**BLACK MIRROR’S *HANG THE DJ* EPISODE**

**The Datafication of Everything**

“Everything happens for a reason”, the digital love assistant, Coach, tells Frank. She says this to Frank in an attempt to comfort him after a series of tiring relationships **that amount to nothing** more than an opportunity for Coach to gather data that will, eventually, lead to Frank’s “ultimate” match. **It’s a means to an end.** All of Frank’s actions and reactions **are silently noted** by Coach, quantified, then used to further fine-tune the search for “the one.”

Everything **is given a** number so “the system” can be fully-automated. Your order at the restaurant **will be pre-determined,** the house you’ll spend the duration of your relationship in **is determined** for you, and last but certainly not least, the length of your relationship **is calculated** for you. Everything **is turned** into 1’s and 0’s for a computer somewhere to make sense of in the name of better “serving” you.

**Digital Assistants**

Much of that datafication already exists today, and it’s almost identical to what we see in “Hang The DJ.” There is very little difference between the digital assistant “Coach” and digital assistants we have today. Similar to Coach, the Google Assistant, for example, is always listening to you, waiting for a voice command to **trigger** an action, which gives it an opportunity to **gather** data on your habits and preferences, so it can recalibrate the data it has on you to better react the next time you need it. Coach is essentially a digital assistant programmed with one specific task: to find your soulmate.

The entire digital ecosystem Coach belongs to is also analogous to what we have today. All the Coaches answer to a single large entity (“the system”; Google), they’re all compatible with (pun intended) other related services (the AirBnB-type service; Spotify), and there is a largely-invisible set of rules you must follow to retain the services (i.e., terms of service agreements).

**The Algorithms of Modern Life**

Frank’s frustration with Coach and “the system” after losing Amy is palpable. At the end of the day, he’s **at the mercy of** an algorithm. He can never really tell whether or not the algorithm is doing its job or if it’s just **messing with** him. Neither can we, with the algorithms that quietly shape our lives: the Facebook algorithms that determine what news makes it onto our feed, the Google search algorithms that answer millions and millions of inquiries a day, **subtly** shaping our thinking.

So like Frank, and all the others who gave themself to the system, the only thing we can do is place our faith in those algorithms and hope for the best. It may not be a huge leap of faith for your search results, but a lot more so in regards to something as delicate as finding “the one.” That’s the horror of “Hang The DJ”: **whether or not** we find true love, like more and more things nowadays, may very well depend on an algorithm.

**THEMES**

* **Submission to technology**
* **Loss of free will**
* **Algorithms for everything**
* **Acceptance of failure**
* **Instant possession**
* **Absolute certainty**
* **Love expectations**

**ANSWER THE FOLLOWING SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS:**

1) What was your overall reaction to the episode?

2) What did you think about the main character and their world?

3) What stood out to you about the episode?

4) Did you find it relatable in any way to society today? How?

5) What did you find disturbing about the episode?

6) Does this vision of the near future frighten you? Why or why not?

**THE BEST DATING APPS FOR 2022**

<https://www.mindbodygreen.com/articles/best-dating-apps>

**OPINION ESSAY**

**Are algorithms our friends? ( 150 WORDS)**