
Your fifth blog entry, which you will post on www.NetflixStudies.com, is due before **5:00 p.m. Friday, June 15**. Before posting your comments (which should be at least **600 words**), you should [1] watch the first episodes of the Netflix original animated programs *F is For Family* and *Big Mouth* and [2] read the following essay about adult television animation (available in the Readings folder of Canvas):

- **Holly Randell-Moon and Arthur J. Randell, “The Man from Isis: Archer and the Animated Aesthetics of Adult Cartoons”** (a chapter in J. Jacobs & S. Peacock, eds., *Television aesthetics and Style* [New York: Bloomsbury Academic])

The authors of your assigned reading this week put forth a rebuttal to the widespread belief among lay audiences that television animation is “less serious” than its “live-action counterpart.” According to them, “animated television is ‘doubly devalued’ because of its association with both [children’s] cartoons and the comedy genre.” Indeed, as was recently revealed in some of your own reading responses this week (concerning Raphael Bob-Waksberg’s *BoJack Horseman*, one of the most critically celebrated TV series in Netflix’s roster of original programming), dismissive, prejudicial attitudes continue to shape spectatorial responses to this largely misunderstood form of cultural production.

Your one blog assignment this week asks that you put aside such preconceptions and prejudices in favor of a more nuanced, historically informed understanding of why animated television *matters*. Drawing upon ideas presented by Holly Randell-Moon and Arthur J. Randell in their brief analysis of the FX series *Archer* (a spoof of the James Bond film franchise), but expanding your focus to include references to *BoJack Horseman*, *F is For Family*, and *Big Mouth*, discuss some of the textual elements that distinguish these Netflix animated programs from live-action television. How is animation relatively “free” from some of the industrial exigencies of producing non-animated programs? That is, what are some of the “affordances” of this particular medium, which is said to give creative personnel more freedom at both the formal/stylistic and content/thematic levels? Conversely, what are the limitations of animation, and are any of those restrictions at least partially to blame for many audiences’ refusal to take programs like *Archer* and *BoJack Horseman* seriously?

Why do you think that “critical interest in and public perception of animated television has shifted over the last two decades”? Are there any specific programs, besides the ones mentioned by the authors, that you think contributed to that shift; that reassessment of the aesthetic complexities and cultural “worth” of animation for the small screen? Do you think that the Cartoon Network’s Adult Swim block of nighttime programming has made a positive impact on the critical reevaluation of animation and increased this cultural form’s reputation among general audiences? Or is Adult Swim’s appeal confined to a narrow/niche demographic (that of young adult men, ages 18-24)?

Looking specifically at *F is For Family* and *Big Mouth*’s, were there any moments in these program’s pilot episodes that seemed outrageous and/or upsetting? Might any of the material be perceived as being “too adult,” and if so why? If these series had been produced as live-action programs instead, would your reaction to the content and themes expressed therein be any different? That is, did animation as a medium for communicating potentially controversial subjects affect your reception?

Make sure that you touch on some of the authors’ key points related to aesthetics, dialogue, parody, and performance in your blog posts.