

Future predictions in futurama movie

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Introduction and Thesis

Futurama is an adventure into the future with a crazy cast of misfits that will both irritate and endear you with their entertaining adventures and lovable antics. Futurama is an adult-themed cartoon covering the regular misadventures of a futuristic delivery company crew. Adult-themed cartoons are enjoyed by many, but not by all. They are often intentionally politically incorrect in the name of humor. If this type of off-color humor is for you, Futurama will thoroughly entertain you and may offer a reprieve from the standard fair of daily life by showing you a glimpse of a potentially awesome future.

Personal Perspective

Futurama is an adult themed cartoon set in the year 3000. The show follows the adventures of a man name Philip J Fry, who had been frozen in the year 2000, and his crewmates as they make deliveries for the Planet Express company where they work. It is often the case that the crew gets into some type of trouble, which usually makes up the bulk of each episode. In addition to this recurring theme, there are also background stories that follow each of the main characters. These background stories help to create character story arcs throughout each of the seven seasons. This has been my favorite show since I watched the pilot episode. I watch the series on repeat at night during bedtime, almost religiously. The ringtone on my cell phone has been the Futurama theme song since the first iPhone came out allowing MP3 ringtones. I would recommend this show to anyone who enjoys both science fiction and crude humor.

Historical Perspective

The Futurama series aired on Fox from March 28, 1999. There were a total of 140 episodes, ending on September 4, 2013 (The Infosphere, 2015). In addition to the standard episodes, there were also three specials and a crossover episode with The Simpsons titled Simpsorama. Futurama was cancelled multiple times during its production run. The first time it was not officially canceled, but was not renewed by Fox in 2003. The second and final cancellation came in 2013 when Comedy Central announced that they would not be renewing the show beyond season 7 (The Infosphere, 2016).

Adult animation has been around since at least the 1930s with classics such as Betty Boop. These adult aimed cartoons were made essentially illegal due to morally objectionable content until the 1960s when the MPAA was created (Rlaitinen, 2012). Adult animation came into major popularity in the mid-1990s with the creation of shows such as The Simpsons, Beavis and Butt-Head, and South Park.

Technical Perspective

With the exception of the opening sequence, Futurama is hand drawn at 12 frames per second. The opening sequence is entirely CGI and is 24 frames per second. As of season 5, the show was produced in High Definition. According to David X. Cohen, each episode took approximately one year to make from start to finish (Meslow, 2012). The writing staff for Futurama included three Ph. D.'s, seven Master's Degrees, and more than fifty years of Harvard education. According to show creator Matt Groening (Verrone, 2014), " we were easily the most overeducated cartoon writers in history."

The technical quality of Futurama is, as with most things, subjective. I find the quality of the writing to be above par for an adult animation show. There are many instances in the show where the writers have included significant hidden components. The writers of Futurama love math and it is very evident throughout the show. One of the writers, Ken Keeler, actually created a brand new math theorem just to use it in the show (Chan, 2010). This theorem was used to explain how with enough people switching bodies, the original bodies could be placed back with their original personalities. The episode this was used in involved a body switching machine that would only switch bodies once, but those two people could not then switch with each other again. This created a mathematical issue that needed to be solved for everyone to end up back in their own bodies. In the show, there is an extremely complex math theorem written on a virtual whiteboard by the Harlem Globe Trotters that resolves the issue. Technical inspection of the theorem written on the board shows that the theorem is not only original, but also correct.

Ethical Perspective

The plot points in the show are often intentionally politically incorrect and make light of current events. One example of this includes the re-election of Richard Nixon's head in a jar in the episode "A Head in the Polls" in which he is allowed to run again due to the Earth Constitution stating that no 'body' can run for president more than twice. In this episode Philip Fry also makes the claim "like one vote every made a difference." Another episode has President Nixon state that the Earth's Supreme Court is the "one place where the Constitution doesn't mean squat." During the Futurama movie "

Into the Wild Green Yonder”, the Supreme Court is shown to only count the female Justice’s votes as one half vote.

Famous people are often imitated and mocked in the show. Among these celebrities are Pamela Anderson, Claudia Schiffer, Conan O’Brien, Al Gore, and Stephen Hawking (Wikia, 2017). Each of these celebrities portrayed themselves in the show and in each instance the characters were shown to be over the top with each of their respective public personas. An example of this would be when Al Gore was introduced at a symposium as the inventor of the internet.

The show contains many characters that are exaggerated caricatures designed to mock the stereotype they are designed after. A comical example of this includes The Legion of Mad Fellows, which is a several thousand-year-old brotherhood, which defends the Universe against the Dark Ones. These individuals are easily identified by the tinfoil hats that they wear to protect their minds from being read. The show regularly includes hippies that are the butt of many jokes as well.

Cultural Perspective

Futurama could be considered a bit lowbrow and does not provide much in the way of cultural significance. Over the years the show has developed what is considered a cult following. Many of the jokes and hidden Easter eggs are designed to only be caught by hardcore fans. It was due to this cult following that the show was resurrected on Comedy Central in the first place. David X. Cohen once stated in an interview (Cohen, 2014), “ Certainly, in the history of TV it’s very rare for a show to come back after it’s gone and we didn’t it

expect it. It was just fan love that brought us back. People kept watching re-runs and buying DVDs. People would not let it die. I owe the fans for several good runs of employment.”

Crude humor often plays to the lowest common denominator and is a bit juvenile, but can provide hours of mindless entertainment. Though this has little cultural impact it can be great fun to watch. People who are easily offended may not enjoy the constant attack on every possible cultural norm. However, crude humor provides a unique cultural perspective in that nothing is sacred and everything can be funny. It can be a great breath of fresh air to forget about all the things that are offensive and just accept things as humorous. Almost like taking a vacation from having to care.

Critical Perspective

The show is designed purely for entertainment, although it often makes a seemingly unintentional stand on many socio-political issues. For me, this places the show in a unique category of adult animation. Many of the jokes are juvenile, but the lore creates an extremely complex universe. The continuity in Futurama is fantastic. It does have its slip-ups, but overall it is very impressive how well the writers were able to plan in advance. An example of this would be in the very first episode where Philip Fry is pushed into a cryogenic storage chamber, which is the precursor to him ending up in the future. In this scene, there is a small shadow that can be viewed for only a second. It isn't until season four that we are shown that the shadow in the scene is that of a character called Nibbler who is responsible for pushing Philip Fry into the cryotube.

In addition to Nibbler's shadow, there is another reference in the first episode with a manila envelope containing "contents of space wasp's stomach", which turns out to be the career chips of a previous Planet Express ship's crew. Again, this is not revealed until season four. Season two shows a crowd of mutants standing around in the sewer. Among these mutants are Turanga Leela's parents, though this again is not revealed until season four. There is a written alien language that appears in episode one and continues throughout the entire series. This language can be deciphered and is an actual written code, not just gibberish (Morgan, 2016).

If this were what the future turned out to be like, I think we are on the right track. There are obviously certain components of the future as presented in Futurama that would not be ideal, but overall I find that the diversity and breadth of the universe to be refreshing. Who wouldn't want their best friend to be a robot while they fly around space experiencing new adventures every day.

Summary and Conclusion

Adult-themed cartoons are not for everyone. But if you do find them entertaining, you will not be disappointed. In Futurama there is humor for every type of person, ranging from lowbrow to high-end math jokes that only a serious mathematician would even notice. Ethical dilemmas, political incorrectness, celebrity cameos, and tons of amazing continuity abound within this one-of-a-kind adult cartoon. Futurama provides a unique perspective on one possible future. If you choose to watch it, you may find yourself hoping and longing for that future as well.