

way Science Fiction familiarized people with a perpetual and unique present time, as it constructed the social imagery on the assumption that in the technological context, in accordance with the thesis proposed in Heidegger's "The Age of the World Picture" (1977), the future is just a determined path that seems to erase any minority report. Unable to change the future, the subject of the post-media condition can only, from its eternal present, transform the perception of the past, a digital flexible past that forgets the fixity of history – granted by the materiality of the archive – and acquires the changeable nature of the digital immaterial object and the nature of memory.

To start the collection, German A. Duarte analyzes the way in which Science Fiction became a fertile terrain for philosophical reasoning as well as the way in which this genre became a popular space for the development of concepts able to populate the whole social imaginary by suturing a millenarian rupture in western philosophy. This chapter inquires about the notion of the concept, on the difference between the notions of *virtual* and *possible*, and on the way concepts – understood as complex and multidimensional images, – populate the social imaginary via Science Fiction narratives. By analyzing Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) as a foundational oeuvre, this chapter identifies Science Fiction as a clear symptom of an oncoming technological condition, one in which the irruption of electric technology began to exert a force of the externalization of being. Following this framework, this chapter analyses *Black Mirror* as a remarkable attempt to recover the inaugural spirit of the genre by mapping a series of various current social phenomena that features a post-media condition through an episodic format. It is to say, a human condition determined by the end of technologies as a simple prosthesis of humankind.

In the second chapter, Mazurek offers a (post)apocalyptic interpretation of two *Black Mirror* episodes, "Fifteen Million Merits" and "Metalhead," wherein the notion of the apocalypse is approached not so much in terms of its destructive potential, but as a powerful metaphor of paradigmatic transformation. Drawing from Jacques Derrida's discussion of the apocalyptic tone detectable across philosophical discourses, as well as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's view of the evolution of the natural environment into the industrial one, Mazurek identifies in both episodes a number of disappearing binaries hitherto considered formative for the development of western consciousness. These include oppositions such as nature-culture, nature-man, masculine-feminine, organic-technological, and conscious-unconscious.

This dismantling is further supported by the theories of Samuel Butler and René Descartes whose views concerning the (im)possibility of machine consciousness are also reflected in the show. Following the conviction of apocalypse's transformative rather than destructive power, the chapter concludes by offering a socio-philosophical reflection on the post-apocalyptic character of contemporary post-media western society.

In the third chapter of the volume, Joseph Macey and Brian McCauley analyze the episode "Playtest" with particular attention warranted to the ways in which digital games embody contemporary socio-economic realities of western life. While "Playtest" has been described as an episode that lacks a specific moral lesson or social commentary – indeed Charlie Brooker, the series creator, referred to it as simply "a romp ... good fun" (Hibberd, 2018) – it remains a cultural product which offers commentary on contemporary socio-cultural realities, both inviting and provoking discussion amongst fans, critics, and even academics. Central to their interpretation of this episode is the gamification of society and the wider cultural logic of Baumann's theory of liquid modernity. The episode functions as an allegory for liquid modernity, and one which can be further contextualized through the consideration of life in an increasingly gamified world. Furthermore, given the obvious significance of games in "Playtest," they examine the evolving role of video games in facilitating and promoting contemporary practices related to the economic, social, and cultural value systems of liquid modernity.

Continuing with the subject of games, Robbie Fordyce and Tom H. Apperley consider the series' interactive film, *Bandersnatch*, as an experimental hybrid of streaming video and digital game. Like all works in the *Black Mirror* series, it revolves its story around a commentary about everyday life. In their reading of this hybrid game, they argue that *Bandersnatch* is a mystery game in the sense that the combination of complexity and repetition of the various story paths presents a different exploration of *Black Mirror's* science fiction world while still emphasizing the refrain of the danger of technology. From this, they observe that the social commentary provided by *Bandersnatch* focuses on the boredom of platformed entertainment. They derive this position from the way that its simple interface for play is functionally identical to the interface for browsing film choices on Netflix, and thus *Bandersnatch* comments on the mystery of possible choices amongst the shows we could choose to watch and the prospect of being bored to death by contemporary entertainment media.

In Chapter Five, Mauricio Molina-Delgado and Bértold Salas-Murillo propose that several *Black Mirror* episodes deal with one of the most problematic themes when studying the philosophy of the mind and cognitive sciences: *qualia*, i.e., the subjective qualities of experiences, *experimented on through technology*. The authors argue that most episodes occur in potential worlds wherein natural laws are compatible with the main thesis of functionalism. This viewpoint in philosophy of mind interprets mental states not as physical or non-physical functions, but rather as internal operations that mediate between the inputs and outputs of a system. Many of the arguments and counterarguments of functionalism have been proposed through thought experiments. Due to their fictional yet plausible nature, *Black Mirror* episodes play a similar role to these experiments: they propose imaginary situations in which the truthfulness of a specific thesis is verified or put into perspective. Episodes such as “White Christmas,” “Playtest,” “San Junipero,” “USS Callister,” “Crocodile,” “Black Museum,” and “Striking Vipers” contemplate the role of digital technology in reflections about *qualia* or problematizations of the relationship between mind and body, consciousness and brain. The authors assert that, in the *Black Mirror* universe, the self can be considered a disembodied concept. Some episodes take a position concerning this neuroscientific problem, while others imagine possibilities which defy contemporary science. In several episodes, the digitalization of sensations, feelings, or consciousness is enabled by a series of devices corresponding to interfaces that allow the input and output of information, as proposed by functionalism. Finally, the way the authors conceive of ethical issues in organic and non-organic beings face a contemporaneous problematic since *qualia* can be artificially generated.

In the sixth chapter, Justin Michael Battin analyzes the episode “Fifteen Million Merits” through a Heideggerian rendering of place and place-making practices. He suggests, in alignment with other texts in the Science Fiction genre, that the episode is duly concerned with presenting the virtues and hazards facilitated by a technology-as-power worldview; however, it is more fundamentally interested in elucidating what an ontological view of one’s self (i.e. a self considered topologically) can reveal. While the short history of the genre consists of texts presenting dystopian visions of the world, they often conclude with an optimistic outlook. In contrast to these texts, the tale of “Fifteen Million Merits” eschews optimism by mirroring contemporary society’s ubiquitous post-pessimistic malaise. He proposes that while

such a condition endures and critical reflection seems destined for failure, as both the inhabitants of the episode's world and contemporary society seem to have accepted their fates in the current state of affairs, the notion of place and the role of the self as a catalyst for its founding seems to faintly endure. He concludes by proposing that through place and place-making practices, human beings, understood as *Dasein*, are capable of rediscovering and sustaining their ontological role as dwellers, interpreted by Heidegger as cultivators and preservers of existentially meaningful worlds.

The next chapter, written by Hatice Övgü Tüzün, considers the program's dystopian depictions of the world with emphasis on how technologies are transforming their makers and human relationships. The focus of the chapter, "Nosedive," is an episode that imagines a world in which the current climate of social media obsession escalates until all of society is engulfed by the pressure to maintain high ratings. "Nosedive" depicts an engineered society based on popularity, in which people desperately try to ascend the social hierarchy with fake kindness and carefully curated social media profiles. The episode also depicts an extremely 'mediated reality,' one primarily shaped by digital technology/social media and ruled by 'mediated desires,' often expressed through voyeurism and determined emotions. Within this framework, the author argues that "Nosedive" offers a memorable illustration of what Stjepan Mestrovic calls a "postemotional society" (1997, p. 38) wherein emotion has been "transformed into a quasi-intellectual phenomenon that makes it suitable for manipulation by self and others."

Continuing with "Nosedive," Santiago Giraldo-Luque, Ricardo Carniel Bugs, and Santiago Tejedor suggest that the episode raises three issues of interest for the fields of sociology and communication. Firstly, the episode represents the fictionalized and caricatured world of a reality that is real and current, but, in accordance with an "enframed" view of the world, goes mostly unrecognized by the users/viewers of the platform. Secondly, it describes the construction and self-reproduction of systemic power, which is fully sophisticated and functional, and is fed by the users/viewers themselves through the use of their devices and the emotional control exerted by the dynamics of social validation. Finally, the episode encourages viewers to reflect on the use of social networks not as spaces for conversation, meetings, or communication, but as stages for a passive, one-way exchange of automatic "likes" for emotional self-complacency. The episode, in the authors' view, prompts an urgent call for interdisciplinary action, specifically to raise

awareness towards the fading prominence of communication, the power of screen-based platforms, and the need for a collaborative approach to media literacy and education.

Dealing with another expression of social control, the ninth chapter of this collection, written by Andrea Facchetti, presents an analysis on how “The Entire History of You” addresses and represents issues related to surveillance. This chapter focuses on the episode’s ability to produce a fracture in the narrative framework by which discourses and visual imageries are nowadays formulated, represented, and enjoyed around the theme of surveillance. It argues that the critical potentialities of this episode lie in the ability to produce a new image of surveillance devices and of subjectivization. Specifically, this chapter draws a clear schema of contemporary surveillance, which is argued as being articulated into three main issues: the hedonistic matrix that characterizes our relationship with surveillance today, the fluid and mobile network of surveillance wherein elements can be reconfigured to occupy different positions and roles, and its normative character and the action of normalization operating in the society of control.

In Chapter 10, Ward also proposes that the issue of surveillance is a major theme in *Black Mirror* (which reflects contemporary social concerns around developments like data mining and increasingly sophisticated recognition technology), and one of the most novel ways in which it is addressed is in the episode “Crocodile.” The episode was shot entirely in Iceland, during a period in which Reykjavik faced its heaviest snowfall in 70 years. The icy, mountainous backdrop jars with the British accents of the episode’s characters, evoking the sense of rootlessness and disruption often familiar to *Black Mirror*’s dystopian imaginings of the near future. More than this, though, the setting clearly elicits the aesthetics of Nordic Noir, perhaps most notably referencing the transnational hybridity apparent in productions like *Lilyhammer* and *Fortitude*. In this chapter, Ward examines the ways in which “Crocodile” draws upon the conventions of Nordic Noir, not only in the foregrounding of the evocative landscape (an eminent factor in the episode’s landscape from the moment the central characters take advantage of the isolation to cover up the initial crime), but also in exploring the familiar themes and concerns of the genre. While Nordic Noir’s realist aesthetic perhaps jars with *Black Mirror*’s more surreal critique of a future not yet realized, this is another aspect of seemingly incongruent juxtaposition which renders the motif so powerful. The basis of this chapter’s analysis is founded on the untenable