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There are so many faiths



COULD A ROBOT BE SUBJECT?

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ABSTRACT

What differentiates a parlêtre from a robot? Can we make a robot from a human? Is the biology of the flesh finally the barrier between an android and a human being? Can be a subject there? And if so, is it possible to hypothesize a fantasy and locate its traversing?

In the present text, we will articulate the concept of fantasy in neurosis and its traversing towards the direction of a cure, considering it from a fictional character, a robot.

The consequences of the implantation of a mark, made on each robot with the intention of a better imitation of humanity will also be explored, appearing in the series as the center of the maze. A homology between this mark and S1 will be proposed as a mark of jouissance and its accomplishment will reintroduce what is intended as a foreclosure, science at the service of manipulation for mercantilism purposes: the jouissance at stake.

KEYWORDS

atravesamiento del fantasma | S1 | letra número | robot

WESTWORLD OR METAL SOULS: THE FAITH IS THE FAIR¹, THE FAIR OF FANTASY.

The present work is about a science fiction TV series named *Westworld*2 (HBO: 2016-) that leads us to a world in which robotics has advanced to make androids indistinguishable from humans. These robots are hosts in a kind of amusement park, located in the Grand Canyon (Colorado) and set as if it were Wild West. Human guests come to it to live all kinds of experiences.

The advanced robot programming presents a predefined set of narratives that are connected with each other, with the ability to interact with the visitors without being us able to distinguish them from humans, except for one point. For the human safety, the hosts can't harm any kind of living form, which allows the visitors an almost unlimited freedom to participate in any activity they wish, with no life-threatening consequences.

The construction of these androids is governed by the possibility of establishing ultimate control over them, which is hidden from robots in an attempt to better emulate their humanity. Its software includes the ignorance of having being programmed as androids, thus, the robots act responding to different situations sustained by the belief in their autonomy to decide the course of their actions. Thereby, they live in a loop of restarts that occur after their memory has being erased, each time they are disconnected for having serious damages that causes their deaths.

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1 Translated from: Lacan, 1974 [2005], p. 94.

2 *Westworld* is a science fiction and thriller television series created by Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy for HBO. It is based on the 1973 film of the same name, which was written and directed by the American novelist Michael Crichton, and its sequel to *Futureworld* (1976). This article will be about the first season that had 10 episodes.

The series begins with the exhaustive scrutiny of the robot operation after a routine update in programming of the hosts, due to the fact that little unusual behavioral deviations are observed. The problems raised are the appearance of rêveries or reminiscences, observed as the effects on their actions of unknown memories.

The word robot, according to Wikipedia, comes to the Czech word *robota*, which means servitude, forced labor or slavery, especially the so-called rented workers who lived in the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1848. First point of reference, the slave and its correlate: alienation.

In Spain, the fictional name of the original movie, on which the series is based, serves as a pretext to get even closer to the subject of this writing: *Metal Souls*³ is the conjunction of words of inaccurate but true interpretation⁴, with which the series is known, signifying something of the plot knot that is absent in the original name.

Lacan says that “the soul could not be spoken except on the basis of what allows a being - speaking being, to call it by its name - to bear what is intolerable in its world, which assumes that the soul is foreign to it, in other words, phantasmatic.” (Lacan, 1972-1973, p 84) Then, the soul as phantasmatic would be what enables us to tolerate the real. Therefore, we could homologate metal souls to the phantasmatic reality that acts as a screen for those synthetic beings, covering them with a plot unfolded from the implantation of an unknown scene.

Their position in the scene is established within the scene that they unknowingly mount, offering themselves as the object of Other jouissance.

Here, for each robot, as in the neurosis, the fantasy fulfills the function of anchorage-defense-window respect to the real, articulates a meaning, and allows each one, one by one, to assemble their frame of reality. The implicit script effect that orders their sayings and beliefs (their faith) gives consistency to these beings whose psychic reality veils the most real of the cause, from the fantasy of the subject that is revealed to the viewer of the series.

A phrase enunciated by Lacan, enables us to ask ourselves the logical consequences of the axiom of the fantasy in the constitution of a robotic body as a condition of possible jouissance:

(...) this place of the Other is not to be taken anywhere other than in the body, which is not intersubjectivity, but scars on the body, integumentals, peduncles that plug into its holes to serve as outlets, ancient and technical devices that gnaw at it.⁵

Why not think of a synthetic body that inhabits a narrative sustained from a singular, not anonymous desire, that of the creator? That creator is the one who implants the phantasmatic scene that will serve as an answer to the question about the Other's desire. This axiomatic comes from the Other, such as the neurotic's belief, who advances in that sense in order to make it exist.

The fantasy, undoubtedly, intervenes in these daydreams, but it is rather like the invisible ink of a scene script that is written in multiple versions, of an original scene that must be constructed rather than reproduced in memory. (Bassols 2014 [2017])

³ Spanish series name: *Almas de Metal*. [T.]

⁴ Issue that is worked by Lacan, who maintains that an interpretation may not be correlated with the accuracy of what has been said but that it touches the true insofar as it is directly related to what is at stake. (Lacan, 1953)

⁵ Translated from: Lacan, 1966-1967 [2016], p. 347. [T.]

This is the original scene in which the neurotic believes, and which the analysis will deconstruct. The creator's ambition is, thus, the same, that the robot finds, after its programming, its own voice speaking to it. As Lacan says:

“How is it that any of us can help feeling that the words on which we depend are in some sense imposed upon us? [...] Rather, the question is why a normal man, a man said to be normal, doesn't notice that speech is a parasite [...] that speech is a form of cancer that afflicts the human being?” (1975-1976, p. 78)

It is a stake here, the question of the previous time necessary in the constitution of fantasy as a veil to talk about neurosis. As they are robots, the question could be left on hold.

CUTS TO WAKE UP

What is raised on the series about how to find the center of the maze, as a supposed access key of the robots which would allow them to get knowledge about their inhumanity, could be homologated to traversing the fantasy.

To explore the path that will serve as an excuse in the treatment of the theme, I will take one of the oldest Westworld hosts named Dolores and some of the characters with whom she relates, because “if in this race to the truth one is but alone, although not all may get to the truth, still no one can get there but by means of the others.” (Lacan, 1945, p 173)

Dolores's main narrative is to be the daughter of a Wild West rancher and to always act like a damsel in distress. The series raises one of the park's guests, William, as his privileged partner, since he plays the game that takes her to the center of the maze. It is possible to homologate such an image to the one that Lacan presents in “Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty” that includes the possibility of exit of whoever manages to decipher the riddle. The intrigue of the problem is played around the disk in the back that commands the decisions of those who carry it by ordering the ties with the others based on what is inscribed in them. In this writing it will be a color, black or white, that is, any S1 out of sense, from which a meaning is elucidated in three logical times that can lead to freedom, which in the series resonates as “freedom to kill”.

Williams embodies this human character that raises one of the main controversies throughout the series, because after madly loving Dolores, he will diametrically change the modality of bond with her. On his first visit to the park he begins to fall in love with her, even knowing her android nature and in keeping with a certain distance from Dolores from his main narrative. After losing her, he manages to massacre a whole group of androids only to know where his beloved is.

This love story with Williams on his first visit to the park, works for Dolores throughout the years, as the conjugation of the phantasmatic axiom that veils -through love- the impossible to tolerate by Dolores, that real which does not stop registering all the time as a fleshed out real (since the question is about not having flesh). “The function of fantasy in subject's economy is to support the desire in its illusory role. It is not illusory, it is for its illusory function that support desire.”⁶ Desire that is presentified for her in the search for that another place and her lost beloved one.

For Williams, an episode removes a first veil and, abruptly, changes his position in this game. After

⁶ Translated from: Lacan, 1966, unpublished [T.]

some time, when he manages to meet her again, after exhaustively looking for her throughout the park, he found her in his narrative loop, after forgetting what they lived through together. Disappointed, he corroborates that he occupied for Dolores an interchangeable place with any other visitor who bends down to collect her fallen can, that is, with anyone who contingently grants her that place of damsel in distress, her repetitive way of obtaining pleasure. Dolores answers the question about the Other's desire that allows her to cause her own desire, she is a woman who needs to be cared for and that is her bond with the Other.

“That's it, the fantasy is opaque. We can designate his place in the fantasy, perhaps he can glimpse it by himself, but the sense of the position, namely, that for which what manifests from his being is there, that cannot be said by the subject. That is the essential point: aphanisis.”⁷

From there, Williams is revealed as the character that has stormingly murdered and outraged her for years, revealing at the end of the season the cause after their heartless encounters. His continuous attempt is presented as within the order of what we could call with Jacques-Alain Miller (2010) “awakening” the android from the fantasy dream. This awakening occurs through cuts in her body that kill her and lead her to produce remembrances that - throughout the series - leads her to the center of the maze. It cuts S1 and S2, bewildering her, on the side of nonsense. That is his way of holding the belief in her existence as Woman that does not exist, that is, that she wakes up from her android programming.

The word of the Other is imposed on her as a nonsense that states, as an order, remember, despite the updates. She is divided from her remembrances. There is no longer any consistency for her in response to her being, but unlike other androids she insists on continuing to remember after going through that point of anxiety caused by division.

Taking the series as a pretext we can ask ourselves whether since these androids are programmed to speak, can we say that they inhabit the language? What would enable us to change in the following phrase animal for android?:

“There is, according to analytic discourse, an animal that happens to be endowed with the ability to speak (*qui se trouve parlant*) and who, because he inhabits the signifier, is thus a subject of it. Henceforth, everything is played out for him at the level of fantasy, but at the level of a fantasy that can be perfectly disarticulated in a way that accounts for the following - that he knows a lot more about things than he thinks when he acts.” (LACAN, 1972-1973, 88)

This no-animal-robot speaks, and it does it from its fantasy programming.

CENTER OF THE MAZE OR SENSELESS KEY

Although the series embarks us on a dystopian genre, if we go fully into the fiction that it proposes, we notice the determining presence of programming as writing. Programming is nothing else than science's use of number as programmable, as manipulable.

What is written in the programming works as autonomous regarding the consequences that it

⁷ Translated from: Lacan, 1958-1959 [2014], p.332. [T.]

generate. “Here, the signifier operates cut off from the signification and it is, at this level, what it is possible to grasp an existence without world [...] In science, even when scientist aren’t aware of it, there is no world”⁸

Lacan presents a treatment of the number from psychoanalysis that exceeds (and at one point it is diametrically opposite to it) the use that science makes of it in relation to algorithm manipulation that, supposedly, allows a treatment emptied of imaginary and jouissance. (Focchi, 2012).

He states as *Yad’lun*, (Lacan, 1971-1972, 118), that there is, that real that we access from the logical impossible and from which it would be possible to read the plot of the series. Although the exhaustive development of the topic exceeds the purposes of this work, the consequences of its elaborations around the number are in line with what is stated here.

This fiction makes us think about the unsuspected consequences of the mercantile desire of science, where jouissance is reintroduced for the same reason that the construction of robots try to emulate humanity.

Where the senseless mark of *Yad’lun* would be what would give a proportional weigh to the introduction of a real, the letter mark of jouissance carries in its germ the paradoxical effect, its anchoring beyond the fantasy reveals it.

In every loop appears, for Dolores, some variation in its versions, where she builds all the possible senses regarding her marks, not only to extract but also to reduce the phantasmatic sense. As she reads how it orders her world and her bond with the other, she starts to take distance from it, changing clothes and subjective positions that bring her closer to the senseless in-essence of her existence.

She talks to Williams, who is in the position of beloved, about how she thinks that at every moment there are many paths that a person can take. She says: “You said... that people come here to change the history of their lives. I imagined a story where I didn’t have to be the damsel.” (1.5) Distancing herself from that position brings her closer to the center of the maze.

The arrival at this center enunciates the enigma of the significance of the Other’s desire.

Behind the veil that falls, she appears in these memories as an assassin, a mark of jouissance not subsumed by the condition of the fantasy and even against his grain. These marks of jouissance are written as a letter out of sense.

She founds for second time the senseless center of the maze and, finally, its meaning, as an X revealed: that is only a mark, a letter of jouissance, an only S1 that does not mean anything. There is something for her that we could think as of the order of the One of jouissance (Miller, 2011) of speaking being that exceeds the phantasmatic sense. The dimension of jouissance that inhabits her insofar as it doesn’t means anything except that it exists. We could think of these marks as Lacan states regarding the One:

(...) as a real, a real that may equally have nothing to do with any reality [...] is accessed via the symbolic. We access this real in and through the impossible that is defined only by the symbolic.” (Lacan, 1971-1972, 121-122)

The detours and discourse turns for Dolores were delimiting that impossible. Lacan says that a psychoanalysis is needed for a subject to succeed in making the sexual-relationship not exist, this is to drop the answer that, in the form of a plumb line, had been articulated due to the trauma of non-relationship, the correlate of which we find in the Lacanian *Yad’lun*⁹ or as unofficial

⁸ Translated from: Miller, 2011, unpublished. [T.]

⁹ In English the French phrase is used without translation. [T.]

translations used to estate: Hay de lo Uno.¹⁰

One of the creators of Dolores will grant a certain key for this process to take place, he will say that it takes time, a logical time that occurs after each death of the android at the hands of Williams, who with his acts does not aim at the revelation of a hidden truth but carries out an operation of disarticulation of the way of love as a veil.

After the fall of fiction through traversing the fantasy, the reality changes for Dolores. From whom she receives, in inverted form, both her message and her way of jouissance is herself, unveiling, thus, the inexistence of the Other, represented in the final scene where she makes this passage from Other to other and appears, seated facing herself in the mirror saying remember.

That Other that she has created to make sense of her existence has fallen and instead she finds her own way of jouissance. She finds herself making a new bond, but now it is no longer with the visitors like the beautiful lady to be looked at, but with androids from what seems to be her mark: to kill.

Lacan's latest teaching produces a shift that goes from the value of phantasmatic jouissance to the jouissance that is coagulated in the symptom. This movement is produced by the elaboration of the difference between the jouissance condensed by the object a – which can be formulated in terms of meaning and reducible to the axiom of the fundamental fantasy – and the jouissance that escapes from this capture since it is delocalized, without any image or meaning. The movement from object a to sinthome involves crossing the sense barrier and the encounter with the jouissance substance that affect the speaking body [...] and the sinthome is the singular way to deal with it. Thus, the analytical experience establishes a subjective experience that implies two planes. On the one hand, the construction of fantasy and sense-jouissance; on the other hand, the experience of symptom and his opaque jouissance. While the fantasy is a defense to avoid the real, to solve the symptom is to capture his out-of-sense jouissance in order to lessen their displeasure and obtain some possible arrangement of satisfaction.¹¹

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¹⁰ *Hay de lo Uno* could be translated as There's such thing as One. [T.] Gerardo Arenas in his book "Los 11 Unos del 19 más uno" (2014, pp. 90-91) mentions three reasons why he, as translator of "...or Worse" to Spanish chooses to translate the French expression *Yad'lun* by *Haiuno*, thus disagreeing with the non-authorized versions that were before its formal establishment. The first of them is given by the differential use made by French and Spanish in terms of the partitive (d'). Second, because the translation *Hay de lo uno* becomes a neologism not present in the French version. Last, in the translation *Hay de lo uno*, the one goes from being used in the text of Lacan as a noun to take the place of an adjective.

Even though the arguments put forward by the author mark the adequacy of *Haiuno* as a translation of the phrase *Yad'lun*, the version of *Hay de lo uno* resonates (for me) within the trademark register as nonsense in the place of the cause and therefore a valid neologism in its contributions to conceptualization.

¹¹ Translated from: Alvarez, Camali, Nitzcaner, 2017. [T.]

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