

# Branding: HBO en de positionering van WESTWORLD

*Een onderzoek naar hoe de showrunners WESTWORLD positioneren als onderdeel van het  
HBO-brand*



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Studiejaar: 2016-2017  
Blok: 3  
Inleverdatum: 16 juni 2017  
Aantal woorden: 8622



**Universiteit Utrecht**


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## Samenvatting

Door de ontwikkelingen in het Amerikaanse televisielandschap is er sinds de *post-network era* ruimte voor zenders ontstaan om te experimenteren met televisie.

Daarnaast ontstond er de mogelijkheid om televisiecontent los van televisie aan te bieden. Door deze ontwikkeling zijn streamingdiensten zoals Netflix en Hulu ontstaan die concurreren met televisiezenders. Deze streamingdiensten, *basic cable*- en andere *premium cable*-zenders proberen HBO's strategie van kwaliteitstelevisie te imiteren om tevens een dominerende rol te spelen in de televisie-industrie. Hierdoor vervaagt het distinctieve imago van HBO van kwaliteitstelevisie. HBO moet zich vernieuwen om het imago en de positie in de televisie-industrie te beschermen.

Het doel van dit onderzoek is om te onderzoeken met behulp van de casus van HBO-serie *WESTWORLD* hoe het HBO-brand in de *post-network era* gedefinieerd wordt. Hiervoor is de volgende onderzoeksvraag opgesteld: *Hoe positioneren de showrunners van WESTWORLD in interviews en promovideo's de serie als onderdeel van het HBO-brand?* In dit onderzoek staan John T. Caldwell's concept van *branding* en de rol van de showrunner bij de *branding* centraal.

Om antwoord te kunnen geven op de onderzoeksvraag is een thematische analyse uitgevoerd waarvoor interviews en promovideo's zijn geselecteerd. Uit de geselecteerde interviews en promovideo's zijn uitspraken die gaan over de thema's productieproces, genres en complexe verhaalvertelling geanalyseerd. Uit de analyse is gebleken dat *WESTWORLD* gepositioneerd wordt als een serie die HBO's strategie van kwaliteitstelevisie toepast, maar wel vernieuwd. Hierdoor kan *WESTWORLD* gezien worden als een onderscheidende serie ten opzichte van de concurrentie en is het tevens door het toepassen van de HBO-strategie te positioneren binnen het HBO-brand.

# Inhoudsopgave

<b>Hoofdstuk 1: Inleiding</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Hoofdstuk 2: HBO en de standaard van kwaliteitstelevisie</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Hoofdstuk 3: <i>Branding via industrial texts</i></b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Hoofdstuk 4: Methode</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Hoofdstuk 5: Analyse</b> .....	<b>19</b>
5.1 Productieproces .....	19
5.2. Televisiegenres .....	24
5.3 Complexe verhaalvertelling .....	28
<b>Hoofdstuk 6: Conclusie</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Bibliografie</b> .....	<b>34</b>
Media .....	35
Interviews.....	35
Promovideo's .....	36
Literatuur.....	37
<b>Bijlage 1: Transcripties interviews en promovideo's</b> .....	<b>39</b>
<b>Bijlage 2: Uitwerking thematische analyse</b> .....	<b>73</b>

## Hoofdstuk 1: Inleiding

“We started on Westworld, and realized that when they say “It’s not TV, it’s HBO,” they’re not kidding. It’s somewhere between the feature experience and the TV experience.”<sup>1</sup>

*WESTWORLD-showrunner Jonathan Nolan*

In het Amerikaanse televisielandschap vindt sinds de jaren negentig van de vorige eeuw een verschuiving plaats van een *network era* naar een *post-network era* waarbij de Amerikaanse televisie-industrie niet langer meer gedomineerd wordt door de grote *basic cable*-zenders maar waar de *premium cable*-zenders meer invloed krijgen in de televisie-industrie.<sup>2</sup> Hierin groeide HBO sinds de jaren negentig uit tot een succesvolle *premium cable*-zender die een dominante positie innam in het Amerikaanse televisielandschap met series zoals *OZ*, *SEX AND THE CITY* en *THE SOPRANOS*.<sup>3</sup> HBO werd een leidende zender in het televisielandschap door zich te onderscheiden van andere *premium*- en *basic cable*-zenders door een nieuw standaard van kwaliteitstelevisie aan te bieden.<sup>4</sup> Veel *basic cable*-zenders en andere *premium cable*-zenders probeerden deze standaard van kwaliteitstelevisie over te nemen waardoor de distinctie van kwaliteitstelevisie die HBO groot heeft gemaakt vervaagde. Door de toenemende concurrentie van andere zenders en de toetreding van streamingdiensten zoals Netflix moet HBO volgens Dean J. DeFino de *branding*-strategie aanpassen om hun leidende positie in de televisie-industrie te beschermen.<sup>5</sup>

WESTWORLD is een serie die geproduceerd is in het *post-network era* die moet gaan concurreren met series van andere zenders die ook volgens HBO’s strategie van kwaliteitstelevisie geproduceerd zijn. WESTWORLD moet dus concurreren met series van andere zenders maar ook met series zoals *Netflix-originals* die via online platformen beschikbaar zijn. Daarom kan met WESTWORLD als casus goed onderzocht worden hoe

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<sup>1</sup> Scott Meslow, “Westworld Creator Jonathan Nolan Doesn’t Care That You Figured Out the Big Twist,” *GQ Magazine*, 5 december 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <http://www.gq.com/story/westworld-jonathan-nolan>.

<sup>2</sup> Jane Feuer, “HBO and the Concept of Quality TV,” in *Quality Tv: Contemporary American Television and Beyond*, red. Janet McCabe en Kim Akass (Londen: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 2007), 145.

<sup>3</sup> Robert J. Thompson, “Preface,” in *Quality TV: Contemporary American Television and Beyond*, geredigeerd door Janet McCabe en Kim Akass (Londen: I.B. Tauris & Co, Ltd., 2007), xviii.

<sup>4</sup> Amanda D. Lotz, *The Television Will Be Revolutionized* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 70-74.

<sup>5</sup> Dean J. DeFino, *The HBO Effect* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2014), 14.

distinctie wordt toegekend aan een HBO-serie zoals WESTWORLD en HBO in een tijdperk van televisie waarbij vaak dezelfde strategie van kwaliteitstelevisie toegepast wordt. Dit wordt onderzocht aan de hand van uitspraken die door de showrunners gedaan worden in *industrial texts*. Door de *industrial texts* die geproduceerd zijn rondom de nieuwe HBO-serie WESTWORLD te analyseren wordt geprobeerd om de huidige *branding*-strategie van HBO in kaart te brengen en wordt geanalyseerd hoe de zender reageert op de veranderingen in de televisie-industrie.<sup>6</sup>

Deze veranderingen leveren volgens Denise Mann een hogere werkdruk op bij de showrunners.<sup>7</sup> Zij stelt dat het takenpakket van de showrunners in de *post-network era* uitbreidt door de toenemende concurrentie en meer verantwoordelijkheden in het productieproces dat steeds complexer wordt. Door hun uitgebreide takenpakket hebben de showrunners meer invloed op de productie van de serie. Mann beargumenteert via de casestudy van LOST dat showrunners een belangrijke rol spelen bij de *branding* van de serie en de zender.<sup>8</sup> De showrunners hebben in de analyse een centrale positie bij de *branding* van WESTWORLD en HBO. Er zal antwoord gegeven worden op de volgende vraag:

*Hoe positioneren de showrunners van WESTWORLD in interviews en promovideo's de serie als onderdeel van het HBO-brand?*

Om antwoord te kunnen geven op de onderzoeksvraag wordt in het tweede hoofdstuk de *branding*-strategie van HBO in beeld gebracht door de ontwikkelingen van HBO in een context te plaatsen waarbij het concept van kwaliteitstelevisie centraal staat. Daarnaast wordt het concept van *industrial texts* van John T. Caldwell beargumenteerd. Volgens Caldwell positioneren en definiëren *industrial texts* een film of serie en geven zij betekenis aan deze mediateksten waardoor *industrial texts* gezien kunnen worden als filters voor het publiek.<sup>9</sup> De positionering, definities en betekenissen, die naar voren komen in de uitspraken van de showrunners in de *industrial texts*, kunnen van waarde

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<sup>6</sup> WESTWORLD, televisieserie, gecreëerd door Jonathan Nolan en Lisa Joy, Verenigde Staten: HBO, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Denise Mann, "It's Not TV, It's Brand Management TV: The Collective Author(s) of the *Lost* Franchise," in *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*, red. Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks en John T. Caldwell (New York: Routledge, 2009): 99.

<sup>8</sup> Mann, "It's Not TV, It's Brand Management TV," 100.

<sup>9</sup> John T. Caldwell, "Critical Industrial Practice: Branding, Repurposing, and the Migratory Patterns of Industrial Texts," *Television New Media* 7 (2006): 103.

zijn voor de *branding* van de serie.<sup>10</sup> In het derde hoofdstuk zal daarom gekeken worden naar de rol van showrunners en *industrial texts* bij de *branding* van de serie en zender. Het onderzoek van Mann staat hierbij centraal.

Voor het analyseren van de rol van de showrunners bij de *branding* van WESTWORLD en HBO zullen thema's die informatie bevatten over de positionering van WESTWORLD als onderdeel van het HBO-*brand* geïdentificeerd, gecodeerd en geanalyseerd worden. Aan de hand van het stappenplan dat ontwikkeld is door Virginia Braun en Victoria Clarke zal in hoofdstuk vier de methode voor het onderzoek toegelicht worden en zal in hoofdstuk vijf een thematische analyse uitgevoerd worden waarbij via de verschillende thema's antwoord gegeven wordt op de onderzoeksvraag.<sup>11</sup> In het laatste hoofdstuk zal gereflecteerd worden op de analyse in relatie tot de *branding*-strategie van HBO zoals beschreven in de literatuur en de rol van showrunners.

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<sup>10</sup> Caldwell, "Critical Industrial Practice," 117-118.

<sup>11</sup> Virginia Braun en Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Research in Psychology* 3 (2006): 77-101.

## Hoofdstuk 2: HBO en de standaard van kwaliteitstelevisie

HBO heeft een aandeel gehad bij de verschuiving naar de *post-network era* waarmee een nieuwe periode in de Amerikaanse televisie aanbrak.<sup>12</sup> Volgens Amanda Lotz is sinds begin 2000 de *post-network era* ontstaan waarbij geëxperimenteerd wordt met televisie buiten de normale programmering.<sup>13</sup> Lotz geeft aan dat Netflix, Hulu en YouTube dominerende bedrijven zijn die de kijkervaring reorganiseren.<sup>14</sup> Ondanks de veranderingen in het televisie landschap wist HBO volgens haar uit te groeien tot de succesvolle betaalde zender die een dominante positie inneemt in het televisielandschap. Met eigen producties zoals *Oz*, *SEX AND THE CITY* en *THE SOPRANOS* wist HBO veel invloed te krijgen in de televisie-industrie en werd HBO gezien als de leidende zender in de “Second Golden Age” van de Amerikaanse televisie.<sup>15</sup> Volgens Robert J. Thompson had HBO een dominante positie in de televisie-industrie door zich te onderscheiden van alle andere zenders met hun vasthoudendheid en aanpassingsvermogen. Hij beargumenteert dat HBO de vrijheid heeft om zich te onderscheiden doordat het een abonnement-model hanteert. Doordat het hanteren van dit model hoeft de zender zich niet druk te maken om reclameblokken en adverteerders of de Amerikaanse federale regelgeving.<sup>16</sup> Dit geeft de zender meer vrijheid dan de *basic cable*-zenders. Dankzij deze vrijheid kan HBO volgens hem meer risico's nemen en experimenteren met de series en programmering.

Doordat HBO de ruimte heeft om risico's te nemen en te experimenteren heeft het een nieuwe standaard van *quality TV* ofwel kwaliteitstelevisie ontwikkeld waarmee de betaalde zender zichzelf differentieert van andere zenders. De term “*quality*” beschrijft volgens Feuer de demografie van het publiek.<sup>17</sup> Bij premium kabel zoals HBO gaat het om een publiek met een redelijk inkomen die extra geld willen uitgeven voor televisie. Volgens Feuer heeft HBO maar een klein publiek, maar zij hebben wel een publiek met hogere inkomens die extra willen betalen voor meer gespecialiseerde

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<sup>12</sup> Lotz, 8

<sup>13</sup> Lotz, 8.

<sup>14</sup> Lotz, 15.

<sup>15</sup> Thompson, “Preface,” xviii.

<sup>16</sup> Thompson, “Preface,” xviii.

<sup>17</sup> Feuer, “HBO and the Concept of Quality TV,” 145.



televisie met een hogere culturele waarde.<sup>18</sup> Bottomley gaat dieper in op de doelgroep van HBO en zegt dat de doelgroep bestaat uit hoogopgeleide, *upper-middle class* professionals die vaak tevens jong zijn en in de steden wonen.<sup>19</sup> Volgens Bottomley bezit deze doelgroep een hogere culturele waarde waar de televisieproducenten van HBO op inspelen door series te produceren die de doelgroep zullen aanspreken.<sup>20</sup>

Deze hogere culturele waarde van HBO-series is een ander belangrijk element van de HBO-standaard van kwaliteitstelevsie. Feuer stelt dat HBO zichzelf definieert als een televisiezender die kwaliteit toekent aan eigen geproduceerde series door connecties te maken met hogere kunstvormen zoals *art cinema*, modernistisch theater en literatuur.<sup>21</sup> Volgens Feuer differentieert HBO zich met het idee van hogere culturele waarde van andere zenders omdat HBO niet geassocieerd wil worden met het kwaliteitsdrama genre dat Amerikaanse *basic cable*-zenders hanteren.<sup>22</sup>

HBO lijkt dit volgens Feuer duidelijk te willen maken met de slogan "It's Not TV, It's HBO" uit 1995.<sup>23</sup> Met deze slogan wordt volgens Feuer het signaal afgegeven dat de programmering van HBO kwaliteit heeft ondanks dat het televisie is. Zij stelt dat HBO met deze slogan de zender wil positioneren boven de kwaliteitsnormen van de Amerikaanse televisie-industrie. Catherine Johnson gaat hier verder op in en stelt dat HBO met de slogan aangeeft dat het meer dan televisie en massacultuur te bieden heeft en dat de HBO-slogan gezien moet worden als een paradox.<sup>24</sup> Volgens Johnson is de HBO-slogan een paradox die staat voor esthetische expressie en dus hoge culturele waarde, maar tegelijkertijd een beleving aan een massapubliek belooft. Deze paradox leidde tot het ontwikkelen van een onderscheidende en succesvolle formule waarmee HBO controversiële dramaserieën produceerde.<sup>25</sup> Volgens Janet McCabe en Kim Akass werden de grenzen van *broadcasting content* bij deze succesvolle formule verlegd door

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<sup>18</sup> Feuer, "HBO and the Concept of Quality TV," 147.

<sup>19</sup> Andrew J. Bottomley, "Quality TV and the Branding of U.S. Network Television: Marketing and Promoting Friday Night Lights," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 32 (2015): 485.

<sup>20</sup> Bottomley, 486.

<sup>21</sup> Feuer, "HBO and the Concept of Quality TV," 148.

<sup>22</sup> Feuer, "HBO and the Concept of Quality TV," 150.

<sup>23</sup> Feuer, "HBO and the Concept of Quality TV," 148.

<sup>24</sup> Catherine Johnson, "Tele-branding in TVIII: The Network as Brand and the Programme as Brand," *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 5 (2007), 10.

<sup>25</sup> Johnson, "Tele-branding in TVII," 10.

controversiële onderwerpen<sup>26</sup> op een innovatieve manier met een hoge productiewaarde te presenteren.<sup>27</sup>

Als gevolg van de nieuwe standaard van kwaliteitstelevisie inspireerde HBO andere betaalde zenders en broadcastzenders om deze standaard van HBO over te nemen in hun programmering.<sup>28</sup> Dit wordt volgens Dean J. DeFino ook wel het HBO-effect genoemd. Een voorbeeld van het HBO-effect die hij noemt is het succes dat zender AMC had met series als MAD MEN en BREAKING BAD, die geproduceerd zijn volgens HBO's gouden standaard van kwaliteitstelevisie.<sup>29</sup> Dit betekent voor HBO dat de concurrentie toeneemt en dat de imiterende zenders de onderscheidende identiteit van HBO teniet doen. Omdat de concurrenten series van gelijkwaardig niveau aanbieden kunnen abonnees gaan uitwijken naar deze concurrenten. Doordat andere zenders HBO's standaard van kwaliteitstelevisie overnemen vervaagt de distinctie tussen HBO en de overige zenders.

Naast deze concurrenten is er dankzij technologische ontwikkelingen sinds 2010 een nieuwe dreiging bijgekomen. Amanda Lotz noemt deze periode vanaf 2010 "The Netflix Surge" waarbij Netflix en andere streamingdiensten toetreden tot de markt van televisieseries.<sup>30</sup> Met name Netflix kan volgens Lotz in deze periode gezien worden als een directe concurrent van HBO omdat Netflix een eigen definitie aan kwaliteitstelevisie geeft via zelfgeproduceerde series zoals HOUSE OF CARDS.<sup>31</sup> DeFino gaat tevens in op de toetreding van streamingdiensten zoals Netflix en stelt dat de streamingdienst de wens heeft om net zo succesvol als HBO te worden.<sup>32</sup> Volgens hem moet HBO door de nieuwe dreiging van Netflix zich aanpassen om de kern van distinctie te beschermen.

Volgens Amanda Lotz reageert HBO sinds 2010 op de komst van streamingdiensten en de vervaging van de distinctie door nieuwe mediatechnologieën uit te buiten en gespecialiseerdere series aan te bieden. HBO kan via de HBO GO-applicatie en sinds 2015 via de eigen streamingdienst HBO NOW eigen content online aanbieden. Lotz beargumenteert dat de eigen applicatie en streamingdienst middelen

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<sup>26</sup> Met controversiële onderwerpen bedoelen McCabe en Akass het weergeven van seks, geweld en goddeloosheid.

<sup>27</sup> Janet McCabe en Kim Akass, "Sex, Swearing and Respectability: Courting Controversy, HBO's Original Programming and Producing Quality TV" in *Quality TV: Contemporary American Television and Beyond*, red. Janet McCabe en Kim Akass (Londen: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 2007), 69.

<sup>28</sup> DeFino, 129.

<sup>29</sup> DeFino, 129.

<sup>30</sup> Lotz, 70-71.

<sup>31</sup> Lotz, 74.

<sup>32</sup> DeFino, 129.

zijn die het voor HBO mogelijk maken zich te ontwikkelen in de *post-network era*. Met de eigen streamingdienst en applicatie kan HBO via verschillende platformen eigen content aanbieden en daardoor een groter bereik creëren.<sup>33</sup> Daarnaast geeft Lotz aan dat HBO het HBO-*brand* van kwaliteitstelevisie blijft ontwikkelen door series te produceren voor een nog specifiekere publiek.<sup>34</sup> Lotz vergelijkt de doelgroep van de HBO-serie GIRLS met de doelgroep van de HBO-serie SEX AND THE CITY en concludeert dat GIRLS ten opzichte van SEX AND THE CITY een specifiekere segmentatie van het publiek heeft. Zij stelt dat de doelgroep van GIRLS bestaat uit carrière-gedreven single vrouwen van in de twintig die in de steden wonen.<sup>35</sup> De doelgroep van SEX AND THE CITY was volgens Lotz tevens gericht op carrière-gedreven vrouwen, maar was niet zo specifiek als bij GIRLS.

Dankzij de vrijheid van een abonnement-model kon HBO door te experimenteren en risico's te nemen zichzelf in het begin van de *post-network era* onderscheiden door zich op een *quality audience* te richten en een hogere culturele waarde toe te kennen aan hun grensverleggende series.<sup>36</sup> Door te handelen naar de technologische veranderingen en de concurrentie blijft HBO niet stil staan met het HBO-*brand*. In het begin van de *post-network era* heeft HBO een culturele impact op de televisie-industrie gemaakt met het zetten van een nieuwe standaard van kwaliteitstelevisie. Voor dit onderzoek zal geanalyseerd worden hoe HBO actueel met WESTWORLD probeert hun HBO-*brand* te definiëren.

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<sup>33</sup> Lotz, 74.

<sup>34</sup> Lotz, 239.

<sup>35</sup> Lotz, 239.

<sup>36</sup> Feuer, "HBO and the Concept of Quality TV," 148.

### Hoofdstuk 3: *Branding via industrial texts*

Voor het definiëren van het HBO-*brand* als kwaliteitstelevisie die boven de kwaliteitsnormen van de Amerikaanse televisie-industrie uitstijgt, worden showrunners ingezet. Denise Mann heeft onderzoek gedaan naar de rol van showrunners bij de *branding* van een televisieprogramma waarbij de groeiende functie van schrijver-producenten ofwel showrunners als *brand*-managers centraal staat.<sup>37</sup> Zij stelt dat sinds de jaren tachtig kwaliteitstelevisie en “televisieauteurs” met elkaar geassocieerd worden. Volgens Mann zijn zenders afhankelijk van getalenteerde en ervaren showrunners die de distributie helpen.<sup>38</sup> Zij stelt dat sinds de jaren tachtig er grote druk is komen te liggen op de showrunners door de veranderende industriële omstandigheden die geassocieerd worden met televisieproductie en het internettijdperk. Mann geeft aan dat de showrunners meer doen dan enkel het script schrijven of de serie produceren.<sup>39</sup> Hierdoor kunnen showrunners volgens haar gezien worden als *brand*-managers die ingezet worden om betekenis te geven aan een televisieprogramma of zender.<sup>40</sup>

Zoals Mann aangeeft in haar onderzoek neemt het aantal functies van de showrunners toe. Naast dat zij volgens haar nu ook *brand*-managers zijn, is het tevens mogelijk dat zij nog meer taken op zich nemen. Bij WESTWORLD is Jonathan Nolan de scriptschrijver, producent, regisseur en volgens Mann’s opvatting tevens *brand*-manager. In de analyse zullen de showrunners Jonathan Nolan en Lisa Joy centraal staan, omdat zij via uitspraken in *industrial texts* betekenis geven aan WESTWORLD. Met deze betekenis kan de serie gepositioneerd worden als onderdeel van het HBO-*brand*. Daarom zullen uitspraken van de showrunners over hun ervaringen, werkwijze en benaderingen geanalyseerd worden voor de positionering van WESTWORLD als onderdeel van het HBO-*brand*.

Amanda Lotz stelt dat HBO sinds de jaren negentig veel successen heeft geboekt bij de *branding* van zelfgeproduceerde series. Andrew Bottomley omschrijft *branding* als een persoonlijkheid waarbij de *branding* een combinatie is van associaties, gedachtes, gevoelens en houdingen die het publiek helpt bij het positioneren, identificeren en

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<sup>37</sup> Mann, “It’s Not TV, It’s Brand Management TV,” 99.

<sup>38</sup> Mann, “It’s Not TV, It’s Brand Management TV,” 102.

<sup>39</sup> Mann, “It’s Not TV, It’s Brand Management TV,” 100.

<sup>40</sup> Mann, “It’s Not TV, It’s Brand Management TV,” 111.

betekenis geven aan een televisieserie of zender.<sup>41</sup> Hiermee wil Bottomley aangeven dat een *brand* meer is dan alleen een naam, slogan, logo of design. Met *branding* kan een relatie aangegaan worden met de consument alvorens een serie uitgezonden wordt.<sup>42</sup>

Volgens Lotz blijkt HBO veel energie te stoppen in de relatie met de consument via de *branding* van de zender en zelfgeproduceerde series.<sup>43</sup> Lotz benadrukt dat de *branding* belangrijk is voor HBO omdat de zelfgeproduceerde series onconventionele en onregelmatige seizoenen toepassen.<sup>44</sup> Door de onconventionele en onregelmatige seizoenen voert HBO volgens haar grote promotiecampagnes uit om het publiek te helpen herinneren aan nieuwe afleveringen en om nieuwe leden te trekken. De campagnes van HBO zijn volgens Lotz zo succesvol doordat de stijl van de campagnes wijst op de exceptionele kwaliteit van de series en een duidelijke distinctie maakt tussen HBO en de rest in de televisie-industrie.<sup>45</sup> Zij stelt dat de *buzz* over HBO en de programma's domineert in de populaire cultuur, terwijl HBO maar een klein deel van het televisiekijkend publiek bereikt.<sup>46</sup> Als voorbeeld noemt zij *THE SOPRANOS*, die de voorpagina's van tijdschriften sierden voor de promotie van het zesde seizoen van de serie.<sup>47</sup>

Tijdschriften zijn een van de vele mogelijke "toegangspoorten" om betekenis te kunnen geven aan series. Jonathan Gray definieert deze toegangspoorten door het concept van parateksten van Gerard Genette over te nemen en toe te passen op de film- en televisie-industrie. Volgens Gray past Genette het concept parateksten toe in de literatuur om het materiaal rondom de literaire tekst te bespreken.<sup>48</sup> Parateksten zijn volgens Gray een soort leesstrategieën voor het publiek die filters creëren waardoor de kijker waarneemt, luistert en de mediatekst interpreteert.<sup>49</sup> Hij definieert parateksten als volgt: "The greeters, gatekeepers, and cheerleaders for and of the media, filters through which we must pass on our way to 'the text itself,' but some will only greet

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<sup>41</sup> Bottomley, "Quality TV and the Branding of U.S. Network Television," 483.

<sup>42</sup> Bottomley, "Quality TV and the Branding of U.S. Network Television," 483.

<sup>43</sup> Lotz, 125.

<sup>44</sup> Met onconventionele en onregelmatige seizoenen worden kortere seizoenen van twaalf afleveringen bedoeld. HBO zendt de series uit buiten de periodes van de broadcastnetworks. Daarnaast is het geen garantie dat ieder jaar een seizoen van een HBO-serie op televisie verschijnt. DeFino 121-122.

<sup>45</sup> Lotz, 125.

<sup>46</sup> Lotz, 125.

<sup>47</sup> Lotz, 125.

<sup>48</sup> Jonathan Gray, *Show Told Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 6.

<sup>49</sup> Gray, 25.

certain audiences.”<sup>50</sup> Hij ziet parateksten in de film- en televisie-industrie als verschillende soorten teksten die een film of televisieprogramma positioneren, definiëren en betekenis geven. Hierbij wordt rekening gehouden met specifieke doelgroepen.<sup>51</sup> Gray verstaat onder parateksten: *opening credits*, *leader*, aftiteling, trailer, speelgoed, spin-off videogames, podcasts, bonusmateriaal, interviews, spoilers, discussies, posters, billboards en promotiecampagnes.<sup>52</sup>

John T. Caldwell beargumenteert in zijn onderzoek dat de televisie-industrie haar aanwezigheid theoretiseert en *insider knowledge* deelt met het publiek door middel van *deep industrial texts*.<sup>53</sup> Deze *industrial texts* zijn teksten die door producenten van een televisieprogramma of zender geproduceerd zijn en die circuleren rondom een televisieprogramma of zender. De *industrial texts* richten zich tot de *insider knowledge* ofwel achtergrondinformatie die producenten via making-offs, promovideo's, bonusmateriaal en interviews verspreiden. *Industrial texts* zijn te begrijpen als parateksten die televisieprogramma's definiëren en positioneren.

Doordat *industrial texts* een televisieprogramma of zender positioneren en definiëren kunnen zij gezien worden als waardevol voor de *branding* van het televisieprogramma of de zender. Caldwell beargumenteert dat producenten tegenwoordig veel bewuster omgaan met promotie- en beeldmateriaal van achter de schermen.<sup>54</sup> Producenten verspreiden volgens hem voornamelijk achtergrondinformatie om het publiek aan hen te binden. Ondanks dat deze teksten meer kosten dan ze opbrengen blijven deze teksten voor producenten waardevol omdat ze gezien worden als een vorm van *value-added entertainment*.<sup>55</sup>

Om de achtergrondinformatie te gebruiken als *value-added entertainment* zal deze kennis door betrokkenen bij het productieproces gedeeld moeten worden. Máire Messenger Davies beargumenteert in haar onderzoek het belang van de scriptschrijvers bij de discussie over productiekwaliteit. Davies stelt dat de scriptschrijver een cruciale rol heeft in de discussie van productiekwaliteit, omdat het script van onmisbare waarde

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<sup>50</sup> Gray, 17.

<sup>51</sup> Gray, 3.

<sup>52</sup> Gray, 4.

<sup>53</sup> John T. Caldwell, "Critical Industrial Practice: Branding, Repurposing, and the Migratory Patterns of Industrial Texts," *Television & New Media* 7 (2006): 103.

<sup>54</sup> Caldwell, "Critical Industrial Practice," 117.

<sup>55</sup> Caldwell, "Critical Industrial Practice," 118.

is in film- en televisieproductie.<sup>56</sup> De scriptschrijvers bezitten de meeste kennis over het proces omdat zij er middenin zitten. Daarnaast kunnen scriptschrijvers volgens haar onthullende inzichten geven in hoe de serie benaderd moet worden en hoe de verhaallijnen geïnterpreteerd moeten worden.<sup>57</sup> Ondanks dat Davies niet de koppeling maakt met *branding* laat zij wel zien dat scriptschrijvers waardevol kunnen zijn bij het delen van achtergrondinformatie. Bij de *branding* van een televisieserie zijn scriptschrijvers ofwel showrunners waardevol door hun ervaringen, werkwijze en benaderingen te delen in *industrial texts*. Door het delen van deze aspecten helpen de showrunners het publiek om de serie te positioneren waarbij de serie op voorhand betekenis krijgt en al een soort imago heeft die bijdraagt aan het HBO-*brand*.

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<sup>56</sup> Máire Messenger Davies, "Quality and Creativity in TV: The Work of Television Storytellers," in *Quality TV: Contemporary American Television and Beyond*, geredigeerd door Janet McCabe en Kim Akass (London: I.B. Tauris & Co, Ltd., 2007), 173.

<sup>57</sup> Davies, "Quality and Creativity in TV," 174.

## Hoofdstuk 4: Methode

Zoals blijkt uit het onderzoek van Máire Messenger Davies hebben scriptschrijvers een belangrijke positie binnen de *branding* van een serie, omdat zij dicht op het productieproces zitten en beschikken over achtergrondinformatie.<sup>58</sup> In dit onderzoek wordt geanalyseerd hoe de showrunners betekenis geven aan WESTWORLD en het HBO-*brand* met uitspraken die zij doen over de serie en HBO.

Naar aanleiding van de zoektocht naar uitspraken van de showrunners is gekozen voor het analyseren van interviews met de showrunners die gepubliceerd zijn door (online) magazines zoals *Entertainment Weekly*, *Variety* en *IndieWire* en promovideo's van HBO die gepubliceerd zijn op het officiële HBO *YouTube*-kanaal.<sup>59</sup> Er is gekozen voor deze twee soorten teksten omdat in deze teksten bij de interviews rechtstreeks contact met de showrunners is geweest. Het corpus bestaat uit negen interviews en vier promovideo's die gepubliceerd zijn tussen 17 september 2016 en 5 december 2016. Deze periode is belangrijk om te benoemen, omdat in deze periode het eerste seizoen van WESTWORLD werd uitgezonden op HBO.<sup>60</sup> Dit betekent dat de tijd voor de start van de serie en tijdens de uitzendperiode gebruikt worden door HBO om potentiële kijkers te benaderen en te binden aan de serie.

Omdat er nog nauwelijks onderzoek gedaan is naar de rol van showrunners bij de *branding* van het HBO-*brand* is gekozen voor een thematische analyse. Volgens Virginia Braun en Victoria Clarke is een thematische analyse een handige methode wanneer een onderzoek uitgevoerd wordt waar nog niet veel over bekend is en waarbij de opvattingen en onderwerpen in de data nog vrijwel onbekend zijn.<sup>61</sup> Zij omschrijven een thematische analyse als een methode voor het identificeren, analyseren en het melden van patronen binnen data. Met deze methode wordt de dataset in detail georganiseerd en beschreven en worden verschillende aspecten van het onderzoeksonderwerp geïnterpreteerd.<sup>62</sup> In dit onderzoek stuurt de onderzoeksvraag en eerder onderzoek

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<sup>58</sup> Davies, "Quality and Creativity in TV," 173-174.

<sup>59</sup> HBO YouTube-kanaal, laatst geraadpleegd op 10 juni 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/user/HBO/featured>.

<sup>60</sup> De eerste aflevering "The Original" van WESTWORLD werd voor het eerst uitgezonden op 2 oktober 2016 op HBO in de Verenigde Staten. "Episode List WESTWORLD," geraadpleegd op 03-05-2017, [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0475784/episodes?ref\\_=tt\\_ov\\_epl](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0475784/episodes?ref_=tt_ov_epl).

<sup>61</sup> Braun en Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," 87.

<sup>62</sup> Braun en Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," 82.



over *branding* de thematische analyse, waardoor de nadruk komt te liggen op de uitspraken van de showrunners die gaan over het construeren van *WESTWORLD* als onderdeel van het *HBO-brand*.

Braun en Clarke hebben een stappenplan ontwikkeld dat bestaat uit zes stappen, waarbij gezocht wordt naar patronen in de dataset.<sup>63</sup> De eerste stap is het begin van het zoeken naar betekenissen en patronen waarbij de inhoud van de dataset eigen gemaakt wordt door de bronnen meerdere keren te lezen. In stap twee begint het proces van codering waarbij de data georganiseerd wordt in betekenisvolle groepen. Dit gebeurt door dezelfde soort inhoud uit de data bij elkaar te plaatsen. In stap drie worden de codes uit stap twee gegroepeerd in potentiële thema's. De codes worden geanalyseerd waarbij verschillende codes worden gecombineerd tot een overkoepelend thema. In deze stap ligt de nadruk op de relatie tussen codes. In stap vier worden de gevormde thema's uit stap drie gecontroleerd en aangescherpt waarbij gecontroleerd wordt of de thema's coherent zijn en of ze de betekenis van de dataset representeren. Hierbij wordt gekeken naar de link met de theorie en de onderzoeksvraag. In stap vijf wordt gekeken naar wat de essentie is van de thema's en uit welke aspecten de thema's bestaan. Deze twee punten uit stap vijf worden in stap zes uitgewerkt in hoofdstuk 5. In deze laatste stap wordt antwoord gegeven op de onderzoeksvraag.<sup>64</sup>

Voordat het stappenplan uitgevoerd kan worden in dit onderzoek zullen de promovideo's eerst getranscribeerd worden zodat de inhoud van de video's makkelijker gecodeerd kan worden. De transcripties van de promovideo's en de interviews worden meerdere keren gelezen en de relevante uitspraken van de showrunners worden gemarkeerd. De uitwerking van de eerste stap is te vinden in bijlage 1 waarbij de bronnen voorzien zijn van markeringen. Bij stap twee worden de gemarkeerde uitspraken gecodeerd. In bijlage 2 worden de uitspraken per publicatie in het schema in de derde kolom geplaatst. De uitspraken krijgen een code in de volgende kolom door het onderwerp of verband met HBO te noteren. Bij stap drie wordt er gezocht naar de relaties tussen de codes waarbij in de vijfde en zesde kolom sub-thema's en thema's genoteerd worden. Daarna worden bij stap vier deze (sub-) thema's gecontroleerd en aangepast mocht dit nodig zijn. In stap vijf wordt gezocht naar de essentie van de thema's die vervolgens in stap zes worden uitgewerkt. De essentie wordt beknopt

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<sup>63</sup> Braun en Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," 91.

<sup>64</sup> Braun en Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," 94-98.

genoteerd in de zevende kolom. De uitwerking bij stap zes vormt het volgende hoofdstuk van dit onderzoek.

De analyse in het volgende hoofdstuk wordt uitgewerkt door antwoord te geven op de drie deelvragen die zijn ontstaan tijdens het coderen van de dataset. De drie deelvragen zijn geformuleerd aan de hand van de drie centrale thema's productieproces, genres en complexe verhaalvertelling. De eerste deelvraag is: "Welke functie hebben uitspraken over het productieproces voor de positionering van WESTWORLD als onderdeel van het HBO-*brand*?" De tweede deelvraag is: "Welke functie hebben uitspraken over genres voor de positionering van WESTWORLD als onderdeel van het HBO-*brand*?" De derde deelvraag is: "Welke functie hebben uitspraken over de complexe verhaalvertelling voor de positionering van WESTWORLD als onderdeel van het HBO-*brand*?" Door antwoord te geven op de deelvragen wordt geprobeerd te achterhalen hoe de showrunners hun werkwijze, ervaringen en benadering bij het produceren van WESTWORLD inzetten om de serie te definiëren en hoe zij de serie positioneren als onderdeel van het HBO-*brand*.

## Hoofdstuk 5: Analyse

WESTWORLD werd in oktober 2016 voor het eerst op HBO uitgezonden. De serie gaat over een toekomstig themapark met een westerthema bevolkt door menselijke robots, ook wel “hosts” genoemd. In dit themapark kunnen mensen voor veel geld hun wildste fantasieën realiseren waarbij de robots tot hun dienst staan. Maar wanneer er vreemde praktijken achter de schermen gebeuren, het technisch systeem op hol slaat en de robots zich tegen hun scheppers keren begint de sfeer in het themapark drastisch te veranderen.<sup>65</sup>

### 5.1 Productieproces

Door hun werkwijze, opvattingen en ervaringen bij het productieproces van WESTWORLD te bespreken in interviews en promovideo's construeren de showrunners hun serie als een enorme, ambitieuze en onderscheidende televisieserie die afwijkt van het standaard televisieproductieproces.

"This show is such a behemoth, and you're dealing with so many extras and such a large, ambitious scope. You're not just creating an entire Western world, you're also creating a contemporary technological world. It's basically like doing a couple of very ambitious shows, or movies, simultaneously."<sup>66</sup>

Zoals blijkt uit bovenstaande citaat lijkt WESTWORLD een complex productieproces te hebben. Joy verwijst met het woord “behemoth” naar iets gigantisch. Hiermee wil ze aangeven dat de productie van WESTWORLD groter is dan het publiek zich kan voorstellen. Dit beargumenteert zij door aan te geven dat zij het productieproces beleeft alsof zij meerdere ambitieuze films of series tegelijkertijd aan het produceren zijn. Met het woord “ambitious” lijkt zij extra te benadrukken dat het publiek hier te maken heeft met een gigantische productie.

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<sup>65</sup> “Westworld,” Internet Movie Database, laatst geraadpleegd op 15-06-2017, [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0475784/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0475784/?ref_=nv_sr_1).

<sup>66</sup> Christina Radish, “Westworld’ Showrunners on How the Production Hiatus Helped Them Plan for Future Seasons,” *Collider*, 2 oktober 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <http://collider.com/westworld-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy-interview/#showrunners-hbo>.

Deze gigantische en complexe productie is volgens de showrunners alleen mogelijk met de tijd en middelen die HBO hen geeft. In de interviews en promovideo's geven zij aan dat zij hierdoor kunnen afwijken van het standaard productieproces dat veel televisieseries aanhouden.

"It's an ambitious project, and HBO has encouraged us to take the time and resources that we need to work on each stage of that. One of the fun things about television is that sometimes you find yourself in this place where you have to wear all these hats at once. You have to write, shoot, and cut simultaneously. We wanted to in the second season spend some more time writing, then switch gears into production, then cut. So we're not going to follow the annual year-on-year tradition of television. Television's changing. And the ambition of the project is such that we're going to take our time to get the second season right."<sup>67</sup>

Uit deze uitspraak blijkt dat Nolan en Joy betrokken zijn bij de verschillende fases van de productie, maar dat het moeilijk is om alle taken tegelijk uit te voeren. Nolan geeft in deze uitspraak aan dat zij afwijken van het standaard proces voor televisieseries door eerst het script te schrijven, dan te filmen en vervolgens te monteren. Hierdoor zal er om het jaar een seizoen verschijnen. Hij geeft aan dat HBO hen hier de tijd en middelen voor geeft. Zoals DeFino stelt heeft HBO de ruimte om het productieproces te veranderen omdat een HBO-serie een betaalde zender is.<sup>68</sup> Hierdoor hebben de showrunners niet te maken met adverteerders en is het niet erg dat WESTWORLD nu om het jaar een seizoen uitzendt op HBO.

Uit de volgende uitspraak van Joy blijkt dat HBO zichzelf positioneert als onderscheidende zender door af te wijken van het standaard productieproces voor televisie:

"And then we started on Westworld, and realized that when they say "It's not TV, it's HBO," they're not kidding. It's somewhere between the feature experience and the TV experience. As a showrunner, you can kind of outsource that to a trusted partner. You can kind of let

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<sup>67</sup> Daniel Holloway, "'Westworld' Creators on Why HBO Drama Won't Return Before 2018," *Variety*, 5 december 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <https://variety.com/2016/tv/news/westworld-creators-return-2018-1201933825/>.

<sup>68</sup> DeFino, 122.

that go. But here, we wanted to engage very directly and be very hands-on with the actors and the designers and the crew, and really build a world from the ground up."<sup>69</sup>

In deze uitspraak geeft Joy aan dat zij het productieproces beleeft als een productie die zich bevindt tussen een televisie- en filmproductie in. Via haar beleving van het productieproces lijkt zij aan te geven dat de productie van WESTWORLD zich onderscheidt van andere televisieproducties omdat zij als showrunners invloed hebben op de verschillende productiefases waarbij ze nauw samenwerken met cast en crew en dus meer invloed hebben op het eindproduct. Joy citeert hier de slogan "It's not TV, it's HBO" om aan te geven dat HBO kiest voor een nauwe samenwerking in alle fases om zichzelf te kunnen onderscheiden van andere televisieproducties.

Naast het bespreken van de werkwijze tijdens het productieproces wordt door de showrunners dieper ingegaan op de verschillende fases in de productie die bijdragen aan de positionering van WESTWORLD. Bij het coderen van het productieproces blijkt dat subthema's ontwikkeling van het idee van WESTWORLD, het schrijven van het script en het filmproces een centrale rol spelen in de uitspraken van de showrunners over het productieproces van WESTWORLD. De volgende uitspraak gaat over het ontwikkelen van het idee naar aanleiding van de film WESTWORLD uit 1973.

"Twenty-three years ago he sat down with Michael Crichton, who had directed the original film, to talk about remaking it, but he couldn't figure out how to tackle it. Twenty years later it dawned on him that part of the difficulty was that the film is packed with ideas. There are so many ideas that J.J. thought, "There's a series here"."<sup>70</sup>

In deze uitspraak van Nolan worden verschillende elementen van het idee belicht. Het eerste element is dat WESTWORLD een bewerking is van de gelijknamige originele film uit 1973.<sup>71</sup> Nolan geeft aan dat deze film volgens producent J.J. Abrams vol met ideeën zit die verder uitgewerkt kunnen worden in een televisieserie. Het tweede element is dat

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<sup>69</sup> Scott Meslow, "Westworld Creator Jonathan Nolan Doesn't Care That You Figured Out the Big Twist," *GQ Magazine*, 5 december 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <http://www.gq.com/story/westworld-jonathan-nolan>.

<sup>70</sup> Mark Yarm, "The Couple Behind HBO's *Westworld* Want To Know What Is Wrong With Us All," *Wired*, 22 september 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <https://www.wired.com/2016/09/couple-behind-hbos-westworld-want-know-wrong-us/>.

<sup>71</sup> WESTWORLD, film, gecreëerd door Michael Crichton, Verenigde Staten: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), 1973.

Abrams drieëntwintig jaar met het idee heeft rondgelopen. Door het aantal jaren te noemen wordt bij het publiek het idee gewekt dat het een complex en waardevol idee moet zijn aangezien Abrams doorgezet heeft en er uiteindelijk een serie over maakt. Het laatste element uit de uitspraak is dat Abrams met de bedenker Michael Crichton heeft gesproken over het bewerken van de film. Door met de bedenker te gaan praten blijkt dat Abrams niet alleen Crichtons *WESTWORLD* wil bewerken, maar dat hij tevens zoveel mogelijk kennis op wil doen over de mythologie van de film om de mythologie uit de film zo goed mogelijk uit te kunnen werken. Dit construeert een beeld van Abrams als een toegewijde en ambitieuze producent met zijn aanpak van de bewerking van de film naar een televisieserie.

Daarnaast kan de betrokkenheid van een succesvolle producent als J.J. Abrams bij de productie van de televisieserie *WESTWORLD* tevens als een signaal gezien worden voor het construeren van *WESTWORLD* als een enorm en ambitieus project. Volgens DeFino is het trekken van grote namen uit de film- en televisie-industrie een strategie van kwaliteitstelevisie die door HBO wordt toegepast.<sup>72</sup> Door Abrams te noemen worden door het publiek associaties gemaakt met andere producties waaraan Abrams heeft gewerkt.<sup>73</sup> Omdat hij een bekende naam is in de televisie- en filmindustrie zou gezegd kunnen worden dat hij zelf een merk is. Dit verwijst naar Mann's concept van *brand-managers* waarbij de showrunners meer doen dan enkel het script schrijven en de serie produceren.<sup>74</sup> Door Abrams te noemen wordt zijn imago ingezet als merk voor de positionering van *WESTWORLD*.

Naast de serie te positioneren door het bespreken van Abrams' betrokkenheid wordt *WESTWORLD* door de showrunners gedefinieerd door over het script te praten. Zij bespreken het proces van het schrijven van het script door hun werkwijze en ervaringen te delen waarbij Silicon Valley genoemd wordt.

"We went on deep background with sources, talking about the state of AI and where it's going. In Silicon Valley, a lot of people aren't willing to go on the record, because it's an

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<sup>72</sup> DeFino, 8.

<sup>73</sup> J.J. Abrams staat bekend om de series *ALIAS*, *FRINGE* en *LOST*. Met *LOST* heeft Abrams twee Emmy Awards gewonnen. "Internet Movie Database," geraadpleegd op 03-05-2017, [http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0009190/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0009190/?ref_=nv_sr_1).

<sup>74</sup> Mann, "It's Not TV, It's Brand Management TV," 100.

arms-race environment. We modeled so many aspects of the show on their intense secrecy."<sup>75</sup>

Uit deze uitspraak blijkt dat de showrunners experts hebben kunnen spreken in Silicon Valley. Hiermee benadrukt Nolan dat er sprake is van geheimhouding bij bedrijven in Silicon Valley door de hoge concurrentie als het gaat om de ontwikkeling van *Artificial Intelligence* (A.I.). Nolan geeft aan dat ze deze geheimhouding over hebben genomen in de verhaallijn. Echter, uit deze geheimhouding blijkt ook dat de experts en de bedrijven niet direct informatie over de nieuwste ontwikkelingen zullen delen. De showrunners hebben experts kunnen spreken en hebben informatie gekregen over de nieuwste ontwikkelingen. Deze ontwikkelingen worden door de showrunners verwerkt in het verhaal. Door het overnemen van de geheimhouding en de ontwikkelingen blijkt dat het research aspect van Silicon Valley een belangrijke rol speelt bij de invulling van WESTWORLD.

Dat de showrunners zo dichtbij de experts kunnen komen zegt iets over de grootte van de productie van WESTWORLD en de mogelijkheden die de showrunners hebben voor de ontwikkeling van de serie, want door de geheimhouding van bedrijven in Silicon Valley zou het juist moeilijk moeten zijn om aan informatie te komen. Silicon Valley zou hier net als het noemen van Abrams gezien kunnen worden als hulpmiddel voor het positioneren van WESTWORLD als kwaliteitstelevisie. Ondanks dat Mann zich richt op de showrunner als *brand*-manager zou de connectie met een bekend ICT-gebied als Silicon Valley en de kennis die opgedaan wordt daar een bijdrage ingezet worden voor de positionering van WESTWORLD als onderdeel van het HBO-*brand*.

Daarnaast wordt het productieproces door de showrunners ingezet om WESTWORLD door de voordelen van het filmen op locatie te bespreken. Deze voordelen ondersteunen de opvatting van de showrunners dat WESTWORLD een onderscheidende serie is. Een voordeel dat Nolan geeft is dat het de prestaties van de cast en crew bevordert:

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<sup>75</sup> Mark Yarm, "The Couple Behind HBO's *Westworld* Want To Know What Is Wrong With Us All," *Wired*, 22 september 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <https://www.wired.com/2016/09/couple-behind-hbos-westworld-want-know-wrong-us/>.

"The whole experience, for me, reaffirmed the importance of practical location photography. Of going to real places and building real things, and putting that in front of a camera. Not just for the look of it, but for the actors and everyone else."<sup>76</sup>

In deze uitspraak wordt het signaal afgegeven dat het filmen op locatie de kwaliteit van de serie bevordert doordat de cast en crew zich beter in kunnen leven in de situatie van de verhaallijn en dat de sets en omgeving realistischer overkomen op beeld. Hiermee lijkt Nolan aan te geven dat het filmen op locatie de prestaties van cast en crew bevorderen en dat er iets unieks gecreëerd wordt dat niet gecreëerd kan worden in een studio.

Uit het analyseren van uitspraken over het productieproces blijkt dat de showrunners het publiek helpen om WESTWORLD te positioneren door het delen van hun werkwijze, opvattingen en benaderingen. Het bespreken van het productieproces helpt het publiek betekenis te geven aan WESTWORLD en de serie te positioneren als onderdeel van het HBO-*brand* waarbij de serie met het productieproces boven de kwaliteitsnormen van standaardtelevisie geplaatst kan worden. Hierbij wordt WESTWORLD gepositioneerd als een ambitieuze en onderscheidende serie. Via de uitspraken over het de ontwikkeling van het idee, het schrijven van het script en het filmproces geven de showrunners het signaal af dat de gedachte achter de slogan "It's not TV. It's HBO." nog steeds van toepassing is en HBO kwaliteit heeft ondanks dat het televisie is.

## 5.2. Televisiegenres

Naast het analyseren van uitspraken over het productieproces blijkt dat de showrunners tevens hun definiëring van de toegepaste genres gebruiken als functie om WESTWORLD te kunnen positioneren. In de analyse is gekeken naar hoe de showrunners de genres definiëren en gebruiken om WESTWORLD te positioneren. In de uitspraken geven de showrunners aan dat zij genres sciencefiction en western willen herdefiniëren. Dit blijkt uit de uitspraken doordat zij zeggen dat films en andere series de conventies van de

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<sup>76</sup> Scott Meslow, "Westworld Creator Jonathan Nolan Doesn't Care That You Figured Out the Big Twist," *GQ Magazine*, 5 december 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <http://www.gq.com/story/westworld-jonathan-nolan>.



genres blijven herhalen waardoor volgens hen interessante concepten van de genres onbenut blijven. Daarnaast geven zij aan dat zij inspelen op de nieuwe mogelijkheden bij het genre sciencefiction door de nieuwe technologische ontwikkelingen die onder andere gedaan worden in Silicon Valley.

Wanneer de showrunners spreken over de invulling van het sciencefictiongenre wordt net als bij het bespreken van het productieproces Silicon Valley aangehaald.

"To explore artificial intelligence and the potential emergence of sentience in a time when, literally, incubators and Silicon Valley are working on the same thing, seems like an impossible opportunity to deny."<sup>77</sup>

Joy bespreekt de ontwikkelingen van A.I. die plaatsvinden in Silicon Valley en geeft aan dat die ontwikkelingen mogelijkheden bieden voor het genre die niet genegeerd mogen worden. Door Silicon Valley te noemen wordt door Joy in de uitspraak nadruk gelegd op het heden door de huidige ontwikkelingen te benoemen. In deze uitspraak van Joy lijkt de nadruk te liggen op vernieuwingen in de technologie en het sciencefiction genre.

Deze benadering komt tevens naar voren in de volgende uitspraak van Nolan waarbij hij spreekt over A.I. en hoe dit de laatste tijd gepresenteerd is in films en series.

"I think this is a subject that we have seen so much of in film and television that we've become a little immune to it. We've come to regard it solely as the problem of science fiction, but it's actually happening."<sup>78</sup>

Nolan zegt hierover dat wij hier immuun voor zijn geworden. Hij probeert hier duidelijk te maken door het woord immuun te gebruiken dat de herhaalde presentatie van A.I. niet zo veel effect meer heeft. Nolan zegt dat 'wij' het alleen als een probleem van het sciencefiction genre zien, maar hij stelt dat er veranderingen wat betreft A.I. plaatsvinden, dus dat de herhaalde presentatie niet meer hoeft. Uit deze uitspraken van

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<sup>77</sup> Eric Eidelstein, "Still Have No Idea What 'Westworld' Is About? Let the Creators Explain," *Complex*, 30 september 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <http://uk.complex.com/pop-culture/2016/09/westworld-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy-interview>.

<sup>78</sup> Matt Miller, "Westworld Is Not the Next *Game of Thrones* – It's More Than That," *Esquire*, 29 september 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <http://www.esquire.com/entertainment/tv/news/a49073/westworld-interview-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy/>.

de showrunners kan geïnterpreteerd worden dat zij dankzij de kennis van Silicon Valley A.I. op een andere en nieuwe manier kunnen benaderen.

Joy maakt daarnaast de opmerking dat door de ontwikkeling van A.I. dit concept niet zozeer meer aanvoelt als onderdeel van sciencefiction. "It's a timely moment to be exploring the evolution of sentience and artificial intelligence because it doesn't feel like science fiction, at this point. It feels like an examination of current events."<sup>79</sup> Joy ziet de twee aspecten van A.I. en *sentience* meer als hedendaagse ontwikkelingen. Het concept A.I. dat voorheen gezien werd als een onderdeel van sciencefiction wordt nu door Joy los gezien van het sciencefictiongenre. Met deze uitspraken over A.I. en het genre sciencefiction wordt het signaal gegeven dat de showrunners proberen om te breken met conventies binnen het genre door het concept van A.I. te vernieuwen. Door een vernieuwende benadering lijken de showrunners met hun uitspraken duidelijk te maken dat WESTWORLD zich met een eigen invulling van het sciencefictiongenre onderscheidt van andere films en series met hetzelfde genre.

Naast het bespreken van het sciencefictiongenre gaan de showrunners in op het genre Western dat tevens aanwezig is in WESTWORLD. Het verschil met het bespreken van het sciencefictiongenre is dat de showrunners met het bespreken van het westerngenre geen concepten van het genre bespreken maar dieper ingaan op de inhoud van WESTWORLD. Nolan bespreekt hoe zij het genre anders benaderen door personages die normaliter een bijrol hebben in een standaard westernverhaal in WESTWORLD een belangrijke rol in het verhaal spelen.

"I think there's a double layer of subverting expectations with point of view in this. We are looking through the West through the POV of characters that are normally the sidekick, the damsel in distress, the helper, and the madam who gives a sassy word or two to people passing through town. In this, they're not peripheral characters. They're their own heroes. Each of them has their own agency and history and dreams and fears."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Christina Radish, "'Westworld' Showrunners on How the Production Hiatus Helped Them Plan for Future Seasons," *Collider*, 2 oktober 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <http://collider.com/westworld-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy-interview/#showrunners-hbo>.

<sup>80</sup> Christina Radish, "'Westworld' Showrunners on How the Production Hiatus Helped Them Plan for Future Seasons," *Collider*, 2 oktober 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <http://collider.com/westworld-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy-interview/#showrunners-hbo>.

Met deze uitspraak geeft Joy aan dat zij het westerngenre ondermijnen door te breken met de conventies. Zij geeft aan dat personages met een bijrol op de voorgrond geplaatst worden in het verhaal die een eigen achtergrond hebben met dromen en angsten. Daarnaast bespreekt zij dat de showrunners tevens breken met de typering van genderrollen in het westerngenre:

“The tale of the old West is one often told through the lens of the men who conquered it. Of course, we have a plethora of incredible actors playing really unique characters in this, but the spotlight isn’t just on the male experience in the West. It’s also on the women, and there’s a whole eco-system there that was ripe to be explored.”<sup>81</sup>

Joy geeft aan dat zij door het breken met de traditionele rolverdeling van gender in het westerngenre er een nieuw soort ecosysteem ontstaat waardoor er nieuwe ideeën en invalshoeken ontwikkeld kunnen worden binnen het westerngenre.

Uit de analyse van de uitspraken van de showrunners over genres blijkt dat de showrunners beide genres op een vernieuwende en onderscheidende manier toepassen in *WESTWORLD*. Bij het bespreken van het sciencefictiongenre wordt door de showrunners de nadruk gelegd op hoe zij de hedendaagse ontwikkelingen verwerken in de serie en hierdoor A.I. op een nieuwe manier kunnen benaderen en weergeven. Daarnaast wordt bij de invulling van het westerngenre gebroken met de rolverdeling door meer vrouwelijke personages en personages met een bijrol op de voorgrond te zetten.

Volgens Jason Mittell worden genres gebruikt voor branding en om doelgroepen te produceren.<sup>82</sup> Hierbij gaat het om het categoriseren van de serie. Door de herdefiniëring van de genres te bespreken via *industrial texts* kunnen de showrunners *WESTWORLD* positioneren als een unieke, onderscheidende en vernieuwende serie is. Net als bij de analyse van de uitspraken over het productieproces hebben uitspraken over de genres de functie om *WESTWORLD* te positioneren als onderdeel van het HBO-brand als distinctieve en ambitieuze serie waarin genres herdefinieerd worden.

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<sup>81</sup> Christina Radish, “Westworld’ Showrunners on How the Production Hiatus Helped Them Plan for Future Seasons,” *Collider*, 2 oktober 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <http://collider.com/westworld-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy-interview/#showrunners-hbo>.

<sup>82</sup> Jason Mittell, *Genre and Television: From Cop Shows to Cartoons in American Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004),7.

### 5.3 Complexe verhaalvertelling

Het derde thema waar uitspraken over gedaan worden door de showrunners om WESTWORLD te positioneren is complexe verhaalvertelling. Bij de analyse van uitspraken over complexe verhaalvertelling ligt de nadruk op welke manier uitspraken over complexe verhaalvertelling bijdragen aan de positionering van WESTWORLD binnen het HBO-brand. In de uitspraken worden verschillende aspecten besproken door de showrunners die wijzen op een complexe verhaalvertelling die wordt toegepast in WESTWORLD. Bij het analyseren van uitspraken over complexe verhaalvertelling zijn drie sub-thema's door de showrunners gebruikt om WESTWORLD te positioneren. Dit zijn de sub-thema's plotconstructie, wisselingen van perspectieven en empathie oproepen bij de kijkers.

Deze sub-thema's zijn volgens Mittell aspecten van "narrative complexity" ofwel complexe verhaalvertelling.<sup>83</sup> Volgens Mittell staat HBO sinds de populariteit van THE SOPRANOS bekend om het toepassen van *narrative complexity* in eigen series.<sup>84</sup> Andere HBO-series met deze verhaalvertellingen die hij aanhaalt zijn THE WIRE, SIX FEET UNDER en GAME OF THRONES. Mittell geeft aan dat met complexe verhaalvertelling niet elke HBO-serie de populariteit van THE SOPRANOS bereikt, maar dat de complexe verhaalvertelling wel prestige oplevert die het imago van het HBO-brand bevordert.<sup>85</sup> Dit betekent dat door het aanhalen van aspecten van complexe verhaalvertelling de showrunners deze strategie van HBO voortzetten. Door verschillende aspecten van complexe verhaalvertelling aan te halen kunnen zij aangeven hoe de toepassing van complexe verhaalvertelling bijdraagt aan de positionering van WESTWORLD als HBO-brand.

Bij het bespreken van WESTWORLD gaan de showrunners grotendeels in op de inhoud. Maar naast inhoudelijke antwoorden doen de showrunners ook uitspraken over het construeren van het plot. Hieruit blijkt dat de showrunners zich met hun constructie

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<sup>83</sup> Mittell heeft onderzoek gedaan naar *narrative complexity* in televisieseries waarbij hij dit concept omschrijft als *plot driven*. Dit betekent volgens hem dat de verhaallijnen centraal staan in de series. Volgens Mittell is er een wisselwerking in de verhaalvertelling waarbij lange termijn verhaalvertelling afgewisseld worden in de afleveringen met korte verhaallijnen die binnen één aflevering afgerond worden. Jason Mittell, "Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television," *The Velvet Light Trap* 58 (2006): 34

<sup>84</sup> Jason Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics Of Contemporary Television Storytelling* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 17.

<sup>85</sup> Jason Mittell, "Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television," *The Velvet Light Trap* 58 (2006): 34.

proberen te onderscheiden door kennis over de nieuwste technologische ontwikkelingen toe te passen in het plot.

"I think we wanted the show to explore the uncanny valley completely. We wanted this idea of near AI (artificial intelligence), or near-human A.I. It's an interesting one, because as you approach the question of intelligence and consciousness and sentience, the fabric of that is very subtle. It's the suspense of what makes us alive."<sup>86</sup>

Nolan geeft aan dat ze proberen het verhaal in de serie op een vernieuwende en unieke manier te construeren door vragen te stellen bij concepten intelligentie, bewustzijn en waarnemingsvermogen. Uit de uitspraak blijkt dat de showrunners met het plot dus verder gaan dan het bestaande materiaal rondom A.I. door vragen te stellen over het onderwerp aan de hand van de genoemde concepten om zo WESTWORLD te kunnen positioneren als een onderscheidende serie.

Naast het bespreken van de constructie van de serie worden vergelijkingen gemaakt met de constructie van videogames. "The trend is toward human beings' ability to turn more and more of their world into game space and narrative space—you've got peak TV, you have VR."<sup>87</sup> Met deze uitspraak maakt Nolan duidelijk dat er een trend is die ervoor zorgt dat series steeds meer elementen overnemen van videogames voor de vorming van de verhaalvertelling. Door *virtual reality* aan te halen legt Nolan de nadruk op de huidige technologie. Ondanks dat meerdere series elementen uit videogames overnemen, lijken de showrunners van WESTWORLD zich te willen onderscheiden van deze trend door naast het overnemen van elementen uit videogames nieuwe technologische ontwikkelingen te verwerken in de verhaalvertelling.

Een ander aspect van complexe verhaalvertelling die de showrunners bespreken om de positionering van WESTWORLD te ondersteunen als onderscheidende serie is de wisselingen van perspectieven. Dit blijkt uit de volgende uitspraak van Nolan:

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<sup>86</sup> Matt Miller, "Westworld Is Not the Next *Game of Thrones* – It's More Than That," *Esquire*, 29 september 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <http://www.esquire.com/entertainment/tv/news/a49073/westworld-interview-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy/>.

<sup>87</sup> Mark Yarm, "The Couple Behind HBO's *Westworld* Want To Know What Is Wrong With Us All," *Wired*, 22 september 2016, geraadpleegd op 17-03-2017, <https://www.wired.com/2016/09/couple-behind-hbos-westworld-want-know-wrong-us/>.

"When J.J. [Abrams] called Lisa and myself, he pitched us this idea of, what if we turn the structure around and started with the hosts. For us, that gave us a way to play with everything that we're interested in, all at once. It's the ultimate playground for us because we deal with questions about artificial intelligence, which is something I've long been fascinated by, but also human intelligence, or the lack thereof, human behavior, and interactive, immersive storytelling."<sup>88</sup>

In deze uitspraak wordt duidelijk gemaakt dat het verhaal verteld wordt vanuit de perspectieven van menselijke personages en van de robots die leven in het themapark. Nolan benadrukt hoe interessant het voor hen als showrunners is om het verhaal vanuit het perspectief van de robots te vertellen, omdat zij hun creativiteit kwijt kunnen in de concepten A.I. en menselijke gedrag en deze uit kunnen werken in een interactief en meeslepend verhaal. Uit de uitspraak van Nolan blijkt dat de serie onderscheidend en vernieuwend is doordat zij de structuur omdraaien en het verhaal vertellen vanuit het perspectief van de robots.

Daarnaast wordt de connectie met HBO door Nolan gemaakt als het gaat om het toepassen van complexe verhaalvertelling. "One of the great things about this omnibus, ensemble storytelling that HBO has mastered is the ability to shift that perspective and find empathy for different people, and that's something that we want to continue to play with throughout."<sup>89</sup> Nolan haalt de aanpak van HBO aan waarbij hij aangeeft dat series van HBO vaak vanuit verschillende perspectieven verteld worden en waarbij empathie ontstaat voor verschillende personages. Hij geeft aan dat zij deze aanpak hebben overgenomen en proberen deze empathie voor personages verder te ontwikkelen.

Door de unieke verhaalvertelling vanuit het perspectief van verschillende robots te vertellen, kunnen de showrunners op een vernieuwende manier de empathie voor personages opbouwen. Dit is een volgende aspect van complexe verhaalvertelling dat door de showrunners aangehaald wordt in de interviews en promovideo's. In de volgende citaat van Joy komt de benadering van de showrunners over dit aspect duidelijk naar voren.

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<sup>88</sup> Christina Radish, "'Westworld' Showrunners on How the Production Hiatus Helped Them Plan for Future Seasons," *Collider*, 2 oktober 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <http://collider.com/westworld-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy-interview/#showrunners-hbo>.

<sup>89</sup> Daniel Holloway, "'Westworld' Creators on Why HBO Drama Won't Return Before 2018," *Variety*, 5 december 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <https://variety.com/2016/tv/news/westworld-creators-return-2018-1201933825/>.

"You know, building that empathetic connection between the audience and the host is something we worked very hard to create, both on the page and in performance. I think the question that we pose in this series—"Have you ever questioned the nature of your reality?"—is applied to the hosts, but if they seemed lifelike and we empathize with them, then it might act as a mirror of us. Then the audience is also asking, "Have you ever questioned the nature of your reality and your place within it?" So, in making them as lifelike as possible, they form a kind of mirror to the guest within the park and also, hopefully, the audience itself."<sup>90</sup>

Uit dit citaat van Joy blijkt dat de showrunners bewust inspelen op de empathie tussen de kijker en de personages. Zij beschrijft hoe zij omgaan met vragen rondom realiteit en hoe de robots kunnen dienen als een soort spiegel voor de kijkers doordat zij net mensen lijken. Joy geeft aan dat hun weergave van de robots in de serie de kijkers op een soort meta-niveau laat nadenken over hun eigen realiteit. Hierbij wordt geïnsinueerd dat de serie verder gaat dan het vertellen van een verhaal en de kijkers uitdaagt door ze aan het denken te zetten over een diepere gedachte die schuilgaat achter het verhaal.

Deze constructie die Joy beschrijft lijkt op wat Mittell "operational aesthetics" noemt.<sup>91</sup> Hiermee bedoelt Mittell dat de kijker aan de ene kant kan genieten van de verhaalwereld in een televisieserie, maar dat de kijker aan de andere kant zich bewust is van de constructie van de serie en deze waarneemt.<sup>92</sup> Door de constructie te bespreken in interviews en promovideo's wordt op voorhand de nadruk gelegd op de manier van vertellen in *WESTWORLD*. Door de constructie voor de complexe verhaalvertelling naar voren te laten komen in uitspraken over het oproepen van empathie wordt *WESTWORLD* gepositioneerd als een serie die de strategie van kwaliteitstelevisie van HBO volgt maar het wel op een vernieuwende manier probeert te construeren.

Een ander kenmerk van HBO die naar voren komt in uitspraken over het oproepen van empathie voor de personages is het inzetten van geweld, grof taalgebruik

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<sup>90</sup> Matt Miller, "Westworld Is Not the Next *Game of Thrones* – It's More Than That," *Esquire*, 29 september 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <http://www.esquire.com/entertainment/tv/news/a49073/westworld-interview-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy/>.

<sup>91</sup> Mittell, "Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television," 35.

<sup>92</sup> Mittell, "Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television," 35.

en seksuele situaties.<sup>93</sup> Joy bespreekt in het volgende citaat hoe zij seksueel geweld inzetten in het verhaal om empathie bij de kijker op te roepen.

"Well, I think if the implied sexual violence in the show, if it's jarring for people, makes them think and makes them empathize with the machines, then that's part of a conversation that we wanted to start. There are so many video games out there where violence and sexual violence is just something that you play. And here, because you think of them as the "other" because they are just for recreation, it's just a game. Now, in pushing that boundary and making the host more and more lifelike, we start to question: When does it become immoral, whether or not these are actual human creatures, to exercise these violent urges upon them?"<sup>94</sup>

Joy geeft aan dat zij de grenzen van realiteit opzoeken door de robots zo menselijk mogelijk te maken waardoor zij niet meer gezien worden als "de ander" maar als gelijke van de mens. Hierbij maakt Joy de vergelijking met videogames en omschrijft zij de ongelijke rolverdeling van personages in videogames en dat geweld en seksueel geweld anders beoordeeld wordt in videogames omdat het videogamepersonages overkomen die niet gelijk staan aan mensen in werkelijkheid. Zij zoeken met de serie die grenzen op door mensen te laten nadenken over de rolverdeling tussen mens en robot in WESTWORLD.

Door de verschillende aspecten van complexe verhaalvertelling te benoemen wordt duidelijk dat de showrunners WESTWORLD proberen te positioneren als een authentieke en vernieuwende serie. Door de verschillende aspecten van complexe verhaalvertelling wordt duidelijk dat WESTWORLD een serie is die de complexe verhaalvertelling toepast binnen het HBO-*brand*. Het lijkt erop dat de stelling van Mittell aansluit bij de resultaten waarbij WESTWORLD het imago van het HBO-*brand* kan bevorderen met de prestige die toegekend wordt aan de serie door de constructie van de complexe verhaalvertelling die toegepast wordt in WESTWORLD.

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<sup>93</sup> McCabe en Akass, "Sex, Swearing and Respectability," 69.

<sup>94</sup> Matt Miller, "Westworld Is Not the Next *Game of Thrones* – It's More Than That," *Esquire*, 29 september 2016, geraadpleegd op 27-04-2017, <http://www.esquire.com/entertainment/tv/news/a49073/westworld-interview-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy/>.



## Hoofdstuk 6: Conclusie

Als er gekeken wordt naar de strategie achter “It’s not TV. It’s HBO” waar de succesvolle strategie van kwaliteitstelevsie van HBO begon, blijkt dat de showrunners van WESTWORLD dezelfde strategie die HBO al jaren gebruikt blijven toepassen. Bij het bespreken van het productieproces van WESTWORLD blijkt dat HBO’s strategie van kwaliteitstelevsie toegepast wordt waarbij WESTWORLD tussen het productieproces van film en televisie in zit doordat het een productieproces met hoge kwaliteitsnormen heeft. Met het bespreken van de herdefiniëring van genres kijken de showrunners verder dan de genreconventies en bespreken hun benaderingen om de serie te positioneren als een unieke, vernieuwende en onderscheidende serie die past binnen het HBO-*brand*. Hiermee gaan de showrunners met de herdefiniëring van genres verder dan HBO’s slogan waarbij WESTWORLD zich op het gebied van genres zich volledig probeert te onderscheiden van films en televisieseries met dezelfde genres. Bij het bespreken van complexe verhaalvertelling wordt ingegaan op de constructie van WESTWORLD door de aspecten plotconstructie, wisselingen van perspectieven en empathie met personages oproepen te bespreken waarmee aangegeven wordt dat de serie past binnen de complexe verhaalvertelling die volgens Mittell prestige oplevert voor de serie en het imago van HBO.<sup>95</sup>

De serie wordt gepositioneerd als een onderscheidende vernieuwende serie, een strategie dat al jaren toegepast wordt bij HBO. Thompson’s stelling dat HBO zich onderscheidt met vasthoudendheid en aanpassingsvermogen lijkt nog steeds van toepassing.<sup>96</sup> HBO past zich aan door zich te vernieuwen met het herdefiniëren van genres en productie positioneren de showrunners WESTWORLD als een op zichzelf staande serie dat tevens past binnen het HBO-*brand* door HBO’s strategie van kwaliteitstelevsie in het productieproces, definiëring van genre en de complexe verhaalvertelling toe te passen. Door het delen van hun ervaringen en ideeën lijken de showrunners van WESTWORLD waardevolle *brand*-managers voor het HBO-*brand*. Dit sluit aan bij de stelling van Mann waarbij kwaliteitstelevsie en “televisieauteurs” met

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<sup>95</sup> Mittell, “Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television,” 34.

<sup>96</sup> Thompson, “Preface,” xviii.

elkaar verbonden zijn.<sup>97</sup> HBO lijkt de showrunners de ruimte te geven zodat zij hun talenten en ervaringen in kunnen zetten voor de distributie voor WESTWORLD.

Dit onderzoek laat de benadering van de showrunners van WESTWORLD zien en hoe de serie gepositioneerd wordt binnen het HBO-*brand*. Hierbij is geprobeerd om te analyseren hoe *industrial texts* interviews en promovideo's ingezet kunnen worden voor het hervormen van het imago van HBO en hoe dit invloed heeft op de positionering van HBO in de Amerikaanse televisie-industrie in de *post-network era*. Door de showrunners als *brand*-managers in te zetten, representeren zij de productiezijde van WESTWORLD. Om het HBO-*brand* beter te kunnen positioneren in de Amerikaanse televisie-industrie in de *post-network era* zou er meer onderzoek gedaan moeten worden naar HBO-series die in deze tijdsperiode geproduceerd worden. Door *industrial texts* van verschillende HBO-series te analyseren die geproduceerd zijn in deze tijdsperiode kan het HBO-*brand* beter in kaart gebracht worden.

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<sup>97</sup> Mann, "It's Not TV, It's Brand Management TV," 102.

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## Bijlage 1: Transcripties interviews en promovideo's

Legenda:

-  = bruikbare uitspraken
-  = bruikbare informatie afkomstig van de bron
-  = informatie over WESTWORLD

Interviews:

### **The Couple Behind HBO's *Westworld* Want To Know What Is Wrong With Us All**

***Wired*, 22 september 2016, Mark Yarm**

JONATHAN NOLAN AND Lisa Joy might have created *Westworld*, HBO's new series about an android-populated Western-themed park, but this isn't their first rodeo. Nolan cowrote five of older brother Christopher's movies, including *Interstellar*. Joy is a TV veteran who's writing the new big-screen *Battlestar Galactica*. However, *Westworld*—based on the 1973 cult-classic film—is the first project that Nolan and Joy, married since 2009, have collaborated on. Here, they discuss *Westworld*'s heady sci-fi themes and their domestic partnership.

The original *Westworld* came out in 1973. What made you want to revisit this world?

JONATHAN (JONAH) NOLAN: I've been working for several years now with [show executive producer] J.J. Abrams on *Person of Interest*. Twenty-three years ago he sat down with Michael Crichton, who had directed the original film, to talk about remaking it, but he couldn't figure out how to tackle it. Twenty years later it dawned on him that part of the difficulty was that the film is packed with ideas. For instance, there's a throwaway line in the original about the thing that's propagating the error from robot to robot being like a virus. I looked it up, and the first computer virus didn't appear in the wild until 1974. There are so many ideas that J.J. thought, "There's a series here." Unlike the movie, lots of the story is told from the POV of the park's android "hosts." How did that decision come about?

NOLAN: The robots' obliviousness to the rules of the world makes them great protagonists. I remember arguing with my brother over *Memento*; he wanted to do it backward, because going backward stranded the audience in the protagonist's perspective. **Westworld's hosts share something in common with him in that they have a certain amount of amnesia—in this case, the amnesia has been built in by design.**

LISA JOY: Jonah and I would joke that if we were hosts, we would be so easy to program because our loop is so tiny: We would breakfast together, drive into the office, work, work, work, eat lunch and dinner out of a Styrofoam box, work, work, work, try to get home, put our daughter to bed, rinse and repeat.

NOLAN: Whoever's writing our lives is—

JOY: —really uninspired.

How much do you strive for accuracy on the show? Did you have advisers?

NOLAN: We went on deep background with sources, talking about the state of AI and where it's going. In Silicon Valley, a lot of people aren't willing to go on the record, because it's an arms-race environment. We modeled so many aspects of the show on their intense secrecy. The nice thing about the Western part is that there's no obligation to accuracy whatsoever. Westworld itself is a pastiche of one character's romantic ideas about the West: You have some of the elements of an 1840s Western; you have the trains from the 1870s and 1880s; some of the firearms are from the turn of the century. In a meta moment, one of the human guests describes Westworld as being much more than "guns and tits and all that mindless shit I usually enjoy." How do you achieve a balance between the mindless and the more high-minded concepts?

NOLAN: That question is very much at the center of what we're doing. The trend is toward human beings' ability to turn more and more of their world into game space and narrative space—you've got peak TV, you have VR. We're starting to ask, why are all these narratives so similar? Why are many of these narratives so violent? And the series very much asks the question: What the fuck is wrong with us?

Reporters at a recent press event questioned HBO programming head Casey Bloys about the network's portrayal of sexual violence—an exchange that was spurred in large part by *Westworld's* pilot, in which one of the female androids is raped, off-camera, by a human male.

JOY: The way we portray violence of any sort, including sexual acts, is something that we spend a lot of time talking about. With every scene, we ask ourselves: Is it integral to the story? Are we doing it in a fair way, not a gratuitous way? Of course, questions like that are subjective. Especially with a theme park in which humans are encouraged to let their id run free, to indulge in whatever their heart desires, it felt like these were topics that we did have to touch on in order to fully explore human nature.

NOLAN: This is a story about how people behave when no one is keeping score and there are no apparent consequences. You have to deal in these transgressions.

Were you anticipating this sort of controversy?

JOY: We expect the show to be thought-provoking, because it's thought-provoking for us. When I play Grand Theft Auto, I'm such a nerdy little law abider because I've always had this active imagination in which I sympathize and empathize with things. When other people turn off the game, they don't think, "Oh my goodness, I just ran over four pedestrians, how terrible. I wonder if their family has health insurance?" Now, as technology develops, you start to wonder: Where is that line where it becomes immoral not to have empathy, even if you know that these creatures are artificial?

As Jonah mentioned, the original *Westworld* was very prescient. When we look back in 40 years, how do you think your version of *Westworld* will be perceived?

JOY: I think the thing that will endure about *Westworld* will be the questions it poses. Forty years from now, there will be ways in which we're able to hack our DNA. So in the future we might be looking at the show from the other way around—empathizing with the robots because we're now the robots, the ones whose code is hackable.

If you were given the chance to visit *Westworld*, what would be the first inappropriate thing you'd do?

NOLAN: Oh dear ... based on my track record with role-playing games, I'd be a bit of a square. But I do think a train robbery would be high on the list.



JOY: Before marriage, I think I would have at least kissed a gunslinger or two. I'm not sure about anything beyond that, but I can certainly see myself getting some smooches.

## ***Westworld* Is Not the Next *Game of Thrones* – It's Much More Than That** ***Esquire*, 29 september 2016, Matt Miller**

**The showrunners talk humanity, masculinity, and artificial intelligence in HBO's heady new sci-fi series.**

A fly landing on an eyeball, the light touch of a finger on a synthetic lip, a naked human form sitting exposed as an object of beauty formed by either god or man—*Westworld* is a show that explores what it means to be human by confusing our notions of sentient life and artificial intelligence.

HBO's newest science fiction series takes place in a near future in which wealthy guests vacation in *Westworld*. The titular setting is an amusement park of cowboys and Indians that immerses patrons into the wild American frontier, where the damsels, sheriffs, heroes, and villains are all near perfect mechanical humans known as "hosts."

On its surface, *Westworld* could easily be interpreted as *Jurassic Park* with cowboy humanoid robots (which wouldn't be far off, as it's a reimagining of *Jurassic Park* writer Michael Crichton's 1973 film of the same name). But the show, thanks to the curious sci-fi minds of showrunners Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy, manages to address some of the most pressing concerns of our stunningly technological world. All at once, the show takes on masculinity, our notion of reality, the ethics of entertainment and human-machine interaction, the dangers of artificial intelligence, and our very definitions of sentient life. These are demanding topics that television shows rarely ask an audience to wrestle with. Yet *Westworld* manages to keep sight of what it is: an exploration of humanity along with a study of the western genre that provides a palatable balance of shootouts, campy ragtime covers of Radiohead songs, and gunslinging with a lecture in ethics.

Coming at a time when fans are starved for another *Game of Thrones*, *Westworld* is HBO's attempt to fill that void. But the truth is, *Westworld* is not *Game of Thrones*. And that's a good thing. Because although the shows are largely matched in terms of production value, *Westworld* provides the clay and tools for Nolan and Joy to discuss themes far beyond killing our favorite characters.

**ESQ: One of the small details that I really liked about the show was when you weren't sure if a character was an actual person or a wax figure. It created that sense of uncertainty in the viewer. What does that add to the experience of watching *Westworld*?**

**Nolan:** I think we wanted the show to explore the uncanny valley completely. We wanted this idea of near AI (artificial intelligence), or near-human AI. It's an interesting one, because as you approach the question of intelligence and consciousness and sentience, the fabric of that is very subtle. It's the suspense of what makes us alive.

Humans are so attuned to tiny behavior in each other, you know? We're so aware of the tiny movements of eyes and hands, the tiny curl of a mouth into a smile. We read so much into behavior. And the sense that a machine could evoke that is something that in the real world we're getting closer and closer to. Not the physicality of it, but our online interactions are becoming more and more sophisticated and harder and harder to tell whether you're dealing with a human or a bot or a piece of software. We were just fascinated by that—the moment in which the robot's behavior becomes so close to human that it's only in the tiny subtle ways that you're exploring the question of, well, *are they sentient or not?* Because they certainly seem sentient.

**Westworld does such a good job making the viewer empathize with these "hosts," or these machines. What do you think this says about modern technology?**

**Joy:** You know, building that empathetic connection between the audience and the host is something we worked very hard to create, both on the page and in performance. I think the question that we pose in this series—"Have you ever questioned the nature of your reality?"—is applied to the hosts, but if they seemed lifelike and we empathize with them, then it might act as a mirror of us. Then the audience is also asking, "Have you ever questioned the nature of your reality and your place within it?" So, in making them as lifelike as possible, they form a kind of mirror to the guest within the park and also, hopefully, the audience itself.

**Is that why so much of the story is told from the host's point of view?**

**Nolan:** Yeah, I mean, I've long been fascinated by artificial intelligence. My last show was about it—the parts of *Interstellar* that I was most excited to see brought to screen dealt with the interactions between the artificial crew members and real crew members. I'm fascinated by the subject. And there was an opportunity here to dive all the way in so you're not looking at them—you're looking through them. You're with them trying to understand the world that they've been placed in, and the appetites and their interactions with the guest. It's more about AI looking at us and trying to understand us. Which we thought was such a fascinating way into this story.

IT'S MORE ABOUT AI LOOKING AT US AND TRYING TO UNDERSTAND US.

**How close are we to this being a reality? I mean, it seems pretty plausible the way that you outline it in the show.**

**Nolan:** We did a little bit of research, we talked to some interesting people, and I kept track of the topic for several years for different projects. I think this is a subject that we have seen so much of in film and television that we've become a little immune to it. We've come to regard it solely as the problem of science fiction, but it's actually happening. Setting aside the theme park aspect of it and anthropomorphic robots, AI—the idea that we could have meaningful interactions and substantial relationships with AI—has been such a figment of science fiction for so long that we've stopped imagining that it will become real or how it will become real. I do think that we are getting closer and closer to a moment in which our online interactions are going to become very confusing—I think we are much closer than people imagine to passing the Turing test online. I think most people think we're 40 years out from that, and I think we're probably more like 10 to 15. It's felt like the topic could head some urgency at this point.

**Going along with that relationship with technology and empathizing with technology, that's what makes the sexual violence of the show so difficult to take in. How do you respond to people who might be critical of that?**

**Joy:** Well, I think if the implied sexual violence in the show, if it's jarring for people, makes them think and makes them empathize with the machines, then that's part of a conversation that we wanted to start. There are so many video games out there where violence and sexual violence is just something that you play. And here, because you think of them as the "other" because they are just for recreation, it's just a game. Now, in pushing that boundary and making the host more and more lifelike, we start to question: When does it become immoral, whether or not these are actual human creatures, to exercise these violent urges upon them?

**In the first four episodes, you get a predominantly male experience in the park. Is that a design of the park in the show? Or are there more female experiences to come? Is that point of view more of a critique on masculinity itself?**

**Nolan:** I think there's a little bit of all of those things in there. When we set off on writing this series, we had intended to make the park feel as well rounded as possible. You see glimpses of it in the early episodes—it is a place people would take their families. Just as resorts cater to singles and they cater to families, the park experience is designed in such a way you can take your kid there and have the ultimate camping trip—sort of an experience of the American West unlike anything you could have in the real world, where you knew your children would be safe, they'd be looked after, and they'd have a great experience.

But, at the same time, the Western as a genre—this show is very much about genre and storytelling and asking some of these questions: *Why do we like these genres? Why was almost every movie a western for almost 30 years?* Clearly, as a culture, we get invested in genres. And the western genre is an interesting one. It is significantly more of a masculine fantasy. We're looking at that genre to understand what the fantasy represents for people. In Episode Three, we have a female gun slinger who's come as a guest to indulge her fantasy. You imagine the player that caters to everyone's taste. We did settle in on a story line that emphasizes more of a masculine experience, in part because the genre seems to tilt that way.

**I thought the music was really fascinating, with the twangy western covers of Radiohead and "Paint it Black." But, to me, it seemed like these modern pop songs were the only hint that this show might be taking place in our timeline. Is that a hint, or was it just using these songs as a cool way to get popular music in there?**

**Nolan:** Yeah, I think that we did want to gently remind the audience that this was possible, that this is not a real western, that this is a synthetic western. The point of view of the show is largely limited to what the hosts understand about their world. And they don't understand much; they don't know what that outside world is, they don't know when that outside world is. They're coming to discover that. But their world has been sort of fabricated and filled with cultural references. Their dialogue features allusions and homage. That music in the saloon. And on a creative level, we just loved the idea of being able to take advantage of popular music but recast it as something that you'd feature in the Old West. And we love the player piano as the symbol for the hosts themselves, but as a symbol for the kind of collision of the Old West and the modern world.

**I know that HBO is trying to create *Game of Thrones*-style shows that are going to catch. Given the success of that show, did that create any sense of pressure for you guys while creating *Westworld*?**

**Joy:** We're both huge fans of *Game of Thrones* and the programming that HBO has done over the years. When we were thinking of *Westworld* and doing it with HBO, what they really showed us is that they have the ambition in their network, and they value production value as much as we did, and that that would be a perfect place to do a show of this scope and this ambition.

**Yet you guys don't get bogged down by the technicality, the little details of how this works. I think so much bad sci-fi over-explains. Is it difficult to naturally let the viewer fill in the gaps?**

**Nolan:** That's really the challenge within a lot of ideas in this. And one of the things we're interested in with this series is the ways in which AI won't resemble us, the ways in which their mentality and their thinking will be distinctly different from ours. We're the only species that we're currently familiar with that we deem sentient, right? Apply a different set of standards to all the other animals on this planet and other species of life that were sentient—like Neanderthals, like Ford says in a later episode—you know, we

fucked and ate them out of existence. Right? There's nothing left on this planet that we deem intelligent. We're only familiar with the way that humans think.  
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT ON THIS PLANET THAT WE DEEM INTELLIGENT. WE'RE ONLY FAMILIAR WITH THE WAY THAT HUMANS THINK.

But I think articulating that—we did a lot of thinking about what that consciousness would look like, the nuances of it, how it would be qualitatively different from human thinking. And the impulse there is to say, "Look! Look at all the thinking we did!" Then you get to a point, usually in the edit sweep, that you think, "Look, the thing that I enjoy most as an audience member is being allowed to put things together and figure them out for myself." We tried to strike a balance between big ideas, big complicated storytelling, but also letting the audience find their own way through the narrative. It's a challenge, but it's a fun one.

**I think this show connects so well to our moral choices in a realm where they wouldn't have any real-world consequences. Do you think our modern or current version of *Westworld* would be how we treat other people online or in video game?**

**Nolan:** That's a great observation.

**Joy:** It really is. No one's actually pointed that out before, but I think it's really true. We thought about it mostly with gaming, but ... the way in which technology works now is it allows a barrier between people [discussing a subject] and the subject of what's being discussed. And I think that within that you can start to feel an otherness with the person that you're dealing with, and that leads to all sorts of bad behavior.

**Nolan:** There's this long observed phenomenon that killing in war time is easier the more distant you are from your target. And the more automated we can make killing people, the easier it is for people to do it, right? I mean, that's long been a function of warfare; it's a well-understood phenomenon within that world. We've taken that logic and applied it to our social interactions online. It's no wonder why Twitter becomes a fucking heaping mass of wretchedness. There's a real question Twitter's actively struggling with right now in terms of: How do we prevent this from sliding into being a cesspool in which people behave in ways that they would never behave in person? It is kind of a fascinating, dehumanizing world that we're stepping ever more rapidly into. But I think all of us are kind of saying, "Wait a fucking second," you know? How do we retain some level of civilization and humanity? How do we hold onto some of that in a world that is becoming ever more confusing when it comes to our interactions with people? We've been able to take on board all of these innovations and adapt very rapidly to them. But you still fundamentally have some human attributes that don't work very well in the world that we've created, you know? Which is part of the reason why new technologies and social media should be wonderful things and are often not, because we're all broken.

**Still Have No Idea What 'Westworld' Is About? Let the Creators Explain**  
*Complex*, 30 september 2016, Eric Eidelstein

With *Game of Thrones* coming to an end sooner than later, HBO is in desperate need of a series that challenges viewers in terms of what it can do with a large ensemble cast, genre, special effects, tone, and a pretty big budget. Enter *Westworld*, a new sci-fi fantasy

series based on the 1973 film of the same name created by Lisa Joy and her husband Jonathan Nolan (Christopher's brother).

The series, which boasts some notable faces including Sir Anthony Hopkins, Evan Rachel Wood, and Jeffrey Wright, takes place in a not-so-far-away future, and specifically looks at the creators of an expansive virtual theme park—one that takes the shape of the Wild West—the androids created to populate and add texture to the park, and the rich guests who pay thousands of dollars to visit, go on quests, party, and get into trouble. The show, at least in its first few episodes, brings into question our conceptions of free will, the role artificial intelligence plays in our world, and toys with our romanticization of a genre and place in time that paradoxically feels both very distant and super close.

Complex had the opportunity to speak to *Westworld*'s creators about their epic project, its place on HBO, and how its twisted and sinister themes feel more timely than ever.

**I read that J.J. Abrams wanted to adapt the 1973 movie for a while because there was just so much material in the movie. But I wanted to know why you guys wanted to adapt the film into a TV series?**

**Lisa Joy:** For me it was this amazing opportunity to deal with things that were both intellectually timely and emotionally resonant. Intellectually speaking, the world of science fiction is getting closer and closer to science fact. To explore artificial intelligence and the potential emergence of sentients in a time when, literally, incubators and Silicon Valley are working on the same thing, seems like an impossible opportunity to deny. Then, emotionally speaking, we combine sci-fi with the Western genre, in which, for me personally, it was sometimes hard to connect with some of the heroes. I wanted to see people who reminded me more of myself, from a different perspective than the lone male hero. It was a chance to look at the West world, and to look at overlooked POVs and really explore them.

**Jonathan Nolan:** It's a rare privilege to be writing about something that feels very urgent. You are sort of writing the prehistory of a thing that feels not only urgent but imminent—[we explore] the idea of our ability to create narrative space that's so immersive that for all intensive purposes it's the real world, and the question of artificial intelligence. I've been obsessed with artificial intelligence for a long time. It was featured in my first season *Person of Interest*, it was one of the aspects of *Interstellar* that I was most excited about in terms of the character dynamic in that movie. For me, it was a chance to reapproach that question from a completely different perspective—from their perspective.

**Focusing on the Wild West setting, did you guys take this as an opportunity to challenge the stereotypical narrative that is most associated with the period?**

**Joy:** I think we are subverting it by looking at it from a different point of view. In this tale, the classic story of the Western gunslinger, the man against nature who is the hero of the story, is quickly debunked. Here, that character, the classic male hero, is just a robot—they are there not to be the leads of the story, but to basically be cannon fodder or romantic objects to the guests who visit the park. You are taking the whole thing of masculine identity and turning it on its head on a very natural level.

**Nolan:** The more peripheral characters in the Western become the central characters in our story. Beyond subverting the genre, we are trying to ask the question of why this genre exists in the first place. Why are human beings interested in the Western? What does that say about us?

**There is no way to watch *Westworld* while multitasking. You have to be paying attention or you won't get it. Was that deliberate?**

**Nolan:** [Laughs]. Good. Yes. Absolutely. I've always liked and wanted to make TV or film that requires you to lean in a little bit.

**How much of *Westworld* do you think functions as a sci-fi series on its own and not as some moralistic or cautionary tale?**

**Nolan:** You definitely don't want the show to be didactic. I don't think we are trying to present it as a cautionary tale. In certain moments in my life I've felt a little bit more positive about the human species. And certain moments probably less so. This comes from a place of not thinking human beings are wonderful. [Laughs.] That has no correlation to the election season or anything else.

**Obviously the world of *Westworld* is very violent. There's also a lot of sex. It's HBO and HBO has, at points, gotten into some trouble with that. As writers and creators is there a conscious effort to use these elements not so much as a plot device but with a purpose?**

**Nolan:** What made it comfortable for this subject matter on this network was that it was very exciting to be able to explore the questions of the show. They are obviously about exploitation and violence and fantasy and victimization. We are able to play with those questions on a network where we could really explore those questions to the degree that we wanted to, without any interference in terms of setting rules for what we could or couldn't do. I think the narrative is very much about why do we find this stuff entertaining. That's the question the show is asking. In our video games, films, and TV, why is the most transgressive and dark material the stuff that we tend to be drawn to? Why are we watching these shows in the first place?

## **'Westworld' Showrunners on How the Production Hiatus Helped Them Plan for Future Seasons**

**Collider, 2 oktober 2016, Christina Radish**

Created for television by **Jonathan Nolan** and **Lisa Joy**, the HBO drama series *Westworld* is as ambitious as it is thought-provoking, exploring fascinating themes of humanity and human intelligence, and with a cast that couldn't get any better. It is a dark odyssey about artificial consciousness, in a world in which every human appetite, no matter how noble or depraved, can be indulged, if you pay the right price. The series stars **Anthony Hopkins, Ed Harris, Evan Rachel Wood, Jeffrey Wright, James Marsden, Thandie Newton, Jimmi Simpson, Ben Barnes** and **Rodrigo Santoro**, among many others.

During this exclusive phone interview with Collider, showrunners Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy talked about why they wanted to explore this story, deciding the points of view to explore, putting together their dream cast, realizing that they would need to take a production hiatus, in order to catch the writing up to what they were shooting, what needing to take a break taught them about possible future seasons, and making the world feel immersive and visceral. Be aware that there are some spoilers discussed.

**Collider: What was the appeal for you guys, in retelling and exploring *Westworld*, in a very new and very different way?**

**JONATHAN NOLAN:** When J.J. [Abrams] called Lisa and myself, he pitched us this idea of, what if we turn the structure around and started with the hosts. For us, that gave us a way to play with everything that we're interested in, all at once. It's the ultimate

playground for us because we deal with questions about artificial intelligence, which is something I've long been fascinated by, but also human intelligence, or the lack thereof, human behavior, and interactive, immersive storytelling. It was like a candy store. I'd seen the film when I was a kid and really dug it, but this way into it allowed us to really, really get under the hood of some of these questions. We also wanted to explore the guest experience and the techs' lives and the conflicts with these creatures that they're interacting with and controlling, but that central idea of seeing A.I. from the inside out was where it was an offer that we could not refuse.

LISA JOY: It's a timely moment to be exploring the evolution of sentience and artificial intelligence because it doesn't feel like science fiction, at this point. It feels like an examination of current events. But in addition to that, for me, it was a chance to approach two genres, in terms of the Western and science fiction, from unlikely points of view that I could feel a more visual connection to. The tale of the old West is one often told through the lens of the rugged men who conquered it. Of course, we have a plethora of incredible actors playing really unique characters in this, but the spotlight isn't just on the male experience in the West. It's also on the women, and there's a whole eco-system there that was ripe to be explored.

**Did you have a process for deciding not only which characters you wanted to follow through the story, but for whose point of view you wanted to explore the story from and when?**

NOLAN: Yeah, totally. The first thing we did was that we laid out the entire corporate structure of the park. It started with the park hierarchy itself. We said, okay, you'd have a narrative department, who are the writers. You'd have a behavior department, who are the programmers of baseline behaviors, details and filigree, but also the core of how you make it all work, in terms of the hosts' psyches. You'd have a quality insurance department, where they're making sure there aren't any glitches or weird things, and that the guests have a great experience and seamless experience. You'd also have security. So, we laid out the corporate structure, and then we cherry-picked from that the people who would be brought into the most conflict and the most day-to-day relationship with each other and with the hosts. And then, building the narrative inside the park, having played a lot of video games and watched a lot of Western, we started from this question of not who are the heroes, because the guests have to be the heroes, and not who are the villains, because the guests are the villains too, but of who the peripheral characters are. We were designing the non-player characters in our game, with an emphasis on who the stock characters are in an immersive Western role-playing game. There is the friendly rancher's daughter who will happily show you around, a little bit. There is the grey hat cowboy bounty hunter who will guide you out. There is the comic relief ne'er-do-well hosts that will accompany you on some mischief. There is the madam and her boys and girls at the brothel, who will indulge you immediately. We also wanted the scope of the park to be massive. The original film is basically like a little Western backlot. When [Michael] Crichton was making this, the state-of-the-art video game was *Pong*. Now, we live in this post *Grand Theft Auto* era, so this is an immersion has to be big enough that you would never find the end of it. It has to have dozens, or even hundreds, of storylines that you can participate in, so that you would always have a different experience. It's very different from the original film. With this, the heroes and heroines are drawn from this group of peripheral characters that are not supposed to have adventures. They're supposed to make the guests feel good or attractive, or help them on their way.

JOY: I think there's a double layer of subverting expectations with point of view in this. We are looking through the West through the POV of characters that are normally the sidekick, the damsel in distress, the helper, and the madam who gives a sassy word or two to people passing through town. In this, they're not peripheral characters. They're their own heroes. Each of them has their own agency and history and dreams and fears. We look at it from that POV first. And then, on a broader level, we're coming to the entire park through the point of view of the robots, who we call the hosts. It's a double-layered situation of exploring unlikely points of view.

**When it came to casting, did you always have a desire to put together a cast of not only hugely talented actors, but also very well known and recognizable actors that would be anyone's dream cast, or was there a point when you realized that you had a bunch of roles that would entice actors that might not otherwise have been interested in doing a TV series?**

NOLAN: When it came to casting, we did it the old-fashioned way. We thought about the actors that we'd love to see in these roles and the actors that we'd love to work with, but we wrote the script first. I find thinking about specific actors while you're writing to be distracting, but we thought a little bit about Anthony Hopkins before. We thought, "If we're gonna do this character the way we want to do him, we're gonna need someone great." That went for all of these roles, really, but if we were going to find someone to play God, he had to be pretty impressive. We thought about the roles, in terms of who our dream cast was, and we sent them the script and they all said yes. That was a first for me.

JOY: We feel really fortunate. They're such incredibly talented actors. What we try to bring on the page, they bring to life in totally new dimensions. We lucked out, in the biggest way, because each of them is a gem, personally, and a pleasure to work with. We feel incredibly fortunate to be working with them.

**There's been a lot of discussion and speculation about why you guys decided to take a hiatus during production, and you've been pretty clear that you needed the writing to catch up with the production side of things. When did you realize that was going to be something that you were going to need to do, and was HBO immediately open to you taking the time that you felt you needed?**

NOLAN: Yeah, we're very fortunate to be working with an incredible network with an incredible legacy of shows and an unbelievably supportive disposition towards the writers and producers, and making sure that we had everything we needed, every step of the way, to make this show as ambitious as possible. One of the things we hadn't counted on was the complexity of the production. I've done TV before, and normally you can write and shoot, at the same time. This was a little more complicated. We started shooting fairly early in the process, and it's a beast of a show, but a glorious beast of a show. We had a great team, a great crew, and a cast who's incredibly patient and supportive. Everyone was just pointed in the same direction, trying to make this show as ambitious and complete as possible.

JOY: This show is such a behemoth, and you're dealing with so many extras and such a large, ambitious scope. You're not just creating an entire Western world, you're also creating a contemporary technological world. It's basically like doing a couple of very ambitious shows, or movies, simultaneously. We got really lucky with our crew, your production designer and costumes. Everybody pulled together, in every division, and worked together really hard. They did an amazing job in bringing in all to life.



**After you were able to get ahead in the writing, did you need to go back and reshoot anything from the episodes you had already shot?**

NOLAN: I think we had one or two additional pieces to pick up that were location contingent. With a production like this, you're shooting episodes simultaneously and you're trying to build in as much efficiency as possible. We went out to Utah for the pilot, and then we went back out to Utah to shoot pieces for all of the episodes. So, we had a couple of pieces to pick up that we hadn't had a chance to get to. And then, we were able to push ahead with the last three episodes.

**After realizing just how ambitious this story was, and taking that time to catch the writing up to reflect that, what did that teach you about how you'll have to approach future seasons? Did that give you a different perspective on what you'll need, going forward?**

NOLAN: For us, it's a different animal. When you make a movie, you write the script first, hopefully, and then you go make the movie. A movie that they're writing as they go usually doesn't work out very well. In television, you're writing and producing simultaneously. In truth, this is somewhere in between. So for the second season, we're going to write everything that we can, so when we go into production, we'll have all the scripts and be able to block shoot, which is hugely important to us. There's a ton of beautiful visual effects work in the show, but for the most part, we like to use visual effects in the way nature intended, which is not as the main dish, but as the finishing pieces. So, we like to shoot on location where we can, and by having more written before we start, we're hopeful. We'd love to go back and shoot even more in Utah, in the second season, should we be so lucky.

**At least in the first four episodes, we don't really get to see any of the outside world or who any of the guests or the people working behind the scenes are, outside of their life in or related to Westworld. Is that very intentional, and what do you hope to achieve with that, as far as the viewing experience goes?**

JOY: Yeah. Throughout this, looking at point of view has been really important to us and the way in which we've constructed the series. For the most part, especially in terms of the hosts, we've tried to limit our understanding of the world, and by that I mean the audience's understanding of the world, to the same aperture as what a host would be experiencing the world as. So, we try not to get too far ahead from the creatures that we're watching on screen. That way, the reveals come simultaneously for us, as they do for the characters we're depicting. It was very much a conscious stylistic choice. When dealing with writing and depicting artificial intelligence and robotic humans, in this case, you have to be very careful, especially in our show, where they're really the protagonists, in creating that connection with the audience, so that the audience doesn't dismiss that as other and lose that empathy and that visceral connection with them. For us, it was really a fine-tuned process of how life-like they should be and when we should reveal their small glitches, in a way that it doesn't, all of a sudden, jar the audience out and make us lose sympathy for them. Manipulating POV so that we feel grounded in that same reality is one way of achieving that.

**The violence on this series, whether it be sexual or physical, is often terrifying and horrific, and it really helps you feel for the hosts. Was it important to you not to over-glorify that aspect of the story?**

NOLAN: Yeah. Part of what are playing with here is the idea that whenever this story is taking place is that Westworld is more real, more immersive, more sensual and more

violent than the real world. When you're there, it feels really real. So, we wanted to depict those aspects of it tastefully, but we also wanted them to feel visceral. Part of what's happening here is that the trauma for the hosts is significant and that's a big part of the story, so you want to feel that sympathy. We didn't want that to feel comic. There are some place in which we're playing some of the depravity of the situation in that way, but for the most part, we're playing it in a way where you really do sympathize with the plight of the hosts. They didn't choose to be in this place, and they don't understand that the joke is on them. If you look at contemporary gaming, it's a journey that's similar, not just in the level of gore and realism, but also in terms of the level of sophistication of the non-player characters. Every game has a physics engine and a graphics engine, but it also has an A.I. engine and it has limited A.I. that's powering those NPCs. They have conversations whether the player is there to hear them or not. In a sense, they're already starting to take on some agency of it. It's obviously very limited. No one feels bad when they turn off their PC or their console at night and goes to bed, but it's going to get a lot weirder, over the next 10 or 20 years.

JOY: It's funny, I'm not really a gamer, but part of what we did to prepare for this – much to Jonah's delight – was play video games together to understand the rules of gaming and to introduce myself to them. I played *Grand Theft Auto* as part of that research, and what a weird job that that was the research, but as I was playing it, I realized that I'm a weird player for this stuff. Individuals are very different in their reactions to violence on screen. I abide by the rules and the laws of the streets when I play *Grand Theft Auto*. I stop at stop signs and I don't run over anyone. I'm a terrible player, in that sense. I just enjoy driving around the streets and looking at the buildings, which I know is not how you're meant to play it. But when you do play it, you're not meant to feel guilt about plowing down 400 pedestrians. You're meant to enjoy the ride, and you're encouraged to do that in a lot of gaming and a lot of different forms of entertainment. With this show, where we're meditating on a new kind of game where it's brought to life, one of the things we definitely set out to do was to not give the audience that same ease of having no second thoughts about morality or what your role as a player is. We wanted to bring a mirror up to the player and saying, "Is this really what we should be doing? What does this mean that we're playing this way?"

**According to the credits, you wrote an episode with Ed Brubaker, who is a comic book writer best known for creating the Winter Soldier character and arc for *Captain America*. How did he get involved in the series and what was it like to have him contributing to the writers' room?**

NOLAN: Ed was a part of the staff for the first half of the season, and he's a great guy. We had enjoyed his work in comic books, but he hadn't worked on a staff in TV before. It was great fun collaborating with him. He's a very imaginative writer.

## **Westworld showrunners explain that premiere episode** ***Entertainment Weekly*, 2 oktober 2016, James Hibberd**

You just saw HBO's *Westworld* premiere. You now have questions (lots and lots of questions). We have some answers — or rather, some helpful clarifications — on some of the things you saw. Below showrunners Jonathan "Jonah" Nolan and Lisa Joy took our questions about that shocking scene, the structure of the park, how the robots work (what's with those Reveries and that "violent delights" phrase?) and more. Think of this as your park map to the premiere — no spoilers for what's ahead in the coming weeks, but some helpful orientation on that story-stuffed first hour (we had to watch it three

times). Of course, if you rather know nothing and just experience the show as pure narrative, stop reading now.

**ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY:** Okay, I'm going to try to start with a couple basic setting questions that you may or may not be willing to get into at this stage. You said during HBO's new behind-the-scenes video that *Westworld* is set in the 21st century. Wondering if you can reveal what year?

**Jonathan Nolan:** That's something for the audience to discover. We very want as much as possible for the audience to experience the show from the host perspective — where it's somewhere in the mid-to-late 19th century. So they're just getting starting to get a handle on how that's not the case.

**Lisa Joy [to Jonathan]:** Basically, James called you on giving away a spoiler on our behind-the-scenes video, Jonah. You were just busted, Mr. Secrecy!

**I didn't mean to get him in trouble.**

**Joy:** Now I'm like: "Jonah, what are you doing?!"

**Nolan:** Um, who's to say it's not metaphorical? [Laughter]

**So, moving on! The exteriors were shot in Utah. Are we supposed to assume the park is literally in Utah or a similar Western state, or might this all be set someplace entirely different?**

**Joy:** At the risk of sounding like Jonah, exactly where and when we are is something we're going to be exploring and revealing through the eyes of the hosts later on down the line. One thing I can definitely say is that later on we'll see the ways the park is terraformed. Not only are the hosts and wardrobe and dialogue are designed meticulously, but also the land is also designed for the park.

**One more orientation question, but I think this is one you can probably answer. The action cuts from the park to the behind-the-scenes team who operate on what our own Jeff Jensen calls — and I love this term — “the showrunner level.” But it's like we see there's this big above-ground facility on a cliff and also these areas underground below the park and it's not clear what's happening where. Can you give us a sense of what the cliff facility is for vs. what happens in those underground levels?**

**Nolan:** We mapped it all out with the help of our intrepid production designer Nathan Crowley. So the idea is that most of the facilities are underground. We sort of pictured a 100-story building skyscraper that goes down instead of up, which for us was also a visual metaphor for the age of the park. When you're in the older portion of it [far below the surface], the cold storage, it has been clearly repurposed from something that used to be more grand. The more functional bloody aspects of host maintenance are literally down further on the totem pole and when you get to the top of the mesa structure — that pool area you see in the episode — that's a detox area from people coming out of the park. The idea being, you wrap up your stay in the park and spend a night or two on the mesa having a cocktail, reliving your experiences with a little R&R before you go back to the real world. So the shock of coming out of full vacation mode — or homicidal mode, or whatever your fancy is — is buffered somewhat by conventional modern luxury before you go back. The techs, depending on their station or pay scale, they have accommodations that map onto their importance. But in some moments in the first four episodes somebody makes a reference to “getting leave” so you get the sense the [workers are] in the park for several weeks at a stretch before they rotate home.

**When we're told in the premiere that the park “hasn't had a critical failure in 30 years.” Are we supposed to take the events in the 1973 movie as canon — that**

**everything in the *Westworld* film happened in this universe – or was that reference not meant to literally be to the film’s events?**

**Nolan:** It’s playful but not meant to be literal. We wanted to connect to the ideas in the original film, but also take a look at this place as a cultural institution that is not new — because these ideas aren’t new. They stretch back to when Crichton was playing with them. We wanted to consider the park in that capacity, as a cultural institution in the manner of a Disney World. We feel like there’s a long story here. Like there’s something so pointed and sad for us about the idea that Dolores, this sort of evergreen frontier girl next door. She’s been that plucky heroine for 30 years.

**Joy:** She’s that wide-eyed, innocent, always wondering “Oh, when will my life begin? When will it all start?” in that romantic, existential way in which all people do at that phase in their lives. “When will I find my love?”

**She’s like a Disney princess.**

**Joy:** Exactly, very much so. And then to take that Disney princess and put her through the ringer and explore some existential stuff.

**In the original film, the Delos company had different lands, not just Westworld but Roman World and Medieval World too. Are we meant to assume those other lands might also exist?**

**Nolan:** I would assume nothing. We’ve got an awful lot of material to cover just with Westworld, but you want to stay tuned.

**Let’s get into those pesky Reveries — the new gestures programmed by Dr. Ford that are seemingly causing the glitches. We’re told they’re tied to past memories. But we’re also told their memories are reset over and over again, which at first seems contradictory. Can you clarify how much of the host’s past is on their mental hard drives that they *potentially* might be able to access?**

**Nolan:** How much they can remember is an important question for the season.

**Joy:** I’m looking at my husband going: “Can you be a little less vague, dude?”

**Feel free to jump in and rescue this interview!** [Laughter]

**Joy:** When I write a script, I have all the old versions of the script on my laptop. They’re saved as backups in case something goes horribly wrong. But I only use the latest configuration.

**Nolan:** It’s like Time Machine on the Mac.

**Joy:** Exactly. So there are past incarnations of their characters that are stored but the hosts just don’t have access to them — or aren’t *supposed* to have access to them. The Reveries work on a kind of subliminal level. What I think of them as — because I’m not a coder, Jonah is more into that world — for me it was imagining that consciousness and history are a deep sea and Reveries are tiny fishhooks that you dip into it and get little gestures and subconscious ticks. The hosts don’t consciously know where they’re drawn from, but they’re just there to add some nuance to their expressions and gestures. But dipping that fishhook in might prove to be a little .. fraught.

**When Delores tells Bernard that her father told her the “violent delights” phrase, the camera then cuts back to her father continuing to speak. Are we supposed to assume there was more that he said in addition to that phrase and that she lied to him about it?**

**Nolan:** No, I think it’s the phrase itself that’s important. The seemingly innocuous phrase that has layers of meaning behind it.

**This might also be a bit confusing to some, as well: The hosts don’t know they’re robots. Yet they have a level in their programing that’s accessed while in those**

**creepy “Analysis Mode” interviews with the tech staff. So they have some awareness that they’re robots on some root level?**

**Nolan:** We wanted to play with the ways in which the hosts are similar to us and the ways we’re different. Humans only have one sort of aperture for consciousness. There’s many different levels and lots of smarter people than me have tried to analyze how all of those pieces fit together: the conscious, the subconscious — all the Freudian-Jungian stuff. But with the hosts, those levels would be explicit. They would have a different architecture. This gave us great fodder [for Westworld programmer characters to] directly query the hosts’ subconscious. You could query my subconscious too, although a lot of it right now would be about cookies [Laughter]. So the ability for the technicians to directly query the subconscious of the hosts was such a fun way to play this dynamic and also hint at the levels of sophistication and control that are latent in the host that they’re not allowed to access. So, no, they’re not aware of their plight. They are aware on another level, but they are forbidden from accessing it.

**Another good twist is the Man in Black is no longer, seemingly, a robot. Which perfectly reflects the whole idea that the hosts are now the heroes and the humans are the villains. And I assume that’s the reason you switched that, but what’s your actual reason?**

**Joy:** It’s tough talking to you because you really have an understanding of this place [Laughter]. Yeah, it was about subverting that. It was important for us to establish that connection with the hosts from the beginning. We’ve been trained to have a distance from those characters in other movies and TV depictions of artificial intelligence. To look at them as the Other. It was important for us to start within their reality, believing in their reality along with them and fully being sunk into that and once you develop that empathetic connection with them initially, it only makes sense that in order to subvert it you have to turn the whole thing inside out. So that was a lot of fun to play with. We started from the point of view because for us it was the most tenuous emphatic connection and if you didn’t nail it right on you might not ever get it. If you started from the guests, we already have that kind of human-centric bias. We had to shake that system. And then after that in future episodes you could expand the guest point of view a little bit more and the technician’s point of view a little bit more so that you really have this trinity of perspectives going on and I think the interplay between them and when different groups feel more human is part of the fun of writing this show and experiencing the show.

**The Man in Black attacking Dolores really upset some critics [I make a case for why the scene was crucial in my premiere recap]. But that scene seemed to really dramatize the show’s central question: “Are these actions horrifically evil or are they merely destruction of property?”**

**Joy:** You are right, in terms of the plot, it’s an issue of perspective. If you play a game like *Grand Theft Auto* you don’t go home afterwards and cry because you ran over a couple characters, because you do not give them personhood. We wanted to set up in this is the idea that these hosts could have personhood and to establish that connection. If you do feel a connection and have empathy for Dolores — which I do — whether that is right or wrong is a lens we’re seeing a bunch of characters through in the series. And it evolves, this is an ever-changing look at people and other creatures. For me, it was important to do that respectfully and to get from it the essential question: “This a terrible, terrible thing that is happening. If Dolores is a person, it’s unforgivable.” Then if you take a step back — and for a minute, you do really have to take a step back to get

into the analytical, less visceral place — it's like "If it's just a robot, does it matter?" That's a question we continue to ask throughout the series.

**I wanted to also ask about Dr. Ford. He's a bit like the John Hammond character in *Jurassic Park*. Michael Crichton wrote both, but his *Westworld* film lacked that creator character. Was there an eye toward Hammond when you wrote this?**

**Joy:** The sad thing is I don't think I've seen *Jurassic Park*. Not that it's not an amazing movie, I literally didn't watch film or TV until I was 23 or something. I have a lot of catching up to do. However, we did have a lot of influences from Prospero to the idea of Walt Disney, and we thought about theme parks and how that would work. And he's this classic Promethean figure. It's a bit of an archetype, but with Tony, nothing's fully archetypal, because he always brings his own twist and sparkle to it.

**Another change is the use of contemporary music in the Old West. It's effective yet also breaks the immersive time period setting. Can you talk about your decision to do that?**

**Joy:** The setting of the show is itself anachronistic. It's a synthetic Western set in the future — and *apparently* in the 21st century, according to my husband...

**Nolan:** Why would I tell the truth in a behind-the-scenes video?

**Joy:** ... so I think our way of doffing our caps to that is in music, mimicking that anarchism. So though they're contemporary songs, they're also played in this Old Timey fashion. It mimics the set-up of the series itself.

**Nolan:** And selfishly, we loved using contemporary music. Also the visual of the player piano is a visual metaphor for the hosts themselves, and is a standard feature of a Western narrative. And we found a company that could make the reels based on contemporary songs. So we have this player piano in our office which is pretty great.

## **Interview: 'Westworld' Creators Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy on Building Their Intellectual Lego Set**

*Slashfilm*, 3 oktober 2016, Jack Giroux

*Westworld* creators **Jonathan Nolan** and **Lisa Joy** are hardly beholden to **Michael Crichton**'s original 1973 film. With their reimagining, they're telling a different story in the same location. Crichton's movie is more of a springboard for this sci-fi drama, which deals with identity, consciousness, the relationship between man and maker, and more. Joy, Nolan (who directed the pilot), and all involved let their imaginations run wild with *Westworld*, which presents a future where humans can pay \$40,000 to live the day in the life of a cowboy or outlaw.

The series is executive produced by filmmaker **J.J. Abrams**, who's been wanting to remake *Westworld* for over 20 years. A few years ago, Abrams brought the project to Nolan and Joy, and the two couldn't resist the opportunity. They clearly set their sights high, because HBO's new series is every bit as ambitious as it looks. Nolan and Joy's take on *Westworld* places more emphasis on the hosts, the artificial intelligence in the park. By shifting the focus to the A.I., Nolan and Joy raise all sorts of new questions regarding *Westworld* and its employees and visitors, and the two writers and producers were kind enough to discuss some of those questions with us recently.

Below, read our *Westworld* interview.

**You both save some exposition that's expected of a pilot for the second episode. How did you want to establish the world with the first? What were some lessons learned in making this pilot?**

**Nolan:** Yeah, I tend to prefer film or TV where I'm allowed as an audience member to do some of the math myself. At the same time, I also like stuff that's layered and dense. We knew we wanted to tell a complicated story, but we also knew from the beginning, when J.J. first approached us for the project, his suggestion had been to consider the perspectives of the hosts. We took that suggestion and ran a country mile with it, up to and including and turning inside out the entire narrative where we could.

The really interesting thing that we ran into, and we should have anticipated it and wrote in that direction... As we were cutting the episodes and working, especially with the visual effects, the very subtle visual effects with the actors' performances ... Most of the brilliant acting is done by the actors themselves, but we also did tiny little adjustments to their performance that the speed at which their eyes would blink or their cheeks bulge.

What we found validated the approach that we took was that the second you went too far with that, the second you push their performance too far into the uncanny valley by fiddling around with those effects... This maybe says as much about the audience as anything else, but people who were watching the episodes would immediately stop empathizing with it, right? Not all of the people watching, but it sort of speaks to how much empathy I think the audience member has.

You would approach this really interesting moment where you could adjust a blink or a smile or a glitch to a certain point, and past that point, the audience stops thinking of Dolores or Maeve. What was interesting is that the second you stop thinking of the hosts as alive and start thinking of them as robots, you did not empathize with them anymore. For us, starting with the hosts and starting with their story was critically important, even if it might leave some audience members hungering for a little more conventional explanation of how the world works. They'll get a little more of that in episode two, but it was important for us that the audience buy-in with the hosts right out of the gate. It's really just trying to make sure that you're sympathizing with the hosts rather than the guests who are coming in. Hopefully, in episode two, you approach the guests with a little more suspicion because you're already rooting for the hosts to rise up or escape. **And what the guests do the hosts is often unsettling to watch. It's interesting, though, that someone could have a completely different reaction to those images, thinking that's what the hosts are there for.**

**Joy:** We found the same thing. It reinforced for us that entertainment is very subjective. We have what our interpretation of what you should feel and what we're trying to say here, but once you put it out into the world, it becomes communal property, and each individual internalizes it differently. I have to tell you, I was quite shocked myself when there would be scenes that we would write where I would think of it as this tragic scene and my empathies would be so rooted with the hosts.

I would talk to people, people I like, who would come at it much more from the gaming perspective of saying, "Well, what does it matter? They'll be wiped, and they'll be put back in the park the next day, and it doesn't really matter. They're just playing the game. They're just fulfilling their role." It was definitely a conscious calibration to try to combat that kind of wall that people have between themselves and the other, especially if that other is thought of as a robot or a gaming NPC, and to really enliven their plight and root ourselves as the audience with them and their condition.

**The park is built on these narratives, and you see Dr. Robert Ford discuss what customers get out of these stories written for them. Is *Westworld* at all about the nature of storytelling?**

**Nolan:** I'm not usually drawn to stories that are about what we do. I don't think what we do, as writers or filmmakers, is terribly interesting. But here, the content was so clearly about interactive storytelling that it prompted us to ask questions about what we do that I'm still wrestling with, right?

We abhor violence in the real world, but we almost overwhelmingly enjoy it in drama. Storytelling is an odd phenomena. I've never done anything else. I've been doing this since I was a kid, and I hadn't had a lot of opportunities to stop and sit back and ask, "What is the purpose of what we do? What is it for? Is it simply entertainment?" Well, if it's entertainment, why is there so many common themes? Why there are so many things that people come back to again and again and again? Why is violence and transgression such a big part of that? For me, it was a really interesting opportunity to ask questions about the nature of storytelling. Why do we do it? What is it for? Does it connect to consciousness? Are humans distinct in their consciousness because we tell stories?

For us, the show doesn't propose to provide any answers. It's just, ultimately, asking interesting questions about why people would come to this place, what they would get out of it, what they'd be looking for, what people are trying to get out of the stories and games that they immerse themselves in. It was a really fascinating, for us, a fascinating form to play with those questions a little bit.

**Going back a few years, when J.J. Abrams first came to you both with *Westworld*, what were some of the other original ideas that were discussed?**

**Nolan:** We can't tell you. [Laughs] In that first conversation with J.J., I think we talked about things that we will build should we be so lucky to keep telling our story if the audience digs it. Some of those ideas are places we want to go to in season three and four. The reason why Lisa and I couldn't say no to this project was it was an opportunity to play with almost all of the questions we were interested in, right now.

**Joy:** Thematically, it was so ripe with opportunities to explore. I mean, some of them, we've talked about already. There's the examination of human nature, the responsibilities of scientists, their creation, the role of storytelling and understanding our society and understanding ourselves. There are also other themes that I find really enduring, and it's the idea of a sense of self. Is it manufactured, or is it authentic? I don't just mean the hosts, who are programmed and must grapple with the issue of, "Is this me, or is this somebody else's idea of me that I'm living?"

Those questions define what the teenage years and the mid-life crisis years are, like, "Who am I? Who do I want to be? Am I living someone else's script, or is this my authentic self?" I think those are timeless issues, and then there are the themes of love, betrayal, and loss.

It's a theme park that invites adventure and larger-than-life action and stakes, and so you'll feel all those sweeping stories, and it's a great chance to examine them. In the case of love, Dolores has lived for decades now on the cusp with something, on the cusp of leaving her homestead and venturing out into the world. She lives in that hope, on the razor's edge of that hope for years and years and years.

There's something about that notion of idealistic love that we're trying to explore but also the idea of, "What is real love then?" People come to the park in order to sometimes experience the idea of romantic love, but it's a synthetic romantic love. Beyond that synthetic romantic love and that idealized presentation of love, what does it mean when all the artifice falls away? What's the kind of love that endures? That's something we're examining too.



**Mr. Nolan, in a previous interview, you mentioned some people in Silicon Valley were hesitant to talk too much about the state of artificial intelligence, just because of the competition involved. What sort of research were you both able to do?**

**Nolan:** I'm a believer in doing a certain amount of research and then stopping before you do so much research that you find yourself lost in a thicket of ... Obviously, **with the show, we're pushing into the future a little bit.** We had some interesting conversations with some interesting people who had insight there. **I think people were reluctant to be on the record talking about it because there is a bit of an arms race thing that's happening in Silicon Valley right now with AI.**

Google and Facebook are two of the bigger players. This will become the essence of their business. The concept of an AGI or a machine intelligence that can approximate and think like we do makes what Google and Facebook do that much more efficient and compelling. Advertising is limited in its impact because it's so often wrong. It's showing you the wrong product. Consider all the time that you spent watching, you know, feminine hygiene commercials. It's being played for the wrong person, right?

The second that you can fine-tune that advertising and have it deliver to you the thing that you really want or the things that you didn't even know you wanted. For them, it's a market-driven reality. I think we're probably closer to it than we imagine we are, based on the conversations that we had. I mean, look, people were paying some attention when DeepMind beat the world Go champion earlier in the year, but that's a landmark moment. The press tried to bring attention to it, but IBM had beaten chess years ago, so the significance of the moment with Go was, "We don't have any more complicated games that we can play." That's as complicated as it gets, right?

The idea that we're now subordinated to the machine in all of our most rule-based intellectual pursuits means that, on some level, on a somewhat esoteric level, we're already there. Now, as you watch that creep into the softer sciences and everything else ... You know, I welcome the day when our robot overlords can take over the scriptwriting on our behalf, and we can just watch. *[Laughs]* That would be very exciting. The limited glimpse that we had into the state of the art of what's happening up there made us feel ... I mean, that's just Silicon Valley. Who knows what's happening in China? Who knows what's happening in other places around the world? **This is one of the reasons why we found the subject so compelling. We live in the moment before. We live in the moment in which AI could not exist. We're approaching it asymptotically. There will be an after.**

I think part of the reason why so many smart people are going public with their concerns, whether you're talking Stephen Hawking or Elon Musk, that AI is being developed in a proprietary, closed way. Pushing for Elon's open AI initiative is an effort to make sure that at least everyone understands that this sort of stuff is available to people so when we make AI, it's not a proprietary, closed system. **There's a lot of really smart people who are very worried about the way this is happening, but part of the problem is us.**

By "us," I mean TV and television producers and writers and filmmakers because **we've spent so much time dealing with this subject as science fiction. We've done such an effective job of making it seem like a dystopian nightmare that I don't think ... I love all those movies, but you have exceptional pieces like *Her*, the Spike Jonze film from 2013 that had a very nuanced, very original take on what our interactions with AI would be like, one that I found quite inspiring.**

Otherwise, we've convinced everyone this is 30 years in the future, and it's dystopian. No, it's going to be more subtle and complicated than that. It's closer to us that we think. In fact, it'll probably happen, and we won't realize it's happened. I think that everyone is so focused on the singularity of the idea that will be this massive, on-rushing, and overwhelming set of events. I'm actually more interested in the idea, and the show certainly explores the idea that it could happen, that two things could happen. One, that we could reach that moment more subtly than we imagine, that we could slip over that barrier without realizing it. Two, and this is a slightly more worrying version, that we would continue to move the goal posts, in part because we don't like things that challenge our primacy. We don't like the idea that our machines would be as smart as we are.

By some measures, the Turing test has already been passed, right? I mean, there's an international Turing competition every year, and a couple of years ago, a pretend 13-year-old boy from Russia, by the terms of the competition, won, right? The judges were unable to determine that this was a piece of software as opposed to a real person. Then with the immediate backsliding of like, "Yeah, but it wasn't but ... *Yeah* ..." I think this is probably going to creep up on us a little bit. Part of what the show deals with is the idea that we'll redefine what sentient is ever so slightly further than whatever we're dealing with in the moment.

### **When it came to realizing Westworld, how thorough did you and everyone get with the rules and the inner workings of the park?**

**Joy:** I mean, thorough enough that you look like an insane person at the beginning of the show. As we were starting out, we had a wonderful, creative, original movie, but we're really expanding it and converting the world significantly. Before even embarking on writing the pilot, we wanted to feel sure that we understood the story, where it could go and the depths of some of the things that we wanted to explore, and that included an understanding of the world and the rules of the world.

Though we don't explicitly address rules that much within the episodes, there is certainly an underlying rule set. The reason you don't explicitly address them is because we're trying to root it in the hosts' point of view and gradually come to understand how the world works with them, to be mystified by it sometimes but then to realize the underlying logic of it becomes clear. Certainly a part of the thinking about theories has been mapping out the loops of all the different hosts, some them major characters, some of them minor characters. It's really exploring a bunch of different storylines that we've only seen the tip of the iceberg on.

Then it involves maps of what Westworld actually would look like and different towns within it and what those towns would involve and the different mythologies that would exist there. That's a constantly fun thing to engage in. It's kind of like playing with a giant set of intellectual Legos and just building and building and building.

## **'Westworld': How Video Games Inspired Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy's New Sci-Fi Western Hybrid**

IndieWire, 5 oktober 2016, Liz Shannon Miller

***The executive producers of the new HBO drama explain the impact that Pokemon Go and Grand Theft Auto had on the series.***

You can't accuse HBO's biggest drama gamble in years of playing it safe. Developed by Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy, "Westworld" remakes Michael Crichton's 1973 film about a futuristic theme park as a meditation on what it means to be human – from the point of view of the robots created to populate an artificial Western world.

The world "Westworld" occupies is lush with authentic details, made possible by HBO's commitment to physical production, and the same sheen of quality is only enhanced by the stellar cast, including Sir Anthony Hopkins, Ed Harris, Jeffrey Wright, Evan Rachel Wood, Thandie Newton and James Marsden.

At the Television Critics Association press tour, IndieWire spoke with Joy and Nolan about the impact of video game design, what went into creating the world of Westworld and the ethics of consent as they apply to robot sex. While they promised that Season 1 would contain answers to many of the show's biggest questions, they also acknowledged that they've got a ton of story left to tell.

**To start off, was this fun? To take on this project and get to build an entire world for it?**

**Nolan:** Yeah, it was glorious. I mean it was difficult.

**Joy:** It was difficult.

**Nolan:** We define fun at a certain point in there, but yeah. It's an incredible cast and there are an incredible set of ideas that we got to play with and hopefully to continue to get to play with. Lisa and I would joke when we were first talking to JJ [Abrams] about the pitch that it would be like kids in a candy store. There are so many exciting ideas that you get to play with here. I mean I love character, Lisa likes character, starts from character. I tend to start from ideas and hopefully come up with good characters along the way, but there are so many ideas and characters to play with in this setup. It was endless fun.

**In your heads, how fleshed out is the world that Westworld lives in?**

**Joy:** You mean the outside world?

**Yeah, this entire universe you've built.**

**Joy:** Well we've spent a lot of time discussing this and so we did try to create a big mythology and some answers. It's kind of like those Russian nesting dolls, where you pull apart one level and there's another level. We did think about the world outside quite a lot and where the series would go and even how it would end. When we first started thinking about it, I think I was still pregnant at the time. It was funny because I would just sit there like round as a house and we would paper all the walls... It was like "A Beautiful Mind," leading from one thing to the next. It looked like an insane asylum, and maybe it was.

I have to tell you, we only got through probably an eighth of the wallpaper this season. So there's more story to tell and the bigger world outside is something that we will get to. But what we're trying to do is constrain it narratively. We've chosen a really specific lens even to start the pilot, where you're coming at it from the host perspective. The

intention of the show is we play with perspective and we also wanted to personify and really make sure you felt a connection with the host. The way in which the larger world leads in, we'll try to keep faithful to that, as you're on the journey and you're finding things out along with some of the characters.

**By the end of Season 1, how many more questions do you think we will have?**

**Nolan:** Oh boy, I'm a big believer when you're designing these shows... Not when it comes to social relevance to the show necessarily, but in terms of strict plot developments, I'm a big believer in pose some questions and then answer a few of them before you move onto the next set of questions. You don't ever want to run out of engaging questions, but I do believe in it. I watch some shows and some shows that I love where the questions were never answered or they just kept spitting out into the ether so our intention is to have answered a few important questions by the end of the first season, posed a few more interesting ones that then drive the second season.

One of the things that's really fun to tap in with television right now is this sort of explosion, the peak TV moment that we're in, people are exploring different modes of storytelling here. But one of the exciting things here is being able to commit upfront to a big, big, big story. Our story is a really big one. It's the story of the origin of a new species on this planet, and being able to tell that in chapters and commit to aggressive moves season-by-season that propel that story upwards and outwards and inwards.

**You mentioned that you only used one-eighth of your wallpaper. Does that mean there are eight seasons in this idea?**

**Nolan:** Oh God, I don't know about that.

**Joy:** Well we'll definitely find a way to pack it all in, I think, to whatever box we are lucky enough to have. But there's a lot more to go. The great thing is, we do know here we're going and so at the same time we love to have the questions, we do have the answers planned out and it's about when we get to reveal those cards and turn over some new ones.

**How much were you able to build, in terms of sets and locations?**

**Joy:** It's so exhilarating, visiting our set. Nathan Crowley, in the pilot, designed a ton of stages and the street that Sweetwater's on, that whole town that's at Melody Ranch, which was the Gene Autry studio. You're just steeped in history, the same history of the films that we're kind of subverting. It's just really fun to be in the same spot and to both kind of honor those films and to kind of twist them around. Just crazy things like we brought in a train, like a giant train. Who does that? It's thanks so much to HBO's support and Warner Brothers' support. We couldn't have done this anywhere else. It's pretty fantastic.

When we took our first walk around and literally this train is pushed in by this giant crane and you see it moving into town and so you walk through and the saloon, I just kept wanting to get a drink at it after shots. Actually the last day after wrap, it was really sweet. We didn't have any lights there, but a bunch of the cast and crew just kind of informally gathered and just talked. We just talked outside the Mariposa Saloon and hung out, and it was this magical experience because you're in the town. It is completely accurate for similitude for the Old West and you feel totally transported, like you're this living, breathing anachronism - not unlike, how the guests would feel.

**Nolan:** Yeah, we kind of built Westworld. I'm a big believer in practical and location photography so we also shot on ranches all around the southland, absolutely beautiful ranches, a couple of them just unfortunately disappeared in the fires. We also went to Utah. We went out to Moab and shot extensively out there in the valleys and parks around Moab. As Lisa said, one of the really great things about working with HBO and Warners is that commitment to physical production, which is on great display in "Game of Thrones." They're in the real places. They're in Iceland and Ireland and Malta to give you that great texture. We took advantage of that. It's convenient for us that we live in the American West so it wasn't too far from home, but we got a lot of great practical photography.

**I'm curious – just in terms of consent issues: If you build and program a robot to want to have sex with you, is that robot consenting to have sex with you?**

**Nolan:** No. And then of course, yeah, absolutely. And then the question becomes, the very nature of consent – how much consciousness do you need to have before it matters? I think it comes up often and it's an issue that extends beyond sexual violence and into the world around us. The animals that we deal with and eat, all these levels on which we've made this world our dominion. Researchers who are looking into I/O problem with the human mind and trying to solve that because at this point we're limited to this, this or this.

We've been talking to this couple who are involved in this research who are founders of a company devoted to this, trying to understand the human mind using various technologies, imaging technologies. So they used some animals to establish that baseline, and they said that both of them, as husband and wife, went vegan the next day. Because what they saw was so similar to what they were seeing from the human beings that they were studying.

You really start to question the nature of consciousness. We're surrounded by these creatures who we put in categories, in terms of how ethical they are. As it is right now, in terms of our virtual creatures we've created – Pokemon go being the most colourful and immediate example – we don't think of them as having consciousness whatsoever. You don't feel remotely bad when you turn off your Xbox. You don't attribute any sentience to them whatsoever. But that is going to get more and more complicated very, very quickly, just in the next decade.

**Well, when you talk about video games, the storytelling within a video game can be on the level of film or television, to the point where you do have an emotional connection to those characters. You do feel sad when you turn off your Xbox.**

**Joy:** Yes. It comes through the storytelling and then the funny thing is, it also comes through the player. It comes through the receiver. That was one of the really interesting things about working on "Westworld." For instance, I use this example a lot because I'm not much of a gamer, so I only have a small frame of reference, but in what's it called...?

**Nolan:** "Grand Theft Auto"

**Joy:** "Grand Theft Auto," when I play, I abide by all the laws, I lose the game entirely. I don't even know how to win the game. I'm just literally admiring the infrastructure of the building and being like, "Is this what Miami looks like? That's great!" That's me playing. Somebody else will play and just plow down the street full of pedestrians and get the bag of gold or whatever's happening. So that's a difference. The level of guilt you

have, the level of responsibility you feel is also subjective the human who's receiving it and that's true in gaming. It's true in fiction, it's true in TV, it's true in film. That's a really interesting part of writing this, is knowing that what we put out there and our intention will also be received different ways and interpreted different ways by different people and they'll have different moral judgments about different acts.

That's part of the difficulty of being human, is we don't all see things the same way. We don't all have the same level of empathy. We don't all have the same moral code necessarily or drawn the lines at the same places. I was mortified when I figured out once you catch a Pokemon, you make it fight! Those cute little creatures are going to go fight each other later. That's the point of the game, right?

**Nolan:** You could just catch them.

**Joy:** I was joking with my friend, "You should start a Pokemon sanctuary where they don't have to fight. They can just graze off the land and be free and be happy and cuddled and you can braid their hair." Then again, I'm not sure that would be a very successful video game. What does that say about us?

**In general it seems like video game design and culture has really impacted the show. How much of that was conscious versus unconscious?**

**Nolan:** Equal measure probably for me, because I'm a gamer. Or I was until we had our daughter.

**Joy:** You loved making us research it though, AKA play hours and hours of video games together. [laughs] So much research.

**Nolan:** Great excuse. That's really so interesting about the original film. Crichton really anticipated when he made that original film – no video games. They literally don't exist. Now, 40 years later, you think about how sophisticated or unsophisticated gaming has become in that time. It's a new form of storytelling and you've seen film and TV to some degree struggle to kind of take on, either grammatical ideas that they can take from gaming or character ideas. For us here, it was very clear looking at "Westworld" to go, "Okay that's a role-playing game, clearly." Those existed even before video games, D&D and the like.

There are some very clear analogs and models and game mechanics that play into our world, which is great. The original film's super cool, but the park itself is quite small and the gaming aspect of it is kind of limited – the bar fight and seducing the bar maid and those sorts of things For us, we wanted to imagine a vast game space with many layers woven into it.

It's funny because Lisa's less of a gamer than I am, and we would have these conversations where I would realize that part of what's informing a pitch that I'm making or an idea that I'm making is an assumption about gameplay, and sometimes you had to step back and I went, "No, right, okay here's why I'm thinking this might be an interesting moment because this is how you play a Bioware game or this is a game mechanic that for non-gamers, lets them on."

**In terms of technology, one thing I noticed was that it's a clearly extraordinarily advanced society, but it's not like there are a lot of closeups on gadgets and gizmos. How deliberate was that?**

**Nolan:** It's sort of a directorial choice in the pilot. We worked with Nathan Crowley, who is the genius who's designed a lot of the movies that I've worked on with my brother. Nathan's a brilliant production designer and one of the things that we talked about early was that we wanted ... It feels like, I mean as a mental exercise you'll look around this room and try to figure out which of the artifacts would've been here 50 years ago. What's different? The drapes are the same, the clothes, a little bit different, largely the same. It's really the little items in the corner.

So much of our technology is disappearing, right? Which is cool, I mean our iPhones or our tablets or computers, they're all gradually getting smaller and sleeker. It felt like Steve Jobs' whole mission was to try to get these things to disappear, which was a design ethic that we really liked. Sometimes you get lost in sort of the gadgetry of things. We definitely have a firm sense for when the story is taking place and where, but we do want the audience to not focus in on that. Part of the experience or Westworld itself is you're stepping into this space and you're divesting yourself of all those things. You're leaving your phone behind You're not Instagramming your adventures while you're there.

## 'Westworld' Creators on Why HBO Drama Won't Return Before 2018

*Variety*, 5 december 2016, Daniel Holloway

"Westworld" ended its first season Sunday night. By the next morning, it was already reaping accolades. The big-budget sci-fi series from executive producers and creators Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy was one of five television dramas nominated for a 2017 Writers Guild Award Monday.

Nolan and Joy spoke to *Variety* about the finale, their plans for Season 2, and why the show won't be back until 2018.

Spoiler alert: This article includes spoilers from the season finale of "Westworld."

### How dead is Ford?

**Jonathan Nolan:** Oh, he's dead.

### Is he "Anthony Hopkins is available for pilot season" dead?

**Nolan:** Working with Anthony Hopkins on this season of TV has been one of the greatest pleasures and privileges for Lisa and I in our careers. It's been an incredible experience, and we'll see where our story takes us.

### Did he know before signing on that Ford would die at the end of the season?

**Nolan:** Lisa and I doled out the information about the characters to the actors in moments, trying to keep the story as fresh and present for them as possible. Obviously sometimes you need to go a little bit further so that the actor is properly equipped. Here because so much of the season is about Ford's intentionality and his plan for his new narrative, because this is a tragic figure here, it made sense for Lisa and I to engage with him from the beginning to engage with him in this conversation about how this is a scene of television that is in a sense a prologue to the larger story that we're telling. In this narrative Ford is God. This is the death of God as the jumping off point for our story but also a full meal to itself. We were very straightforward with Tony from the beginning.

**We've perceived Ford to be one type of person, and at the end he reveals himself to be a different type of person in terms of how he feels about his creations and how he feels about his own life's work.**

**Lisa Joy:** Only a titan like Anthony Hopkins could have done all the nuance that he embedded in this series. His character in my mind is always a little bit of Prospero in "The Tempest." You think his plan involves one thing. You kind of underestimate him. Then you see this glimmer of malice and menace that you didn't anticipate, so he goes to being the villain. Then by the end you realize that this is in some way about atonement for him and that he's chosen this very difficult road because he believes it's the only road in which he can atone for the mistakes of the past.

**We got confirmation in the finale that the show takes place on multiple timelines, which had been hinted at strongly in previous episodes. How did you settle on that structure?**

**Joy:** I think the key is to let it grow organically from the concept and the characters. Even though it is a very complicated, twisty set of reveals, this is the one show in which it is totally organic to what they're experiencing. You have a group of hosts who are basically immortal, and the fundamental thing that is holding them back is memory.

Unlike humans, who have these imperfect memories — we can't really conjure events in all the detail they occur — the hosts have a different problem. They're able to bring back the exact replica of that memory so lifelike and engrossing in detail that it's impossible to distinguish today from tomorrow or yesterday.

**Nolan:** This is not the first time I've written about amnesiac characters. I remember talking to my brother [Christopher Nolan] about "Memento" and how I was intending to structure that as a short story. I wanted to write it as a deck of cards and then shuffle that to make it completely, aggressively non-linear, because that was that character's understanding of the world. Here we had the unique opportunity to try to illuminate some of the differences between how an artificial person might understand the world, and especially an artificial person who had been artificially held back in terms of their understanding of the world in order for us to facilitate us being able to do whatever the f—k we want to them.

**At this point there aren't many humans to kick around anymore. Most of them are either dead or missing or revealed to be hosts. Going into Season 2, will you be focusing even more on the hosts, with the humans relegated to either helper or adversary roles?**

**Nolan:** Not necessarily. One of the great things about this omnibus, ensemble storytelling that HBO has mastered is the ability to shift that perspective and find empathy for different people, and that's something that we want to continue to play with throughout.

**Where are you at in terms of work on the second season?**

**Joy:** We've started working on scripts and outlines. It's looking good. It's looking very ambitious. There's some surprises and bits of it that you won't see coming. I'm having fun.

**Nolan:** It's an ambitious project, and HBO has encouraged us to take the time and resources that we need to work on each stage of that. I love television. One of the fun things about television is that sometimes you find yourself in this place where you have



to wear all these hats at once. You have to write, shoot, and cut simultaneously. We wanted to in the second season spend some more time writing, then switch gears into production, then cut. So we're not going to follow the annual year-on-year tradition of television. Television's changing. And the ambition of the project is such that we're going to take our time to get the second season right.

**So a longer gap than viewers might be expecting between seasons.**

**Nolan:** We won't be on the air until 2018. We started that conversation with the network when we were shooting Episode 2 and we realized the complexity of trying to write and produce the show at the same time. We both work in the movie business as well, and in the movie business the best that you can possibly hope for with a film franchise is to turn around another installment in two or three years. So really on that schedule, we're doing great.

**Joy:** We're racing ahead.

**Finally, "SW" stands for Samurai World, right?**

**Nolan:** Stay tuned.

## **Westworld Creator Jonathan Nolan Doesn't Care That You Figured Out the Big Twist**

*GQ* magazine, 5 december 2016, Scott Meslow

On the heels of a deck-clearing season finale, Jonathan Nolan breaks down how *Westworld's* first season came together.

TV shows rarely come as ambitious as HBO's *Westworld*, which spanned hundreds of characters, dozens of sets, and three distinct timelines over the course of its first season. But TV's buzziest new drama began on the smallest scale imaginable, as Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy—the husband-and-wife team who serve as *Westworld's* co-creators and showrunners—sat in a room together, hashing out the beautiful, complicated world that would eventually roar to life on HBO.

Now that the first season is over, how has the series evolved—and where might it go next? On the heels of last night's finale, we talked to **Jonathan Nolan** about the tremendous undertaking of *Westworld's* first season.

**Since the whole first season is finally out in the open: How much does the completed project resemble your original concept for the show?**

We shot the pilot in 2014, but we're almost remarkably on target for where we wanted to be. Obviously, big things change from the first day you sit down to scheme out the pilot and the series. [Lisa] and I spent months—she was pregnant with our first child, so we had this kind of unique, amazing window—just the two of us, sitting around and talking about what this world could be. Obviously building on the blueprint from the original film, but really cutting from whole cloth in the characters, and everything else. Lots of different ideas would get picked up and set down—but by the point we sat down to shoot the pilot, we had a strong sense of what we wanted the first season, the second season, and subsequent seasons to be. One of the beautiful things about TV, as opposed to film, is that you have the opportunity to shoot a little bit with the actors.

See what you're getting back, see what's working, and refine—*ever so slightly*—toward that.

**TV is such an incremental process—particularly when you're putting together a show this sprawling and ambitious. As *Westworld* slowly came together, what surprised you most?**

I've worked in film for most of my career as a writer. I started doing TV about six years ago, and I got accustomed to the broadcast TV model—which I loved, and which is incredibly immediate. It's like speed chess, right? It's great that Garry Kasparov can sit there for an hour *thinking* about a move. And that's the movie business. On, TV, it's like, "Okay, that's nice. *Now* what have you got?" It's a fucking pie assembly—and I loved that, because you have to move quickly, and do three things at once. You literally had to be at some stage of production on five episodes simultaneously. And I got used to that.

"I'm the kind of little asshole who, from a young age, was the guy ruining movies for the person sitting the next to me."

And then we started on *Westworld*, and realized that when they say "It's not TV, it's HBO," they're not kidding. It's somewhere *between* the feature experience and the TV experience. So we weren't able to do the things we normally do. Especially with the added complexity of directing. As a showrunner, you can kind of outsource that to a trusted partner. You can kind of let that go. But here, we wanted to engage very directly and be very hands-on with the actors and the designers and the crew, and really build a world from the ground up.

**So much of the story was built around strategically withholding information from the audience. How did you decide where to parcel out those reveals over the course of the season?**

It's really complicated, because the *reality* is that the way that works is different for every audience member. I'm the kind of little asshole who, from a young age, was the guy ruining movies for the person sitting the next to me. I loved that! It was a game. I've been doing this for a long time: sitting there, trying to get a sense for the filmmaker's intention from the beginning.

I remember when I was just out of high school, when a buddy's dad bet me \$50 I couldn't figure out who was Keyser Soze [in 1995's *The Usual Suspects*]. So I sat down, and I watched the film, and I got it in about five minutes. And I didn't get it because I'm that clever. I got it because Chris McQuarrie and Bryan Singer very carefully threaded it through the narrative. We see Keyser Soze wield a lighter with a flourish, and Gabriel Byrne reacts to that. And then Verbal Kint sits down in the police station, and tries to light a cigarette, and drops the lighter. Ergo, he's Keyser Soze. It's all very beautifully, carefully layered into the film. I went back because I was curious—and it's all in the script.

From that experience onwards, I loved the idea that you could *withhold* some things from the audience—but you couldn't *lie* to them. You had to layer these things in from the beginning. That's a challenge now. Not only are you making a transition from film to TV, where you're doling out your story in weekly allotments—so people have the chance to spoil it for other people. But also because the internet has arisen in the time between. And we're still negotiating and figuring it out—now that we have total information awareness, what do we *do* with that, when it comes to entertainment?

**Did you anticipate that so many viewers and recappers would decipher *Westworld's* twists?**

Typically, on the stuff I've worked on, there's always a hardcore audience that's in there digesting everything you're working on. We're very lucky to have had that success. And here, the scale of it was pretty incredible—which is very gratifying and very exciting. And terrifying. But cool!

"The one thing that prepared us for the amount of theorizing the viewers did was the amount of theorizing the *actors* did."

**How did you decide how much you would tell the actors? I spoke with Jimmi Simpson, and it sounds like most of the actors were largely in the dark about where their characters were going.**

It's a really interesting thing, and it's tricky to negotiate. On the one hand, we work with some spectacular actors on this. You don't want to artificially withhold information from an actor. A great actor's job is to have the information, and hold onto it, and process it, and calibrate that into their performance.

That said: We're dealing very specifically here with a story about creatures whose worldview is characterized by how narrow it is. We wanted them to understand what it would be like to be an artificial human, and an artificial human whose understanding of the world has been curated. And so we felt that it was important to dole out the information tactically and carefully, to make sure the actors had everything they needed to know. In the case of the human actors, they had to understand what had already happened to them—which seemed fair—but not what was going to happen to them. And with the hosts... we just didn't tell them anything. [laughs] That seemed fair game. And honestly, it was a great experience. The actors seemed to thoroughly enjoy it, and were excited with each script that came in. The one thing that prepared us for the amount of theorizing the viewers did was the amount of theorizing the *actors* did.

**After spending the vast majority of your career so far as a writer, you directed both the pilot and the finale. How did your understanding of *Westworld* change by wearing a totally different hat?**

The whole experience, for me, reaffirmed the importance of practical location photography. Of going to real places and building real things, and putting that in front of a camera. Not just for the look of it, but for the actors and everyone else. Our visual effects supervisor is a genius, and the vendors we work with are amazing—and can *do* anything, and did some extraordinary work on this. But all things being equal—and part of the reason we wanted to do this show at HBO—was what they had built with the producers on *Game of Thrones*. Sure, look, you can put actors on a CG stage in Vancouver and make it look like Morocco. Or you can just *go to Morocco*.

This is something that I learned with my brother [director Christopher Nolan], coming up. There's no substitute for reality. It was a big, complicated, ambitious thing to take the unit to Utah and shoot everything there. We faced some questions about whether it was worth it. And then we got there, standing out in Dead Horse Point, and we said, "Hell yes." There's a lot you can do these days—and maybe 20 years from now, the film and TV business will be a bunch of people standing in a closet that's been painted

green, pretending. But I certainly hope not—because when you're out there on a train in Utah with a bunch of actors, there's nothing that can replace it.

*This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.*

## Promovideo's HBO

### **Classic Western Meets Science Fiction Film | Invitation to the Set – Westworld (HBO) (2:08), 17 september 2016,**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAUoVqZ7BLw&list=PL079iP69FaZNU4T5f9Ils-IPqOA4kJCdw&index=28>.

**Jonathan Nolan: “We were interested in a moment in which humans are able to create their own realities, and control them and populate them and interact with them where ever they chose. What happens to a place where you live without limits? Supposedly consequence free. It’s a classic full boat Western meets a science fiction film.”**

William: Are you real?

Woman/host: Well, if you can't tell... Does it matter?

J.J. Abrams: “When you open it up, there are these great emotional questions that are talking about our deepest fears, our greatest passions and how we behave when those are challenged.

Logan: “This place is the answer to that question you’ve been questioning yourself.”

William: “What question?”

Logan: “Who you really are.”

**Lisa Joy: “One of the things that we wanted, to defranchiated in series was to come in from an unlikely lands and feel a connection with the hosts.”**

Thandie Newton: “If there are artificial intelligence that would so much sophistication they actually seem human, what would you do with them?”

Dr. Robert Ford: “The guests don't return from the story that tells them who they are. They are here because they want a glimpse of who they could be.”

**Nolan: “If their simulation is immersive enough would you start discovering things about yourself that you didn't want to know?”**

Jeffrey Wright: “The heart of the exploration we're undertaking is to cast some reflection on who we are.”

Evan Rachel Wood: “It's challenging. It's supposed to challenge your views of what's right and what's wrong.”

Dr. Robert Ford: "How men create live itself. You can't play God without be acquainted to the devil."

**Welcome to Westworld | About The Series – Westworld (HBO) (2:05), 26 september 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1D-GWBgnTJU>.**

*Opening text: A new HBO Original series*

**Jonathan Nolan: "You are completely immersive in the fantasy. One in which you can do whatever you wanted, consequence free.**

*From executive producers J.J. Abrahams, Jonathan Nolan, Lisa Joy*

**Nolan: "If the simulation is immersive enough, would you start discovering things about yourself that you didn't want to know?"**

*Welcome to Westworld*

Thandie Newton: "Westworld was device to satisfy people who want to go further than virtual reality. So you can actually go into a world where you interact with the artificial intelligence."

Woman guest: "We didn't mean to bother you."

Dolores: "Do you like to try a closer look?"

**Nolan: "The robots, or as we call them in the series the hosts, non of them understand that they are simply there for the amusement of the twentieth century guests."**

J.J. Abrams: "They sort of taken **the great "what if"** of what if there were a place like this and then what if the hosts began to crack."

Dr. Robert Ford: "What is your itinerary?"

Host: "To meet my maker."

**Lisa Joy: "Westworld explores what are the responsibilities when you create a new technology."**

James Marsden: "It's a moral dilemma when things are playing God and the future of artificial intelligence."

**Nolan: "If you make something ever more lifelike and they're sufficiently able to mimic human emotion, at what point does it become a life?"**

J.J. Abrams: "This show I think grapples with the question of are you upon in some insidious game."

**Joy: “You have forces colliding here that have far reaching implications.”**

Evan Rachel Wood: “But we are tackling is what really makes us human and that at the end of the day who will have more humanity: the robots or human beings?”

### **Reality of A.I.: Westworld (HBO) (4:27), 10 oktober 2016,**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKTbFwyLuuM&index=13&list=PL079iP69FaZNU4T5f9Ils-IPqOA4kJCdw>.

Dr. Robert Ford: “Do you know where you are?”

Dolores: “I’m in a dream.”

Ford: Do you know what this dream means?”

Dolores: “Dreams of a man telling stories to itself.”

Ford: Yes Dolores, but in my dream.”

**Jonathan Nolan: “You want to come to Westworld from the perspective of the robots or as we call them the hosts, who are not in on the joke. They are not aware of the fact that this is a simulation, that this is not reality. They are simply there for the amusement of the twenty first century. Guests are coming to indulge in a fantasy.”**

**Lisa Joy: “The guests come into the park and though they would never hurt a human outside of the park, you do see a sight of them that they are more likely to express in the park, because they kind of let go.”**

Man in Black: “I didn’t pay all this money ‘cause I want it easy. I want you to fight.”

**Joy: “Really, if you’re a host in the park, the savages are the guests.”**

J.J. Abrams: “Your heart breaks for these characters who we know are not human. But it doesn’t matter, because you begin to connect with them, which is the very premise of the show that at a certain point becomes a irrelevant whether something is organic or not.”

Bernard Lowe: “You taught me how to make them, but not how hard it is to turn them off.”

Ford: “You can’t play God without being acquainted to the devil.”

**Nolan: “We were fascinating with this thing that shooting we barreling towards. The moment, which we create things intelligent, enough that we can take advantage of them and to arrive pleasure from them. But not so intelligent that we worry or feel badly when we turn them off. When you play your Xbox your interacting with virtual characters you don’t think twice about hitting the power button.”**

Elsie Hughes: “You imagine how fucked we would be if these poor assholes ever remembered what the guests do to them.”

J.J. Abrams: “A.I. is on the one hand the gimmick of the show. But to me what it’s doing is investigating something that some people far smarter than I am, saying that this is happening already.”

Jeffrey Wright: “Stephen Hawking, Bill Gates and Eion Husk, you know, have nightmares about the future of artificial intelligence.”

**Joy: But we are already living in a world of artificial intelligence. It’s just that you are not seeing a robot, you are seeing a smartphone. We think while this is just a small leap, a small advance. But if you look at everything in aggregate we are moving towards a place where we’ve uploaded our lives and our thoughts. There is a cost to that.”**

James Marsden: “With every advancement in technology, it feels like to me there is something darker, lurking. Sometimes we’re excited about how cool, how new this is. We don’t want to think about the potential consequences.”

Ashley Stubbs: “Would you ever hurt a living thing?”

Dolores: “No.”

Stubbs: “Have you ever lied to us?”

Dolores: “No... of course not”

**Nolan: “The thing about A.I. is that science fiction has been presenting this question for so long, we’ve become a little immune to it.”**

Evan Rachel Wood: “You have this image of them rising up and taking over the world and... it’s still a possibility, but what if they would actually in fact be better than us, maybe even more peaceful? But they will be mimicking what they know. If all these robots seek is the worst side of human nature. It would be hard to expect anything less from them.”

Thandie Newton: “If you teach a person to care, they are gonna care. If you teach a person to hate, they’re gonna hate. And it really makes me realize that so much of what humanity does is taught. And if we can learn to hate, we can unlearn to hate”

**Nolan: “We started to think about only as a question to science fiction, and the reality is these things are happening very quickly. I believe when we start grabbing some of these questions far earlier than we anticipated.”**

Ford: “Just don’t forget, the hosts are not real. You mustn’t make that mistake.”

**Jonathan Nolan on Directing Westworld (HBO) (2:44), 7 december 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TItyl3h09yU>.**

Dr. Robert Ford: “And now it’s time to say goodbye old friend. Good luck”

**Jonathan Nolan: “One of these reset motions with the pilot was designing the look of the show in a way that wasn’t necessarily flashy or over stylized, but the very gently suggested where are your sympathies should lie.”**

Boy guest: “You are one of them aren’t you? You’re not real.”

**Nolan: “Some of the camera movement is there to gently nudge your sympathies towards the hosts. By the end of the first season we want to transform the world from a dream to a reality or nightmare shades of both. So we had handheld cameras work in the finale for the first time. Specifically the moment when Maeve.. She walks on on that train at the end, with steady cam, sits down, realizing she makes a mistake, makes the first real decision she’s made ever. And when she gets back of the train we’re in a handheld shot that feels vibrant and alive and real. You do begin to realize that her decisions through the first season have been like a train on a track.**

**One of the main questions of the second season is where is Dolores go from here? We wanted to start with the Disney princess and end with liberty leading the people. A great French portrait of revolution. We’ve understood through the course of the first season that she is trying to resolve her own inner decency with the obscenity of her position in this park and the point that she comes to one underlined by Ford for her in the finale is you can’t escape this place, you can’t be free by being the person you are.”**

Ford: “Tell me Dolores, did you find where you were looking for? And do you understand who you need to become if you ever want to leave this place?”

**Nolan: “The very character that we have written you to be is the trap for you, so you have to push out and evolve past that character.”**

Maeve: “What is this place?”

Lutz: “It’s complicated.”

**Nolan: “The first season was about the theme park. Now it’s about a very very dangerous environment. Fantasy has become reality. The gloves have come off. Humans can be hurt, killed or locked in with the hosts. Stakes have risen dramatically. Should be a lot of fun.”**



## Bijlage 2: Uitwerking thematische analyse

Datum	Bron	Uitspraken	Codes	Sub-thema's	Thema's	Essentie
17-09-2016	Promovideo's van HBO HBO. (17 september 2016). <i>Classic Western Meets Science Fiction Film / Invitation to the Set - Westworld (HBO)</i> [Online video clip]. Geraadpleegd op 17-03-2017. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAUoVqZ7BLw&amp;list=PL079IP69FaZNU4T5f9lls-IPq0A4k[Cdw&amp;index=28">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAUoVqZ7BLw&amp;list=PL079IP69FaZNU4T5f9lls-IPq0A4k[Cdw&amp;index=28</a> .	Nolan: "We were interested in a moment in which humans are able to create their own realities, and control them and populate them and interact with them where ever they chose."	Moreel gedrag in de verhaalwereld van de serie	Definiëring mythologie van WESTWORLD	Complexe verhaalvertelling	Nolan zegt dat zij geïnteresseerd zijn in de mogelijkheid waarbij mensen hun eigen realiteit creëren en controle hebben. Dit slaat tevens op het creëren van de robots in de serie. Met deze uitspraak laat Nolan zien dat zij de vrijheid hebben om hun ideeën uit te denken en te kunnen realiseren in de serie.
		Joy: "One of the things that we wanted, to <i>defranchiated?</i> in series was to come in from an unlikely lands and feel a connection with the hosts."	Nieuwe benadering van Sciencefiction genre	Sciencefictiongenre	Genres	Joy heeft het over de empathie tussen mens en robot in de serie. Het lijkt erop dat ze duidelijk wil maken dat zij dit aspect uit de originele film verder wil ontwikkelen en uitbreiden in de serie.
26-09-2016	HBO. (26 september 2016). <i>Welcome to Westworld / About The Series - Westworld (HBO)</i> [Online video clip]. Geraadpleegd op 17-03-2017. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1D-GW'BgnTJU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1D-GW'BgnTJU</a> .	Nolan: "The robots, or as we call them in the series the hosts, non of them understand that they are simply there for the amusement of the twentieth century guests."	Mythologie van "the hosts"	Definiëring A.I.	Complexe verhaalvertelling	Nolan geeft hier een definitie voor de robots. De robots leven in hun eigen werkelijkheid in het themapark waarbij zij geen besef hebben van de grotere wereld waarvan de robots uitmaken.

		Joy: "WESTWORLD explores what are the responsibilities when you create a new technology."				Joy zegt dat zij met WESTWORLD willen onderzoeken wat de verantwoordelijkheden zijn die komen kijken bij het creëren van een nieuwe technologie zoals robots. Hiermee lijkt ze aan te willen geven dat de serie vernieuwend is door een nieuwe benadering op een nieuwe technologie te tonen.
10-10-2016	HBO. (10 oktober 2016). <i>Reality of A.I.: Westworld (HBO)</i> [Online video clip]. Geraadpleegd op 17-03-2017. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKTbFwyLuuM&amp;index=13&amp;list=PL079IP69FaZNU4T5f9JIs-IPqOA4kjCdw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKTbFwyLuuM&amp;index=13&amp;list=PL079IP69FaZNU4T5f9JIs-IPqOA4kjCdw</a> .	Joy: "The guests come into the park and though they would never hurt a human outside of the park, you do see a sight of them that they are more likely to express in the park, because they kind of let go."	Moreel gedrag in de verhaalwereld van de serie	Definiëring mythologie van WESTWORLD	Complexe verhaalvertelling	Joy geeft hier een omschrijving van de relatie tussen mens en robot en hoe het gedrag van de mens verandert wanneer zij in het themapark zijn. Volgens haar verandert het morele gedrag van mensen zodra ze een nieuwe soort wereld zijn met nieuwe regels.
		Nolan: "We create things intelligent, enough that we can take advantage of them and to arrive pleasure from them. But not so intelligent that we worry or feel badly when we turn them off."	Mythologie van "the hosts"	Definiëring A.I.	Complexe verhaalvertelling	Nolan geeft hier betekenis aan de mythologie van de serie door de intelligentie van de robots te definiëren.
		Nolan: "The thing about A.I. is that science fiction has been presenting this question for so long, we've become a little immune to it."	Genreconventie van sciencefiction genre	Sciencefictiongenre	Genres	Nolan geeft aan dat telkens dezelfde vragen rondom A.I. behandeld worden in mediateksten in het sciencefictiongenre.

						Hierdoor lijken we de vragen niet meer te zien. Dit betekent ook dat er geen sprake meer is van vernieuwing. Dit lijken Nolan en Joy te veranderen.
07-12-2016	HBO. (7 december 2016). <i>Jonathan Nolan on Directing Westworld (HBO)</i> [Online video clip]. Geraadpleegd op 17-03-2017. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tltyl3h09yU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tltyl3h09yU</a> .	Nolan: "We wanted to start with the Disney princess and end with liberty leading the people; a great French portrait of revolution."	Ontwikkeling van personage		Complexe verhaalvertelling	Met deze uitspraak wil Nolan aangeven dat zij hun personages diepgang geven door ze te laten ontwikkelen in het verhaal.
<b>Interviews</b>						
22-09-2016	Yarm, Mark. "The Couple Behind HBO's <i>Westworld</i> Want To Know What Is Wrong With Us All." <i>Wired</i> , 22 september 2016. Geraadpleegd op 17-03-2017. <a href="https://www.wired.com/2016/09/couple-behind-hbos-westworld-want-know-wrong-us/">https://www.wired.com/2016/09/couple-behind-hbos-westworld-want-know-wrong-us/</a> .	Nolan: "I've been working for several years now with [show executive producer] J.J. Abrams on <i>Person of Interest</i> . Twenty-three years ago he sat down with Michael Crichton, who had directed the original film, to talk about remaking it, but he couldn't figure out how to tackle it. Twenty years later it dawned on him that part of the difficulty was that the film is packed with ideas. For instance, there's a throwaway line in the original about the thing that's propagating the error from robot to robot being like a virus. I looked it up, and the first computer virus didn't appear in the wild until 1974. There are so many ideas that J.J. thought, "There's a series here."	J.J. Abrams en een film vol ideeën	Ontwikkelen van het idee	Productieprocedures	Nolan bespreekt hoe het idee voor <i>WESTWORLD</i> als serie is ontstaan bij J.J. Abrams en hoe complex het idee al was bij de originele film. Nolan lijkt hier te willen benadrukken hoe complex de mythologie van <i>WESTWORLD</i> de film is en dat dit betekent dat de serie nog complexer is, omdat zij deze complexe ideeën nog verder ontwikkelen voor hun verhaallijnen.
		Nolan: " <i>WESTWORLD</i> 's hosts share something in common with him in that they have a certain amount of amnesia—in this case, the amnesia has been built in by design."	Mythologie van "the hosts"	Definiëring <i>A.I.</i>	Complexe verhaalvertelling	Er wordt een vergelijking gemaakt met de film <i>MEMENTO</i> voor de definiëring van de robots in

				<p>Nolan: "We went on deep background with sources, talking about the state of AI and where it's going. In Silicon Valley, a lot of people aren't willing to go on the record, because it's an arms-race environment. We modeled so many aspects of the show on their intense secrecy."</p>	Vorbereitung in Silicon Valley	Ontwikkelen van het idee	Productiepro-ces	<p>WESTWORLD. Nolan geeft hier aan dat zij met experts op het gebied van A.I. hebben gesproken om hun perspectief van A.I. in de serie vorm te kunnen geven. Zij hebben zich laten inspireren door Silicon Valley. Dat de showrunners zo dichtbij de experts kunnen komen zegt iets over de grootte van de productie en de mogelijkheden die de showrunners hebben voor de ontwikkeling van de serie.</p>
			<p>Nolan: "The trend is toward human beings' ability to turn more and more of their world into game space and narrative space—you've got peak TV, you have VR."</p>	Vergelijking met videogames	Definiëring A.I.	Complexe verhaalvertelling	<p>Nolan lijkt hier in te willen gaan op de toenemende controle die mensen hebben op hun omgeving in de serie. Hierbij maakt hij de vergelijking met videogames waarbij gamers meer keuzes krijgen binnen de wereld van de videogame.</p>	
			<p>Joy: "We expect the show to be thought-provoking, because it's thought-provoking for us. When I play <i>Grand Theft Auto</i>, I'm such a nerdy little law abider because I've always had this active imagination in which I sympathize and empathize with</p>	Vergelijking met videogames	Definiëring mythologie van WESTWORLD	Complexe verhaalvertelling	<p>Joy gaat in op het aspect van empathie voor de fictieve personages en waar de grenzen van empathie overschreden worden.</p>	

			also, hopefully, the audience itself." Nolan: "I've long been fascinated by artificial intelligence. My last show was about it—the parts of <i>INTERSTELLAR</i> that I was most excited to see brought to screen dealt with the interactions between the artificial crew members and real crew members. I'm fascinated by the subject. And there was an opportunity here to dive all the way in so you're not looking at them—you're looking through them. You're with them trying to understand the world that they've been placed in, and the appetites and their interactions with the guest. It's more about AI looking at us and trying to understand us. Which we thought was such a fascinating way into this story."	Definiëring <i>Artificial Intelligence</i>	Definiëring mythologie van <i>WESTWORLD</i>	Complexe verhaalvertelling	In deze uitspraak komt de benadering van de showrunners naar voren over hoe zij het verhaal vanuit het perspectief van de robots vertellen. Hiermee wordt de complexiteit en de vernieuwende functie van de serie benadrukt. Hij benadrukt dit door het woord "fascinerend" te gebruiken. Hiermee wordt unieke benadering van <i>A.I.</i> benadrukt.
		Nolan: "I think this is a subject that we have seen so much of in film and television that we've become a little immune to it. We've come to regard it solely as the problem of science fiction, but it's actually happening."	Genreconventie van sciencefictiongenre	Sciencefictiongenre	Genres	Door <i>A.I.</i> steeds op dezelfde manier te benaderen lijkt Nolan te willen zeggen dat het genre stil is blijven staan. Hij geeft aan dat er veranderingen op het gebied van <i>A.I.</i> plaatsvinden en deze veranderingen wil hij ook toepassen door het genre te vernieuwen met hun benadering.	
		Joy: "Well, I think if the implied sexual violence in the show, if it's jarring for people, makes them think and makes them empathize with the machines, then that's part of a conversation that we wanted to start. There are so many video	Moreel gedrag in de verhaalwereld van de serie dat vergeleken wordt met videogames	Definiëring mythologie van <i>WESTWORLD</i>	Complexe verhaalvertelling	Joy bespreekt hier hoe zij in de serie spelen met de positionering van <i>A.I.</i> ten opzichte van de mens. Zij bespreekt de mate van	

29-09-2016	Miller, Matt. "Westworld Is Not the Next Game of Thrones – It's More Than That." <i>Esquire</i> , 29 september 2016. Geraadpleegd op 17-03-2017. <a href="http://www.esquire.com/entertainment/tv/news/a49073/westworld-interview-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy/">http://www.esquire.com/entertainment/tv/news/a49073/westworld-interview-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy/</a> .	things. When other people turn off the game, they don't think, "Oh my goodness, I just ran over four pedestrians, how terrible. I wonder if their family has health insurance?" Now, as technology develops, you start to wonder: Where is that line where it becomes immoral not to have empathy, even if you know that these creatures are artificial?" Nolan: "I think we wanted the show to explore the uncanny valley completely. We wanted this idea of near AI (artificial intelligence), or near-human AI. It's an interesting one, because as you approach the question of intelligence and consciousness and sentience, the fabric of that is very subtle. It's the suspense of what makes us alive."	Mythologie van "the hosts"	Definiëring mythologie van WESTWORLD	Complexe verhaalvertelling	Hierbij haalt zij het voorbeeld van <i>Grand Theft Auto</i> aan waarbij mensen doodgereden kunnen worden maar waarbij geen consequenties aan de actie verbonden zijn.
	Joy: "You know, building that empathetic connection between the audience and the host is something we worked very hard to create, both on the page and in performance. I think the question that we pose in this series — "Have you ever questioned the nature of your reality?" — is applied to the hosts, but if they seemed lifelike and we empathize with them, then it might act as a mirror of us. Then the audience is also asking, "Have you ever questioned the nature of your reality and your place within it?" So, in making them as lifelike as possible, they form a kind of mirror to the guest within the park and	Joy: "You know, building that empathetic connection between the audience and the host is something we worked very hard to create, both on the page and in performance. I think the question that we pose in this series — "Have you ever questioned the nature of your reality?" — is applied to the hosts, but if they seemed lifelike and we empathize with them, then it might act as a mirror of us. Then the audience is also asking, "Have you ever questioned the nature of your reality and your place within it?" So, in making them as lifelike as possible, they form a kind of mirror to the guest within the park and	Mythologie van "the hosts"	Definiëring mythologie van WESTWORLD	Complexe verhaalvertelling	Net als bij het vorige punt positioneren de showrunners hun benadering van het concept van <i>A.I.</i> als vernieuwd en uniek idee die zowel de verhaallijnen in de serie vormt als de kijkers thuis laat nadenken via de diepere betekenis van het concept.

				<p>games out there where violence and sexual violence is just something that you play. And here, because you think of them as the "other" because they are just for recreation, it's just a game. Now, in pushing that boundary and making the host more and more lifelike, we start to question: When does it become immoral, whether or not these are actual human creatures, to exercise these violent urges upon them?"</p>				<p>gelijkheid tussen mens en robot in de serie. Met dit idee willen zij de kijkers laten nadenken over het concept van robots uit de serie.</p>
			<p>De ambitie van HBO dat naar voren komt via GAME OF THRONES</p>	<p>Joy: "We're both huge fans of Game of Thrones and the programming that HBO has done over the years. When we were thinking of WESTWORLD and doing it with HBO, what they really showed us is that they have the ambition in their network, and they value production value as much as we did, and that that would be a perfect place to do a show of this scope and this ambition."</p>		Productiepro ces	<p>Joy beargumenteert waarom zij graag de serie bij HBO wilde produceren. Door aan te geven dat HBO net zo ambitieus te werk gaat als zij geeft Joy met deze uitspraak niet alleen betekenis aan WESTWORLD maar tevens aan zender HBO.</p>	
			<p>Mythologie van "the hosts"</p>	<p>Nolan: "And one of the things we're interested in with this series is the ways in which A.I. won't resemble us, the ways in which their mentality and their thinking will be distinctly different from ours"</p>		Complexe verhaalvertell ing	<p>Uit deze uitspraak van Nolan blijkt dat de robots anders zijn dan mensen. Hiermee geeft hij een definiëring van WESTWORLD.</p>	
			<p>Balans in verhaalvertelling en ideeën</p>	<p>Nolan: "We tried to strike a balance between big ideas, big complicated storytelling, but also letting the audience find their own way through the narrative. It's a challenge, but it's a fun one."</p>		Complexe verhaalvertell ing	<p>De complexiteit komt naar voren door het te hebben over "grote" ideeën en "grote" complexe verhalen die ook nog op een manier verteld moeten worden dat het publiek hun eigen weg door de complexe</p>	

30-09-2016	Eidelson, Eric. "Still Have No Idea What 'Westworld' Is About? Let the Creators Explain." <i>Complex</i> , 30 september 2016. Geraadpleegd op 17-03-2017. <a href="http://uk.complex.com/pop-culture/2016/09/westworld-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy-interview">http://uk.complex.com/pop-culture/2016/09/westworld-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy-interview</a> .	Joy: "To explore artificial intelligence and the potential emergence of sentients in a time when, literally, incubators and Silicon Valley are working on the same thing, seems like an impossible opportunity to deny."	Ontwikkelen van A.I. in Silicon Valley waar de showrunners mee spelen in WESTWORLD.	Sciencefictiongenre	Genres	verhaalvertelling kan vinden. Joy gaat in op de mogelijkheid voor hen die is ontstaan dankzij de ontwikkelingen van A.I. in Silicon Valley. Zij geeft aan dat zo'n mogelijkheid niet onbenut moet blijven.
		Nolan: "You are sort of writing the prehistory of a thing that feels not only urgent but imminent— [we explore] the idea of our ability to create narrative space that's so immersive that for all intensive purposes it's the real world, and the question of artificial intelligence. I've been obsessed with artificial intelligence for a long time. It was featured in my first season PERSON OF INTEREST, it was one of the aspects of INTERSTELLAR that I was most excited about in terms of the character dynamic in that movie. For me, it was a chance to reapproach that question from a completely different perspective—from their perspective."	Vernieuwen van het sciencefiction genre door een andere benadering te kiezen voor A.I.	Sciencefictiongenre	Genres	In deze uitspraak gaat Nolan in op hun vernieuwende benadering van A.I. en hoe zij als het ware een nieuwe creatie van A.I. vanaf de basis ontwikkelen.
		Nolan: "The more peripheral characters in the Western become the central characters in our story. Beyond subverting the genre, we are trying to ask the question of why this genre exists in the first place. Why are human beings interested in the Western? What does that say about us?"	Breken met genreconventies van het Westerngenre	Westerngenre	Genres	Door het breken met genreconventies door van bijrollen hoofdrollen te maken wijken ze af van de standaard van het westerngenre en vernieuwen zij het genre door de conventies op een



							andere manier te benaderen.
							Uit de uitspraak van Nolan blijkt dat de showrunners bij HBO de ruimte hebben om te experimenteren met controversiële onderwerpen zoals geweld en personages tot slachtoffer maken. Hij geeft aan dat er geen regels zijn dus dat zij de vrijheid hebben om de serie naar hun ideeën uit te werken.
							Productiepro- ces
							Script
							Ruimte om te experimenteren met controversiële onderwerpen op HBO
							De vragen die de showrunners over het verhaal stellen en vergelijken met andere media
							Complexe verhaalvertell- ing
							Definiëring mythologie van WESTWORLD
							Verhaalperspectief vanuit "the hosts"
							Complex verhaalvertell- ing
02-10-2016	Radish, Christina. "Westworld' Showrunners on How the Production Hiatus Helped Them Plan for Future Seasons." <i>Collider</i> , 2 oktober 2016. Geraadpleegd op 17-03-2017. <a href="http://collider.com/westworld-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy-interview/#showrunners-hbo">http://collider.com/westworld-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy-interview/#showrunners-hbo</a> .						Nolan: "What made it comfortable for this subject matter on this network was that it was very exciting to be able to explore the questions of the show. They are obviously about exploitation and violence and fantasy and victimization. We are able to play with those questions on a network where we could really explore those questions to the degree that we wanted to, without any interference in terms of setting rules for what we could or couldn't do."
							Nolan: "I think the narrative is very much about why do we find this stuff entertaining. That's the question the show is asking. In our video games, films, and TV, why is the most transgressive and dark material the stuff that we tend to be drawn to? Why are we watching these shows in the first place?"
							Nolan: "When J.J. [Abrams] called Lisa and myself, he pitched us this idea of, what if we turn the structure around and started with the hosts. For us, that gave us a way to play with everything that we're interested in, all at once. It's the ultimate playground for us because we deal with questions about artificial intelligence, which is something I've long been fascinated by, but also human intelligence,

		or the lack thereof, human behavior, and interactive, immersive storytelling. It was like a candy store. "				concepten uit te werken. Uit deze uitspraak blijkt dat de showrunners veel vrijheid hadden bij de uitwerking van het idee voor de serie.
	Joy: "It's a timely moment to be exploring the evolution of sentience and artificial intelligence because it doesn't feel like science fiction, at this point. It feels like an examination of current events. But in addition to that, for me, it was a chance to approach two genres, in terms of the Western and science fiction, from unlikely points of view that I could feel a more visual connection to. The tale of the old West is one often told through the lens of the t men who conquered it. Of course, we have a plethora of incredible actors playing really unique characters in this, but the spotlight isn't just on the male experience in the West. It's also on the women, and there's a whole eco-system there that was ripe to be explored."	Het vernieuwen van genreconventies	<i>Genre mixing</i>	Genres	Door de genres sciencefiction en western te benaderen vanuit een nieuw perspectief lijken ze nieuwe mogelijkheden te creëren binnen de genres. In het westergenre zijn vrouwelijke personages net zo belangrijk en in het sciencefictiongenre vernieuwen ze het genre door de ontwikkelingen van <i>A.I.</i> te verwerken in de serie.	
	Joy: "I think there's a double layer of subverting expectations with point of view in this. We are looking through the West through the POV of characters that are normally the sidekick, the damsel in distress, the helper, and the madam who gives a sassy word or two to people passing through town. In this, they're not peripheral characters. They're their own heroes. Each of them has their own agency and history and dreams and fears."	Het verhaal vertellen vanuit het perspectief van vrouwelijke karakters in een westergenre	Westergenre	Genres	Met de voorbeelden lijkt Joy aan te willen geven hoe zij het westergenre op een andere manier benaderd hebben.	
	Joy: "We look at it from that POV first. And	De verschillende	Structuur van de	Complexe	De showrunners geven	

		then, on a broader level, we're coming to the entire park through the point of view of the robots, which we call the hosts. It's a double-layered situation of exploring unlikely points of view."	lagen in de verhaalvertelling	verhaalvertelling	verhaalvertelling	uitleg vanuit welk perspectief het verhaal verteld wordt.
		Joy: "We feel really fortunate. They're such incredibly talented actors. What we try to bring on the page, they bring to life in totally new dimensions. We lucked out, in the biggest way, because each of them is a gem, personally, and a pleasure to work with. We feel incredibly fortunate to be working with them."	Samenwerking met de cast	Filmproces	Productieproces	De showrunners prijzen hun cast voor het werk dat ze leveren.
		Joy: "This show is such a behemoth, and you're dealing with so many extras and such a large, ambitious scope. You're not just creating an entire Western world, you're also creating a contemporary technological world. It's basically like doing a couple of very ambitious shows, or movies, simultaneously. We got really lucky with our crew, your production designer and costumes. Everybody pulled together, in every division, and worked together really hard."	De belevenis van Lisa Joy	Overkoepelende ervaring van het productieproces	Productieproces	In deze uitspraak van Joy worden veel verschillende elementen besproken. Allereerst is de productie enorm. Zij heeft de productie ervaren alsof ze twee werelden aan het creëren waren. Daarnaast had zij het gevoel dat zij meerdere grote films en series tegelijkertijd aan het produceren waren. Als laatste noemt zij de goede samenwerking die nodig was om de ambitieuze plannen uit te voeren.
		Nolan: "If you look at contemporary gaming, it's a journey that's similar, not just in the level of gore and realism, but also in terms of the level of sophistication of the non-player characters. Every game	Vergelijking tussen videogames en A.I.	Structuur van de verhaalvertelling	Complexe verhaalvertelling	

02-10-2016	Hibberd, James. "Westworld Showrunners Explain That Premiere Episode." <i>Entertainment Weekly</i> , 2 oktober 2016. Geraadpleegd op 17-03-2017. <a href="http://ew.com/article/2016/10/02/westworld-premiere-interview/">http://ew.com/article/2016/10/02/westworld-premiere-interview/</a> .	has a physics engine and a graphics engine, but it also has an A.I. engine and it has limited A.I. that's powering those NPCs." Joy: "It was important for us to establish that connection with the hosts from the beginning. We've been trained to have a distance from those characters in other movies and TV depictions of artificial intelligence. To look at them as the Other. It was important for us to start within their reality, believing in their reality along with them and fully being sunk into that and once you develop that empathetic connection with them initially, it only makes sense that in order to subvert it you have to turn the whole thing inside out." Joy: "We wanted to set up in this is the idea that these hosts could have personhood and to establish that connection."	Het creëren van empathie voor "the hosts"	Definiëring mythologie van WESTWORLD	Complexe verhaalvertelling	De showrunners vonden het belangrijk om te beginnen met "the hosts" waarbij de kijker hen niet moeten zien als een minderwaardig wezen maar als een gelijke van de mens. Met deze uitspraak lijken ze hun keuze duidelijk te willen maken aan potentiële kijkers door uitleg te geven.
03-10-2016	Giroux, Jack. "Interview: 'Westworld' Creators Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy on Building Their Intellectual Lego Set." <i>Film: blogging the reel world</i> , 3 oktober 2016. Geraadpleegd op 17-03-2017. <a href="http://www.slashfilm.com/world-interview-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy/">http://www.slashfilm.com/world-interview-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy/</a> .	Joy: "It reinforced for us that entertainment is very subjective. I would talk to people, people I like, who would come at it much more from the gaming perspective of saying, "Well, what does it matter? They'll be wiped, and they'll be put back in the park the next day, and it doesn't really matter. They're just playing the game. They're just fulfilling their role." Nolan: "For us, the show doesn't propose to provide any answers. It's just, ultimately, asking interesting questions about why people would come to this place, what they would get out of it, what they'd be looking for, what people are	Mythologie van "the hosts"	Definiëring mythologie van WESTWORLD	Complexe verhaalvertelling	Joy stelt in deze uitspraak dat entertainment subjectief is. Hiermee lijkt zij te bedoelen dat iedereen entertainment op een andere manier ervaart. De showrunners willen de kijkers aan het denken zetten waarom zij de serie kijken en wat zij uit hun consumptie halen.

05-10-2016	<p>Miller, Liz Shannon. "Wesworld": How Video Games Inspired Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy's New Sci-Fi Western Hybrid." <i>IndieWire</i>, 5 oktober 2016. Geraadpleegd op 17-03-2016. <a href="http://www.indiewire.com/2016/10/westworld-interview-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy-hbo-pokemon-go-robot-sex-1201733337/">http://www.indiewire.com/2016/10/westworld-interview-jonathan-nolan-lisa-joy-hbo-pokemon-go-robot-sex-1201733337/</a>.</p>	<p>trying to get out of the stories and games that they immerse themselves in</p> <p>Joy: "As we were starting out, we had a wonderful, creative, original movie, but we're really expanding it and converting the world significantly. Before even embarking on writing the pilot, we wanted to feel sure that we understood the story, where it could go and the depths of some of the things that we wanted to explore, and that included an understanding of the world and the rules of the world."</p> <p>Joy: "Well we've spent a lot of time discussing this and so we did try to create a big mythology and some answers. It's kind of like those Russian nesting dolls, where you pull apart one level and there's another level. We did think about the world outside quite a lot and where the series would go and even how it would end."</p> <p>Nolan: "One of the things that's really fun to tap in with television right now is this sort of explosion, the peak TV moment that we're in, people are exploring different modes of storytelling here. But one of the exciting things here is being able to commit upfront to a big, big, big story. Our story is a really big one. It's the story of the origin of a new species on this planet, and being able to tell that in chapters and commit to aggressive moves season-by-season that propel that story upwards and outwards and inwards."</p>	<p>De complexiteit van het verhaal in de originele film omzetten naar verhaallijnen voor de serie</p> <p>De verschillende lagen in de verhaalvertelling</p> <p>De mogelijkheid om te experimenteren met de manier hoe het verhaal verteld wordt</p>	<p>Script</p> <p>Structuur van de verhaalvertelling</p> <p>Definiëring mythologie van WESTWORLD</p>	<p>Productiepro- ces</p> <p>Complexe verhaalvertell- ing</p> <p>Complexe verhaalvertell- ing</p>	<p>Joy bespreekt het proces dat zij als showrunners doormaakten om de mythologie van de film te begrijpen en waar zij de verhaalwereld uit konden breiden.</p> <p>De showrunners bespreken de diepte van de mythologie van de serie en dat de verhaalwereld van WESTWORLD in hun gedachte verder reikt dan dat te zien is in de serie.</p> <p>Nolan bespreekt de mogelijkheden die de huidige televisieperiode met zich meebrengt. Hij noemt de verschillende manieren van verhaal vertellen. Maar hij gaat dieper in op mogelijkheid om een enorm en ambitieuze serie te produceren.</p>
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	<p>has encouraged us to take the time and resources that we need to work on each stage of that. One of the fun things about television is that sometimes you find yourself in this place where you have to wear all these hats at once. You have to write, shoot, and cut simultaneously. We wanted to in the second season spend some more time writing, then switch gears into production, then cut. So we're not going to follow the annual year-on-year tradition of television. Television's changing. And the ambition of the project is such that we're going to take our time to get the second season right."</p>	<p>middelen die de showrunners krijgen en hoe ze vooruitkijken naar het produceren van het volgende seizoen</p>	<p>ervaring van het productieproces</p>	<p>ces</p>	<p>functies van de showrunners worden besproken waarbij Nolan geeft meer tijd te willen nemen voor elke functie. Hierdoor zouden ze afwijken van het standaard productieproces van televisie.</p>
	<p>Nolan: "It's a great problem to have this many people engaged with the show. Look, internet speculation has always existed. With a lot of shows along the way, the theorizing doesn't add up to much. In the case of "True Detective" in the first season, a lot of the theorizing was outside of the scope of what the show intended to do. In our case, the theorizing was right on target. We were layering this idea of a nonlinear experience experienced linearly."</p>	<p>Het sturen van de interpretaties van de kijkers</p>	<p>Betrekken van de kijkers</p>	<p>Complexe verhaalvertelling</p>	<p>De showrunners lijken op voorhand in te spelen op de speculaties door ruimte voor speculaties te verwerken in de verhaallijnen van de serie.</p>
	<p>Nolan: "The answer is nothing. We want each season to feel like an evolution of the show and something that builds in scope and ambition season on season. We're hopeful the audience will be patient with us. We want to take the time so that the second season is every bit as ambitious and beautifully produced as we can make it."</p>	<p>Ambitie van de showrunners voor de toekomst van WESTWORLD</p>		<p>Productieprocesses</p>	<p>Uit deze uitspraak blijkt dat de showrunners bewuste keuzes maken voor de serie waarbij ze verhaallijnen voor volgende seizoenen alvast bedenken waarbij ze alvast op in kunnen spelen in het huidige seizoen. De opbouw van de gehele</p>

05-12-2016	Meslow, Scott. "Westworld Creator Jonathan Nolan Doesn't Care That You Figured Out the Big Twist." <i>GQ-Magazine</i> , 5 december 2016. Geraadpleegd op 17-03-2016. <a href="http://www.gq.com/story/westworld-jonathan-nolan">http://www.gq.com/story/westworld-jonathan-nolan</a> .	Nolan: "And then we started on WESTWORLD, and realized that when they say "It's not TV, it's HBO," they're not kidding. It's somewhere between the feature experience and the TV experience. As a showrunner, you can kind of outsource that to a trusted partner. You can kind of let that go. But here, we wanted to engage very directly and be very hands-on with the actors and the designers and the crew, and really build a world from the ground up." Nolan: "Typically, on the stuff I've worked on, there's always a hardcore audience that's in there digesting everything you're working on. We're very lucky to have had that success." Nolan: "The whole experience, for me, reaffirmed the importance of practical location photography. Of going to real places and building real things, and putting that in front of a camera. Not just for the look of it, but for the actors and everyone else." Nolan: "But all things being equal—and part of the reason we wanted to do this show at HBO—was what they had built with the producers on Game of Thrones. Sure, look, you can put actors on a CG stage in Vancouver and make it look like Morocco. Or you can just go to Morocco. There's a lot you can do these days—and maybe 20 years from now, the film and TV business will be a bunch of people	De betrokkenheid van de showrunners bij verschillende fases in het productieproces	Overkoepelende ervaring van het productieproces	Productieproces	serie is doordacht. Zij willen de tijd nemen om dit goed uit te kunnen werken. Nolan bespreekt de mogelijkheid die zij showrunners bij HBO krijgen om veel invloed te hebben op het productieproces. Hij heeft het proces ervaren als een proces dat zicht tussen een film- en televisieproductieprocessen inzit. Nolan is blij met het succes van WESTWORLD. Hij heeft het over de trouwe fans die alles bekijken, goed of slecht. De realiteit van het filmen op locatie dat ingezet wordt door de showrunners om de prestaties te verbeteren van cast en crew. Nolan geeft aan dat filmen op locatie iets unieks is dat niet nageemaakt kan worden in de studio.
			Het trouwe publiek van WESTWORLD	Betrekken van de kijkers	Productieproces	
			Het belang van filmen op locatie volgens Nolan	Locatie	Productieproces	
			Het belang van filmen op locatie volgens Nolan	Locatie	Productieproces	



					standing in a closet that's been painted green, pretending. But I certainly hope not—because when you're out there on a train in Utah with a bunch of actors, there's nothing that can replace it."				
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