, such as the Kony 2012 campaign.

## 2.2 15 Million Merits

*15 Million Merits* is the most 'futuristic' episode of *Black Mirror*, which echoes Orwell's *1984*, in a totalitarian society, filled with screens. A Marxist reading of this episode would note the authority that rules in the clear hierarchy. As Karl Marx states:

The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. (Nisbet, 1993 p.203)

In this system the lowest members of society are forced to continuously cycle, powering the city, constantly being bombarded with advertisements. The authority have the "means of material production", as they have created this structure, as well as all of the media that the public consume, and therefore they have "the means of mental production", creating ideology.

This echoes today's society where we are constantly inundated with adverts, whether we are aware of them or not. Subliminally placed in the media we consume, and especially catered for us through our Google searches and Facebook 'likes', adverts are everywhere. In *Fifteen Million Merits* the characters have to pay to skip adverts, which is familiar concept to app games today: where you have to pay to get rid of the constant advert bombardment. The system in place means that protagonist of the episode, Bing, must either watch adverts all day, or work hard to receive merits to skip the adverts. Either way he is conforming.

The characters can also save up merits to buy accessories for their personal avatar. They are spending money on a commodity that isn't even physical. As explored in Chapter 1, people like to have an online persona who is popular and socially attractive. The avatars in *Fifteen Million Merits* are a critique of this; the characters buy no clothes for themselves, as all they are permitted to wear are grey tracksuits. A Marxist reading would suggest that the avatar is an outlet for the workers to 'express' themselves, and acts as a device for the authority to keep the public under control and stop them expressing themselves in real life.

The characters in the episode are given the illusion of choice; deciding which outfit their avatar should wear each day and choosing one of limited channels that show very much the same content. Bukatman (1993, p39) states "Television functions to maintain order; it provides the state with the unprecedented ability to interpolate many of its citizens into the proper sociopolitical positions". All of the TV programmes that are available in *Fifteen Million Merits* have been designed to embed certain ideals into the viewer's mind. For example, one channel shows 'Botherguts' a programme that humiliates overweight people by filming them

completing an assault course. The viewer is encouraged to laugh at the overweight members of society and therefore ostracise them. On another channel there are thin celebrities being praised and admired. Social critic, Guy Debord commented:

The ideological function of celebrity is clear ... the message is 'all is luck; some are rich, some are poor, that is the way the world is ... it could be you! (Debord, 2011)

The two channels combined teach the citizens to aspire to be thin and famous, and shun the overweight, keeping them in their place as peddlers at the bottom of the capitalist hierarchy. As Bukatman (1993, p.39) states: "TV is, by virtue of its mere presence, a social control in itself."

In real life we live in a society of celebrity culture. Debord explains that "the status of celebrity offers the promise of being showered with 'all good things' that capitalism has to offer" (Debord, 2011). New media has given the public easier access to celebrity culture. On sites such as Twitter and Instagram, celebrities share their own thoughts and photos, meaning that the public are constantly updated on their life. The immediacy of social media and the ability to interact directly with celebrities means that the barrier between 'them' and 'us' has been broken down. Charlotte Blom (2015) explains in her paper 'Modern Social Influence on Instagram' that celebrities are often paid to promote brands. This is a much more subliminal way for products to be marketed. The celebrities are targeted due to their huge following on social media and therefore they only need to take a photo with the brand, or mention it briefly in a tweet to encourage 'fans' to consume it. This is a breakthrough for marketing, as previously a celebrity endorsement would require an expensive TV advertisement.

In *Fifteen Million Merits* the talent show 'Hot Shots' is seemingly the only way out of this monotonous predetermined life of constant pedalling. The main character, Bing saves up his credits by watching countless adverts and pays for talented singer, Abi, to enter the Hot Shots talent show. The fictional talent show is clearly reminiscent of real life talent shows such as Britain's Got Talent and The X Factor. It has been

suggested that shows such as The X Factor “are reflections of a capitalist mode of production and serve to justify it and ensure its survival” (Cresswell, 2012, p46). Often criticised as being cruel and exploitative, talent shows are arguably designed to manipulate the public into passivity (Andrae, 1979). They are a mass produced, standard format TV shows, which can be considered as ‘Mass art’. According to Adorno:

Mass art is merely a commodity to be sold, its technique designed solely to manipulate consumers through pre-digested formulas and calculated effects rather than any concern for artistic form or truth content. (ibis)

The ‘pre-digested formulas’ that Adorno refers to can be applied to the standard format of a reality TV show. The content does not challenge the audience, yet it gives the viewer an ‘important’ role in the outcome of the show, by allowing them to vote. In doing so, the public are paying in to the designed structure, and feel that their continued viewership is important.

As the episode unfolds, it becomes clear that Hot Shots is merely an outlet for the public to passively consume, whilst also giving them something to aspire to. The contestants are laughed at and ridiculed and those few that succeed simply become another commodity for the system to exploit. Abi is disregarded by the three archetypal judges, and she is instead sent to work on a porn channel.

As an act of defiance, Bing enters the Talent show and puts a shard of glass to his neck. In response, the authorities attest their dominance by creating an outlet for the population to ‘rebel’ after watching Bing’s defiance on Hot Shots. They create a ‘shard’ accessory for the people’s avatars, which they can display as an act of defiance against the authority.

Ironically, in buying this, the population are reinforcing the same structure that they are rebelling against. By making rebellion into a commodity that can be consumed, the authoritative powers are preventing any social change, but also allowing society to have a small release for their anger so that they feel like they are making a difference.

## 2.3 Summary

The societies that are represented in these three episodes of Black Mirror seem passive and easily influenced by their surroundings. The mobs in *White Bear* and *The National Anthem* act as a swarm, attacking a subject with no remorse or individual consideration. Their behaviour is enhanced by the social media and mobile phone barrier between themselves and the subject of their attack.

In *Fifteen Million Merits*, the capitalist authority structure encourages the general public to remain passive and obedient. They use the media and celebrity culture to promote specific ideology in the masses.

## Conclusion

There are clearly many comparisons that can be drawn between Charlie Brooker's Black Mirror and today's society as it is now. From online personas, to celebrity culture there are many aspects of Black Mirror that could easily be set in 2016. *The National Anthem* is an accurate depiction of mob culture on Twitter, as demonstrated by real life events happening daily. Ash from *Be Right Back* is a clear representation of the general public who are constantly living in an online space instead of reality.

*Fifteen Million Merits* is the episode that is furthest removed from today's society. Echoing George Orwell's 1984, it depicts a totalitarian society, where one class owns all the means of production and media, and therefore dictates the ideology of the public. This subtly alludes to current social issues such as the use of celebrities as commodities to sell products. It also comments on the repetitive structured media that we consume such as reality TV. The reflections of today's society are the least obvious in this episode, because the setting is the most futuristic.

In *The Entire History of You* and *Be Right Back* the technology that is designed to aid the character ends up having a negative impact on their lives. The dystopian

elements of these episodes act as a caution of the personal effects that technology might have in the future if we continue to develop as we are.

I believe that although Black Mirror has been created as a critique of today's society, it works more as a warning for us. The episodes each reflect today's society, either obviously or subtly, and warn that the technological utopia that we have always foreseen may end up becoming a disappointing dystopia.

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