

“IT IS A WHOLE DIFFERENT BALL GAME NOW”

‘MEN AGAINST FIRE’

This episode of “Black Mirror” engages with the question of what might happen when the powers that be decide that some classes of people no longer carry any economic, political or artistic value and must be extinguished because of their biological undesirability and do so by using artificial intelligence to manipulate their perceptions and sense of justice and morality.

What happens when our political leaders turn against some of us and justify their actions with biotechnological arguments? What happens when we are encouraged to live in the vestiges of our own ‘righteousness’? The ‘Other’ is dangerous, sick or has gone crazy! We identify with some, we reject the others. We have to a certain extent become comfortable with gender discrimination and racism. Even when we demonstrably object to it, there is a sort of resignation that admits that gender discrimination and racism will never die. This is the case, even if Adil El Arbi, a successful Belgian filmmaker with Moroccan roots, recently testified that Hollywood is colour blind. He says it makes no difference in Hollywood whether one is Hindu, Muslim, white or black, as long as there is money to be made.

But what if our oppositions and contradistinctions exceed terminology, like right-wing or left-wing, conservative or progressive and if this polarised thinking receives a scientifically supported biological scaffolding? It is this very problematic that this episode of “Black Mirror” exposes.

A study from Stanford University found that that Artificial Intelligence can accurately guess whether people are gay or straight based on a photograph of their face¹. The study found that a computer algorithm could correctly distinguish between gay and straight men 81% of the time and 74% for women. This is particularly worrying in societies where being gay is still punishable by death.

Controversial scientific investigation in Canada claims that it is possible to recognize paedophilia in certain physical features. Paedophiles are more often left handed, have earlobes not connected to the head and more instance of deformed ears and ‘pinks’ - a third toe longer than the second Investigators claim that these distinctions are developed in-uterus in the first and second term of pregnancy, they affect the brain and thus have a biological basis. If we can conclusively demonstrate this, it will influence the way we treat this demographic, says Fiona Dyshniku from the University of Windsor in Canada². The point that is being made is that child abuse and paedophilia are not necessarily connected.³

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/sep/07/new-artificial-intelligence-can>

² Effect of Deviant Sexual Fantasies on Aberrant Sexual

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<https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6023&context=etd>

³ Clinical Neuropsychologist Rachel Fazio <https://www.springer.com/gp/about-springer/media/research-news/all-english-research-news/pedophiles-more-likely-to-have-physical-irregularities/>

The question that presents itself now more and more is whether fact-checks⁴ are effective in supporting a shared reality, a social bond that does not fanatically banish the Other who is different. Why has fact-checking proved ineffective? Our social bond has become fanatical. A social bond seems to be only possible between people with strong identifications. These identifications motivate, organise desire and produce votes for politicians. However, as we have seen in Hungary and Poland, these identifications also compromise and undermine our democratic constitutional state, equal rights and co-operation.

Recent developments show that nation states are losing their significance, overtaken by multinational commerce overruling national sovereignty. Government and business are no longer separate.⁵ Multinationals and financial markets have now more power than nation states or voters in democracy. The traditional oppositions of internal and external affairs no longer operate. They can however still be exploited by the few for very dodgy reasons as seen with the 'America first' slogan. Neoliberalism forces people into autonomic production units fostering ever growing inequality very different from the way psychoanalysts understand singularity.

Psychoanalysis can contribute to break the deadlocks of polarization. Psychoanalysis theorises the paradoxes of existence via its concepts of identification, the four discourses and the formulae of sexualisation.

Psychoanalysis knows that the truth can only be half-spoken, that signification and meaning are imaginary constructs. Psychoanalysis understands the possibility and impossibility of boundary and limit; concepts like inside/outside one surface significations.

The question for psychoanalysts now is: How do we move from analysis to action?

⁴ Wikipedia-oprichter Jimmy Wales heeft met WikiTribune [WikiTribune presenteert zichzelf als 'evidence based journalism.'](#) zelfs een nieuwssite opgericht met uitsluitend dit doel: enkel feitelijke, objectieve verslaggeving waar 'links' noch 'rechts' een rol speelt.

Berucht is inmiddels het portret van The New York Times [Hier vind je het portret van de neo-nazi in The New York Times terug.](#) van de 'Nazi sympathizer next door.'

⁵ CETA