

'Nosedive' -- A Visual Representation of Social Media Addiction



Sometimes all we need is to see a visual representation of what our world can or does look like to understand the issues and addictions that social media brings to us, and I believe that this episode of 'Black Mirror' is it. -- From preparing our food for aesthetically pleasing photos to trying our best to look the happiest in sharing everything we do online, there's an absence of humanity that resides in our online selves, and that is reality.

Netflix's 'Black Mirror' has been my latest obsession, and I just had to share, in its own unique post, the episode 'Nosedive', which is the first one I watched of the series.

Nosedive is the first episode of the third season since the show first started in 2011. Before immersing into my own explanation of the story, with the help of some research, I must first explain the environment in which all episodes (each presenting different plots) take place. There are apparent parallels between each episode, telling that each of the stories are happening in the same era, which is the future.

The future, as presented by Black Mirror, looks a lot like our world today -- just *more*, as we all expect. Technology is a lot more involved in our lives. From being able to implant a hard drive into our mind that enables us to save memories and replay them, to connecting with loved ones who have passed on, we definitely witness its pros and cons in the variety of slightly disturbing and thought provoking episodes.

In this particular story, the worlds of most people revolve around their personal rating on what seems to be an over exaggerated version of Instagram. Individuals are constantly glued to their phones, and rating people, on a five-star system with every encounter they face in their day. The higher rating you have, the more benefits you receive -- both socially and culturally. For example, only "four-fives" (people with a minimum of a 4.5 star rating) have access to luxurious apartments and the latest car models along with more-than-perfect smiles from strangers of the *same kind*, whereas those with lower ratings are offered lower quality apartments and prejudice from strangers. In this environment, people are literally living for their ratings.

Contrary to the notion that social media brings us all together and enables us to keep bonds with friends and family, I'm finding that this opportunity that we receive through the many available social apps does not fulfill our human need for connecting and socializing with other humans. In fact, I

find that social media may even **dehumanize** us, because we're living for our virtual persona that is shared on a literally unrealistic platform. **From preparing our food for aesthetically pleasing photos, trying our best to look the happiest in sharing everything we do online, there's an absence of humanity that resides in our online selves, and that is reality.**

Not to say that what we post online isn't real, it just isn't everything, and because we don't share the behind-the-scenes of our lives -- for example, how many mental breakdowns and battles with depression we faced within the time it took to complete school degrees, it isn't enough for humans to accept. Instead, we compare ourselves and emit feelings of envy towards others, which definitely doesn't contribute to human connectedness.

Fortunately, we still haven't reached an era where absolutely everyone is on social media (though a more *utopian/dystopian* view would be that it is a necessity for all), but being part of a generation that grew up with the beginnings of this oversharing movement and overwhelming amounts of technology, what will happen once the last generation is gone? Is the tech movement really healthy for humanity or is it actually doing the opposite?