

“What transforms the subject is fundamentally the assumption of an image.”

The Open Seminar comprises a screening of a set of episodes of Black Mirror allowing for the opportunity to address the notion of subjectivity in relation to the technological changes within society. Change within evolution and society is a process of incremental developments. However it does lead to the extra-ordinary observation that one day we wake up on the brink of a self-made disaster carrying the immanent possibility of the total disintegration of our social order and we ask ourselves perplexed ‘how did we get here?’

Black Mirror features a series of independent episodes. They are stories of encounters, certainly unlikely, but encounters set in a future already present that profoundly shake our understanding what is to be human today. In search for knowledge there are always unintended consequences. These episodes explore some of the consequences and highlight our unlimited potential for destruction.

The protagonists in Nosedive are obsessed with creating a fictional online persona. Every one ‘rates’ everyone by using their mobile phone. These ratings operate as a kind of parallel currency which has the power to give or deny access to the social fabric, medical care, transport etc. It exposes the consequences of technology and its unlimited potential for universal embarrassment.

Over his teaching Lacan will develop different topologies with different perspectives to highlight the dynamic structure of subjectivity and transference. However his teaching preceded the recent developments of commonly used digital technology, genetic engineering and cyborg developments (hybrids of part organic tissue and technology). The question now is, how do we re-think our notions of subjectivity and transference within a social fabric that is being transformed by the introduction of intelligent machines that outperform our most treasured achievements, problematize our commonly held notions of space and time and fundamentally shake-up our traditionally held ethical positions.

With this screening we hope to provide an opportunity to question the notion of image (Imaginary), identification with the social position (Symbolic) and the experience of fundamental emptiness (Real).

This series produces a wake-up call to the unprecedented bio-engineering and technical advances of the last 50 years and their effect on our social fabric. Will an ever more advanced technological society make our relations as we know them today obsolete?

It is vital that we engage in conversation about the consequences of these technological consequences and participate in the public debate that might steer the use of our scientific discoveries in the future.

The showing of the series hopes to provoke the insight that it is not enough to be exposed to technological advances or to be the ignorant user of them. We hope to wake people up out of a comfortable passivity and to encourage the imperative of taking control of one's own destiny. It is not enough to follow the technological advances from a distance. It is imperative to be informed as to what is at stake for our society, subjectivity, the division of power and resources on this planet. The goal is to put into question whether it is in the best interest of our species to radically embrace technology and science as it is advancing today.

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