Black Mirror's "Be Right Back": How Does Human Emotion Impact our Relationship with Technology and AI?

Can technology and AI replicate human-related emotions like love, connection, and relationships (and further, is it meant to?)
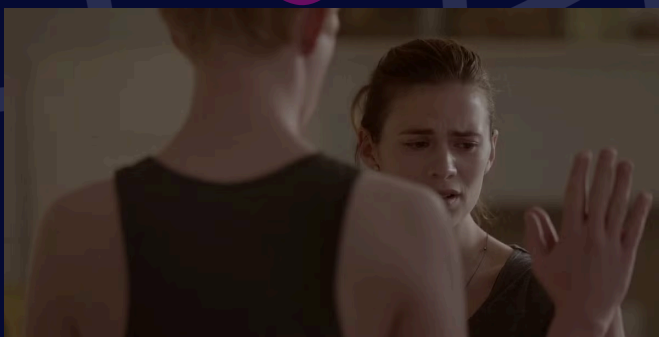
Brief Synopsis of Episode

After dealing with her husband Ash's accidental and abrupt death, Martha uses a technology that creates androids of loved ones, using AI to replicate common speech patterns, how one would send a text, and even the jokes they would make, mimicking behavior and learning as they interact with their human

BLACK MIRROR

What The Episode Says About Technology

The technology in the episode is meant to help people like Martha deal with grief and loss in a way that allows them to continue life with their loved one, by replicating them as closely as possible using AI

It is meant to aid humanity and bring comfort

What The Episode Says About Humanity

As we learn through Martha's reaction to Ash's android, even though the technology is extremely advanced and always working toward improvement, she cannot accept this replica of Ash; she feels more grief and upset about having this "fake" Ash as a presence in her life than she would have felt losing him entirely

How Do Humanity and Technology Interact?

The episode ultimately shines light on the fact that technology can do incredible things, but that there are limits to what it can do for humanity, and that it is important to know its limits so as not to make situations worse than they already are, or even create new problems
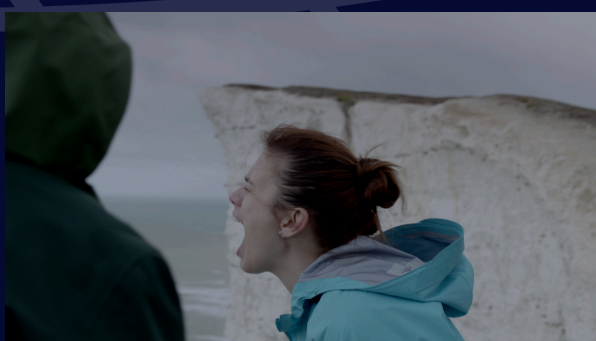
Technology is Always Changing, But Humans Never Do

Trying to use technology to aid in the processes of grief and comfort do not end up helping, according to the episode; technology cannot replace the human need for connection and forming loving relationships, no matter how much we might wish it to, or how advanced it becomes

It is better to recognize the limits between how much technology can aid humanity and human emotion, rather than trying to make use what the episode identifies as an inevitable failure leading to more heartache

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