
Reflections on Reality: A Representation Analysis of Ethical Dilemmas in *Black Mirror's* "Crocodile"

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the ethical complexities surrounding memory-extracting technologies by analyzing the speculative narrative of *Black Mirror's* episode "Crocodile". Employing Stuart Hall's representation theory as the main analytical framework and guided by Jawad's research on brain-computer interface (BCI) ethics focusing on the ethical lenses of autonomy, privacy, and security, as well as responsibility and regulation, the study investigates how the Recaller device represents broader societal anxieties about surveillance, control, and the erosion of personal boundaries. Through content and discourse analysis, the research unpacks how "Crocodile" constructs meaning around the loss of individual agency and the moral consequences of technological overreach. The episode presents a dystopian world where memories are no longer private, forcing characters into ethically fraught situations. This study argues that the episode not only dramatizes the potential dangers of intrusive technologies but also reflects cultural fears about the future of privacy, autonomy, and moral responsibility. In doing so, it emphasizes the importance of critically assessing how emerging technologies might reshape societal values, ethics, and communication practices.

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INTRODUCTION

Dystopian fiction often serves as a potent lens through which to examine the concerns and possibilities of our technological present. With its chilling depictions of a dystopian world driven by futuristic and unsettling technological advancements, the Netflix series *Black Mirror* is an excellent example of this. The series premiered in 2011 as an anthology, with 27 episodes released up until 2024. *Black Mirror* episodes mostly explore the extremes of how technology and media could affect human lives in the near future. *Black Mirror* episodes bring dystopia as their main theme. Schulzke (2014) defined the dystopia narrative as the consequence of bad policies, an unsustainable way of life, and human degradation. Most *Black Mirror* episodes, including "Crocodile," have rather recent settings compared to other dystopian movies or shows, considering how advanced the technologies introduced in the series are. By putting on a timeline based on the technology, media, and other clues presented in each of the *Black Mirror* episodes, some fans on the internet predicted the Recaller era depicted in "Crocodile" in the decade of the 2030s. It is also supported

by the sets and background in the episode where the technology portrayed is similar to what exists in the 2020s.

In its episode "Crocodile", the series dives into the eerie implications of a device known as the Recaller, a neurotechnology device capable of extracting and displaying a person's memories. This concept warns about the potential for unchecked technological control over the most private and vulnerable experiences, representing concerns that are being faced in our increasingly technologically saturated world.

The episode follows Mia Nolan, a renowned architect who is the episode's villain protagonist. Mia is introduced as a witness in an involuntary manslaughter incident and later as a witness in an accident involving a self-driving pizza van that hits a cyclist. The pizza van incident leads Mia to use Recaller technology on her.

The government is mandating the use of Recaller for witnesses of incidents, including accidents or crimes, to obtain testimony and corroboration. Law enforcement agencies and insurance companies are leveraging this mandate, reflecting concerns about the intrusive role of

technology in controlling human behavior and reshaping societal norms. In the episode, an insurance company investigator, Shazia, uses the Recaller to get witness statements and corroborations in the pizza van incident.

The device uses a small, needled chip on the witness' temple to access and interpret memories and then display them in audio and visual form. The device's output is accessed via a pair of earphones and what seems to be an old-school cathode-ray tube monitor. Although described as a device that reads only subjective memory related to the incident, Mia's attempts to hide her memory of her past incidents eventually fail.



Figure 1. Depiction of The Recaller device
Source: memoiretotale.org

To critically analyze this portrayal, the study applies Stuart Hall's representation

theory, particularly the constructionist approach, which views meaning as created through language, symbols, and cultural context rather than existing inherently in objects. Media, especially speculative fiction like *Black Mirror*, does not only reflect reality but also actively constructs it, shaping how society understands emerging technologies and their ethical consequences. By using this framework, the research positions "Crocodile" as a cultural text that constructs meaning around memory, control, and surveillance.

While fictional, the Recaller resonates with real-world anxieties about how rapidly evolving technologies could undermine human autonomy and redefine consent. In a time where personal data is increasingly commodified, "Crocodile" offers a critical reflection on what it means to have control over one's own memories and the ethical costs when that control is lost.

In recent years, the rapid development of brain-computer interface (BCI) technologies has further intensified these concerns. Emerging BCI technologies that are designed to create direct communication pathways between the brain and machines, could advance the idea of accessing and manipulating human thoughts and

memories. Although still in development, BCI development introduces complex ethical challenges about cognitive privacy, mental autonomy, and consent. The possibilities of technology blur the boundary between what is imagined in fiction and what is becoming scientifically possible. This growing technological landscape analyzes "Crocodile" even more relevant, as the episode offers a critical reflection on the potential risks of mind-reading and surveillance technologies that are no longer entirely speculative. Therefore, this paper seeks to answer the following question: How does *Black Mirror's* "Crocodile" represent the ethical concerns of memory extraction technology through Stuart Hall's representation theory?

METHODOLOGY

This research focuses on analyzing *Black Mirror's* "Crocodile" using a qualitative approach, specifically within the framework of Stuart Hall's representation theory. The study aims to explore how the episode constructs meaning around mind-reading technology, memory manipulation, and the resulting ethical dilemmas. Hall's representation theory, particularly the constructionist approach, provides the foundation for

understanding how "Crocodile" produces and communicates meaning about technological power, surveillance, and human agency.

Hall's constructionist approach views meaning as not inherent in objects or symbols but as created and negotiated through language, cultural practices, and power relations. In the context of "Crocodile", this perspective is essential for understanding how the episode represents the Recaller device not just as a piece of speculative technology, but as a symbol of larger societal fears surrounding privacy, consent, and institutional control. The Recaller becomes a metaphor for real-world concerns about technological overreach, the erosion of personal autonomy, and the commodification of human memory.

The study applies a combination of content analysis and discourse analysis to the episode. Content analysis is used to examine the narrative elements, including the storyline, character actions, dialogue, and visual depictions of the Recaller device. It allows for a systematic understanding of how memory extraction technology is represented in the episode and how it drives the plot forward. The analysis pays particular

attention to scenes where the Recaller is used, exploring how the device functions within the story and the ways it alters character behavior and decision-making process.

Discourse analysis complements the content analysis by unpacking the ideological and cultural meanings embedded in the episode's dialogue and narrative choices. It examines how the language used by characters, especially during moments of moral conflict or technological use, reflects broader societal discourses on surveillance, privacy, and ethical responsibility. For instance, the moments when characters justify the use of the Recaller or express fear and resistance towards it are critically analyzed to understand how consent is constructed or undermined in the story.

The analysis also considers the visual representation of the Recaller device itself, including its physical design, the invasive method of memory extraction, and the way the device is embedded into social and legal systems within the story. The visual elements are key to understanding how the technology is portrayed as both mundane and terrifying, reflecting the potential

normalization of invasive surveillance in society.

Secondary literature on memory theory, neuroethics, surveillance studies, and speculative fiction is incorporated to provide theoretical support and deepen the analysis. This includes scientific perspectives on how memory works biologically and psychologically, as well as philosophical discussions about the ethics of memory manipulation and technological control. The study also engages with research on dystopian fiction, which often serves as a reflection of cultural concerns about the future.

This research uses Jawad's 2021 research regarding the ethical issues pertaining to Brain-Computer Interface (BCI) as a guideline. Jawad's research shows how BCI interacts with user safety, humanity and personhood, autonomy, stigma and normality, privacy and security, responsibility and regulation, and justice of human beings. This research will specifically discuss the ethical issues portrayed in the episode through the lenses of autonomy; privacy and security; and also responsibility and regulation aspects.

Through this methodological approach, the research seeks to

answer the central question: How does *Black Mirror's* "Crocodile" represent the ethical concerns of memory extraction technology through the lens of Stuart Hall's representation theory? By grounding the analysis in representation theory and contextualizing it with relevant secondary literature, the study aims to reveal how "Crocodile" functions as a cultural text that critiques the potential dangers of unchecked technological advancements in surveillance and memory manipulation.

Ultimately, this methodology enables a comprehensive exploration of the episode as a medium where fictional technology intersects with real-world ethical concerns, offering insights into how media representations shape and reflect societal fears about the future of human agency, privacy, and the power of technological systems.

DISCUSSION

The episode "Crocodile" places the Recaller technology within mundane contexts like insurance investigations, illustrating how invasive tools can become normalized under bureaucratic justifications. By embedding the Recaller into routine activities, the narrative shows how advanced

technologies, initially designed for societal benefit, can be co-opted to serve private interests. This normalization blurs the ethical boundaries of consent and privacy and pushes the audience to question how easily technological intrusions could be accepted in real-world scenarios when framed as necessary for efficiency or justice.

Furthermore, "Crocodile" amplifies these concerns by showing how the Recaller facilitates a chain of violence that escalates beyond the control of its users. The technology's ability to extract memories with clarity becomes both its strength and its ethical flaw, as it disregards context and the emotional, psychological, and moral complexities of human memory. Through Mia's fall into moral collapse, the narrative reveals that while the Recaller seeks objective truth, it simultaneously erodes human empathy and accountability. This duality reinforces the need to critically examine the ethical implications of similar technologies as they move forward closer to reality.

These narrative choices in *Crocodile* set the stage for deeper ethical questions about how such technology reshapes fundamental human values. By

portraying the Recaller's impact on individual choices, personal privacy, and institutional accountability, the episode invites viewers to reflect on the moral dilemmas embedded in technological progress. This discussion will first discuss the general representation of the episode through the sub-section "Crocodile", then further analyze the episode through three interrelated ethical lenses: autonomy, privacy and security, and responsibility and regulation. The ethical lenses used in this section will unpack how Crocodile critiques the potential consequences of mind-reading technologies on society and the human condition.

Crocodile

"Crocodile" opens with a scene of a couple riding in a car, intoxicated, eventually crashing into a cyclist. Mia, the episode's main character, sits on the passenger's side. The driver of the car is her then-boyfriend, Rob. Mia's lines express that she was guilty, disturbed, and moved to do something responsible, such as calling someone about it. Meanwhile, Rob seems to think ahead and wants to remove the evidence to avoid the consequences:

... Fucking hell, Mia. Think, OK, hey? You need to think, baby. We've been fucking caning it, yeah? And I-- This is prison, yeah? A fucking instant prison. I've got fuck knows how much drink in me, I fucking hit a guy. Now, they will put me in the cell. I'm the driver, they'll fu--They'll put me in a cell and fucking keep me there. (Hillcoat, 2017, 0:02:17)

The couple finally decides to throw the dead cyclist into the river in a sleeping bag they found in their car, removing the evidence as Rob wishes. Mia shows her guilt and nerve in the scene as she throws up after discarding the body.

The scene, in the beginning, represents the present era, or in the show, considered the pre-Recaller era, where concealing a murder or manslaughter is a matter of hiding or discarding the body and evidence.

The scene then jumps to fifteen years after the incident. Mia speaks in front of an audience about her company at a forum. She then went back to her hotel after the event, where newly sober Rob came to meet her. Rob reveals that a news article came up this morning with a woman who turns out to be the widow of the cyclist that they

ran over fifteen years ago. The recently sober Rob wants to write the widow an anonymous letter showing her that he is deeply remorseful about the accident. Rob seems to be guilty as he says he cannot live with it.

On the other hand, Mia thinks it is a bad idea; she wants to leave the incident behind as she has gained acknowledgment and a public view of her work. The conversation turns into a debate and, eventually, an altercation. Mia accidentally breaks Rob's neck, killing him.

Shaken by what she has done, Mia gazes out the window, where she coincidentally witnesses an accident where a self-driving pizza van hits a pedestrian. She shrugs it off and continues to dispose of Rob's body while turning a pornography movie on the hotel's television to set an alibi.

An insurance company, Realm Insurance, investigated the self-driving pizza van incident. The episode introduces Shazia, Realm Insurance's investigator. Shazia visited the pedestrian and used the Recaller technology to recall his memory of the accident. The Recaller consists of a pair of electrodes to be pinned into the witness' temple, a pair of

earbuds, and what seems to be an old-school tube monitor.

Shazia brings a bottle of beer for the witness to smell, believing that the sensory trigger would help to jog the memory since the location of the incident is near a brewery.

The Recaller works by reading the mind's signal and translating it into an audio-visual output:

... So, this accesses engrams, your memories of what happened. Now, they're subjective. They may not be totally accurate, and they're often emotional, but by collecting a range of recollections from yourself and any witnesses, we can help build a corroborative picture of the whole. (Hillcoat, 2017, 0:24:21)

Based on the dialogue, it is revealed that the Recaller works subjectively. The device pulls recollection from the witness based on how the witness remembers, not how the events were received by the eyes of the witness. According to neurobiology, memory is the process of retaining knowledge over a period of time to affect future actions (Sherwood, 2015, 157-162). How the recaller works aligns with Anderson's classification of memory, which are declarative (explicit) and procedural (implicit) memories (2013). The subjective

thoughts in the dialogue are classified as explicit memories that can be recalled consciously. The explicit memory is stored in the medial part of the temporal lobe of the cerebrum and hippocampus (Mujawar et al., 2021). With this fact, the electrode placement depicted in the show represents how the device taps into the memory of the subject and physically to the temporal lobe.

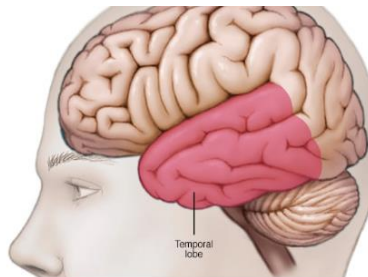


Figure 2. Position of the temporal lobe
Source: mayoclinic.org



Figure 3. The placement of Recaller device
Source: screenspy.com

The Recaller: Public Perception and Reality

The placement of the electrodes also represents how the public would perceive a mind-reading device. As early as 1964, the device was depicted as a wearable

headpiece, as seen in the 1964 movie *The Misadventure of Merlin Jones*.

It also represents real "mind-reading" devices, such as EEG machines, which use electrodes placed in the brain area being scanned.



Figure 4. Depiction of mind reading device in *The Misadventure of Merlin Jones*
Source: movies.disney.com

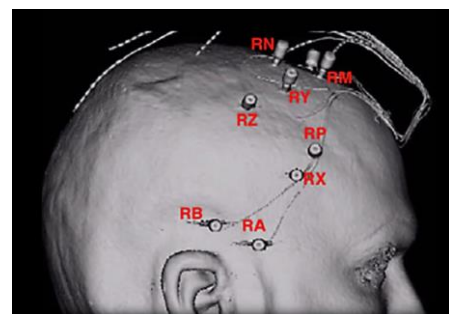


Figure 5. Position of the EEG electrodes for temporal lobe scan
Source: mayoclinic.com

The Recaller: Ethics and Challenges

From the pedestrian's memory, Shazia is led to a

female passerby, who leads her to Mia as a witness because she was looking at the accident from her hotel window. Because Shazia needs to interview Mia as a witness, she takes a lengthy drive to Mia's house to collect her testimony in a memory form to corroborate the other witnesses' testimony.

When Shazia arrived, Mia was shown The Recaller. Knowing that she has two manslaughter incidents she was a part of, she refuses to use the device on her. However, Shazia explains that the use of the device has been mandatory since the previous year.

... it's a legal requirement since last year. Well, if you've witnessed an incident, yes. I have to notify the police when people refuse, and when they get involved, it just drags everything out, so... (Hillcoat, 2017, 0:38:17)

Hesitantly, Mia invites Shazia inside. Mia attempts to reject the use of The Recaller on her. However, her verbal explanation of her recollection of the accident does not satisfy Shazia.

... It's sometimes hard to articulate what your mind's eye's seen, but capturing your impression of what you saw is really useful.... (Hillcoat, 2017, 0:39:21)

Given the possibility of seeing testimony in an audio and visual form, it is understandable that a verbal testimony will not satisfy the investigator. The dissatisfaction of verbal testimony represents how human beings are dissatisfied with a certain technology if the recent technology gives better results than the former. There are many parallels of the interplay between how the current technology works and how humans react to it, namely how TikTok is more addicting to former social media platforms as it employs reward-based learning more aggressively than its predecessors (Petrillo, 2021), resulting in more satisfaction for its users.

Shazia finally performs the same thing to Mia as she did with the pedestrian: she pins the electrodes to Mia's temple, puts on the earbuds, and gives Mia a sniff of the beer.

Knowing that The Recaller works subjectively, Mia tries to modify her recollection. She convinces herself that she was alone in the hotel room, ordered room service, and watched pornography. She repeatedly says it to herself, hoping it will show up when the device probes into her brain.

Despite her effort to shield and alter her real recollection

of the event, Mia's real memory of murdering Rob is still revealed by The Recaller. The method of repeating a "mantra" used by Mia to attempt to modify her memory is similar to concentrative meditation, which is commonly used as a psychological therapy for anxiety and trauma (Krishnakumar et al., 2015). Scientifically, memory modification can happen as memory is consolidated and reconsolidated over time (Stickgold & Walker, 2005). However, based on the research carried out by Wheeler et al. (2000), the process does not happen in a few minutes but rather over an inconsistent period.

The relatively non-consensual recollection pulled by the device can be seen as the double-edged sword of free will, as it suggests possible ethical violations that are a function of the lack of true awareness and consent on the part of subjects (Wilson et al., 2008). Even though the subject consents to putting the device on, they are unable to choose which memory is being recalled by the device. It is similar to what humankind experienced in this era, where advertisement bombardment was designed based on our preferences on the internet. It can also represent today's

experience where only one in five mobile application users or website visitors read the privacy policy fully yet accept it (Atske & Atske, 2024).

The Recaller: Consequences and Future Implications

Panic engulfs Shazia as the realization van that a murder had been witnessed without her involvement in any investigation. In a state of distress, Shazia is compelled to run to her van, asserting that Mia's testimony captured through The Recaller will be sufficient for her purposes. Meanwhile, Mia experiences her own turmoil, fearing potential trouble stemming from the reflections of her memory. In a moment of desperation, she decides to grab Shazia, effectively kidnapping her.

Once Shazia is restrained, Mia proceeds to interrogate her using The Recaller, motivated by a desire to ascertain whether Shazia had disclosed her visit to anyone. The Recaller reveals that Shazia has previously informed her husband about her intention to visit Mia's house to obtain testimony regarding the pizza van accident. This revelation leaves Mia agitated and anxious, she feels that she needs to remove the evidence by eliminating Shazia's husband.

Consequently, she drives to Shazia's house.

In an act of desperation, Mia murders Shazia's husband and baby, aiming to erase any memories that could potentially link back to her. The need for this drastic measure stems from the fear of being implicated in the events surrounding the murders Mia had witnessed and implicated. Mia then flees the scene.

When police arrive at Shazia's house to conduct their investigation into the murders, it is shown that a guinea pig present in the baby's room remains unharmed. This detail raised questions about the nature of the events that had unfolded.

The investigation then took an unusual turn as the authorities proceeded to use The Recaller on the unharmed guinea pig. The episode concluded on a cliffhanger, leaving it ambiguous whether the technology could be employed effectively against all animals, or if its capabilities were limited exclusively to humans. This unresolved tension highlighted the evolving nature of evidence collection and witness interrogation in a world where technology had transformed traditional methods.

The concealment of murder or manslaughter had indeed become increasingly complicated in the era of The Recaller, especially compared to the pre-Recaller era. The dynamics of removing witnesses and evidence were now rendered more intricate due to a fundamental shift in the definition of a witness. No longer were witnesses confined solely to human beings capable of relaying testimony; the scope had expanded to include any sentient beings possessing brains that could register sensory signals.

This shift in definition raised significant implications for legal and ethical considerations in criminal investigations. The potential for non-human witnesses to possess information that could lead to breakthroughs in cases altered the landscape of forensic methodologies. As the boundaries of witness credibility were redefined, the implications of interrogating not only humans but also animals prompted broader discussions about the ethical treatment of these sentient beings within legal frameworks.

Moreover, the reliance on technology such as The Recaller highlighted inherent issues of privacy and consent. The act of extracting information from both human and non-human

witnesses begged the question of whether consent would be necessary and how it could be ethically obtained from sentient creatures. The moral complexities of using such technology raised concerns about exploitation and the potential misuse of power.

The narrative posed a chilling reflection on the nature of crime in an age dominated by surveillance and technological intrusion. The advancements represented by The Recaller served as both a tool for justice and a means for individuals to manipulate truth for their own ends. With the ability to access memories and information from any being, the distinction between knowledge and ignorance became increasingly blurred.

As the implications of these technological advancements continued to unfold, a pressing need for ethical guidelines and a re-evaluation of legal standards became apparent. The tension set forth by the events surrounding Mia and Shazia showcased a world grappling with the consequences of its own inventions, where the past could be revisited, and truths could be obscured through manipulation.

The possibility of the use of similar technologies with The Recaller not only

transformed the landscape of criminal investigations but also prompted profound ethical and philosophical questions about the nature of testimony, witness credibility, and the boundaries of privacy. The complexities introduced by technology in criminal acts underscored the ongoing struggle between innovation and morality, echoing a cautionary tale for society moving forward.

Crocodile Through Ethical Lenses

Autonomy

The use of the Recaller device can take away the autonomy of individuals by making the memory retrieval process seem procedural and harmless, yet deeply coercive. The victim of the pizza van accident expresses this concern by saying that he feels like a specimen when Shazia first put the Recaller on him (Hillcoat, 2017, 00:24:15). The victim hesitates but complies, reflecting how the perceived 'routine' nature masks the ethical breach. Although verbal consent is requested, refusal seems to be socially difficult, reducing the free will to mere formality.

In another scene, Mia tried to refuse the use of Recaller on her. Her desperation

escalates as she realizes Shazia might uncover the murder.

... it's a legal requirement since last year. Well, if you've witnessed an incident, yes. I have to notify the police when people refuse, and when they get involved, it just drags everything out, so... (Hillcoat, 2017, 0:38:17)

The scene shows that Mia's sense of autonomy collapses. She is forced into a binary, either submit her memories or face greater consequences. This scene shows that when someone tries to refuse the Recaller, the insurance company has a procedure in place to involve the law enforcement agency, making it practically impossible to refuse.

Mia attempts to refuse the use of the Recaller once again after they sit down, saying that she will be able to make a statement orally based on her memory. Shazia lets her and asks her the speed the van is going and Mia stutters. Shazia uses that opportunity to ensure Mia that the use of the Recaller is necessary to get the full picture.

Based on Hall's encoding/decoding concept, The state or corporations encode the Recaller as a neutral, procedural tool, while individuals decode it based on

their lived experiences. However, the power to define the situation remains with the institution, limiting individual autonomy.

In addition, the Recaller is introduced and popularized to be an aid, a tool that reveals the truth. Instead, it transforms into a weapon that corners individuals, proving that in a highly technological society, autonomy is not taken by force, but it is surrendered piece by piece through systems that appear harmless.

Privacy and Security

The Recaller's invasive power disrupts the notion of private memories, transforming internal thoughts into external, sharable content. Throughout Crocodile, this theme is repeatedly illustrated through scenes where interviews using Recaller extract far more than intended.

One of the examples of this instance is when a random witness, simply recalling the pizza van accident, accidentally reveals an image of Mia, near the window of her hotel room.

... I saw some woman staring at something. So I looked down, it was just a load of commotion. There was a woman in a sort of lime coat... (Hillcoat, 2017, 0:33:16)



Figure 6. Mia's image through the Recaller

Source: Netflix.com

This leads Shazia to realize the importance of this unintended data, another witness with a different point of view. This moment exemplifies memory collateral damage, a concept where unrelated private information becomes exposed because memory is interconnected.

Shazia's reassurances to the bystander are equally telling, "What we do is build up an overall average, a crowd-sourced picture of reality". This highlights that people do not even realize the scope of what they involuntarily record. As a result, they have no control over what private moments might surface during the scan. This raises profound ethical concerns because the technology does not respect contextual boundaries.

The power dynamics represented in these scenes are crucial. The Recaller does not function as a neutral tool as it is always wielded by someone with institutional authority, such as the insurance company.

Hall's theory highlights how meaning is constructed not only through the object but also through its usage and context. In *Crocodile*, the Recaller is framed as an instrument of control, granting the user disproportionate access to another's inner world. This dynamic strips individual of their ability and right to secure their private memories.

The Recaller's design also lacks safeguards. Once memories are externalized, their security becomes the company's responsibility and property, yet the system has no visible checks. There is no encryption, no consent form for accidental data, and no clear protocol if a witness sees something traumatic or incriminating. It is shown in the episode that even though there is a verbal statement extracted before the legal use of the Recaller, the device can be used without consent, as shown by how Mia forcibly uses the Recaller on Shazia.

After knowing that Shazia also has a family, Mia visits Shazia's home with a hammer. Mia proceeds with murdering Shazia's husband in the bathtub. Mia shows guilt and frustration as she cries after the murder. When she gets out of the bathroom, she hears a baby and gets closer to the sound. The scene cuts to

Shazia's baby, cooing and babbling. Mia is shown to be conflicted and scared of either being caught or having to murder a baby. By this point, she is only thinking about removing evidence and eventually kills the baby. The episode ends with Mia attending her son's school play, juxtaposed against the knowledge that she has killed a family just to save herself.

This illustrates how the Recaller creates a world where no one, not even a small child who has no ability to make a statement, is free from the risk of surveillance. Privacy is no longer about secrecy, but it is also about survival. In addition, this scene also vividly represents the loss of privacy as an inevitable consequence of blurring the line between privacy and evidence, leaving individuals exposed in the most intimate and irreparable ways.

Responsibility and Regulation

Perhaps the most dystopian aspect of Crocodile is that the Recaller is not only owned or operated by law enforcement but by a private insurance company. Shazia is not a police officer or a lawyer, but a mere claims adjuster. This use of intrusive technology exposes a world where ethical oversight is entirely absent.

Shazia's casual tone when she talks about the Recaller throughout the episode reflects how normalized this power imbalance has become. At one point, she reassures a witness that she will not add his embarrassing memory to the accident report. She simply says that the secret is safe with her. The promise sounds reassuring but is legally empty. There is no mention of ensuring deletion or making sure that only relevant recordings are kept. It looks like there are no regulations about what happens if a scan accidentally uncovers unrelated crimes. Even worse, Shazia mentioned to one of the witnesses that she has to bring the recording to a law enforcement agency if she sees that the memory indicates that the person is harming themselves or another person.

From the perspective of regulatory ethics, this is far from ideal. Mia's spiral into violence is not triggered by a police investigation, but by bureaucratic actions that are entirely irrelevant to her. It is not state power, but corporate negligence that turns this type of technology into a lethal force.

When Mia confronts Shazia, it is clear that the system has no safety valve. Shazia has no authority to stop the process

even if she senses danger. Mia begs: "You can just delete it, right?" But Shazia's silence confirms that even she has no control once the data is extracted. By outsourcing memory retrieval to the private sector, society has created a world where responsibility is fragmented, as no one is truly accountable. As a result, this practice has put everyone at risk.

In the final scenes, the police arrive at the aftermath, revealing that they are able to retrieve the pet guinea pig's memory.



Figure 7. Guinea Pig and the Recaller

Source: Netflix.com

It is implied that they retrieve Mia's image from the pet's recollection, proving that the technology has no biological or ethical limits. Regulation is so absent that even non-human memories can be weaponized. It is also implied that all organisms that are able to see and store memory in a rather long-term fashion can be treated as a security camera.

Hall's representation theory reminds us that meaning is never fixed. In this context, the Recaller is supposed to be meant as a truth-finding device but is perceived by Mia as an instrument of terror because institutions define its use through economic and legal lenses, not moral ones.

CONCLUSION

Through the lens of Hall's representation theory, "Crocodile" constructs a powerful critique of how technological advancements reshape societal perceptions of privacy, autonomy, and moral responsibility. The Recaller is represented as a mundane yet terrifying object, ordinary in design but extraordinary in its ability to penetrate the most private corners of human memory. This device becomes a symbol of contemporary fears regarding surveillance, reflecting growing concerns over how personal data can be extracted, commodified, and weaponized by those in power. Mia's descent into violence serves as a representation of how technology's invasive potential forces individuals into morally impossible situations. Her repeated acts of murder illustrate how the need to protect one's secrets becomes an act of survival in a world where memories can no longer be kept private. Hall's

theory helps see that Mia is not just an individual making choices but a representation of broader societal anxieties—where the erosion of privacy leads to the breakdown of moral boundaries and the dehumanization of both self and others. "Crocodile" serves as a warning about the ethical consequences of unchecked technological surveillance and represents the growing fear that as technology advances, personal autonomy and privacy may become casualties in the pursuit of truth and control.

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