

OUTLIERS – A HOLONOVEL

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SCIENCE- FICTION PROTOTYPE SUMMARY

- As per the idea introduced by Brian David Johnson, science-fiction prototyping aims to forecast the future with technology.
- *Outliers* is a science-fiction prototype which looks at the future of technology and emotional intelligence.
- This SFP poses the question; 'Can technology truly ever replicate human emotions accurately?'



OUTLIERS - STORY SUMMARY

- *Outliers* defines a bleak future in which Singularity has been achieved. The protagonist, Judy, exists in a society controlled by technology known as Hypers.
- Judy is an 'outlier', a person with a tendency towards heightened emotion and heightened emotional intelligence. At the time of this story, the Hypers are collecting the emotional experience of these humans in the hopes of replicating them.
- Judy is issued an emotion needed by the Hypers to feel. This emotion is the grief.
- As she leaves the emotion deposit unit, she is accosted by her brother, who begs her to leave the city. An accident occurs and she shoots her brother.
- At the moment of the shooting emotions flood her senses, including grief. This only lasts for a moment as Judy realizes that this is not her brother, but simply a Hyper mimicking the emotions and appearance of her brother perfectly.
- The story ends with Judy recognizing the fearful possibility of artificial super intelligence while thankfully acknowledging her own humanity.

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OUTLIERS – A HOLONOVEL

- The holonovel originated from the plot device employed by *Star Trek*. In a fictional world, some of the characters are or interact with holograms.
- In *Outliers* several of the Hypers which the protagonist encounters are holograms.
- The higher-ranking Hypers appear as human-like robots, with the most advanced emotion-mimicking devices. Lower-ranking Hypers appear to the human Outliers as holograms.
- The holograms are an integral plot device within the story as they remind the protagonist to reflect upon her own humanity.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTERISATION

- Whilst in a science-fiction prototype the forecast for the future is the driving force of the story, the protagonist is also vital.
- In *Outliers*, Judy faces the challenging position of having her humanity exploited by the Hypers. In exchange for her emotions, she receives food and shelter.
- Much of the story poses the question of what Judy's humanity is worth and what she is willing to sacrifice to survive.
- Judy is a well-rounded, fleshed-out character with few of her reactions coming as a surprise to the reader as they come to know her as the ruthless yet vulnerable girl she is.
- Without an emphasis on the importance of characterisation the story's plot would make little sense to the reader as Judy makes strong decisions to save herself.

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STORY PURPOSE AND IMPLICATIONS

- *Outliers* has implications as both a science-fiction prototype and a holonovel.
- The consequences from a human perspective of technical Singularity are explored, alongside the integration of holograms into society.
- A future in which humanity is secondary to technology has hindered the flourishing of any kind of peaceful society.
- The consistent control in which the Hypers exert over every aspect of human life stifles human growth and encourages the remaining outliers to make negative decisions without thought of others.

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SYNTHETIC EMOTIONS AND EMOTIONAL LAYERING

- Emotions are the foundation of our humanity, but also our personalities as our reactions are unique. It is this uniqueness that the Hypers in *Outliers* aim to replicate and manipulate.
- The emotions that are requested from each Outlier, on a weekly basis are those that the Hypers study and replicate.
- At the beginning of the story, we see that Judy has been requested to collect 'regret'. When she deposits this, she is then requested to collect 'grief'.
- Judy acknowledges that both are complex emotions and that she has the emotional intelligence capable of feeling deep emotion. The Hypers manipulate this to their own ends.
- This poses the question; are some emotions more complex to experience than others? The protagonist thinks upon this and wonders if emotions such as grief is simply a compounded or layered emotion including; sadness, anger and other emotions specific to each individual.
- These layered emotions are more difficult for the Hypers to recreate accurately. At the end of the story we see that they have successfully achieved this through Judy's brother, Mo.

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- Emotional intelligence can be defined as the capacity to be aware of one's emotions and to react accurately.
- The protagonist of *Outliers* can be described as emotionally intelligent. Judy is able to understand the complexity of the emotions she is being required to make along with the consequences of her actions.
- Judy's emotional awareness is what makes her a perfect test subject of the Hypers to understand the hierarchy of more difficult to understand emotions such as panic, anxiety, grief or guilt.
- Can artificial intelligence ever truly mimic these emotions seamlessly in our reality? To do so, they would need a comprehension of emotional intelligence and the differences in human nature and the human mind.

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DYSTOPIA VS. UPTOPIA

- As is a common mode of discussion in fictional stories, particularly sci-fi stories, dystopian or utopian societies are described, where utopia is desirable and dystopia is despondent.
- *Outliers* is a despondent view on society, from the human perspective. On the other hand, from the point of view of the AI this is an entirely utopian tale as they achieve control over societies far and wide.
- The reader will naturally align themselves with the human protagonists experience as she is oppressed. However, the utopian flipside cannot be ignored as the Hypers become more and more human-like.

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A WRITER'S PERSPECTIVE

- From the perspective of a writer, a holonovel is an excellent plot device. In *Outliers* the holograms in the beginning of the tale serve as a reminder of the stark differences between humans and AI.
- These differences become less obvious as they Hypers perfect their emotion-collection and replication methods.
- This serves as a concrete story arc, as both the Hypers and Judy's emotions evolve in tandem.
- The conflict of the story comes from the interact of Judy and a Hyper she believes to be her brother. The Hypers force her hand to experience intensely negative emotions for their own ends.
- There is character background given, leading to a fully dynamic protagonist that can be both brave and vulnerable. This also strives to contrast the rigidity of the Hypers.

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TECHNICAL RIGIDITY

- In *Outliers*, much of Judy's experience with artificial intelligence relies on remarking upon the rigidity of the Hypers who are holograms.
- Judy expresses that the Hypers in the Emotion Bank are stiff and their reacts seem almost doll-like.
- This rigidity keeps the distinction between humans and AI very obvious and clear.
- When this rigidity begins to bend, the lines blur almost with the morality of both humans and Hypers. Their actions become more violent and erratic.

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HUMAN COMPLEXITY AND CHANGEABILITY

- To my imagination, in order to achieve Singularity, the question of what makes a human must be discussed.
- Humans are multi-faceted in every way, not only emotional. Defining a human is impossible but can be summarised simply by understanding that what makes a human is a core complexity.
- Each human's complexity is unique. Through the Hypers in the story, we are unsure if the replicate emotional complexity is unique to each Hyper or rather a computer-generated venture.
- This raises the difficult question of exactly how AI which have achieved singularity would deal with human changeability in emotion-driven decision-making.

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REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS

- *Outliers* aimed to explore human interaction with singularity in a realistic view. This is done through human desperation and need.
- As the protagonist travels through an AI-driven society, we can see that there are differences between humans and AI that may never be replicated accurately.
- These differences are rooted in how human emotion is intrinsically linked to human experience and perception.
- This piece of fiction is speculative and poses many questions about the extremity of human desperation when their needs are secondary to AI.



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING
TO MY PRESENTATION!

