

*DTC 101 Introduction to Digital Technology & Culture*

*Final Project*

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***Black Mirror: Bandersnatch, A new way of film making.***

*In today's paper, we will be taking a look at the Netflix film "Bandersnatch," which was released on Netflix in December. 28, 2018. a branching film with multiple endings, which consists of hyperlinks that may change the way the story is told. This film describes the adventures of*

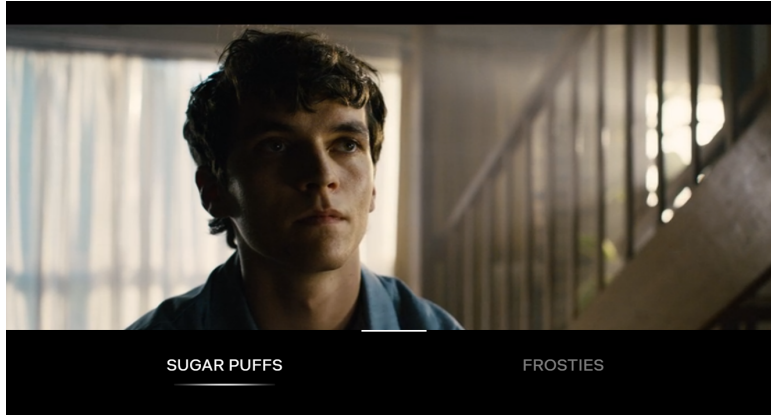


*Stephan Butler, a relatively unknown video game programmer in the mid-80s. He creates an interactive video game similar to a novel which allows the player to choose to take a different route as it moves forward. Stephan gradually becomes convinced that his decisions are being*

*controlled by an external force. This sends him down to a variety of dark paths of self-destruction. An introduction briefly explains how the show works, then it gets followed by viewers being presented with choices that will lead to the path the protagonist will take. In this paper, we'll discuss Hypermedia in the film, and how the creator used the film as a medium to convey a message about how we live our lives at home in these modern times, where the majority of our time is spent scrolling through our phones or watching TV.*

*"In a universe of words where the laws of hypertext are truly in effect, anything can link to anything else. Or, in other words, everything is everything—the ultimate abstraction." **Douglas Rushkoff.***

*As we use our machines to function faster and more efficiently. By doing so, information has become accessible to all. Finding the information we are looking for does not require as much effort or expertise as it did in the past. Hypertext is a product of this digital age and allows any*



*piece of writing to be detached from not just its author, but also from its original context. Whenever we encounter a link, we are given the option to leave a single event at any moment and access a wide range of possibilities within the reality of the actual story. Digital technologies have the tendency to create abstractions of real, tangible entities. With those variety of narrative choices*

*available, viewers interpret Bandersnatch in their way, depending on the form in which the remote viewer chooses. However, without a given form inside the film story, there can be no discussion about Bandersnatch, almost affecting the way we used to collectively reflect about the films when sharing them with our social circle. This is a consequence of each viewer seeing the movie differently. The narrative form is lost without a clearly defined beginning, middle, and end, and without form, it can no longer connect with its audience. Although this is not a bad consequence, as it will create a more personal and single-directed connection with each viewer.*

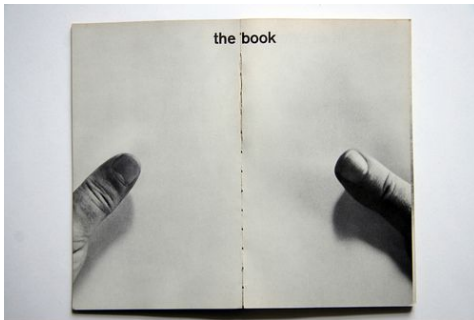
*Bandersnatch, intentions are not to just tell a story if not truly connect with our emotions on such a personal level, that as we take control of the story we can feel the consequences of our action through Stephan. Resulting in a revelation of how we interact with others inside our true reality. In the same way that McLuhan used his book as a medium to convey a message, so does the film.*

*The medium is the message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium - that is, of any extension of ourselves - result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology." **Marshall McLuhan***

*In Bandersnatch, the audience does not play the protagonist. The third-person viewpoint positions the viewer as the puppet master for Stephan, who is made to follow a tune of murder, suicide, drugs, and mental breakdowns, regardless of the fact that Stephan increasingly comes to the realization that he doesn't wish to do any more of those actions. Viewers and Stephan are able to engage in a potentially hurtful relationship by engaging throughout the film. While the*

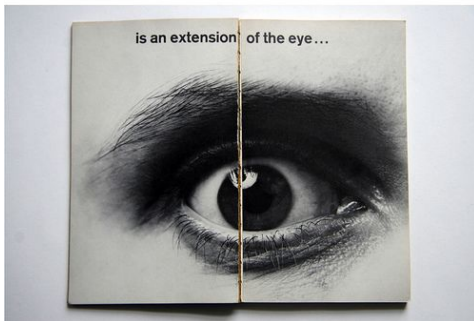
storyline evolves, the main experimental aspect of the film is its alteration. It is a story without structure. Though there are many possible storylines, Stephan's narrative form, boundaries, and ultimately, the path remains elusive to the viewer. As there are so many options available, it feels as if one doesn't get the movie without exploring them all. Both life and narrative have a beginning, middle, and end. Death gives a complete shape to life in the same way that a story's ending gives a complete shape to a narrative. As a work of fiction is completed, the contours of

the narrative emerge, and each moment's significance becomes clear in relation to the narrative whole. Our eyes see the world in this way, but this film changes that perception of life for us.



“The wheel... is an extension of the foot. The book... is an extension of the eye... Clothes, an extension of the skin... Electric circuitry, an extension of the central nervous system.”

**Marshall McLuhan**



Films like *Bandersnatch*, are an extension of our internal voices, a way to observe how the digital era has affected our culture and perception of life in all its spectrum. Nowadays, with so many streaming platforms offering so many worthwhile options to view, we choose what we watch more carefully. As we begin

to lose the collective nature of narrative consumption when we choose our viewing paths.

In the end, *Bandersnatch*'s interactive format reveals this. and we may think it is the powerlessness of Stephan as he slowly becomes part of the game he has created, that represents our dystopian future, but the third-person viewpoint of ourselves watching from our TV. In times where we hide behind screens and avatars to escape the cruel reality of our world, for example, *The Life 2.0* on Netflix. Focusing on four people whose lives have been transformed by their involvement in *Second Life*. A Canadian and an American couple meet in *Second Life*. Both are already married with families. Throughout the film, we observe their online relationship, which becomes more difficult to maintain when they meet in person, separate from their spouses, and try to make a fresh start in a new country.

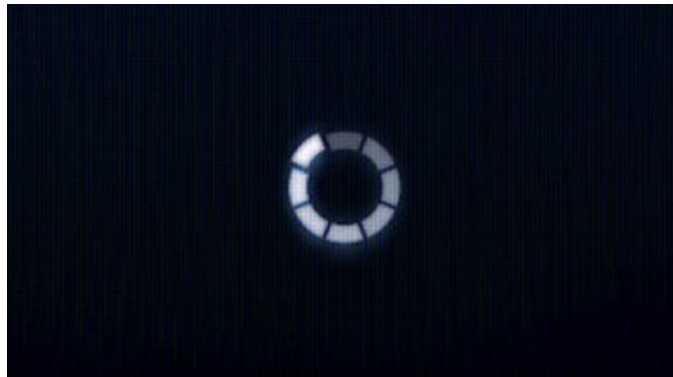
In today's world, everyone is connected. During the early stages of the 20th century, people would live and die without even seeing one foreigner. Today, we can interact with people halfway around the world on a daily basis. Conversations, jokes, political debates, and learning about one another occur here. Through digital and social media, people are able to learn about touching stories of people from different communities and faiths finding ways to help each other.

*As a result of the digital revolution, mankind has a unique opportunity to strive toward a truly tolerant society. However, the more we become part of this new digital life, the more we lose ourselves inside it. As we look for the acceptance and approval of millions. As digitized machines replace humans, society becomes increasingly impersonal. People shop online, do their banking online, pay their bills online, and increasingly work online. Additionally, transportation will increasingly become automated, which will eventually lead to a driverless world. People are becoming increasingly lonely and unable to make contact with real people. Like Stephan, we have also lost ourselves through our actions. Our humanity is slowly being lost behind a black screen.*

*“The Analytical Engine has no pretensions whatsoever to originate anything. It can do whatever we know how to order it to perform.... Its province is to assist us in making available what we are already acquainted with.” **Ada Lovelace***

*The unique features of a computer's operating system allow artists to directly work with their works. In the same way as they play with codes for their pieces, we do the same for Stephan's life. We create our own and unique pattern for the film as they will produce a unique set of numbers that will represent its piece of art. As a result, the film will end with unique endings created by our own actions, similar to how digital media artists create their unique works.*

*In conclusion, *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch* is in many ways a film that connects to the roots of Digital Art, as it is not interested in being a story with a beginning and an end, if not a group of*



*soties interconnected like our computers creating a vast network of possibilities. It goes beyond its purpose of being a piece of entertainment, it becomes art itself as it looks for more. It tries to present us with a message about our culture and society, as we live in a world where timeless computers take our time away from our reality. It makes us reflect about the way we see our life, like if it was a video game, where you can go back and reset, but in reality, we just keep moving forward. However, the most notorious way of seeing the true message of the film, is right at the end, when you think everything is over and you can go*

*watch another film or series, the screen goes black but the time keeps moving. And an image begins to reflect from our powered-down TV screen. It is not Stephan, but rather us, alone on the couch.*

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***Images:***

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