

ILLUSTRATION: ABIR HOSSAIN

# DEBUNKING THE MYTHS surrounding dark mode

LAKUM MURSALUN

Since its adoption into regular social media apps, the dark mode setting has been a popular screen choice for users of different demographics, particularly young people. Initially known as "night mode", this shadowy-themed feature was initially designed to be used depending on the lighting conditions. However, due to the perceived addictive nature of the alternative along with aesthetics and acclaimed benefits, people have opted to use the dark mode. But, aside from aesthetics, how credible are said benefits?

Dark mode isn't really a recent technological invention, and those who are into programming know that it's been around since the digital revolution started. Most original computers dating back to the '70s had light text on a dark background to save power. Moreover, they used Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) monitors, which were not sophisticated enough to light up the entire screen at once.

Later, to make them conventional and more user-friendly, black text on a white background was introduced. And now, almost 25 years into the 21st century, dark mode has made a comeback with claims such as the feature providing better legibility and improved focus while saving significant battery and reducing eye

strain.

Starting with legibility, the claim is that dark mode increases readability and gives you better visual acuity. But vision research says it's actually harder for the eyes to read white text on a dark background. Human eyes

Visual acuity, on the other hand, refers to the ability to clearly see the smallest details. When you stare at black writing on a light background, your pupils shrink or narrow down so that you can have clearer eyesight. Oppositely, when you set your eyes on

It is also widely claimed that dark mode saves significant battery life. But in contrast, scientists from Purdue University have found that dark mode saves up to only three to nine percent of battery on OLED screens in average brightness. However, in maximum

in falling asleep. However, blue light may not be the culprit that distorts your sleep schedule as this claim lacks credible scientific proof. Researchers believe that the discomfort people experience after staring at displays for too long is due to reduced blinking

because of its encompassing dark aura. Furthermore, dark mode gives comfort in low-light surroundings and reduces eye strain making its users prone to screen addiction. Twitter has revealed that dark mode has made users spend more time on the app than usual.

So, maybe the claim of greater concentration could be true to some extent, but only in terms of keeping individuals hooked on those apps for a longer period – giving users more reasons to be glued to their smartphones. On the contrary, everyone's experience with dark mode is different. Dark mode might bring comfort to people with issues like migraine, headaches, and certain eye conditions, but in general, it might bring more disadvantages than benefits in the end.

Lakum Mursalun is an undergrad student from University of Chittagong.

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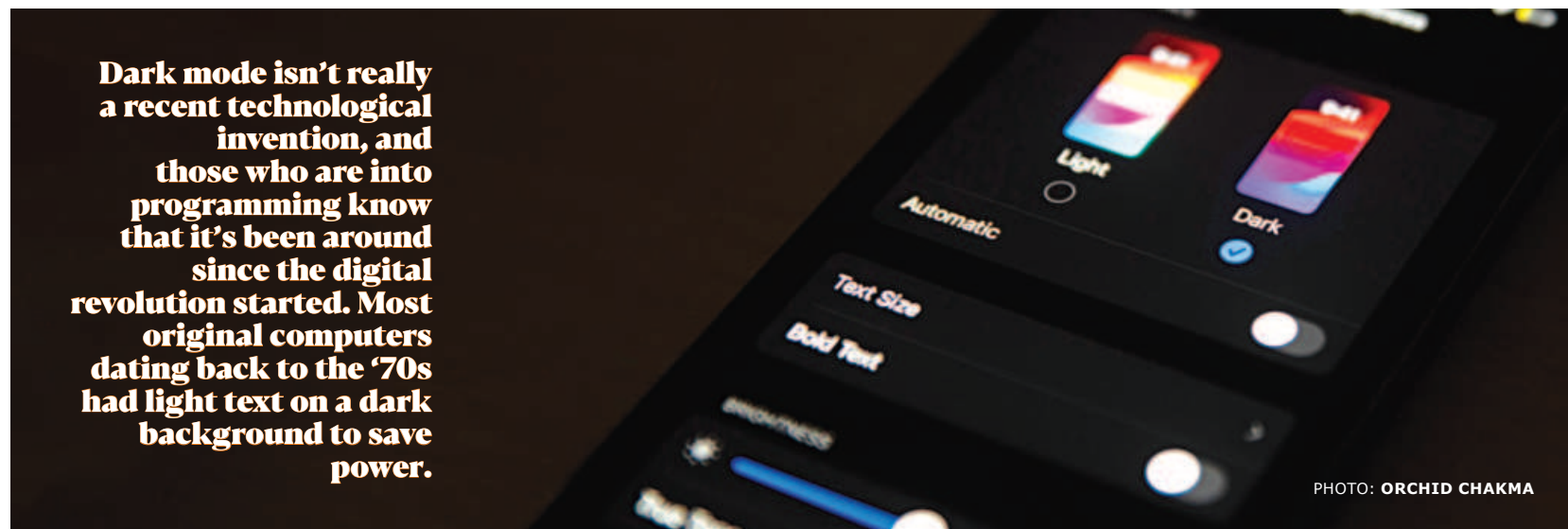


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are biologically designed to work in daylight. Thus, bright backgrounds with contrasting darker elements are more suited for our vision. Therefore, bright mode is recommended for optimal reading experience and longevity.

a lighted text with a dark background, your pupils dilate or become wider to allow more light to enter. And vision experts say this makes it harder to focus on the text and even harder for some people with certain eye conditions like myopia and astigmatism.

brightness this can increase to about 39 to 47 percent. So, unless you are using your phone in broad daylight, you won't be saving a whole lot.

Another commonly cited claim is that adopting to dark mode minimises blue light consumption, which helps

rather than brightness and suggest that the real solution to better sleep is to not use screens altogether before going to bed.

Research also suggests that dark mode can lead to negative emotions such as depression and gloomy mood

# The need to recognise propaganda in pop culture

**This issue of overt biases toward specific cultures and alignment with the existing power structure's agenda is not limited to Hollywood. Rather, it can fundamentally be found in every culture.**

FARIHA LAMISA

Back when I was in high school, I found myself surprised and shaken after reading Elif Batuman's memoir, *The Possessed*. The memoir, written in the form of an essay collection, borrowed its title from Fyodor Dostoyevsky's classic of the same name. It recounts Batuman's journey as a graduate student, pursuing her PhD in Russian literature at Stanford University.

While reading the book, I found myself astounded by the rich tradition of Russian literature, which depicts human complexity maybe in its finest form. The more I read, the more I realised that my pre-existing notion of Russia as an autocratic dictatorship was developed through my predominant consumption of Hollywood. Russia and its history, just like any other country, cannot be captured in a binary depiction of good and evil. Rather, it requires adequate nuance in its portrayal, and the country of Pushkin and Dostoevsky cannot get a proper representation in the shadow of the governance of Vladimir Putin and Soviet-style

communism.

This issue of overt biases toward specific cultures and alignment with the existing power structure's agenda is not limited to Hollywood. Rather, it can fundamentally be found in every culture.

Fatima Bhutto, in her book about the growing popularity of Asian pop culture titled *The New Kings of the World*, pointed out that since the 2014 general election of India, which brought Prime Minister Narendra Modi into power, Bollywood collectively shifted towards adopting a right-wing hyper-nationalist narrative, resulting in films that otherise the Indian-Muslim population. Although, not in equal proportion, the Bangladeshi cultural industry too has largely, if not completely, failed its minority community by hardly representing them in the cultural scenario. It would be difficult to find films or series that did an authentic

portrayal of minority communities, be it ethnic or religious.

Popular culture is a product of its time, representing the politics and ideas of a specific era. Often, films and television that challenged existing power structures have

director who supported the Bengali nationalist movement against the Pakistani authoritarian government, ended up disappearing and never being found.

When brutal suppression is in place, ruling parties maintain their grip on popular storytelling sources to spread their narratives in a more sophisticated fashion.

For example, the CIA has actively funded Hollywood films to portray the organisation in a positive light, justifying torture in its military operations abroad. This includes the Oscar-winning 2012 film *Zero Dark Thirty*, where torture has been justified as a necessary evil despite its factual inaccuracy.

Needless to say, the dominant power structure has always made it difficult to narrate the tale of the oppressed. Elites across the globe have tried with all their might to keep the popular mediums of storytelling

to fit their narrative. It would not be wrong to say that they do often succeed due to superior resources. However, we need to question who is producing the narrative and what purpose it serves.

In the age of rapid technological advancement where the battle of narrative is intense, it is important for us to make ourselves digitally literate and to question what we see and recognise its ideological orientation. It is not wrong to adopt and promote a specific ideology. However, doing that at the cost of truth is vile. As a result, we need to question and corroborate what we see. By the mere act of identifying the rhetoric behind what we consume, we may effectively end up recognising when we are trying to be dictated against our interest and when we are being fed propaganda.

Fariha Lamisa is a struggling student who is currently majoring in English at East West University. Consider sending your well-meaning advice and consolation to her through email: [flamisa2020@gmail.com](mailto:flamisa2020@gmail.com)



ILLUSTRATION: FATIMA JAHAN ENA