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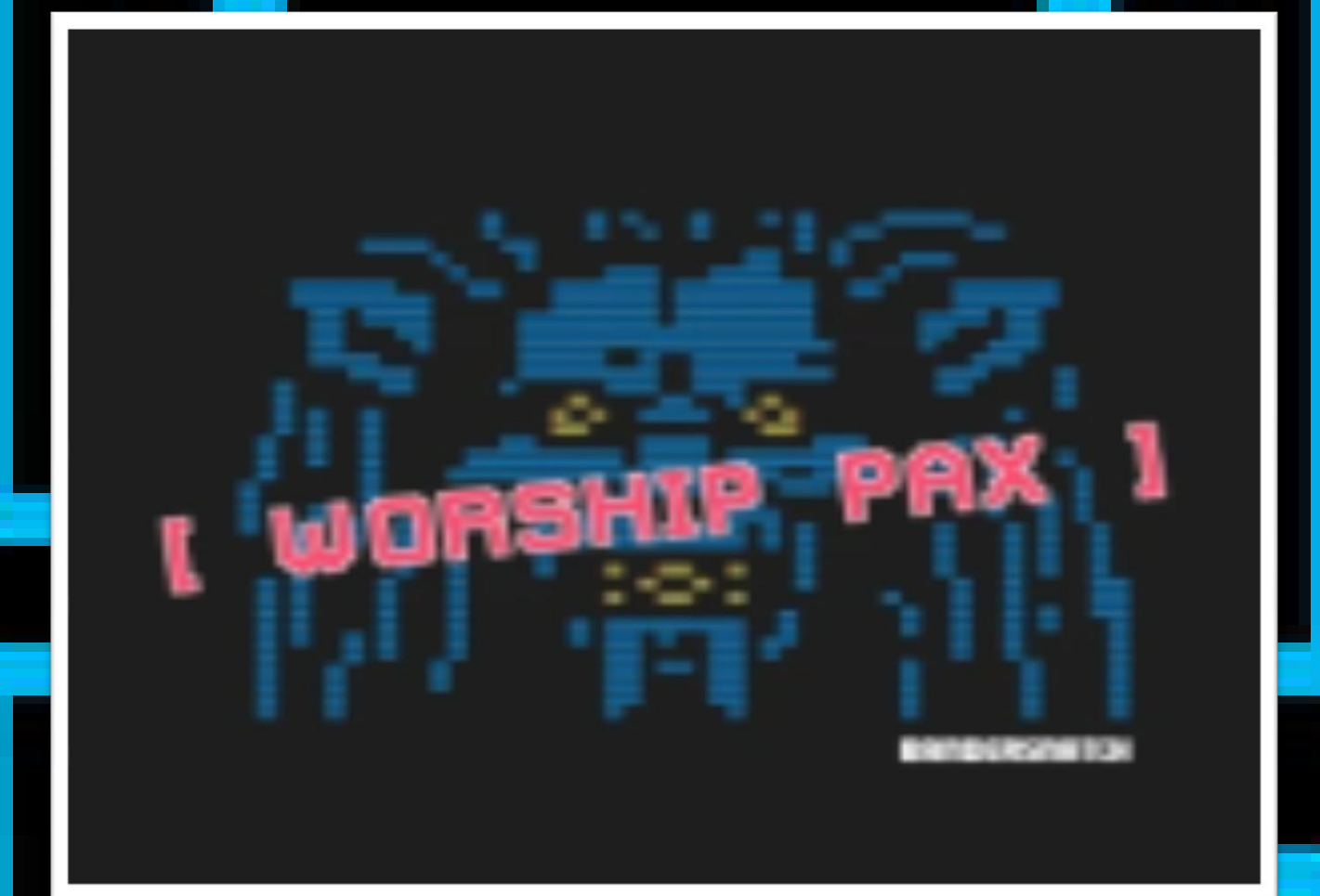
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Borges & Netflix

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Introduction

Rapidly growing influence of technology and science has altered the way in which we live and think, giving way to divergent conceptions of time, history and space. These new forms of media to which we are exposed to possess new rules, and present a new paradigm in the way information flows. Fictional words reflect these changes in the way we construct meaning, and thus, the way we read a story. In this sense, Borges may have envisioned the possibility of multiple temporalities in a completely novel conception of writing space, a seemingly digital environment where literature, science and technology interact, providing new ways of representation and interpretation. The irrevocability of the actions is a recurrent theme within the story, and which emphasizes the deterministic nature of the future states. The aim of this poster is to analyze alternative and multiple realities in film and literature through the use of the analogy of the “maze”, standing for the infinite diverging narratives which can open in all directions. The aforesaid study will be grounded on the comparative analysis of the interactive film “Black Mirror: Bandersnatch” (2018), and “The Garden of Forking Paths” (1941) by Jorge Luis Borges, supported by the latest Postmodernist theories.



Borges' *The Garden of the Forking Paths*

In “The Garden of the Forking Paths” (1941), Borges describes a novel by the fictional character Ts'ui Pên whose plot bifurcates at every point in time, with all the possible worlds coexisting in a ‘super-space’ and ‘super-time’ coalescing in a moment. Borges’ labyrinth is not physical, but temporal. In this short story that combines elements of spy literature and science fiction, the Argentinean writer envisioned different possible worlds or possible variations of the world even with incompatibilities. In other terms, he openly explored the many-worlds interpretations of quantum mechanics in the field of literature. In order to do so, he appealed to different levels of narration -standing for a Chinese world-box structure- and used analogies as well as converging and diverging timelines to convey the idea that time is an infinite labyrinth. As a result, the story is presented as a determinism system since it openly acknowledges how time changes everything and how restoration is impossible.



“A future as irrevocable as the past” (Borges 1944:84)

Hypothesis and objective

The aim of this poster is to compare and contrast “Black Mirror: Bandersnatch” (2018), and “The Garden of Forking Paths” (1941) by Jorge Luis Borges through the use of the analogy of the “maze”, standing for the infinite diverging narratives which can open in all directions. In the aforementioned analysis, the concepts of free will, power and parallel/ alternative realities will be broadly discussed in order to prove how both cultural artifacts convey the illusion of free- will in a paradoxically deterministic system.

Netflix's *Bandersnatch* and the “illusion” of free will

How many times have we wished that we could go back and choose a different path? Are we characters in a story which has many branching paths, or is the tale written to the end, with each of us destined to play it out? In the recent “Black Mirror: Bandersnatch” (2018), the storytelling breaks with the linearity of the plot, involving the viewers and immersing them in the universe of fiction that it is shown to them. Thus, the audience is positioned where the protagonist is standing, giving the user the power to decide between different options in the development of the plot. The course of the story, divided into fragments, stops at different times, just before actions that can be key-moments in the plot, offering the user the possibility to choose what he wants to happen. Yet, it is important to note that the power to choose which option to follow is controlled by the author of the piece, who has previously designed the possible itineraries.

Different styles, similar bifurcations

In conclusion, we could affirm that either in the story or in the film, the readers/viewers know it is a fictional creation and that it has many dead ends, but still feel hooked by the creation of such intricate form and are intrigued about how the puzzle will unfold. Borges is intentionally ambiguous on the matter of destiny. In telling the story through the perspective of a narrator who believes in fate, he is able to simultaneously create an ominous mood in which coincidence seems preordained and also allows his reader to doubt the narrator's perspective and its mystical implications. As regards Netflix's film, Bandersnatch retakes Borges's idea of free will and destiny, but the several bifurcations that the film allows to its characters -which involves the audience- respond to both entertainment and marketing necessities.

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