
Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Gyuri - 23-04-2008 16:48

In the "When the Hairs Stand Up on the Back of Your Neck" thread, Inca chided me for my shame at watching/enjoying the O.C. While I definitely liked the show, I think I came by the shame honestly as I have been routinely mocked by friends for my O.C.-love.

So, what TV shows have you watched that you're embarrassed to admit to enjoying? Also, what shows have you watched that you've been mocked for though you think such mockery is unjustified?

Besides the O.C., I've received undeserved mockery for enjoying such little-screen classics as Veronica Mars, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, and Angel.

I've been justly ashamed of watching American Idol (though I only watch occasionally, and usually pay little attention), Friends (after the first couple seasons), 90210, Arliss, and Project Runway (I blame the girlfriend for this one, though).

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by meerkat - 23-04-2008 21:05

I love Buffy and Angel. Buffy's a postfeminist icon, ffs. I even have a buffy mousepad. (It was a gift, but I was pleased to receive it.)

I'm distinctly lowbrow in my taste in tv, and I really don't care.

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Bored Of The Dance - 23-04-2008 21:47

As I mention on another thread, I watch Neighbours regularly. I also watch a whole host of American shows such as Desperate Housewives and Ugly Betty.

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 23-04-2008 21:50

90210 is awesome. As are the drinking games associated with it (e.g. "drink when they say something stupid", "chug whenever they have a life crisis with which you can't possibly identify").

I think I've mentioned this before on here, but 90210 is basically Star Trek in High School. Like Star Trek, every week they take on a "New Issue" (Brandon and Kelly visit the planet of teen alcoholism!). And the Peach Pit is basically Ten Forward. And from a professional perspective, I found the entire second and third seasons - with their college search and financial aid story arcs - absolutely fascinating.

I have regular fights with my 11-year-old (who is OC-addicted) about which is the better show. He finds OC "realistic", but 90210 "cheezy", which is obviously irrational and entirely fuelled by his pre-adolescent lust for Mischa Barton.

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Gyuri - 23-04-2008 21:54

I'm distinctly lowbrow in my taste in tv, and I really don't care. I don't think Buffy and Angel are particularly lowbrow (not that there's anything wrong with lowbrow). They are definitely genre fare, but, much like Battlestar Galactica, I think they have too much going on in them to be considered lowbrow.

When I think of lowbrow TV, I tend to think of things like American Idol, Deal or No Deal, or any of those big/dumb-guy-hot-wife comedies like According to Jim

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Gyuri - 23-04-2008 22:03

I have regular fights with my 11-year-old (who is OC-addicted) about which is the better show. He finds OC "realistic", but 90210 "cheezy", which is obviously irrational and entirely fuelled by his pre-adolescent lust for Mischa Barton. I don't think it's irrational for an 11-year-old to find 90210 cheezy (though I can't fathom the Barton love). 90210 is definitely a bit dated now, and the issue-of-the-week (great Star Trek analogy, by the way) was usually presented in a very standards-and-practices mandated, overtly moral way (if they drink, bad things happen to them).

As I mentioned above, I watched the show regularly (they were my age! they were just like my friends!), but felt that it often had a movie-of-the-week vibe and a terrible sense-of-humor (whereas when the OC was funny, it was very funny).

That said, 90210 was kind of awesome, especially if watched ironically. I think what set the OC over-the-top for me was it's built in sense of self-irony. That pose can get annoying/seem a bit precious at times, but I thought season 1 of the OC nailed it.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by meerkat - 24-04-2008 07:44

Oh, I think they're fairly low brow, when compared with, say, question time. Not bottom feeder kind of low brow, but not exactly elevated watching.

Buffy and Angel were well scripted, very entertaining, with occasional moments of insight and humour that made them well worth the two hours a week I religiously devoted to them.

Thing is, I think TV is by definition supposed to be, you know, entertaining. If I want to be educated, I read a book. If I want to experience slack jawed drooliness, I watch tv.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 24-04-2008 07:54

That's overstating it, I think, and offers too many hostages to Murdoch. There's nothing intrinsically "lowbrow" about TV drama or comedy, and there's no necessary conflict between entertainment and depth. The TV adaptation of Kant's Prolegomena to a Metaphysics of Morals has perhaps yet to be made, but we're still waiting for the opera and ballet versions as well, and nobody goes around calling them "lowbrow".

In fact, I think you've got the wrong axis here. The key distinction isn't between highbrow and lowbrow, it's between popular culture that respects its audience and popular culture that insults it. There's plenty of scope for the former on telly.

I must admit, I take the medium far more seriously than you say you do.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by meerkat - 24-04-2008 08:01

OK, I might be exaggerating slightly for effect...

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 24-04-2008 08:38

The TV adaptation of Kant's Prolegomena to a Metaphysics of Morals has perhaps yet to be made,

See, there's where you're wrong. I can think of at least a half-dozen episodes of 90210 where the gang try to make the transition from common rational to philosophic moral cognition.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Nil a fhios agam - 24-04-2008 08:58

I watched Dawson's Creek when I was in school, the first series of Desperate Housewives. When I'm flicking channels and Scrubs or any quiz show whatsoever is on I'll watch that too.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Bored Of The Dance - 24-04-2008 10:13

I don't think there is anything as high or low brow. Well, certainly not anything that is objective.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by The Horse - 24-04-2008 15:29

I genuinely thought The Secret Diary Of A Call Girl was a good drama.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Coffy - 24-04-2008 20:35

I'm not embarrassed by this but know I'll be judged harshly on OTF for it: I will never not love Friends.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Lyra - 25-04-2008 08:59

those big/dumb-guy-hot-wife comedies

I really love The King of Queens.

Call Girl though, I had to sit through the whole thing at work and I thought it was a bit rubbish, very by-numbers.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 25-04-2008 09:47

Antonio Gramsci wrote:

at least a half-dozen episodes of 90210 where the gang try to make the transition from common rational to philosophic moral cognition. Totally.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by The Horse - 25-04-2008 09:53

Yeah, no need to be embarrassed about liking Friends, Coffy. I regularly watch the reruns. People who claim to dislike it are just showboating.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Havencheese - 25-04-2008 09:54

There was a terrible dating BBC show I was into about three years ago called 'Three's a Crowd'. Me and my bored housemate loved watching it, it was sheer turd, but we kept watching it til it vanished very quickly.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Bored Of The Dance - 25-04-2008 09:54

I agree, Freinds is excellent. No "Frasier" but still very good

I will get slaughtered for this but I prefer "Freinds" to "Seinfeld" and "Curb Your Enthusiasm"

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by twohundredpercent - 25-04-2008 10:29

"Crimewatch". Even now, I get mildly annoyed at myself when I switch the television on and it's half-way through because I forgot (as I did last night).

I even have my 20 year old running joke (and surely everybody does this) of accusing people that I know of the crimes featured on it, and then trying to come up with reasons why it could surely only be them that did it.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by The_Liquidator - 25-04-2008 12:18

I will get slaughtered for this but I prefer "Freinds" to "Seinfeld" and "Curb Your Enthusiasm"

We should never sit and watch TV together.

Friends is shit in my eyes. I actually liked it for the first couple of years when the characters actually seemed like real human beings. At some point they got rid of the things that made those people amusing and turned them into heavily made up gag machines. That, plus the soapy tendencies of the relationships turned me off of it.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by The Horse - 25-04-2008 13:05

It was relatively crap for the first two seasons. The characters weren't defined enough: Joey kept making clever remarks a la Chandler and everyone spoke in the same "like, hello?" tone of voice. When they were more defined they were indeed gag machines. But what tremendous gags.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by And I am the Life - 25-04-2008 13:25

For me Friends and seinfeld are the same kind of supercelebrity comedy shite, with friends being slightly more annoying. I've never seen the point of the larry seanders show, and curb your enthusiasm is just basically a cunt does comedy of embarassment based on a cunt goes around being a cunt to cunts. I have no patience for american comedies written by teams of scriptwriters. It's like comedy eastenders or something.

That said, I will admit to liking Bones.

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Bored Of The Dance - 26-04-2008 00:21

Strangely, Liq, I didn't think that an evening of us together fighting over the remote would go that well anyway.

AIATL, as I say, I am no great fan of Seinfeld or especially CYE but there are very few British sitcoms that come anywhere close to American ones. Even ho-hum ones like "The Big Bang Theory" piss all over "My Family" or "The Royle Family" whereas it is only with "The Office", "Gavin & Stacey", "Nighty Night" etc that the UK has raised its game.

When "Cheers", "The Golden Girls" early "Roseanne", "Frasier" etc were being aired, there was nothing at all here that could be talked about being in the same league here

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Gyuri - 26-04-2008 00:38

For me Friends and seinfeld are the same kind of supercelebrity comedy shite. . AIATL, what does "supercelebrity comedy shite" mean? It sounds like you're saying that it's comedy based solely on the celebrity of the actors, but, at the time these shows started, none of the actors were famous at all. Seinfeld was the most famous, and I would be surprised if 1 out of 100 people had ever heard of him before he had the show.

While I have no issue with your cunt cuntung cunt cunt description of CYE, it is written solely by Larry David, though mainly improvised on camera, so I'm not sure why it leads into your point about teams of screenwriters.

Agree about "Bones", though I'm not sure why I like it as much as I do.

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Kowalski - 26-04-2008 00:59

I don't particularly like Seinfeld but my mate begs to differ. I've started to think that he only watches to seem superior to the people he works with, he tries this attitude with me sometimes too.

He also raves about Curb Your Enthusiasm so I tried it. I didn't find that particularly funny either.

I don't seem to find much of the comedy based around embarrassed silences very enjoyable, am I thick or something?

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Gyuri - 26-04-2008 01:13

I've always liked Seinfeld, but I wonder how American-specific (or, even narrower, Northeast US-specific, or, narrowest, Northeast Jewish-specific) it's type of humor is.

CYE is difficult for me to watch. It takes cringe humor to an extreme that I usually find more uncomfortable than funny. Every now and then it really works, but usually it leaves me shielding my eyes and covering my ears as if it was a horror movie.

Kowalski, I don't think your "thick" for not finding this stuff funny (or, if you are, I'm equally thick). I don't think humor is all that susceptible to intellectualizing, and those that attempt to intellectualize humor are often missing the point.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 26-04-2008 08:32

Seinfeld was absolutely astonishingly superb, you mad people. What I find oddest about people's objections is that it didn't fall into the cookie-cutter US wise-cracking sitcom pattern at all. The comedy was driven by the characters and the excruciating situations that their failings got them into. In that respect, it was more like Fawlty Towers than it was like Friends.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Pan Tau - 26-04-2008 10:43

Whatever lunatic Seinfeld backlash there is, it is cool-to-be-contrarian revisionist nonsense. Seinfeld was indeed superb.

It redefined the TV comedy genre. Certainly there'd be no Arrested Development or 30 Rock, two of the sharpest comedies of the '00s, without Seinfeld.

Friends was excellent, too. Here the prejudice against it was based on the celebrity status of its stars. Yet, before the series started, the only main cast member I had seen before was the Cox woman, in the Springsteen video for Dancing In The Dark. The celebrity came off the back of the show's popularity, which in turn was based on the smart scripts and fine performances by the cast (and the many great walk-ons. Roommate Eddy was brilliant) which justified all the hype.

Proper revisionism of Friends would require an acknowledgment that it was indeed an extraordinarily good TV series.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Pan Tau - 26-04-2008 10:52

Oh, and the first season of The O.C. was great. The second season was OK,. The third terrible.

What's the view here on Desperate Housewives? I watch it every week, and enjoy it mostly. Yet I know I don't really like it. It's the canned viennas of TV shows. And I am trying to discern where the "satire" its producers speak of is located. In the sardonically pontificating voiceovers by suicide woman (all of which start: "Yes!...")?

Ugly Betty has more satire and more interesting characters than DH. Wilhelmina's assistant Mark in particular. His physical comedy is quite remarkable.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by And I am the Life - 26-04-2008 15:03

AIATL, what does "supercelebrity comedy shite" mean? It sounds like you're saying that it's comedy based solely on the celebrity of the actors, but, at the time these shows started, none of the actors were famous at all.

It doesn't matter what they were like when they started. I'm talking about comedies with Smug cunts playing hopelessly

unappealing characters, that have somehow reached megastar status and get paid around \$1,000,000 an episode for the 5th, 6th and 7th series of a comedy that disappeared up its own arse after maybe two series max. I just associate Larry david with seinfeld. I don't find him funny. just really annoying, like a less human, less likeable ricky gervais.

Friends was excellent, too. Here the prejudice against it was based on the celebrity status of its stars.

no, it's that it was absolutely ubiquitous for the guts of a decade, with everyone telling me how absolutely great it was. The problem with it was that it just wasn't funny. Everything was Chandler, you're so sardonically funny. Ross, you're such a new man loser dweeb. Moron, you're a cunto moron. I'm not even going to mention how fucking irritating the women in that show were. (though I did like that phoebe in the opposite of sex) Maybe if the central characters didn't make me go rooting around for my hunting knife then I might have found some of their cracks funny.

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Lyra - 26-04-2008 15:20

CYE is brilliant, but it depends a lot on you knowing the characters, series 5 referencing series 2, etc, so you can't really watch it casually.

One other HBO show I love is Entourage. Absolute comedy genius.

I tried watching Ugly Betty once but it felt like being trapped in a small room with violently swirly wallpaper being shouted at by a lunatic.

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Crusoe - 26-04-2008 15:38

I've seen more Ugly Betty than I'd care to (my better half loves it) and I'd agree with ex-G, Mark's physical comedy is the funniest bit of it. He and Wilhelmina are an excellent double act.

There's no TV I feel embarrassed watching. The only shows I make a real effort to watch are The Big Bang Theory (it's just plain funny; not especially clever or inventive, but a great example of consistently funny sitcom writing), Reaper (which just about captures the Whedon style of Buffy or Firefly, and has the excellent Ray Wise as the devil) and to a lesser degree Doctor Who, My Name Is Earl (same comment as The Big Bang Theory) and from next week Peep Show.

Gavin & Stacey I've watched, but only for the James Corden/Ruth Jones/Rob Brydon bits. The rest don't crack a smile on my face.

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Inca - 26-04-2008 19:08

I realized reading this thread that there aren't many scripted shows that are "must watches" for me--enough to be in my Season Pass.

Just the Office (US). I have it set for My Name Is Earl, but I didn't get into it this year. I watched 30 Rock at the beginning, before it really started clicking, and I haven't watched it since even though I know it's supposed to be really good. My favorite scripted show is Friday Night Lights, but I don't think that's coming back.

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Bored Of The Dance - 26-04-2008 23:21

He also raves about Curb Your Enthusiasm so I tried it. I didn't find that particularly funny either.

I realised my problem with CYE isn't particularly the writing - at the end of the day, the guy co-wrote Seinfeld, he is a good comedy writer - it is the acting, the improvisation and specifically, the timing which is all awry.

I am not being contrarian about this, I just am not a big fan. I sat through three episodes at the start and they didn't make me laugh or make me want to carry on watching it. Indeed, I gave it more of a chance than I normally would so I was hardly being contrary

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by blameless - 27-04-2008 11:04

Whatever lunatic Seinfeld backlash there is, it is cool-to-be-contrarian revisionist nonsense

And here was me thinking I'd disliked the damn thing of my own volition since I first saw it in the mid-90s. Thanks for setting me straight.

I reckon the reason that Seinfeld polarises opinion so much is that the exact same things that make its devotees such huge fans - the contrived embarrassing situations, the dislikability of the characters, Jerry pulling stupid faces instead of actually delivering the punchline, and that bass chord between scenes - are the things that make the haters detest it so much.

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Pan Tau - 27-04-2008 11:19

Did I say your backlash was lunatic, blameless? Wrong, of course, but not lunatic.

AIATL's critique betrays the fact that he has not really seen much of and knows little about Seinfeld, which really hit its stride in season 3 and did not let up in quality till season 7.

So his critique should go something like: "I might be speaking from a position of relative ignorance here, but from what very little I've seen of Seinfeld, I can say that I was not motivated to explore this programme much further. And what bass chords are you talking about, blameless?" Or something like that.

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Matej - 27-04-2008 12:57

FNL is coming back Inca. But it is some weird thing where it is going to be on cable/premium channel in the Fall before showing up on NBC in the Spring.

We've just started watching Bones and New Amsterdam. Can't quite decided about either yet, but the latter has lots of potential.

Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Kowalski - 27-04-2008 13:17

I can see that programmes such as Seinfeld and CYE have something about them but they're just not to my taste. I don't hate them, I just can't get into them.

However, I detest Friends. I also detest the Shows that Channel 4 airs each Morning, apart from Frazier of course. You know the suspects; Everybody Loves Raymond, the one set in the magazine and that fucking abomination, Will and Grace.

The wonderful characters (surely everyone loves sassy parents unafraid to voice opinions), the putdowns, the beautifully

engineered situations; there's just so much to hate.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Inca - 27-04-2008 15:17

Matej wrote:

FNL is coming back Inca. But it is some weird thing where it is going to be on cable/premium channel in the Fall before showing up on NBC in the Spring.

Well, that's good. I think NBC did something like that with one of the Law & Orders--CI, I think, moving the new episodes to USA.

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Re:Judge Me By the Shows I Watch

Posted by Bored Of The Dance - 27-04-2008 22:32

It's not a chord though, it's a little slap bass fill. A chord is a collection of notes played at the same time

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