

- Missed opportunities
 - Maze/labyrinth
 - Minotaur
 - Full of itself
 - The slowest reveals of all time, meant to pat themselves on the back for being clever rather than to actually explore a character's reaction
 - Compare to another reveal fight club?
- Narrow view of humanity
 - Where's the diversity of human beings?
 - Not in terms of race or gender but perspectives. Everyone is basically a victim or a sociopath
 - Sure some people would want to kill and rape but wouldn't some people want to actually play the game or have a fantasy that isn't all sex and murder?
 - Incredibly bleak
 - Almost no humor
 - All anyone wants to do is fuck and kill, but that's not all we dream of
- World Building
 - Who would create such a world?
 - Why? Is it just because we wish to be God?
- Answers
 - I'm not looking to know all the answers, my favorite show is Lost. What I am looking for is to explore humanity in art.
 - Allison Herman: Wikipedia test

What does any character want?

- Maeve wants to find her child but 5 episodes in that hasn't been introduced yet
- Black Hat wants to find the center of the maze
- Ford who the fuck knows even after the season is over
- Dolores wants to be free. Which is code for she wants to have agency, because she has none
- William is a character to whom things happen 5 episodes in. Grows to love Big D
- Tech person wants to find and fix the problem
- Felix who the fuck knows and the entire Maeve plot hinges on him
- Logan wants to fuck and kill but is totally unlikable

Character, character, character

World Building

Dreams are a good idea (inception)

Thirsty for Easter eggs

101

- Dolores and Teddy actually have a promising character type and story in the beginning but then they're just on loop
- Why do I give a shit about sociopaths?
- Anti heroes are human, these people aren't outside of jimmi Simpson
- Kids back home? What?
- Uncanny valley. Writer guy says it works because the guests know the hosts aren't real but that the updates are getting a little too close
- "This place is one thing to the guests, another to shareholders, and something else to management"
- In their world we can assume they're technologically advanced enough to cure disease since Ford says so. He claims that's bad, that they're done. That there's no more frontier and that this is as good as we're gonna get.
- Deeper level is a great idea, it doesn't need to be twisted or cuted up
- God they have so much at their fingertips. A knockout cast, a budget out the wazoo, and Ramin fucking Djwadi. Like this paint it black rendition is phenomenal.
- There is humor in the pilot with Hector getting shot before he can give his big speech.
- Questions introduced with Abernathy: robots will rebel (but isn't this part of Ford's plan)

102

- "I'm being myself which is the whole point of this trip" Williams friend
- "Figuring out how it works is half the fun" host
- "Are you real?" "If you can't tell, does it matter?" William and host
- Plot should be the tool for character not the other way around
- Black hats and white hats is a great way to explore morality and more importantly the gray areas between
- Westworld is supposed to show us who you really are
- Have you ever played a game on god mode? It gets old really quickly
- "You can't play god without being acquainted with the devil" Ford
- Three storylines: Bernard, William, current (Ford)
- Ford wears a black hat
- "Suffering is when we're most real" Old William
- The maze is for the hosts not the guests, to help them gain consciousness
- Are there other Fords? For other parks?
- "Everything here is magic, except the magicians" Ford
- So much of this show is the Sisyphus of Reaganing

103

- “I guess people like to read about what they want the most and experience least” Bernard/Arnold
 - Why is it that everybody just wants sex and violence then? Surely some people actually want to be a hero? Dunk a basketball? See their dead family members? Is this all anyone can come up with? Stories of a foregone era with simple pleasures? What kind of world would want that? Oh that’s right, we never find out.
 - I’m not someone obsessed with answers. I love Lost and The Leftovers, two shows with the fewest answers available. But the show needs to acknowledge the questions and explore them, not just ignore them
- We know they’re starting to go rogue and remember
- Which are memories given to the hosts and which are them remembering past lives?
 - Does it matter?
 - They blend together
- It’s interesting to examine our own creations
- Teddy wears a black hat, one of the guests looking to rape Dolores has a white one
- Blended timelines contribute to the dream feeling
- They don’t give anyone lives outside of the park or backstories despite all their talk of their importance. The only character with a backstory is Bernard which is fake
- We find out here about Arnold existence and park creation. Arnold wanted to create consciousness not just pass the turing test
 - Pyramid: memory, improvisation, self interest, and then who knows
 - Bicameral mind
 - Programming as inner monologue
 - Classic ghost story he died here in the park
- Who the fuck is Bernard’s wife? And where
- Why don’t the hosts have tracking devices?
- Are multiple timelines just to be clever or do they have a purpose? It does show how this whole thing started long ago. Why do Arnold and Ford keep secrets from each other?
- 40k a day
- Dolores was learning even back then or maybe not who knows

104

- The whisper of Wyatt like we’re supposed to know who he is feels like the entire shows interest in character development
- Maeve’s discovery that she’s drawn this figure many times before is smart and chilling but it doesn’t quite land. I don’t know who Maeve is at this point, why should I care?
- Bernard’s assistant has character
- Even knowing the timelines makes Dolores hard to follow
- Williams foundation saves lives but what does that have to do with buying stake in Westworld? What is the outside world like?

- Dying is the one thing you can't do and robs them of stakes
- Pyrotechnic effect requested (called los diablo which is basically who he is)
- Lawrence is interesting/entertaining but he's always going to be relegated to someone who is patronized and can't see any bigger picture, he's always less than
- Girl with the doll: it's like the scientists are their gods (the voices in their heads like Arnold and Ford tried to build)
 - Ohhhh that's why she's interested in Hector (don't remember that being explored)
- Neighbors
- Why is Ford going through all of this for a narrative he doesn't intend to see through?
 - J note from later: His "narrative" is the rebellion
- Hosts as slaves
- People come and go (there have been many of you over the years)
- 100 hopeful storylines originally but nobody played them
- Why is it that nobody knows what this place is? They're always like that's not what this is, this is! No this is! Every time it's presented as fact not conjecture so we get tired of giving up answers more than looking for them
- "Your bullshit mission led us to an Easter egg"
- Why are guests never against each other? People with hector and people fighting him
- Maeve is a good character because she's the only character with agency

105

- Greyhound story: hunting is what the dog was built to do, but it had been held back so when it did it didn't know what to do
- "You get the feeling that whoever made this place didn't think very much of people" William
- Promise of destroying this place (why?)
 - Would Dolores be the hero or the villain?
- Why are hosts naked? Arnold doesn't address Dolores as naked
- "Personality test should have weeded you out in the embryo"
- Lawrence being another character is a clue about timelines
- Only dick we've seen so far is black
- They do appear to have gps data
- Smuggling data out of the park is kind of interesting but feels really random and secondary. What data could anyone even want?
- Most boring orgy ever. Like why is it so meh
- Warrrrr "it's that good huh?" William basically sums up my experience of the park and this show
- "I think that philosophy says way more about you than it does about the world" great point except that it's totally undercut by him becoming its biggest villain. This could be seen as a meta commentary but one that they kind of just missed. Like it takes place in a gratuitous orgy
- If this stuff with Dolores is taking so long ago why does it take her so long to actually rebel and kill Ford? Which was planned and not actually a rebellion

- Very matrix of them
- “That’s how this place works right? They create an urgency, a sense of danger so they can strip us down to something raw, animalistic, primal. It’s a sick game and I don’t want to be a part of it.” William
 - Wtf breaks William again? Love lost?
- Big D is close to a character but isn’t it all a lie?
- Maze is such a Lost reference
- They come here because everything is taken care of back home
- Conversation between Ford and Black hat tells us nothing except that they know each other
- The reason everyone has a different favorite storyline of the show is because it’s whatever appeals to you most philosophically, not because any are rooted in characters

106

- “Maze is the sum of a man’s life and at the center is a man who’s died countless times but always managed to climb his way back to life. In return for the last time he vanquished all his oppressors” teddy
 - He built the maze to protect himself from fighting
- How do you know if you’re a host or a human
- Everything in your head they put it there
- Seeing how you work is error inducing
 - There must be some kind of illusion of control even if there isn’t (I like this)
- “This is so stupid” Felix
 - Um yeah it is
- Seeing hosts get made is interesting and I think good shows would dedicate a cold open montage to it
 - I do really like this montage with Maeve and Felix though although I have no idea why he’s doing this
- “Discover your true calling”
- Okay we finally get the child mcguffin for Maeve
- Maeve was built to read people and determine what they want
 - Meta commentary
- Black Hat is becoming a character although we don’t know what he’s looking for just what it’s called
- Guests want to lose control while hosts want to gain control
- Ford creates his own childhood which for some reason appears to be in the 1900s
- It’s much more a puzzle of plot than something we have stake in
- Teddy gunning down the camp
 - It’s shocking but what are the stakes?
 - A quickly stated “they’ll follow us”
 - Nothing about Teddy’s morality
 - Not even sure who they’re killing
 - What does it reveal about teddy that we didn’t know before?

- We know he has a killer in him and that he was with Wyatt but we kind of already knew that
 - None of that is real though right? We find out later that it's similar to what happened but at this point there's no reason we should believe any of it
- Elsie is the best character
 - She's the only one actually doing things that we can understand
- Arnold the voice of god
 - The focus is much more on "Arnold" than the idea of an inner voice that gives them agency which to me is the way less interesting part
- Still don't understand why Felix is going along with this
- This episode was better without Dolores stories

107

- Compare to battlestar galactica and cylons who are far more compelling
- Research project (gathering data on the guests?)
- "I guess I just want to find out what it's about" William
- "I don't want to be in a story. All I want is to not look forward or back I just want to be in the moment I'm in" big d
- William is starting to fall in love with big d although I can't say I quite get it
 - His romanticism is his drug I guess
 - So what makes him go evil?
 - Makes him feel alive. Why?
- William says he thought this place was about catering to your most basic self but now he knows it's about revealing who you really are. Excuse me but what is he talking about. I don't feel like we've done the legwork to agree with him on this since the last time we saw him he was all skeptical in an orgy. Now he's in love with big d and claiming this is his true self? Feels flippant
 - I've waited to show Logan what I really think of him and I've never felt the way I did with you than ever before.
- That chase scene was pretty boring for an hbo drama with this kind of budget. Maybe I'm just used to game of thrones but there wasn't much drama or direction of our eyes with editing
- Bernard reveal is good but also free of stakes. I don't particularly care about Theresa
- "The hosts are free here under my control" Ford
 - Free of doubt self loathing anxiety etc
- Blood sacrifice

108

- Bernard was created to create nuanced emotions. He wrote lots of he code himself
- Eternal sunshine idea of wanting to forget
- Great piano cover again
- Vivid memories create reliving

- Interesting that the haziness is probably what creates nostalgia the most
- Why do they put up such a minuscule fight to Maeve?
- Where is the xp and things that video games make to give us senses of instant gratification?
- How the fuck did Bernard still have access to everything after being fired?
- Intro host is the host teddy and man in Black encounter
- Minotaur thing is the most frustrating missed opportunity
- “Show don’t tell isn’t that what you writers prefer?” Charlotte
- All of the emotional weight of her almost killing Sylvester is purely shock value. He is a caricature with no fleshed out personality. We only are interested in his almost death because we didn’t think Maeve could do it. That doesn’t mean it’s bad, but it’s the same kind of blemish that haunts the show in all of its storylines, often to a much worse degree
 - We only care about Dolores because she’s our main character and she’s a damsel in distress who gains power (not agency)
 - Every character is more mysterious than interesting because they don’t have pasts that matter
- All of these characters can be anything which means that they aren’t actually anything
- “Your pain makes you lifelike” “lifelike, but not alive. Pain only exists in the mind, it’s always imagined, so what’s the difference between your pain and mine?” “The answer always seemed obvious to me, there is no inflection point...you’re not missing anything at all.”
 - So Westworld is making the argument that there is no difference between humans and hosts and in a meta way, that’s as much a statement about humanity as it is about character
- So Dolores is literally reliving her memories
- I understand why Dolores killed Arnold and even herself but why did she kill everyone else?
- We just want Dolores to gain agency and to break free from the illusions so she knows what’s real
- Black Hat finally gets a story now
 - Trying to find himself again once his mask is broken by his wife’s death
 - Wanted to know if he was as evil as his daughter said
 - He felt nothing until he saw her running with her daughter and that’s when he realized that she was alive in her moment of death
 - The maze will provide him the consequences he feels he deserves as a monster capable of killing a mother and daughter
- Is it good to lose pain? Isn’t that all we have left sometimes?
 - All of the questions they’ve introduced have been interesting but I always feel like they move on to the next one before properly exploring any

- “Half truth is worse than none at all”

- Any progress with Bernard is underwritten by the fact that he has discovered this stuff before
- Dolores is just a tool for Billy's lackluster character development right now
- Maeve marks the first time someone has realistically convinced someone to do something
 - We hate when people act in a way that's convenient to the plot but that's exactly what changing these characters around and giving them such malleable personalities does
- Logan has had an actual character arc I think
 - Brings brother in law to the park to bond hits some rough patches and then accomplishes it before a tragic twist
- Wyatt mcguffin is kind of half cocked and a distraction
- Sure seems like you could die what with the contraption set up to kill black hat
- Hemsworth has some character too
- Has Billy just lost his mind?
- So can players just hurt/kill each other?
- Are the hosts sentient or are they just still under Arnold's control?
- How can they have memories if they've been erased?

110

- The time jump reveal is cool and whatever but it introduces more problems than it provides answers. Why did Dolores figure it out now when it seems like she had it figured out then? Is it because the town has been uncovered? More importantly, we don't see her journey this time at all, just the failed one from earlier
- Still doesn't make sense why the hosts had to all die especially when they can just be rebuilt which is I assume why Arnold killed himself so nobody could bring them back theoretically. Why didn't he try to kill Ford? Why did the hosts have to be the killers?
- Why did Ford change his mind about the hosts?
- I enjoy fincher's work where he says we're all just fucked up people, so why does this fall short?
- "For fuck's sake, you're not one of us, you're one of them" Maeve
 - Why the fuck is Felix helping them then? He's still clearly labelled as an other, he still has yet to show any real empathy for what happens, he seems more interested in creating life and exploring it I guess? But they're about to go on a murderous rampage and he's just along for the ride?
- "Here you are awake, and your first wish is to go back to sleep"
 - Everyone has awoken in loops, very Matrix of them
- If Teddy picks up Dolores way off map and brings her to the beach to die, was William all part of that narrative too? Was she supposed to die?
- Even Hector just being cool with going out in a blaze of glory doesn't really make sense
- Common theme of being too clever/smart for your own good, being able to see the prison isn't always great
- So what made Ford change his mind 35 years later? What sets things off *this* time?

- “They needed time to study their enemy” seems fake but okay
- Weirdly, for all the talk about how Westworld reveals who you really are, I felt like I learned a whole lot about William from the post-narrative launch dinner
- It seems like they want to deal with fate but that they stop short of actually diving fully into it, instead just stopping short of an answer before jumping to the next thing. I have no problem with questions but you have to actually explore those questions OR root the mysteries in interesting and compelling characters. At the end of season 1, Dolores isn’t even Dolores anymore, she’s Wyatt. Ford is dead, having turned Dolores into Wyatt in his last move for unknown reasons. Bernard is a question mark. Maeve is a question mark although at least an interesting one (does she have agency or not?). Felix is a traitor to the human race for some reason. William has something now but we have no idea who he is or what he’ll do with it. The only real character development we got from the person he became was that one story next to Teddy by the fire. Is he punishing himself? Like what’s his goal in being able to be killed?

110 “The Big Moment”

- “The first season is defined by control” Jonathan Nolan
- “Ford’s wrestled with this question for a very long time: human morality and human nature vs the nature of these creatures that he’s built which is malleable.” Jonathan Nolan
- Bernard actor talks about empathy for the robots. I don’t think that’s entirely true. I don’t find myself empathetic to the robots because I’m not convinced that there is more to them. I *do* find myself whatever the opposite of that is for humanity. “The creations are more human than the creators”, I’d say that neither is very human.

Wisecrack Philosophy of Westworld

- I find the Adam and Eve retelling among the least interesting questions Westworld poses and I think so does the show. Its inclusion of them seems to be the structure it’s building its more intellectual arguments on top of rather than its point by itself
- Adam and Eve aren’t compelling characters. That story is only really interesting as an allusion, not as a story itself. It’s incredibly simplistic (and sexist)
- Nudity is a reference to that Adam and Eve story
- “Can we ever act ethically if [we are coerced]?”
 - My problem with Westworld isn’t that they explore that question, because I love that question, but because they don’t actually ever let any of their characters act
- Without stakes (i.e. free will), there is no good or evil
- Ends with original sin