Nosedive: The Illusion of Acceptance

In the **Black Mirror** episode “Nosedive”*,* we see a world where people’s everyday behavior is rated through a scoring system. The higher people score, the more respect and love they receive in society. At the same time, this point system provides financial and social privileges to people. Rules such as applying discounts to people above a specific score force individuals to be a good person all the time. In this system, it becomes mandatory to be an active participant in social media. People have to earn the liking of others by constantly producing content. Each individual also becomes a ”prosumer" because he is both watching the lives of others and constantly sharing about his own life. However, this situation forces people to constantly show themselves positively, and individuals move away from their own selves. Lacie's story is one of the clearest examples of this.

In ”Nosedive," the reward for the work given by individuals is to be accepted only by society. However, this love and respect is not eternal; it is possible to experience a fall suddenly. Lacie's trip to go to Naomi's wedding shows how fragile the scoring system is. The concept of “digital labor” is handled very clearly in the series. Lacie is making a great effort to increase her score, but she can't get the full reward for her labor. For example, although Lacie tries to be polite despite everything, the man at the car charging place gives Lacie a low score without caring; Naomi invites her to her wedding but then excludes her because her score drops. This situation reminds us of the fact that people who produce content on social media platforms can be excluded by algorithms and society. On the other hand, the woman truck driver is one of the rare people who managed to get rid of the pressures of the system. After her husband's death, she realized how cruel this system was and stopped adapting to the system. She tries to show Lacie that there is another way, but Lacie continues to persistently defend the dream of success that the system offers.

One of the most important points of the series that can be reconciled with today's world is that social media condemns people, especially women, to certain beauty standards. Even today, people constantly feel obliged to organize themselves for social media for fear of losing followers, likes, and interaction. Beauty standards for women are at the center of this concern. In ”Nosedive“, women wear pastel shades, displaying a cute and socially acceptable image. For men, success and independence are at the forefront. This distinction shows how the series processes the concept of “digital self and gender”. For example, Lacie's brother told her, “You have to be real, not pretend,”. However, Lacie is unable to accept this fact due to societal expectations and continues to turn herself into someone who is liked. In the simplest term, Lacie is trying to find the “right” smile in the mirror. Nowadays, people hide their real identities and create a persona that society will approve of in order to gain acceptance on social media.

"Nosedive" is not just a science fiction episode but a reflection of today's society. People live to show everything in their lives to others, to prove it, and to be appreciated. Social media causes people to disconnect from themselves. Just like people who buy coffee and share it just to take photos, even though they don't like it like Lacie, individuals act not because they really enjoy it, but to gain the liking of others. As a result, ”Nosedive" is a realistic dystopia that tells how this psychological pressure created by social media consumes people.