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### **Un/predictable Chaos: Artificial Intelligence in HBO’s *Westworld* – Season 3 (2020)**

In this paper, we analyze the representations of artificial intelligence in *Westworld* (HBO, 2016-present). Created by Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy and based on Michael Crichton’s 1973 eponymous film, *Westworld* features artificially intelligent hosts in a theme park. For the purposes of our paper, we will focus on Season 3 (2020), which is set in a dystopian Los Angeles in 2058 after some of the hosts have escaped the theme park. In our analysis of the TV show, we are particularly interested in the representation of Rehoboam, the predictive A.I. at Incite that collects all data and is tasked with predicting the future of each individual and humanity at large. Reminiscent of contemporary for-profit data collection and analysis of human behavior for private corporations, the A.I.’s creator, Engerraund Serac, compares a seemingly omniscient Rehoboam to a God that can “create order out of chaos” (Episode 5).

Originally developed in mathematics, chaos theory has been used to predict the weather or the course of pandemics. It has also been applied in robotics such as in the case of the predictive model of the A.I. in *Westworld*. The show presents a dystopian future where free will seems obsolete, but chaos ensues after the host Dolores decides to release everyone’s data to let people know about their predicted future, which can potentially start a revolution (Episode 5). Using chaos theory, we argue that *Westworld* attempts to deconstruct such a dystopian future by introducing outliers that have the potential to disrupt Rehoboam’s predictions. Serac diagnoses its “problem”: “In every projection ... there were people, outliers, agitators, whom you couldn’t predict or control” (Episode 5). Instead of considering this a weakness, however, we argue that *Westworld* presents the hosts and human beings in *Westworld* as what Deleuze and Guattari have called “bodies without organs” (*Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Anti-Oedipus*, 1972 & *A Thousand Plateaus*, 1980). Their virtual dimensions and capacities are not predictable and they ultimately cause the failure of A.I.s such as Rehoboam. In the contemporary social imaginary, the TV miniseries *Devs* (2020) and Jeff Orlowski’s documentary, *The Social Dilemma* (2020), also engage with similar ideas of free will and determinism as they question the manipulative power of artificial intelligence and how it shapes people’s behaviors. In a world where automation, algorithms, and predictive models have become the norm, *Westworld* presents outliers in behavior as a viable alternative to omniscient prediction.

## Short Bios

**Dr. Jana Fedtke** is Assistant Professor of English at the American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. Her research and teaching interests include gender studies and transnational literatures with a focus on South Asia. Dr. Fedtke's work has been published in, for example, *South Asian History and Culture* (Taylor and Francis), *Asexualities: Feminist and Queer Perspectives* (Routledge), and *South Asian Review* (Taylor and Francis).

**Aisha Al-Ali** earned her B.A. in English Language and Literature from the American University of Sharjah in 2019. Her senior project focused on individuality and consciousness in *Westworld* – Season 1. She is currently a translator at the Sharjah Private Education Authority. Her research interests include post-humanism, narrative theory, concepts of time in narrative and prehistoric literature.