

# Getting to Know...

Component 2A: *Black Mirror* and  
*The Returned*

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# Teacher's Introduction

This resource has been written for the A Level Eduqas Media Studies specification (A680QS), with a specific focus on Component 2: Section A: Television in the Global Age: *Black Mirror* (Series 3, Episode 4: 'San Junipero', 2016) and *The Returned* (Season 1, Episode 1: 'Camille', 2012).

As a 'Getting to Know' pack, this resource has been constructed to actively engage students with the source material through a range of stimulating, focused and entertaining magazine-style articles exploring different topics across the media frameworks and theories. Discussion tasks are included throughout to recap knowledge. At the end of the resource, we have included a range of more challenging essay-style questions for students to test their learning.

The structure of the pack is as follows:

1. What Should I Know? – A brief overview of the key facts/information about the set products.
2. Getting to Know... *Black Mirror* and *The Returned* – 17 articles on a variety of topics. In the articles, we have tried to focus on the more niche aspects of the products that may not have been covered by textbooks, to broaden students' understanding.
3. Show What You Know – five essay-style questions on the close study products complete with an answer section.

Our aim with this resource is to provide variety for those students who may feel overloaded by textbooks and other learning materials with a solely academic writing style. The blend of informative content and entertaining presentation style will not only help to strengthen a student's knowledge of the products, but also help to foster a genuine interest in them.

March 2024

# Glossary

- Ambient sound** – sound that comes from diegetic sources but which is in the background
- Anthology** – a series of episodes that can stand alone or work together to portray a character
- Archetype** – a character stereotype that crosses over from books to TV, to films, to games
- Binary opposites** – themes of conflict that go against each other to tell the narrative
- Cinematography** – the art of visual storytelling through the choice of shot and camera movement  
Doyle sees it as the relationship between the actors and the camera
- Codes and conventions** – visual and audio elements that we recognise in a certain genre
- Conglomerate** – a parent company that is made up of a number of smaller subsidiaries either vertically or horizontally integrated, or both
- Contrapuntal** – when sound goes against the image shown
- Cultural capital** – when the audience's previous knowledge of a text – be it a book or film – is used upon to understand a new text
- Diegesis** – the narrative world
- Diegetic sound** – sound that is within the narrative world that the characters can hear, e.g. music, doorbells, etc.
- Dystopia** – a bleak view of how the world might look
- Enigma codes** – questions that are asked that drive the narrative, e.g. why did they do that? The questions are answered and then others are asked.
- Equilibrium** – where there is a stability in the characters' lives before something disrupts it
- Film noir** – a style of film that came in the 1930s–1950s with a high contrast and low-key lighting and emphasised on the storylines
- Flashback** – when we see something that has happened previously to a character
- Genre** – type or category of film based on the audience's expectations
- Homage** – when a text is paying tribute or respect to another film or other form of media, e.g. dialogue, shots and more, e.g. *Scream*
- Hybrid** – when two or more genres are blended together to make a new style
- Hyperreality** – where fiction and reality are blended together, blurring what is real and what is not
- Iconography** – the visual elements (e.g. setting, costume and characters) that we associate with a genre of film. They can become almost cliché, such as the masked killer in horror
- Intertextuality** – when a film references another text
- Linear narrative** – when the action goes from start to finish without flashbacks
- Metanarrative** – particular ideas that are key to our society, religion, science, law and politics
- Mise en scène** – what we see within the frame
- Narrative codes** – specific devices that have been chosen to work together in a text, e.g. camera and choice of characters (Proppian archetypes)
- Non-diegetic** – this is the score that we hear in the background, and sometimes the audience as well
- Nostalgia therapy** – reminiscence therapy tool that provides a simple and effective way to reduce anxiety or to communicate with a loved one

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**Parallel sound** – when the music fits the action on screen

**Parody** – when a text references another text in the same genre and uses humour

**Pastiche** – when a text imitates another work or genre

**Postmodern** – when a text references other texts to make a new text. The narrator can make connections in the text.

**Satire** – using humour, irony and ridicule to expose flaws in the system

**Semic codes** – signs and signifiers that we recognise which have particular meanings

**Simulation** – we are being shown a false reality but we are happy to believe this is the real one

**The other** – particular characters can be represented as the outsider, the unknown

**Tropes** – characters or stories that go across time and different forms that use iconic elements

**Typography** – different fonts that are used. Certain fonts indicate certain genres

**Verité** – a French term that means realism or natural look

**Watershed** – the universally recognised and agreed time in broadcasting when programmes for children are broadcast on TV

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# What Should I Know?

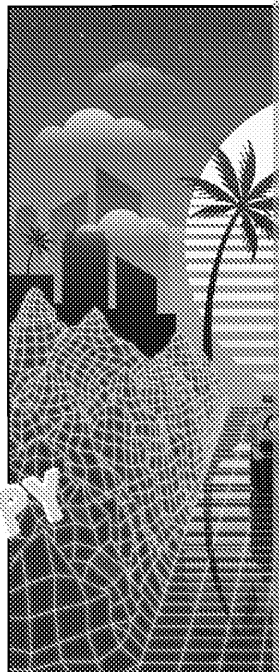
Please note that all figures and staff information are current at the time of writing that you check for any changes.

## ***Black Mirror, 'San Junipero' (Series 3, Episode 4)***

- **Created by:** Charlie Brooker and Annabel Jones
- **Written by:** Charlie Brooker
- **Directed by:** Owen Harris
- **Distributed by:** Netflix
- **Broadcast:** 21<sup>st</sup> October 2016

### **Plot summary**

We first meet Yorkie, who is in San Junipero beach town. We hear 80s music, and see 80s films advertised. Yorkie spots Kelly across the street walking into the club, being harassed by a man called Wes, and is fixated on Kelly's confidence, so she follows them in. Kelly sees Yorkie across the crowd and there is an instant connection. Kelly uses Yorkie to get rid of unwanted attention from the character Wes, who Kelly has had a sexual encounter with (from what we can gauge) and no longer wants his attention. Kelly flirts with Yorkie, telling her to dance, to which Yorkie responds that she doesn't dance for reasons we are yet to find out. The two dance together, but Yorkie leaves feeling uncomfortable. Yorkie follows her out in the rain and invites her to her house, but instead Yorkie replies that she is engaged.



A week later they catch up in the club and Yorkie follows Kelly into the bathroom happy and wants to see her. Kelly responds that she is just a tourist and doesn't give in. They go back to Kelly's beach house and have what we find out is Yorkie's last memory.

Yorkie returns a week later but Kelly is not to be found. Having found Wes at the 'try another decade – you might catch up with her in the 90s or 2000s.' Yorkie sees Kelly in 2002 playing a dance game. The two end up back at Kelly's beach house.

Kelly informs Yorkie that in real life she is dying, and Yorkie says that she is in a coma off the road after witnessing her parents' negative reaction to her coming out. Yorkie is a timer in San Junipero before long and wants Kelly to come and join her. It is here that Yorkie reveals that San Junipero is a simulated reality where the dead can live on in an age of their choice. Yorkie is in the real world so that Kelly can visit her.

We see the real world; Kelly is in a hospital and goes to visit Yorkie in hospital. She is told that although she is in a coma, Yorkie explains why he has agreed to help her cross the line that her father would not object. Kelly decides that she will marry Yorkie instead. The doctor removes Yorkie's breathing tube and we see that Yorkie is dead. Kelly then arrives and the two have an argument about Kelly staying in San Junipero. We see Kelly being euthanised, and her burial, and then she is later reunited with Yorkie. They drive off into the sunset together and we see the nostalgia therapy machines with the database.

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# *The Returned, 'Camille' (Season 1, Episode 1)*

- **Created by:** Fabrice Gobert
- **Written by:** Fabrice Gobert and Robin Campillo
- **Directed by:** Fabrice Gobert
- **Made by:** Haut et Court for Canal+
- **Broadcast:** UK, Channel 4, June 2013 / France, Canal+, November 2012

## Plot summary

The first shot shows Camille, her teacher and other students on a school bus. As it turns a corner, it appears to attempt to avoid something in the road (which we cannot see) and drives through the barrier and over the edge of the cliff.



The text 'present day' appears on the screen, suggesting that this event happened in the past and we are now in the present day. The next shot we see is of a picture frame containing dead butterflies hanging in a home; one butterfly comes to life and flies towards the resident of the house, an elderly man, and a picture of a woman beside him. There is a loud knock at the door and voices are confused. The opening credits role.

We see that flowers have been placed at the top of the cliff where the bus overturned without a scratch on her. She begins to walk back to town. Next, we see her in a relationship with a younger woman. At the same time, Camille's sister Lena is in a rebellious teenage way, and witnesses her father and the young woman, Lucy, re-enact that of a meeting that looks like it is the parents of victims of the bus crash, who are people who died and a memorial to be placed in their honour, so it is confirmed. It appears to be a power outage in the town, but the power quickly comes back on.

Camille's mother is pictured upstairs in her house looking at a memorial of Camille's death. Camille walks into her house and her mother hears someone downstairs and doesn't understand who it is, as her daughter Lena is out. Her reaction when she sees Camille disrespects this and continues to behave as if nothing has happened, explaining that she spent an hour walking back home. Camille's mother first calls Pierre and with whom Camille's father appears not to get along. He does not answer. Camille then asks him to come over.

Meanwhile, the elderly man, who still appears confused, calls for his carer to help him there as soon as possible. A woman is heard in the background asking who is calling and leaving her apartment building. She lets a young man, Simon, another one of the carers, and asks whether the code has changed. Simon is left confused when the woman he is talking to, his girlfriend, does not live there anymore.

Camille's father returns to the family home and witnesses Camille. Camille's mother explains the situation.

We witness Camille assisting the elderly man in his home. When she hears a noise, she goes alone, to which he responds he is. When the carer leaves, we see the elderly man sitting in the kitchen eating pasta. The carer catches a bus back to her apartment building following her.

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Lena meets Simon looking for his girlfriend while out at the local pub. She is attracted to him and takes him to where his girlfriend now lives.

Pierre returns home and it becomes apparent that Camille's mother and Pierre are in a relationship. Pierre also witnesses Camille.

We see the young boy follow Julie (the carer) home and he is outside to be invited in. She is worried for his safety. She doesn't know what is going on but allows him to come in.

Adele, Simon's girlfriend, hears him knocking on the door but assumes that she is the answer. She becomes suspicious and her daughter comes downstairs to check on the young girl. Simon leaves.

Lucy (the barmaid / Camille's father's new girlfriend) is attacked in an underground.

Lena returns home to find that someone is knocking on her wall, like she and her mother. When she and Lena come face to face they are both distraught as they cannot believe how they have ended up here.

The elderly man still doesn't understand why his wife has returned, and finds it difficult to accept. He takes his wife to the ground.

Simon is pictured standing in front of his grave, realising that he is supposed to be dead. He sees on the dam report that the water level has gone down and witness the elderly man's fall from the dam.

We flashback to four years ago (the day before the day of the bus trip), where Lena and Camille instead stay behind to see her boyfriend. It is revealed that Lena and Camille are having their first sexual experience, and Camille feels it through her body and begins to panic as she realises what is happening.

In the final scene of the episode, Victor is standing in the road, in the path of the bus that he has just caused the accident.

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# Getting to Know...

## Article 1: The backstory

What's it like to live in a dystopian world? Over the years, there have been many texts, books and films, including George Orwell's *1984*, that look at what the future looks like in a **dystopian** society (the opposite of utopia, where everything is perfect, no problems, etc.). Charlie Brooker's series of *Black Mirror* depicts a dystopian society, casting us into a version of the future where technology has a higher ranking above humanity.

### Technology and film

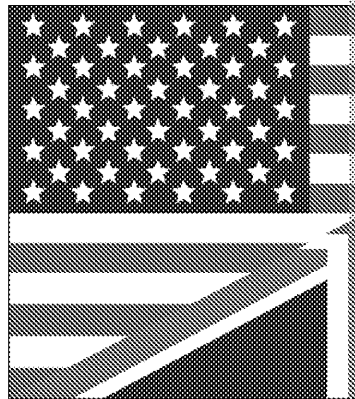
Many films which centre on technology have themes of power/control and story over, such as *Terminator 2*, *Minority Report*, *The Matrix*, *Blade Runner* and even takes this idea even further. In the majority of the *Black Mirror* episodes, writer **technology as a curse** rather than a blessing and how it has had a **negative impact** on human condition.

### *Black Mirror* – *The Twilight Zone* and Apple

When Brooker set out to create *Black Mirror* he wanted to create a show that was like *The Twilight Zone* was originally an American television series which looked at sci-fi stories where each episode could stand alone but also be part of an overarching narrative. Brooker's *Black Mirror* was a reaction to the happy humans that we see in Apple advertisements where technology is completely perfect as a direct result of the new Apple technology.

### Britain and America

*Black Mirror* has been on American television, which started in the UK with a British broadcast on Channel 4. *Black Mirror* was created by **Charlie Brooker**, alongside producer **Annabel Jones**. *Black Mirror* is produced by **Zeppotron** (which is a company founded by Brooker) for Channel 4. Zeppotron is a division of **Endemol Shine**, which is a global leading Dutch production company. Channel 4, known for its innovative outlook, took quite a risk on the series as it was unlike anything that they had produced before. Although programmes like *Brass Eye* had also been satirical, the first episode of *Black Mirror*, 'The National Anthem', was a shocking episode with many comments on our government but also the overarching obsession with social media.



*Black Mirror* became a massive hit over in America, which prompted a bidding war between television companies wanted to own it. *Black Mirror* was nominated on many public television awards and won an Emmy in 2012 for 'Best TV Movie'.

In 2014, it was announced that the global distribution platform **Netflix** had bought the rights to *Black Mirror*. Netflix won the bidding war to co-produce the show alongside Jones and Brooker. Jones and Brooker decided to work exclusively with Netflix and dropped Channel 4. By 2015, Netflix had commissioned 12 new episodes of *Black Mirror* and the first new episode was made available in 80 territories globally. By the year 2020, Zeppotron no longer existed as a new production company created by Brooker and Jones, **Broke and Bones**, was created to produce new episodes and series of the television programme for distribution by Netflix.

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*Black Mirror* has made the transition from **analogue terrestrial TV** (Channel 4) to (Netflix). The original distributor, **Channel 4**, which is UK-based, aired the first tv February 2013. Being a British free-to-air public broadcast television channel me *Black Mirror* was a **UK audience** and many of the episodes included storylines re with UK politics. When *Black Mirror* transitioned to **Netflix** in 2016 for series thr became much more **global** and the themes and issues explored centred more or

## **Economic context – digital TV streaming platforms**

*Black Mirror* across the whole series has gone through quite a transition, but so I have had the advent of streaming platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, BritBox about having to pay a licence fee if you are not watching BBC is still ongoing. *Mirror* moved from Channel 4 to Netflix, which is a streaming platform that has s programmes and films. The way that we watch TV has changed – which has also viewing figures. Barb.co.uk is a website that contains all viewing figures for the t and digital TV, but has also recently integrated streaming platforms into the mix.

### **Discussion questions**

- 1) Discuss the Apple adverts that are available now compared to the older ones – what gestures do the people have? [zzed.uk/12431-apple-ad-1](http://zzed.uk/12431-apple-ad-1), [zzed.uk/12431-apple-ad-2](http://zzed.uk/12431-apple-ad-2)
- 2) Watch the trailers for *Black Mirror* from 2010 to 2012 and compare with those of notice as different?
- 3) Which streaming platforms do you use / do you not use? What are your experiences?



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## Article 2: Who is Charlie Brooker and what has he done before?

### BBC, *Screenwipe* and *Newswipe*

Charlie Brooker, who is seen as the **satirist of the noughties**, has long used his comedy and political undertones to review TV programmes, including the news, often with a slight edge pointing to the producers of the show. He often spins shows on their head to find the most unflattering angle, with a sharp edge looking at today's issues.

Satire and risk in the

Produced on a low budget for BBC Four, with many shots filmed in his own British television review comedy programme created and presented by Brooker. Each week had a different theme/genre each week, such as phone-in shows, scaremongering, American television. There would often be actors reading out public thoughts of an *of View* style.

Brooker then moved onto the spin-off show *Newswipe*, which was very similar to news media. In *Newswipe*, Brooker discussed ethical issues within representative stories were covered by the British press. Both programmes were well received, *Newswipe* was 'glorious, perceptive and rude'. In 2010, *Newswipe* won the Entertainment Royal Television Awards, and was also nominated for a BAFTA.

### Channel 4 and *Deadset*

Channel 4 was the company that gave Charlie Brooker his first written drama brief. **funded by its advertising**, Channel 4 is a **publicly owned** without public funding. It was originally viewed as the **edgier side of TV**. Channel 4 was where experimental and many new programmes were commissioned. Additionally, as Channel 4 does not make itself, but merely commissions and distributes them to an audience, it can select its

*Deadset* was Brooker's first big project for Channel 4. Brooker often critically commented on reality TV show *Big Brother*, and was keen to develop this idea further by creating a **reality TV parody** with an edge. Although the drama department of Channel 4 wasn't keen on the idea of *Deadset*, the comedy department was keen and thus *Deadset* found its place.

Parody: to imitate another text and uses

A mix of reality TV, zombie horror and comedy, *Deadset* was a perfect combination for Channel 4's edgy remit. *Deadset* is a comment on reality TV and its consumption, making what is often referred to as 'zombie audiences'. *Deadset* was produced for E4, which was Channel 4's younger counterpart, and it was an overnight success. The episode was aired on E4, Channel 4's younger sister channel, for a younger audience mainly consisting of late teens. The show had a critical acclaim, and *Shaun of the Dead*'s Simon Pegg wrote a piece for *The Guardian* in which he praised the show for its genre tributes but also said that the zombies weren't scary like those in *Shaun of the Dead* but instead were fun to watch like the infected in *28 Days Later*.

Brooker had shown that writing a miniseries was within his grasp, using his knowledge of reality TV and zombie films to win over his audience. With *Deadset* as proof that a younger audience were listening and watching, there was no stopping Brooker with *Black Mirror*.



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## Curran and Seaton

One interesting theory that we can apply here is **Curran and Seaton's theory of media ownership** that because many media companies are owned by large conglomerates, it results in a lack of creativity and thought. Channel 4 has been responsible for some of the edgiest and most controversial shows. Channel 4's remit goes against that of lack of creativity and thought. We can how Curran and Seaton's theory is embedded within what Charlie Brooker is trying to say about television and capitalism at its helm. He is trying to say that the media is contributing to the problem rather than helping communication.

### Discussion questions

- 1) What is your favourite experience of Charlie Brooker? Look at a couple of clips of his work on *Black Mirror*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgZgZgZgZg>
- 2) Choose a film that you like and look at the company behind it. How can you apply Curran and Seaton's theory to it?
- 3) Watch the trailer for *Deadset* and note all of the references you recognise.

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## Article 3: Production of 'San Junipero'

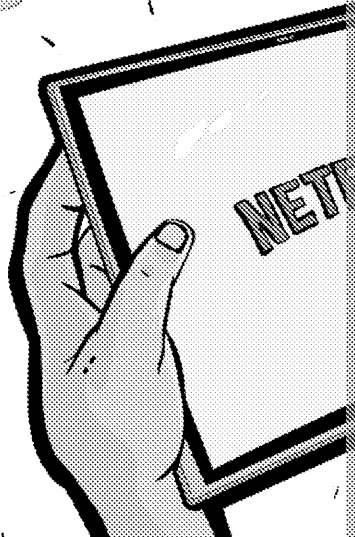
### Zeppotron, Channel 4, Netflix and *Black Mirror* recap

*Black Mirror* was created by Charlie Brooker and producer Annabel Jones. It was Zeppotron, which is a subsidiary of Endemol Shine (a Dutch media company) with distributor Channel 4.

However, with *Black Mirror*'s overnight success in America, Brooker's show had become more desirable, and this led to a bidding war for the third series.

Netflix became interested and was keen to get the rights to *Black Mirror*'s future episodes. Originally, Netflix was going to partner with Channel 4 (*Black Mirror*'s original distributor) on the show, but Channel 4 was worried about a few of the concepts for the next series.

As Netflix was keen to get started, it went ahead and acquired *Black Mirror* for 40 million dollars, and also invested in Brooker's new company, Broke and Bones, set up with Annabel Jones, to make future series.



### A new era

With Netflix as the new distributor and, therefore, a much larger budget, Brooker visualised his ideas for *Black Mirror* even further. Although never citing budget as a whole streaming platform could be seen to *Black Mirror* as one of their flagship shows, 'San Junipero' was made possible on Netflix as Series 3, Episode 4, after one of the most controversial and Dance' episodes dealt with the issue of paedophilia and the dark net.

### To CGI or not to CGI

Many of the *Black Mirror* episodes have used CGI in order to tell the story, and 'San Junipero' uses CGI, although it is less at the forefront. This episode is mainly based around specifically the three characters (the third being San Junipero itself). Although *Black Mirror* was filmed in Cape Town, South Africa, with many Californian tropes being used, such as the beach, the sea, the beach houses and more.

### Production and distribution of 'San Junipero'

- Brooker became very interested in **nostalgia therapy** and the afterlife
- Joel Collins introduced Charlie Brooker and Owen Harris to Tuckers through a VR device where he could look around the bar and move things around
- Susie Coulthard designed the costumes, which were influenced by Janet Jackson's *Control* and Molly Ringwald's *Pretty in Pink* character
- Brooker's company heard the song 'Heaven is a Place on Earth' and knew straight away it was the perfect fit for the episode
- Although set in California, the episode was filmed in Cape Town, South Africa
- The episode was directed by Owen Harris, who had directed a previous episode of the show for young people, such as *Misfits*
- Brooker chose not to use the same actors for the older scenes to avoid the

Nostalgia therapy is a form of therapy that can be used to help people with anxiety and depression.

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- The episode was shown at the Toronto International Film Festival
- Originally the couple were to be a heterosexual couple, but Brooker changed it as he felt that it added an extra layer to the narrative, as marriage for same-sex couples was not legal in the UK at the time.

### Discussion questions

- 1) Do you think 'San Junipero' would have made as much of an impact with a heterosexual couple in the foreground?
- 2) Look at some of the lyrics from the song 'Heaven is a Place on Earth' by Belinda Carlisle. Why do you think Brooker was so keen to use this song?
- 3) Although the episode is set in Cape Town, South Africa, how has the episode been made to feel like it is set in the UK?



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## Article 4: *Black Mirror*: advertising, audience, accolades and awards

### *Black Mirror* and advertising

Now that Netflix was distributing *Black Mirror*, it meant that the budget wasn't as tight as it once was. This meant that advertising could be on a much larger scale. *Black Mirror* has in the past used some controversial advertising techniques.

When Mediahub (a digital creative media agency) came to advertise the show to young adults, they realised that this was the savviest audience, with many installing ad blockers on their computers. They needed a hack that would get around the ad blockers and the platforms installing code to fool the ad blockers so that they could advertise to this audience. The show received a large appreciation from this community who took to social media to exclaim about how impressed they were, resulting in one million conversations on social media.

In regard to the print advertising of the show, Mediahub decided to purchase the entire tube station. Fellow commuters were unnerved to see similar bold statements on the tube and of course as a result it brought lots of publicity for the show.

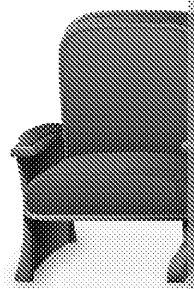
### *Black Mirror* and audience

*Black Mirror* looks a lot different today than it did when it first hit our screens in 2011. The show has also changed in this time. When *Black Mirror* moved to the subscription platform Netflix, a new audience was being introduced to it – but this time a global, paying audience.

*Black Mirror* in general has often been referred to as controversial, with one episode in particular being as the most shocking. The episode 'San Junipero' (Series 3, Episode 3) features a character who becomes the main character. This episode did not resonate with the audience in the same way as the original. The large majority of audience members felt disdain towards the main character who had done. If you look at it from Stuart Hall's oppositional reading, parents would not watch. Read about the episode further at [zzed.uk/12431-black-mirror-s3e3](http://zzed.uk/12431-black-mirror-s3e3)

#### Channel 4 audience profile

- 16–34 age range
- Very active online
- Use social media
- Male and female (skew to female)
- ABC1 (social scale)



### *Black Mirror* and reception theory

- **Preferred/Dominant/Intended** – This is when the audience adopts the intended meaning (the meaning intended by the creators/producers of the text) and usually the text also. For 'San Junipero', the LGTBQ+ community, and audiences that are much on technology and that are young, can be problematic and hinder a preferred / an intended / preferred reading.
- **Negotiated** – This is when the audience may partly accept the text's intended meaning but will also have their own views on the text which are not in line with the intended. In 'San Junipero', a negotiated reading might be that the audience relationship presented in the episode but finds the ending a little too optimistic.
- **Oppositional** – This is when the audience rejects the intended meaning of the text. The way that the audience feel this way towards 'San Junipero' is the original *Black Mirror* audience, who feel that the characters become Americanised. Or, this could be someone who is maybe very religious and going against their beliefs regarding same-sex relationships.

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## 'San Junipero' and fandom

Henry Jenkins argues that audiences can have a deep connection with media texts themselves. 'San Junipero' was critically acclaimed and loved by LGBTQ+ fans, and has the fandom universe. Many LGBTQ+ fans have watched the episode again and again, and many requesting a sequel to 'San Junipero'. Some fans have taken it even further, inspired by the episode. The episode shows a healthy same-sex relationship, and media texts which present this kind of relationship can be good for couples.

It is important for fans to identify with the representations that they are seeing. The audience actually borrows from the media representations in order to construct their own and rewriting their own stories (fan fiction), as well as creating whole communities to meet and discuss the episodes, *and* with the advent of cosplay, we could argue that the clothing, styling and character traits may be something that they want to copy to do in this way.

## 'San Junipero' awards and critical reception

'San Junipero' has been nominated for over 10 awards, winning six, including two for costume, and two Emmy awards for outstanding TV movie and outstanding writing. It has often been referenced in best TV from 2016 guides, including Internet platform IMDb, *The Guardian*, and often ranked as the best or second best in the list of best TV episodes.

### Discussion questions

- 1) How might you have felt to see an entire tube station covered over by posters advertising a new technology? How might it have affected you?
- 2) Which of the words makes you think of a technology in the posters produced for the new technology?
- 3) How many awards has *San Junipero* won?
- 4) Using the character demographics and psychographic profile, come up with a poster for the new technology.

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## Article 5: 'San Junipero' as a sci-fi text

### 'San Junipero' – a hybrid

As part of an **anthology**, 'San Junipero' works as a standalone text, but it also contributes to the overall message of *Black Mirror* as a series about technology and its place within our society. We can refer to 'San Junipero' as a **hybrid text** as it is made up of so many different styles and genres. Above all else it is a **sci-fi** text, but other genres that have been used in reference to 'San Junipero' are **teen romance**, **coming of age**, and **period** (as it is set in a few different eras). It has elements of many more styles and genres too, which is what makes it a **postmodern** text. We will discuss further in Article 11.

**Anthology:** a collection of texts that can stand on their own but that can also be read together to portray a particular message.

**Hybrid:** when two or more genres are put together to make a new text.

### Back to the 80s

The basis for any sci-fi narrative is centred on the idea of a dystopian world (see Article 1 for further information). You just have to look at *The Matrix* to see what some of Brooker's influences are. But this is a sci-fi text that defies much of the usual sci-fi **iconography**.

**Iconography:** the use of symbols or images (e.g. see the character of the character to see).

It is not apparent at the start of 'San Junipero' that it is a sci-fi genre; instead, it lures us into the 80s teen world of *Ferris Bueller* and *Pretty in Pink*, with many Molly Ringwald similarities in Yorkie (through the use of the 80s clothing montage, for example). Brooker tells us that this is set in the 1980s through the use of oversized clothing and large hairstyles, with Kelly's costume similar to that of 'Laurie Johnson'. Brooker uses **semic codes** of the 80s to connect the audience up to the time. Immediately the audience recognises the tropes or the recognisable storytelling of the genre and Brooker uses them as a game to play with the audience. There are, however, a few sci-fi indicators for the audience. For example, the *Back to the Future* reference when Yorkie looks in the window of the store and sees the computer-generated image on a number of screens.

**Semic codes:** signs and signifiers that we recognise which have particular meanings in a particular context.

### Not much time...

It becomes apparent that the characters can visit the same town in a different time, and this is our main indication of a **sci-fi narrative**. We see the same bar in a 90s and 2000s world, and instead of Pac-Man, we see the dance player game, and instead of the easily identifiable 80s neon signs, there is a much more **modern mise en scène**.

However, many **enigmas** are set up about 'not much time left' and this sets up the main **themes of time**, which is often an iconic part of a sci-fi narrative. Within 10 minutes, we see 'one week later' appear on the screen, and the **typography** used is one of futuristic style. In the episode, clocks become a **narrative device**, such as the alarm clock and its prominence within the frame. Just as in *Back to the Future*, one of the most iconic sci-fi and cannot change unless you have a DeLorean time machine.

**Enigmas:** questions or puzzles in a text to keep the reader interested in what they are answered.

**Narrative device:** a device that has been chosen to tell the story, e.g. (Proppian archetypes).

**Typography:** the use of certain fonts.

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Most of the identifiable **sci-fi tropes** don't appear until the end of the episode – showing us the stark, sterile world of a care home / hospital, with cars looking more futuristic in their design, but mainly the button that is used to travel to San Junipero that lights up when pressed into the temple (side of the head). We also see the San Junipero network at the end, emphasising the genre that we have been watching all along.

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**Steve Neale** argues that in order to survive, genres need to evolve or adapt, and he has done. By blending the teen romance with the other genres of sci-fi, and hiding follows films such as *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and *From Dusk Till Dawn* as the episode's genre a considerably different to what it started out.



### Discussion questions

- 1) What other sci-fi films have you watched before? What codes and conventions do you notice?
- 2) Discuss how time is used in 'San Junipero'.
- 3) What did you think at the start of the episode – were you confused about the genre?



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## Article 6: Representation of Kelly, Yorkie and San Jun

### Kelly and Yorkie

**Yorkie** – refers to herself as a ‘tourist’ but wants to be a ‘full-timer’. She is our **archetypal nerd** – shy and awkward. She is not sure what to wear or how to wear it. Through the **visual codes** we can see that she wears glasses, which suggests nerd – she chooses these as Kelly references. They are part of her. Her body language is more subtle than that of Kelly. She is our **Proppian princess** who needs saving from the restrictive confines of her own everyday life. When we see Yorkie as an older person, this challenges the traditionally younger archetype of romance texts. Yorkie, we find out, is also physically disabled having crashed her car after coming out to her parents. This conforms in some way to our ideas about older people not being mobile, etc.

**Kelly** – also refers to herself as a ‘tourist’ and is our archetypal cool girl / the quintessential popular girl. Kelly is confident, funny and has good style dressing circa Janet Jackson in the 80s. She knows what to wear, how to dance, and uses confident facial expressions. Kelly is our **hero** as she marries Yorkie and saves her from her constrictive existence. Perhaps Kelly is also a **princess** as she too needs saving from her monotonous one-night-stand rut. She is scared to let herself feel real love after having her heart broken before. As with Yorkie, when we see Kelly as an older person this also challenges the traditionally younger archetype of romance texts.

Brooker originally had a heterosexual couple in mind for the main characters. Perhaps the ideas of ‘San Junipero’ is the lack of the patriarchal world. In ‘San Junipero’ even out that patriarchy is one of the main problems of our society. Brooker references a more right-wing, old-fashioned patriarchal government railing against progress. ‘San Junipero’ was made. The two main characters in the set episode are free to explore without barriers.

Judith Butler is a theorist who questions gender in our society and how we view social construct and is therefore forced upon us from birth through how we are created. Kelly and Yorkie’s gender is fluid; each chooses their identity based on their feelings.

### San Junipero

Perhaps our third character and one of the most important characters within the series represents life and the ever after. The beach could be seen to represent the consoling for ever and is often seen as a boundary in films such as *The Truman Show*. San Junipero is the best in life, depending on what you are seeing. Perhaps San Junipero is also the best in death. It ends up saving both Yorkie and Kelly.



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## Stuart Hall – representation theory

Stuart Hall argues that meaning is made up of signs, and in order to understand it, we have to put together the signs to make an understanding. He summarised three approaches to representation: reflective, intentional and constructionist viewpoints.

- **Reflective representation** – to directly reflect how society is. As ‘San Junipero’ argue that this approach hasn’t been taken for the set episode.
- **Intentional representation** – if intentional, there is a fixed meaning that the creator is trying to convey to the audience. Intentional representation.
- **Constructionist representation** – this is a combination of reflective and intentional. What we can argue that the creator is aiming for with ‘San Junipero’. By making meaning as to the set episode, audiences must piece together the references and meanings.



### Discussion questions

- 1) Discuss how Propp’s archetypes are used in the set episode. Are they challenged?
- 2) Do you identify personally with any of the representations within the set episode?
- 3) How can we apply Hall’s representation theory to the set episode citing examples?



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# Article 7: Themes – technology, ethics, death

## Technology

A common theme of the **sci-fi narrative** is whether **technology is our friend or our foe**, arguing to be a more positive look at what technology may be able to achieve, in good it can do and the happiness it can provide for people who might otherwise have an unfulfilled existence. Here we see technology is able to keep Yorkie breathing and dancing and a body that can feel as opposed to keeping a coma patient confined to the majority of her existence.

## Dignitas: Yorkie's choice?

**Euthanasia** is an extremely controversial subject. In the set episode, Brook provides one's life on one's own terms, provided a partner or spouse approves the decision with Switzerland's Dignitas clinic coming under fire for providing people with this choice within the text. However, Yorkie is almost hinting and we learn the truth with Kelly, that Yorkie never had a choice about her situation and that her parents hence her decision to marry Greg in order to be free from her coma prison.

## The human condition

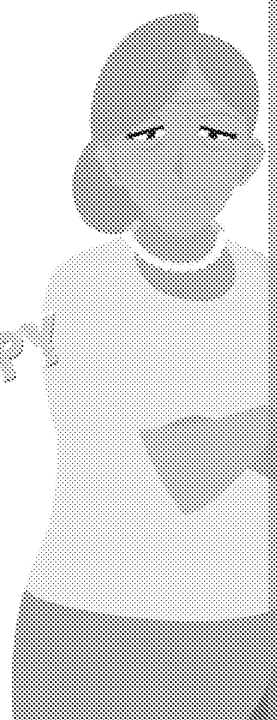
Often a clear theme in sci-fi texts, the human condition offers itself as a **narrative character** in *The Terminator* asks 'Why do you cry?', and Frankenstein learns what it is like learning how to feel, telling us that she wants to learn or be taught by Kelly how to **Touch** is a key narrative device as Yorkie has no sense of touch in the real world. With Kelly through to the feel of the waves on her skin, she is learning what touch is and how to crave. However, Kelly points out that at the Quagmire, people have lost all feeling and experiences in order to feel something (put negatively) with **pleasure** and **pain** synthesize the human condition – without pleasure, we wouldn't know pain, and we see the Yorkie quite often mentions the fact that she can't feel in real life.

**Sight** is also a theme that is referred to as beautiful – Yorkie says 'look at it...' of her life and the beauty of the world around her. The senses are used a lot within the text as Yorkie can neither see nor feel in real life as she is in a coma.

**The need to be loved** – perhaps the strongest part of the human condition – is also explored in depth. Yorkie trusted her parents enough with her coming out only to have it thrown back in her face. Her parents are estranged from her but still want to have a certain amount of control over her life. Yorkie has never known real love and support.

## Age and nostalgia

When we first meet Kelly and Yorkie we see them as youthful, with their whole lives ahead of them but little do we know the truth. We can be forgiven for assuming this – what is the confident archetypal pretty girl who fits with the awkward shy girl. We recognise the two characters from previous texts. The audience loses themselves in the nostalgia of the 80s through the choice of music, etc.



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When we are first greeted with the older versions of the characters, we might be distrustful as we see the complete opposites of the two, which only develops our characters because of the stark difference. What we know about Kelly is that the way in which she discusses it implies that she is dying of cancer, which is one of the many people have a link to in some way. We see her walking slowly, slightly vulner

### Discussion questions

- 1) Give some examples from the text that illustrate the advances in technology. How do these advances in technology affect the characters?
- 2) Discuss the ideas and themes within the text. Do both characters have the same attitudes towards technology?
- 3) What other texts have you seen set in the 1980s? Discuss what made these texts popular, and how are they similar to or different from *San Junipero*?



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## Article 8: Cultural capital in San Junipero

**Cultural capital** refers to the audience's previous knowledge and the many differences within a text. For example, there are many semantic codes that are used to introduce the set episode. The audience, depending on their age, can also immerse themselves in a specific decade, so there is something for everyone to recognise. 'San Junipero' piece together.

### 1980s

- Films
  - The film reference – *The Lost Boys*, released in 1987
  - *Back to the Future* film references: TV store, time, typography, period
  - *Pretty in Pink* film references: character dress, look, style, cars, etc.
- Music
  - The first song is Belinda Carlisle's 'Heaven Is a Place on Earth' – iconic to the 80s
  - Robert Palmer 'Addicted to Love' costume in montage
  - Boom box – cassette tapes being changed
- 80s style wedding dresses
- Tuckers sign is like the cocktail sign in *Cocktail* (Tom Cruise film)

### 1990s

- Film playing is *Scream*
- Alanis Morissette song playing – music iconic of the 90s
- Iconic games – Pac-Man, Top Speed

### 2000s

- Music playing is Kylie Minogue – her music transcends all of the decades, but 'Can't Get You Out of My Head' is 2000s
- Dance game

### Romance

- Meet cute – the awkward meeting between a boy and a girl in a romance film (the bet, colliding on the street, etc.)
- The rain – often used in romance films
- Obstacles that Kelly and Yorkie have to overcome in order to be together
- Nature references often used in romance films – such as the waves crashing for sexual metaphor
- Archetypal characters, e.g. nerdy girl vs cool girl
- Grand Theft Auto – almost like computer game – fast car driving, with bird's-eye view
- The game Top Speed foreshadows Yorkie's situation

### Discussion questions

- 1) Discuss each of the references listed above – did you see any that other people would not?
- 2) Can you think of any other texts where couples have to face obstacles in order to be together?
- 3) Is there anything with the fast car that Kelly keeps driving?

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## Article 9: Use of music as a cultural guide for the a

Music has often been described as one of the strongest memory recall devices. back to a particular time or date and help us to remember a specific event.

### Diegetic music

The music used in the episode mainly comes from the 1980s and has been chosen very carefully to add to the narrative and contribute to the plot through its subtext. Billie Jean King's song 'Heaven Is a Place on Earth' starts the episode and as the episode, introducing the **binary opposition** of life and death. The music is used **diegetically** at the start as Yorkie is dancing in a nightclub, then at the end the music comes on, this time **non-diegetically**, continuing over the credits.

The diegetic music that is mainly used in the nightclub sequences spans the 1980s through to the 2000s. We hear 'I Wanna Dance with Somebody', by Whitney Houston, through to 90s tracks such as 'C'est La Vie' positioning us in the decade.

The choice of songs that are played in the nightclub and on Yorkie's cassette player gives us an indication of the narrative. For example, the first song that the two dance to is called 'Fake', which sums up the simulated reality created characters. Also, certain songs are used in an ironic way to foreshadow the the Smiths' song 'Girlfriend in a Coma' plays on a cassette player during Yorkie's coma who knows the song gets snippets of Yorkie's real-life situation, and it is ironic as she 'Living in a Box', conjures up images of being buried or trapped, which life in San Junipero could also link to Yorkie's coma as she is trapped within a simulation to escape to except

### Non-diegetic music

The non-diegetic music used in the set episode is mainly synthesiser music which is synonymous with the 1980s and used in many 1980s films to evoke emotion, such as *A Clockwork Orange*, *Blade Runner* and *The NeverEnding Story*. Cleverly used, the music is **parallel** to the action that is happening on screen. The score was composed by Pop Will Eat Itself frontman Clint Mansell. Mansell uses strings in places in order to evoke certain emotions. The audience feels like they are there with the pair, feeling all of the emotions that Kelly and Yorkie feel, and that we are with them all the way. The song to play non-diegetically is the last song, 'Heaven is a Place on Earth'. The score blends the two worlds – heaven and earth – together, making us think about the narrative of the set episode.

### Music, sounds and hyperreality

San Junipero has been constructed from the characters' memories and experiences more specifically, an afterlife simulation, where we can be ourselves after we contribute to the realism of this reality. The plot is where we see behind the characters well-known computer game Grand Theft Auto. The over-heightened sounds from emphasise the speed of the simulation and the damage that could be done if it were to

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### Discussion Questions

- 1) Listen to some other electronic synth soundtracks from the 1980s, such as *Apocalypse Kid* – how do they evoke emotion? [zzed.uk/12431-soundtracks](http://zzed.uk/12431-soundtracks)
- 2) How do the diegetic sounds used add to the hyperreality of San Junipero?
- 3) What is the effect of the waves crashing on the beach?

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# Article 10: San Junipero – Todorov, Lévi-Strauss and Barthes

As already discussed, *Black Mirror* can be seen either as part of a wider narrative

## Todorov

Todorov wanted to analyse the structure of events and look at what links them all up with the five act structure:

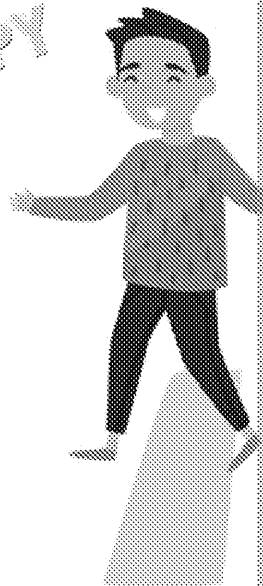
1. a state of **equilibrium** – the **status quo** – we see a town at night
2. a **disruption** of the **equilibrium** by some action – the main disruption is the realisation for the audience that San Junipero isn't real
3. a **recognition** that there has been a disruption – we see the two characters in the everyday world
4. an attempt to **repair the disruption**
5. **new equilibrium** – a new start as full-timers in San Junipero

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## Binary opposites

Lévi-Strauss wanted to look at what all texts have in common and discovered that media texts are largely made up of opposites. The following are some of the binary opposites found in the set episode:

- **Old vs young** – a common narrative but used in a slightly different way. By showing the characters both young and old there is no conflict as usually it looks at how the choices you make when you're young affect you when you're old. The tagline from *The Last Boy on Earth* is 'You grow old. Never die.'
- **Life vs death** – The conflict is discussed all the way through the episode. Referred to as a graveyard, some people see beauty in San Junipero and some see it as an ending. The song 'Heaven Is a Place on Earth', which bookends the episode, gives us the indication that it is about life and death.
- **Straight vs gay** – we see two different paths. Yorkie chose to be brave and come out to her parents at a time when society was less tolerant of same-sex relationships. Even while in a coma she has never denied who she is, and the song 'Heaven Is a Place on Earth' is about living your life in your own way.
- **Night vs day** – we only really see San Junipero at night until Yorkie crosses over and she could be forgiven for thinking that the characters are vampires who only come out at night.
- **Happy vs unhappy** – Yorkie feels that Kira is denying herself a happy ending by accepting the death of her daughter and her own. Yorkie is on a quest for happiness.
- **Pain vs pleasure** – part of the human condition, pain is needed so that we can appreciate pleasure, and grief, and pleasure linked to touch – Yorkie has been blind since she was a child.
- **Fantasy vs reality** – the two find love in a simulated reality vs their very separate lives in the real world they would never have met due to Yorkie's situation.



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## Barthes' codes

Roland Barthes, considered by many to be the father of semiotics, looked at text and how they are used together to tell the story.

- **Enigma codes** – there are many questions that the audience asks as they are watching a programme; perhaps the first is 'Where is this place?', then 'Why can't York be running out?'.
- **Action codes** – recognisable actions that have a narrative consequence, e.g. people dancing in the nightclub.
- **Symbolic codes** – Barthes suggests that symbolic codes are a 'battle' between binary opposites, e.g. night vs. day.
- **Semic codes** – things that we recognise in a particular context, e.g. the nightclub dancing, or hospital iconography, including white mise en scène.
- **Cultural codes** – these are the intertextual elements that we recognise from other programmes, films, books, art, and more. In the set episode, there are many references to film – think *The Lost Boys* and *Scream*, for example. Subtler references are to 'Girlfriend in a Coma'.

### Discussion questions

- 1) How do binary opposites help to tell the story?
- 2) What other action codes are used, and how?
- 3) What other questions / enigma codes – answered and asked – are used throughout the episode?

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# Article 11: 'San Junipero' as a postmodern text

## Baudrillard

You should already have a slight understanding of Jean Baudrillard and his concept of **simulation** and **hyperreality** if you cast your minds back to earlier in your studies when you discussed **semiotics**. Everything is made up of signs, and it is only when all of these signs are put together in a way that we can fully understand the context. But as we know, context is key to understanding signs.

Baudrillard argues that because we have been conditioned by the media to read these signs in a certain way, we are all being bombarded by unreal images. We choose to believe the myth shown before us as we prefer it to the reality. Advertising is a good example of this: we know that what we are seeing isn't real, but it makes us happy. Instagram is the current example of this: we understand that filters are used, but we choose to believe what we see – so much so that some people have surgery to look a certain way which is based on a lie.

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## San Junipero and simulacra

To some extent we can equate the situation in San Junipero with that of Neo in *The Matrix* – he is about to witness isn't real, but he prefers it to his mundane existence of the real world.

The people in San Junipero know that it isn't real, but they choose to recapture the memories of their youth rather than see what death has to offer. San Junipero is made from people's memories of the 1980s: the music, the films, the places they have been to, etc. and this has helped them to remember. They can create themselves as a character (Kelly asks Yorkie 'Why glasses?'); they can relive memories of their youth (videos, etc. from when they were young).

We see a glossy 1980s world that we believe to be the actual 1980s, but we are focused on the penny drops that we are in a simulated world. We start to question what we are seeing.

## Homage or parody

Brooker uses many postmodern ideas in a **homage** (not to be confused with a **parody** – he is paying tribute to many of these films, not making fun of them).

### Postmodern identifiers

- **Bricolage** – here there are no boundaries – anything goes; different styles and formats, e.g. film, cars, books, TV shows, music, religion and much more can all be used together.
- **Irony** – when something is used to make a point that a character that the character might not know but which the audience will know or learn. For example, in the set of the episode, songs are used to hint to the audience about the nature of the narrative, such as the song 'Girlfriend in a Coma'. We first hear the song when Yorkie is dancing, and we don't find out that Yorkie is actually in a coma, which makes this irony.
- **Self-referential** – when a text references itself. The episode turns Brooker's 'Up and Dance' upside down, looking at the positive aspects of technology.
- **Intertextual references** – discussed previously, when a text references another text (e.g. *Back to the Future*).

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- **Fragmented narrative** – this is where the narrative jumps around through past and present as non-linear. In the set episode, we see one world – San Junipero – and then another.
- **Death of the metanarrative?** Metanarratives are the main narratives or ideas that we understand such as religion, science, things that we understand to be part of our existence. In the set episode, there is no discussion of religion, which could be argued to be a metanarrative of many people’s lives in today’s society. The episode also pushes the idea of developing the nostalgia therapy. The themes of life and death are perhaps the main metanarratives in the set episode, but ideas about how to live and death are also explored.

### Discussion questions

- 1) Where does the text suggest that we are in a simulated reality?
- 2) What is the death of the metanarrative and how does it apply to San Junipero?
- 3) Watch the scene with the red and blue pill from *The Matrix* and discuss the reference to the [reference to the BBC website: \*\*bbc.com/news/health-12431-the-matrix\*\*](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-12431-the-matrix)
- 4) What other texts openly discuss the idea of death or the afterlife? Is it done in the same way as the set episode?

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## Article 12: *The Returned* as a zombie text or a noir

*The Returned* borrows from a **French poetic realist style** which was devised in the recreated reality done through **low-key lighting** and a **stylised look** which is reflective of the storyline and its gritty authenticity. The storylines got darker as the Second World War approached, similar to noir, which had its roots in German expressionism in the 1920s with the use of high contrast and contrast lighting.

### Noir

With its roots in the German expressionist films of the 1920s, film noir style of the 1940s-1950s has become a TV genre in its own right. Using low-key lighting and low saturation (originally black and white in the 1930s), *The Returned* has all the makings of a horror film but also fits the description of a **noir** drama. In noir, usually the high contrast style with its dark setting reflects the dark narrative of the story. The clouds have been used for foreshadowing – hovering over the town to warn us that something terrible has happened or is about to happen. The use of the towering mountain shadows and the isolated town is iconic of both noir and horror to reflect the mood and the narrative.

### Horror iconography – codes and conventions

In *The Returned*, we see the **horror genre** merged with the **supernatural thriller**, which has been done a number of times before but not always successfully. The child **Victor** fits **the possessed child archetype**, but we do not know anything about him other than he has caused a plane crash. There are many horror **codes and conventions** that are **subverted**; for example, we are fearful of Camille, but we are not fearful of Lucy on her own in the alley as she becomes one of the **essential female victims** of thrillers and horrors.

The use of a **bird's eye view** shot to introduce the isolated setting is a common technical code.

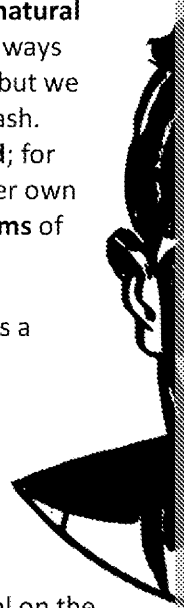
With the use of the **zombie subgenre** somewhat interwoven, *The Returned* challenges what we know about zombie films. If the people are zombies, then they do not conform to the zombie character conventions seen before:

- Often the zombie body is decaying, but characters such as Camille look as if they would pass for living, appearing normal on the outside.
- The returned characters are not walking slowly and dragging their feet, which the godfather of zombie films) zombies did in *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), or more recently *28 Days Later*. Instead, they are walking and behaving normally.
- In fact, Fabrice Gobert (creator, writer and producer of *The Returned*) has said that a Romero-like zombie film will be disappointing. The main thing that is noticeable about *The Returned* is that it is not a Romero-style zombie film and can't seem to get full. Here, the **zombie** that is used again and again in zombie films to comment on our overconsumption of material goods. The zombie in *The Returned* is about a society evolving or devouring another to make way for a new one.

### Setting

The programme itself is set within the mountains, which is a typical horror setting for an isolated community. The vast amount of water being held back from the town by a dam is a metaphor for the secrets which lie within. The setting is not necessarily French – country – and the setting is also Nordic in its mysterious and enigmatic look.

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## Themes

The following themes have been used in horror since its birth in 1922 with the film *Nosferatu*.

- **Boundaries** – a theme of horror that often takes on a role of its own; for example inviting someone in (in a vampire film), or the masked killer walking into someone's house (in a slasher film) or being used as an escape route. Doors and windows are used quite a bit in the past, maybe). The returned simply walk through into their old lives with no consequences. In *The Returned*, the glass that forms part of the main boundary that has been crossed is that of the dead coming back to life. The start with the butterfly brooch, but yet another glass boundary.
- **Food** – food is often used as a comment on capitalism and materialism in zombie films.
- **Technology** – phones are used in the programme to show the isolation of the characters and the lack of communication between characters.
- **Mirrors and reflections** – used to discuss the duplicitous nature of the characters. We see many reflections in windows and mirrors, but also with the butterfly brooch.
- The water that is being held back by the dam is also used in the opening, showing how water is used in some cultures as a connector to the other side.
- **The human condition** – horror films often look at the vulnerability of the human body can be broken and manipulated, sometimes in a gory way and sometimes in a more subtle way. In the set episode, director Fabrice Gobert focuses on relationships and how our brains might make us react when we see something that we have seen before. The various reactions to the returned highlights how we all experience things differently in the same situation.

## Steve Neale

Once again we can discuss Steve Neale's theory of repetition and difference, which includes the audience's expectations (repetition) but also include the 'twist' or a bit of unexpected. Fabrice Gobert, has made many comments about the nature of the zombie subgenre. He says that a typical zombie narrative in that it can't be said to give the zombie a heart.

'There isn't a mass uprising, the revenants' return isn't experienced collectively, it's just a few people. I was interested in imagining what normal people would do in a miracle in the movies. Some of them believe it, some don't want to believe it, some are scared. Everyone reacts differently.' (Fabrice Gobert – interview for Den of Geek)

## The Returned as a hybrid

It is clear that Fabrice Gobert (with his background in film) wanted to challenge the zombie genres by mixing together the style of noir and the genres of supernatural horror. Although taking a risk, it has been handled well through the technical, audio and

### Discussion questions

- 1) Having watched *The Returned*, what do you think or how do you feel about Gobert's approach to the zombie genre?
- 2) What zombie films have you seen? Watch a clip from the zombie film *Shaun of the Dead*. How do the zombie characters in *The Returned* differ from his?
- 3) What horror codes and conventions do you recognise in the set episode?

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# Article 13: The production of *The Returned*

'Camille' is the first episode of the first season of *The Returned*. Unlike Brooker's 'San Junipero' (which can be watched as a standalone episode with a complete story arc), this episode is part of a much larger story arc which spans across two seasons with eight episodes each. 'Camille' was first broadcast on Channel 4 at 10pm in June 2013. *The Returned* is a French supernatural thriller created by Fabrice Gobert and produced by Haut et court. It was originally broadcast on the Canal+ network in November 2012 and was inspired by the French film *Les Invisibles* (2004). It was distributed by Zodiak Rights.

**Conglomerate** that is smaller which horizontally

## Curran and Seaton

Curran and Seaton developed the theory of hegemony within the media industry conglomerates, which are vertically and horizontally integrated, often produce a means that all production and distribution processes are usually completed with subsidiary companies that belong to the head company. This often results in very produced in order to reduce risk and maximise profit. Let's look at the production Canal+ is a subsidiary of Vivendi, which is a large conglomerate. Vivendi, the company that produces media products and TV shows, so has quite a few areas covered within the media and horizontally integrated. Hesmondhalgh argues that companies like Vivendi do not maximise profit. With *The Returned*, however, it could be argued that there is a quite risky with its use of hybrid genres.

## The creator, the writer, the director – Fabrice Gobert

Before he created *The Returned*, Fabrice Gobert had studied and been involved in making a few films, including a film called *Camille*, before switching to TV production. Gobert's links to film production are evident in *The Returned* through its use of cinematography and each episode is like a mini film in its own right (because each episode is centred on a different character's story).

**Cinematography** storytelling shot and camera work between the characters. [zzed.uk/1](http://www.zzed.uk/1)

## Channel 4

Channel 4 was launched in 1984 (18 years after the launch of the BBC). Channel 4 is a **broadcaster**, which means that the channel does not produce anything in-house content or co-produces content from/with production companies such as Haut et court. Channel 4 is **owned** and **commercially funded** (funded through advertising). As it is publicly owned, it has to provide the following (<https://www.channel4.com/corporate/channel-4s-remit>):

- Be innovative and distinctive to stimulate public debate on contemporary issues
- Reflect the cultural diversity of the UK
- Champion alternative points of view
- Inspire change in people's lives
- Nurture new and existing talent

*The Returned* was very popular with audiences and achieved critical acclaim. It was the first programme to be broadcast by Channel 4 in over 20 years. As Channel 4 does not produce its own content, Channel 4's editorial staff is responsible (along with the producers of the

**Watershed** and agreed programme are broadcast

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programmes, and seeking advice from lawyers) to ensure that the content it distributes is appropriate for children. Ofcom is the communications regulator, **Ofcom** (<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom>). Ofcom is by making sure that its programme scheduling is appropriate for screening content **post-watershed** at 9pm, which makes a statement to the audience that this is not suitable for children (for example, reasons of adult themes such as sexual relationships and graphic imagery of people being dismembered).

## Economic context and regulation

Channel 4 is owned by the Channel 4 Commission, a vertically integrated company that is often involved in producing content. Channel 4 is funded by the Rhône-Alpes Regional Fund that funds film and television projects in that region. Channel 4 is also funded by the National du Cinéma and the British Film Institute funds projects in our country.

Ofcom is the national regulation body for broadcasting, and sets out standards that the programme or company will be investigated. Therefore, Channel 4 needs to be regulated carefully, so that it fits with the Ofcom guidelines.

### Discussion questions

- 1) Think about what other programmes are on Channel 4 – what categories do they fit into Channel 4's remit?
- 2) What other programmes are on after the watershed? What are the reasons?
- 3) What is the specific audience of Channel 4?
- 4) How was *The Returned* marketed by Channel 4? Discuss all of the different platforms used. <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/the-returned>

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# Article 14: Representation

## What is representation?

Perhaps one of the most important key concepts in media. Here we look at the way characters are constructed. Each character may stand for a certain ideology or belief. Representation is used through technical codes, visual codes and audio codes. When discussing representation in media, use these codes to support your argument.

## Characters

- **Camille** – fits the **innocent** Camille on the bus before the crash. When she wakes up afterwards she does not understand that much time has gone by and acts as if it is the same day. She gets upset when she sees Lena (her twin sister) as she cannot understand why she looks older. She comes across as more innocent / less sexual than her sister through her clothing, which is more demure. We see her in close-ups to demonstrate the confusion in her face. She is the first zombie we meet, and she represents the first of **the other**.
- **Lena** – Lena is the teenager and the one twin who grew up. She too had an emotional reaction when she saw her twin unaged. She is typically the **rebellious teenager archetype** and shows this through her **sexualised** clothing.
- **Claire** – the twins' mother. Her reaction when she sees Camille is that of a mother who has lost a child. She is **emotional** and **passive**, as although she cannot believe what has happened, she goes along with it as she is so pleased to see her. She fits the **maternal** and fits in with the **maternal** given to female characters in the media.
- **Adele** – is very emotional and fits the **mother** role. She cannot understand why she is in a wedding dress again with close-ups on her emotions and wide-eyed expression hugging her daughter.
- **Julie** – is **emotional** and caring; taking in Victor demonstrates her caring and which makes her isolated.
- **Sandrine** – another mother who announces her pregnancy.
- **Victor** – the creepy child (think *The Exorcist*, *The Omen* and more). He fulfills the **creepy child** archetype and is invited into Julie's house. This is one of the elements of the horror genre and supernatural drama.
- **Jerome** – Camille's father is clearly struggling to come to terms with the events. He is the most emotional male character that we meet, and he leans on his wife for support. He comforts him physically by placing an arm around him. Jerome challenges the **stereotype** of men and links to power in certain situations.
- **Pierre** – Pierre is seen to be the voice of reason by the town. He is now in a position of power and seems to be at the forefront of the community, running the shelter. He comes across as the **strong** male figure in the town, and other relatives of the crash victims come to him for help, including Claire (who he is with) and Adele.
- **Simon** – has returned the **strong** young man who had his life before the crash.



## Women

We can argue that the majority of the women in the set episode are **emotional** and quite often seen in the **domesticated** caring role as mothers, carers or youth workers. They lack their own agency and are often **subjugated by men** and interrupted, put in their place by Pierre and seems happy to be.

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Van Zoonen argues that within the media, women are often shown in a domesticated setting. In *The Returned*, women are mothers, daughters, girlfriends. For example, Claire is mainly seen in a domesticated **mise en scène** such as the kitchen / the house. Julie fulfils the carer, nurturing maternal role. Lucy fits into bell hooks' theory as she is used by men for pleasure and is objectified.

## Men

Men tend to come across as **rational** thinkers in the media and are the ones David Gauntlett argues that **television is reflective of society**; that white men are cool so the text will reflect more 'together' male characters for the audience to what they see in society.

## Age

Age is an interesting theme of *The Returned*. We see a variety of ages presented dealing with the returned relatives in an irrational way, which is to be expected. struggling, hence the elderly man who throws himself off the dam having burned home. Age in horror films is usually a sign of **authority** (when the adults are present). The younger characters in films typically look to the older characters for adults in the set episode cannot help. The representation of teenagers in horror **breaking rules** and **misbehaving**, and in most horror films, teenagers are punished. In films, the young are often the threat. They have been possessed, meaning their again reflecting the age-old societal opinion that children are growing up too fast.

## Family

This is a clear theme of the text. Families have changed and been disrupted because of an accident. This is a common theme in horror that family has been disrupted in some way, divorce, leaving behind raw emotions and vulnerable children. Families can be punished making the adults removed and normally unable to help.

## The other

The monster within horror films often symbolises a **threat** to society in the real world (think of Nosferatu, who symbolised influenza, or Michael Myers in *Halloween*, connoting the failure of the American dream). A few have argued that the zombies found in zombie films represent the idea of **'the other'**. Originally in Romero's zombie films, the zombies were a representation of black people and the society. Romero makes the hero, Ben, a black man in *Night of the Living Dead*, was a black man at the time when segregation was the rule. Black people were forced into different neighbourhoods and establishments. It has been suggested that characters in Gobert's series could represent the **Syrian immigrants** in France at the time, who were argued were the cause of many problems in both French and UK society. The recent political discourse that we hear today from UK politicians is often using the immigrant

The other can be represented as the underdog.

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## Discussion questions

- 1) How do the relationships between the sisters come across?
- 2) Look at the actor who plays Claire – how do her facial expressions and body language show she is the mother when she first sees Camille in the kitchen?
- 3) Can you think of any other films where the monster represents something else?

## Article 15: Narrative devices, story arcs

The set episode is part of a **larger story arc** and *literally* ends on a **cliffhanger**. From Todorov's theory, the **disruption** happens right at the start of the episode, when we see the crash. There is a new **equilibrium** where the town has managed to continue and has healed over time. The set episode does follow a **linear narrative** to some extent, but we also see **flashbacks** at both the beginning and end of the episode. The flashback is actually replayed at the end of the episode, but this time with much more information and the cause of the incident is revealed.

### Archetypes – Propp

With regard to Propp's character types, it is hard to know whether Camille is the princess that needs saving, or if she is in fact the villain. The returned characters challenge the archetypal roles, and to some extent perhaps the town is the princess that needs saving from the returned? Or do the returned need saving from the town?

**Linear narrative:** when the act is shown without **flashbacks**

**Flashback:** when we see something previously to a character to improve their understanding

### Binary opposites – Strauss

- **Life vs death** – within the first few frames the theme of death comes to light when we see the bus accident. From the title of the programme, we have a good idea of the narrative.
- **Leaving vs returning** – it is clear that people have gone on with their lives since the accident. The discussion about the memorial indicates a way forward. This is used a lot within the leaving and returning is the roadside barrier that the school bus crashes into also integrated here.
- **Dark vs light** – low-key lighting is used even within the daytime. Unlike many normally hidden during the day (as with daylight comes hope), in *The Returned* we only see Victor at first in the dark, making us think that he is not to be trusted.
- **Family vs loneliness** – we see how the families have been torn apart by the accident to a new normal. However, we see people alone in many of the frames, either elsewhere in the town. The returned also come back on their own, not in groups. Also when a character is isolated from others it can make the threat more menacing.
- **Nature vs science** – we see the butterfly in the picture frame come to life in the town. Nature is ominous and always present in the background, which is the natural element. However, the dam is the man-made structure which is holding back the water to stop the town from flooding. Part of nature that we understand is the life cycle – we are born, we live, and then we die. What is clearly demonstrated in *The Returned* is the challenge of this **metanarrative** – the people's utter shock when the cycle has been broken. Nature gives some stability to life, and without this



Mid scene

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## Roland Barthes' codes

- **Enigma codes** – these are questions that a media product makes the audience ask, in order to carry on observing to find out the answers. In this episode, they are answered by the plot and characters as the episode progresses, but some are not, such as 'Why did the bus go over the side?', 'How much did the twins cost?' and 'How much did Lena twins?'
- **Action codes** – these are actions that the audience can recognise and realise within the set episode, one action code is the 'climax' at the end.
- **Semic codes** – otherwise known as iconography. Semic codes are visual and symbolic elements from other genres. In this episode, we recognise the themes of boundaries, nature, and sexual themes from the horror genre.



### Discussion questions

- 1) What are the indicators to suggest that time has passed (think of narrative devices)?
- 2) How is nature used within the text?
- 3) What is the significance of the water within the story?
- 4) How can we discuss cultural codes and symbolic codes used in the episode, and what do they mean?



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# Article 16: Music and audio codes in *The Returned*

## Diegetic sound

Within the set episode, there are many **heightened diegetic sounds** such as **hearing doors banging** to emphasise the theme of **boundaries**. The knocking that the girls do on the door is a **narrative device** as it explains their old relationship and the closeness they had. The sound of the **lights flickering** is also mentioned to emphasise that something is not quite right – maybe something supernatural is afoot. When Lena is attacked near the end of the episode – a visual code we expect to see in a thriller or horror film – **the sound of the door banging** is also emphasised, adding to the **verité** we feel that we are watching when the attack happens. The sound of a **horror film coming from Julie's television** only heightens the **irony** of Victor waiting for her outside later on. The **screams from the bus** at the start of the episode and other screams we hear – for example, when Camille and Lena are face to face – are haunting.

Diegetic sound  
within the  
the character's  
dialogue  
door banging  
Verité  
realism

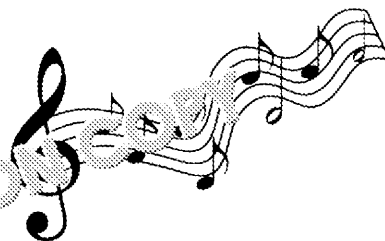
## Non-diegetic score

The **score** for *The Returned* and the opening sequence was produced by Mogwai and was made up of a number of separate tracks but each with its own emotions and parts of the story to tell. The use of **sustained notes** in the form of **organ music** evokes a funereal or religious feel, contrasted with **low drone music** that inserts **discordant synth notes** and feels like a rumble shaking everything up just like in the narrative. These added discordant notes clash and do not harmonise but instead create a jarring sound that we could argue almost represents the returned people who don't belong, as they sound out of place. Commonly this sound along with a drone is used in horror to make the audience feel on edge as the notes do not go with the melody of the music being played. The music in the opening sequence then gets heavier in places as it builds with the addition of **drums**. The **title track** over the opening credits is **mysterious** and **haunting** evoking **enigmatic vibes** which engage the audience's imagination and promote contemplation, as well as an air of uncertainty. By mixing all of these sounds together at specific places, Mogwai have achieved a very emotional score.

Score  
with the  
the organ  
Sustained  
for  
score  
Low  
low  
chords  
no  
Dissonant  
the  
Enigmatic  
ar

## Success of *The Returned* music

*The Returned* soundtrack has had over a million views on YouTube. The band Mogwai originally released it on vinyl, and it is available for streaming on Spotify and Amazon. It has been critically acclaimed, with many using the term 'brilliant' to describe it. The soundtrack, combined with such a powerful script, has many moments and uses of silence within to create tension. <https://www.zigzageducation.co.uk/12431-mogwai>



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## Discussion questions

- 1) Choose one of the tracks from the soundtrack and listen carefully – how does it make you feel?
- 2) Watch the final scene where the bus goes over the cliff – how are we positioned in the episode? How does the music add to this, and what emotions does it make us feel?

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## Article 17: *The Returned* audience

*The Returned* was an instant hit and many viewers took to **social media** with their theories after watching it. Although the primary audience is horror film fans and foreign film fans aged 16–34, it appeals to a number of different audiences as there are characters spanning different age ranges. Distributed by Zodiak Rights in over 70 countries, the show that is told is global and not specific to France as it is a supernatural story. Gobert used a hybrid text made up of lots of different genres, each with its own audience. Steve Neale's repetition and difference can be discussed here as Gobert challenges supernatural narrative tropes and characters.

Bringing in Stuart Hall's reception theory here, we can argue the following in terms of

- **Dominant reading** – anyone who recognises the codes and conventions of horror genres will enjoy the show, guessing its plot twists, and the representations
- **Negotiated reading** – this is someone who is watching and may enjoy the plot but may find that it isn't gory enough if they do not recognise the change in genre
- **Oppositional reading** – some parents may find this hard to watch as it may be different to their own experiences. Some diehard horror fans may be turned off by the zombie text.

### Foreign language drama

This audience is usually seen to be a more high-brow audience in some ways. Shows are usually targeted towards the B–A audience on the social scale. Season 2 moved away from mainly shows documentaries, lifestyle shows and foreign dramas, so there was a shift towards that was ready to watch – those who had previously watched Nordic noir texts. This is a challenge for an American audience without subtitles and so it is a challenge in America.

### Uses and gratification

Developed by Joseph Berelson and Elihu Katz, this theory argues that we use texts for a number of reasons

- **Escapism** – many people like to watch texts or use media to escape from their current situation and themselves and go into another world – for example, the beauty of the mountainscapes in *The Returned*.
- **Personal relationships** – audiences can develop personal relationships with characters and people can also develop relationships with other fans of the show.
- **Surveillance** – we like to know what is going on in our society – this can be seen in documentaries, etc.
- **Personal identity** – we can identify our own selves within a character in the show, their occupation, what they are going through, their experiences and more. In *The Returned*, the characters, so younger audiences may identify with their everyday issues, such as school, so older audiences may identify with the parenting issues and family dynamics.

### Fandom

With its own cult following, *The Returned* has a vast amount of merchandise that ranges from mugs from the pub, to T-shirts and clothing featuring the butterfly from the episode. There is also a fan Facebook site that has been set up where fans can discuss the show and share their experiences.

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## Social media and word of mouth

1. Fan made – such as the Facebook fan made page where people can join
2. Rotten Tomatoes 100% rating
3. Website was interactive with a virtual tour of the town where it is set – making it clear for a younger, more digital audience
4. Advertised the Peabody Award – giving it status among the broadcasting community
5. Posters – multiple posters for each episode of the show – each character has their own poster and storyline
6. The UK version in French adverts and a French feel for the audience to link to the culture

## Awards

Across its lifetime, *The Returned* has been nominated six times for awards and has won the prestigious Peabody Award for unique storytelling in another language.

### Discussion questions

- 1) Look at all of the merchandise that is available – how does this help to sell the show?
- 2) How does *The Returned* merchandise add to the hyperreality? Does it bring it in?
- 3) Can you think of any other TV shows that use merchandise to sell the show successfully?

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## Show What You Know

1. Explain what you understand by intertextuality. Refer to the set episode of response.
2. 'Television products are significantly influenced by the contexts in which they are produced.' Evaluate this statement in relation to the set episodes of *San Junipero* and *The Returned*.
3. Steve Neale argues that genres may be dominated by repetition, but they are also subject to variation. Evaluate this theory of genre. Use the set episodes of *San Junipero* and *The Returned* to support your answer.
4. Television production takes place within an economic context. Discuss the implications of this for the set episodes of *San Junipero* and *The Returned*.
5. How far might audiences respond differently to representations in the set episodes of *San Junipero* and *The Returned* to Stuart Hall's reception theory in your response.

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# Answers

## Discussion questions Article 1

- 1) The facial expressions are all smiles – lots of jumping and dancing; people holding their phones; some movement with the phone.
- 2) The first trailers play on the Apple adverts with the same sort of models, hair getting gradually darker and darker. The Netflix ads use reviews and quotes from the show – using content from the show.
- 3) Students would have seen them just after the advent of streaming so might not be familiar with them. They could be asked to research what their favourite streaming platforms are.

## Discussion questions Article 2

- 1) Students may have seen *Screenwipe* or, more recently, *Year Wipe*. They are both about the same thing.
- 2) Look at the structure behind a film and apply Curran and Seaton's theory – then it has been made by a conglomerate. Looking at specific companies, there are, however, independent companies that are also included within the industry.
- 3) Many references, including Davina McCall, the *Big Brother* house, cameras, behind the scenes on TV, fake news footage looks real, zombie references, text links to horror genre, bird's-eye view shots.

## Discussion questions Article 3

- 1) We could argue that it may not have made as much of an impact. It was so popular because of this story and its happy ending that maybe it would have been forgotten.
- 2) Brooker liked this song because of the lyrics. 'We'll make Heaven a place on the night falls down I wait for you' is spot on. 'We'll mainly come to San Juan we're just beginning to understand the meaning of living' rings true as it is a commentary on what we are doing.
- 3) The use of beach houses, the sand, the fast cars along the seafront, the cars.

## Discussion questions Article 4

- 1) You may have felt that you were in a dystopian futuristic world as everything is in bold.
- 2) 'The worst is yet to come' – the students may feel it is the thought of the worst especially as the word 'parents' precedes it.
- 3) 33 wins, 109 nominations: [zzed.uk/12431-black-mirror-awards](http://zzed.uk/12431-black-mirror-awards)
- 4) Netflix profile – 18–34, tech savvy, active online, use social media

## Discussion questions Article 5

- 1) There are so many to choose from. Students may have seen *Back to the Future* and the codes and conventions of the films such as futuristic mise en scène, e.g. unrecognisable products, lasers or light beams, creatures/monsters that are unrecognisable.
- 2) Time is used as a way of containing the two characters but time is also something that can be controlled by choosing to go across the decades. The idea of time running out is a common theme in the characters' minds in the simulation. The idea of time running out is a common theme in the characters' minds in the simulation. The idea of time running out is a common theme in the characters' minds in the simulation. The idea of time running out is a common theme in the characters' minds in the simulation. One of them may decide that they are going to live together now but maybe not in the future. One of them may decide that they are going to live together now but maybe not in the future. One of them may decide that they are going to live together now but maybe not in the future.
- 3) Because of the time, students may have thought it was a vampire text at the end of the night and the sun coming up. Also, they could be lured into a false narrative. Also, they could be lured into a false narrative. Also, they could be lured into a false narrative.

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**Discussion questions Article 6**

- 1) Propp's archetypes – Yorkie fulfils the Proppian princess role as she needs to marry her so that she can legally pass over. Yorkie's parents are the villain, but her aunt's house was not a supportive one.
- 2) Students may identify with going out with friends; they may identify with the theme of a sensitive theme in places.
- 3) Intentional approach – the message about technology helping us to prolong life, but it also reflects society's views or issues – we can argue that it is reflective of the LGF could argue that the construction is a, which fits best, with the use of a narrative to construct the representation, including *Back to the Future*, many vampire television series from the 1970s, 2000s, 80s coming-of-age films such as *The Breakfast Club*.

**Discussion questions Article 7**

- 1) Giving people who may not have control over their bodies (because they are in a state of life, even in an AI state).
- 2) Neither character really has choice in the text. Both are suffering in real life and in the afterlife.
- 3) Students might have seen *It's a Sin* about gay people living in the 1980s, or *Blue Velvet* set in the 1980s but is more about trans people.

**Discussion questions Article 8**

- 1) This is an open response – discuss why this may be the case – makes us all in a way, references it would be boring), etc.
- 2) Most obvious is *Romeo and Juliet*, but students may talk about more recent films like *Twilight*.
- 3) Yes, definitely, as we find out that this is how Yorkie ended up in a coma, and she was upset about her parents' reaction to her coming out.

**Discussion questions Article 9**

- 1) This is very personal to each student, as they may discuss certain emotions that are dramatic.
- 2) Students could discuss anything here – e.g. the heightened sounds of the car in the beginning, the sounds that sound associated with Paradise (it's calming).
- 3) Often used in romance films, the water is almost a metaphor for a tumultuous relationship.

**Discussion questions Article 10**

- 1) Binary opposites of night and day, old vs young, pain vs pleasure, control vs chaos.
- 2) Action codes of the car being driven fast could be the repetition one week later.
- 3) By choosing to wear glasses, Yorkie conforms to the archetypal *nerd* character, which is different for different people. Questions about what is a tourist and what is a wonder. Why is Yorkie getting married to Greg – who is he?

**Discussion questions Article 11**

- 1) We could start to doubt the reality when they talk about tourists and full-time workers, asks whether she's tried catching up with her in another year, or when we see that time has progressed. It could be the clock.
- 2) We could argue that the text goes beyond the boundaries of religion and science, shows the future of science with this nostalgia therapy, but it also talks about human experience, which is against religious doctrine as well.
- 3) Students could discuss the idea that he doesn't know what he is taking, plus the reference to the idea of the mundane existence is also discussed in *San Junipero*.
- 4) Other texts that link to the theme include *The Good Place* – this may be one with – and *Lucifer*. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* also looks at it, and other texts.

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**Discussion questions Article 12**

- 1) There will be varying points the students discuss – how it differs from other connection.
- 2) Students may have seen *Shaun of the Dead*, *Dawn of the Dead* – slow zombie. They may have seen *In the Flesh*, a BBC drama portraying zombies as the victim with xenophobia.
- 3) Horror codes and conventions they may recognise – isolated setting, the date, use of gore at the end of the episode.

**Discussion questions Article 13**

- 1) Channel 4 mainly consists of fiction drama and factual documentary program *Hollyoaks* is the only soap on comedy shows like *Taskmaster*.
- 2) The watershed is still adhered to as most crime dramas are shown after 9pm are also shown after 9pm.
- 3) The audience for Channel 4 is younger (20–30); however, it still has the audience channel, who are slightly older.
- 4) The trailer hints that it is a hybrid through the copy – the dead return – links thriller – hints that it is subtitled. The interactive website, a poster campaign, town, along with merchandise such as T-shirts and mugs to make the unreal.

**Discussion questions Article 14**

- 1) The bond between the sisters is seen when they see each other for the first time when Camille returns, Lena seems to be struggling with Camille's death through the reaction when they see each other.
- 2) Her eyes are very wide, her breathing is elongated, her body seems to tense.
- 3) Students may mention the monster in films representing a number of things for example, the influenza epidemic, the Second World War, Freddie Krueger has particularly that suffered by children; Frankenstein's monster in film often represents technological advancements; the zombie can represent societal uprising but also fear of a pandemic. *A Nightmare on Elm Street* looks at the issue of parental neglect. Many film examples, the 'Rage' virus in *8 Days Later* – can now be seen in a whole new light with a pandemic. *Eden* looks at class divide in society and parental issues in Britain.

**Discussion questions Article 15**

- 1) The flowers placed at the location of the crash site; the memorial has been taken time to do; Lena is older, although we have not met her before.
- 2) From the butterfly to the mountains, through to the large expanse of water means – is the text saying that we shouldn't mess with nature, that we shouldn't be placing something that might not belong?
- 3) The water almost acts as a warning to the town as the town has been built on water is maybe hiding secrets. In some cultures water is also a conductor for evil.
- 4) Cultural codes that we recognise – the bar scenario, small town, community child as a threat.

**Discussion questions Article 16**

- 1) Students might say that it sounds religious, or they may say something about sad, hopeful – the notes going up the scale can be hopeful and also sound like a warning.
- 2) We are positioned as if we are at the front of the bus but trapped inside. This is often used in horror films. The music is haunting and builds as the bus is falling.

**Discussion questions Article 17**

- 1) There are items (and other clothing) looking at particular characters, through the camera to be in poor taste.
- 2) We can become part of the narrative and immerse ourselves in the narrative through the mug, etc.
- 3) Over the years, quite a few, e.g. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *The Vampire Diaries*.

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## Show What You Know Answers

- 1) **Explain what you understand by intertextuality. Refer to the set episode of your response.**
  - Define what intertextuality is – when a text references one or more other cultural capital
  - May want to discuss the difference between parody and homage – Characters in the texts through homage
  - San Junipero as a homage – give examples – *Blade Runner* in the 80s – all the references to *The Future*
  - How the text uses codes and conventions of different genres and how it subverts them
  - Introduce the idea that the text is postmodern for the reason that it does not follow the visual language with the use of music
  - What it integrates into the narrative – *Romeo and Juliet*, etc.
- 2) **‘Television products are significantly influenced by the contexts in which they are made. Discuss this in ‘San Junipero’ and *The Returned*?’**
  - Discuss the importance of context on a text in general
  - The main contexts introduced are social, economic, political and historical
  - Go through each one and its importance
  - Social – look at technology for San Junipero, and same-sex marriage, with the historical as well
  - Economic – both texts come from large media companies or conglomerate company (Netflix) and the other by a smaller company owned by a large company
  - Political – Dignitas – choice to end one’s life. Representations of the real world
  - Historical references from different decades – resurgence of 80s popular culture
- 3) **Steve Neale argues that genres may be dominated by repetition, but they also vary and change. Evaluate this theory of genre. Use the set episodes *San Junipero* and *The Returned* to support your answer.**
  - Define genre
  - Both texts use the audience’s previous knowledge to help the audience understand the story
  - Genre as a contract between the producer and the audience – link to what the audience expects from the genre – zombies and *Return to the Grave*
  - Genre as a way to survive – audiences can get bored
  - The audience is celebrated in both texts – in different ways
  - Genre for audiences – talk about intertextuality
- 4) **Television production takes place within an economic context. Discuss this in *The Returned*.**
  - International distribution with Channel 4
  - Funded by French and European funding
  - Made by smaller company but shown via channel of a large conglomerate
  - Distribution around the world – 70 countries
  - Remake in America
  - Audience – use of subtitles linked to social scale
  - Taglines ‘When The Dead Return’, ‘History Resurfaces’, ‘Wounds Reopened’, ‘Love Reignites’; haunting soundtrack; trailer claims it is the ‘No. 1 French TV Series’
  - Profit made from sales of official merchandise goes back into the company
- 5) **How far might audiences respond differently to representations in the set episode of *San Junipero* using Stuart Hall’s reception theory? Support your response.**
  - Bring in the representation theory. The intentional approach, reflective approach and the negotiated approach
  - Discuss the use of archetypes in forming an opinion
  - Reception theory – people may feel that the story is in poor taste
  - Feminist theory – women come across as free but contained in real life
  - Sexual in content – with the Quagmire references
  - Changing of the same-sex couple might be a good idea
  - Specific scene analysis
  - 80s audience can immerse themselves in the nostalgia, just like the nostalgia for the 80s

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