

film bicentennial man 1999

film bicentennial man 1999 is a science fiction drama that explores profound themes of humanity, identity, and the intersection of technology and emotion. Directed by Chris Columbus and based on Isaac Asimov's work, the movie stars Robin Williams as Andrew, a robot who embarks on a journey to become more human over two centuries. The film combines elements of futuristic technology with deep philosophical questions about what it means to be alive. This article provides a comprehensive overview of the film bicentennial man 1999, including its plot, cast, production background, themes, critical reception, and legacy within the science fiction genre. Readers will gain insight into how this film fits into the broader context of cinematic history and artificial intelligence narratives.

- Plot Summary of Film Bicentennial Man 1999
- Main Cast and Characters
- Production and Direction
- Themes and Philosophical Insights
- Critical Reception and Impact
- Legacy and Influence in Science Fiction Cinema

Plot Summary of Film Bicentennial Man 1999

The film bicentennial man 1999 tells the story of Andrew Martin, a robot purchased by the Martin family to perform household tasks. Unlike other robots, Andrew develops self-awareness, creativity, and emotions over time. The narrative spans over two centuries, chronicling Andrew's quest to become human. He gradually acquires human traits, including the desire for freedom, the experience of love, and the pursuit of mortality. The story is set in a future where robots serve humans, but Andrew's unique journey challenges societal norms about artificial intelligence and personhood.

Beginning: Andrew's Awakening

Andrew starts as a standard domestic robot but soon exhibits unique traits such as curiosity and artistic talent. His evolving personality causes both fascination and concern within the Martin family and society at large. Early events highlight Andrew's struggle to reconcile his robotic origins with his emerging individuality.

Middle: Quest for Humanity

As Andrew interacts more deeply with humans, he seeks legal recognition as a person. This section of the film explores his efforts to modify his physical form, including replacing robotic parts with

synthetic organs to appear more human. These changes symbolize Andrew's deepening desire to transcend his mechanical nature.

End: Acceptance and Mortality

The film culminates with Andrew being acknowledged as human by law, allowing him to experience mortality. This final phase underscores the emotional and existential aspects of Andrew's transformation and raises questions about the essence of life and humanity.

Main Cast and Characters

The film *Bicentennial Man* (1999) features a talented ensemble cast that brings the complex narrative to life. The characters are pivotal in illustrating the evolving relationship between humans and artificial beings.

Robin Williams as Andrew Martin

Robin Williams delivers a nuanced performance as Andrew, capturing the robot's gradual evolution from mechanical servant to sentient being. His portrayal balances humor, vulnerability, and philosophical depth, making Andrew a memorable and empathetic character.

Embeth Davidtz as Portia

Portia is the love interest of Andrew and plays a significant role in his emotional development. Embeth Davidtz's character represents human compassion and acceptance, key elements in Andrew's journey to humanity.

Supporting Characters

The Martin family and various legal and scientific figures in the film contribute to the narrative's exploration of societal responses to advanced robotics. These characters embody diverse attitudes ranging from skepticism to admiration toward Andrew's transformation.

Production and Direction

The creation of film *Bicentennial Man* (1999) involved notable contributions in direction, screenplay, and technical execution. The production aimed to faithfully adapt Asimov's story while making it accessible to a broad audience.

Director Chris Columbus

Chris Columbus, known for his work on family and fantasy films, brought a sensitive and accessible approach to the film *Bicentennial Man* 1999. His direction emphasizes emotional storytelling alongside science fiction elements, ensuring the film's themes resonate with viewers.

Screenplay and Adaptation

The screenplay was adapted from Isaac Asimov's novelette "The Bicentennial Man" and the novel "The Positronic Man." The adaptation process involved condensing complex ideas about robotics and ethics into a coherent screenplay that balanced drama and speculative fiction.

Visual Effects and Design

The film employed advanced visual effects for its time to portray Andrew's robotic and human transformations realistically. Makeup, animatronics, and CGI were integrated to depict the subtle changes in Andrew's physical and emotional state throughout the two-century timeline.

Themes and Philosophical Insights

The film *Bicentennial Man* 1999 explores several profound themes that challenge viewers to reconsider the boundaries of humanity and consciousness.

Humanity and Identity

A central theme is the definition of what it means to be human. Andrew's journey raises questions about identity, self-awareness, and the soul. The film suggests that humanity is not limited to biological factors but includes emotional depth, creativity, and personal growth.

Artificial Intelligence and Ethics

The film addresses ethical issues related to artificial intelligence, such as rights, freedom, and the moral responsibilities of creators toward their creations. It highlights the potential for AI to develop beyond programmed functions and the societal implications of this evolution.

Mortality and Legacy

Andrew's desire to experience mortality underscores the human condition's transient nature and the search for meaning. The film contemplates how legacy and memory define existence beyond physical life, even for an artificial being.

Critical Reception and Impact

Upon release, film bicentennial man 1999 received mixed reviews but was praised for its ambitious storytelling and Robin Williams' performance. Critics acknowledged the film's thoughtful approach to science fiction themes despite some pacing and narrative criticisms.

Box Office Performance

The film achieved moderate box office success, attracting audiences interested in science fiction and drama genres. Its appeal was enhanced by the star power of Robin Williams and the emotional depth of the story.

Critical Praise and Criticism

Reviewers generally commended the film's exploration of complex themes and visual effects. However, some critiques focused on the film's tone, which fluctuated between sentimental and speculative, and its adaptation challenges from the source material.

Awards and Nominations

Film bicentennial man 1999 received several nominations for its technical achievements and performances, highlighting its contribution to science fiction cinema despite not securing major awards.

Legacy and Influence in Science Fiction Cinema

The film bicentennial man 1999 holds a respected place in science fiction cinema, particularly for its humanistic portrayal of artificial intelligence. It has influenced subsequent films and discussions about AI in popular culture.

Influence on AI Narratives

The film's portrayal of a robot's quest for humanity has inspired other movies and literature that explore similar themes, contributing to the evolving discourse on technology and personhood.

Continued Relevance

As advancements in AI and robotics accelerate, the film's ethical and philosophical questions remain pertinent. It continues to be referenced in debates about the rights and treatment of artificial beings.

Cultural Impact

Film bicentennial man 1999 has achieved a cult status among science fiction enthusiasts and is often studied for its unique blend of emotional storytelling and speculative science, underscoring its lasting impact on the genre.

Key Facts about Film Bicentennial Man 1999

- Director: Chris Columbus
- Lead Actor: Robin Williams
- Based on works by Isaac Asimov
- Genre: Science fiction, Drama
- Release Year: 1999
- Runtime: Approximately 132 minutes
- Production Companies: Touchstone Pictures, Columbia Pictures
- Themes: Artificial intelligence, Humanity, Identity, Mortality

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the plot of the film Bicentennial Man (1999)?

Bicentennial Man follows the story of Andrew, a robot who gradually acquires human traits and emotions over two centuries, exploring themes of identity, humanity, and mortality.

Who stars in the film Bicentennial Man (1999)?

Robin Williams stars as Andrew, the robot, in Bicentennial Man, with supporting roles by Sam Neill, Embeth Davidtz, and Oliver Platt.

Is Bicentennial Man based on a book or original screenplay?

Bicentennial Man is based on the novelette "The Bicentennial Man" and the novel "The Positronic Man" by Isaac Asimov and Robert Silverberg.

What themes are explored in Bicentennial Man (1999)?

The film explores themes such as the nature of humanity, self-identity, freedom, love, mortality, and

the relationship between humans and technology.

How was *Bicentennial Man* received by critics and audiences?

Bicentennial Man received mixed reviews from critics, who praised Robin Williams' performance but found the film's pacing and tone uneven. It has since gained a modest cult following.

What makes *Bicentennial Man* (1999) relevant today?

Bicentennial Man remains relevant as it addresses ongoing questions about artificial intelligence, robotics, and what it means to be human in an increasingly technological world.

Additional Resources

1. *Robot Visions* by Isaac Asimov

This anthology collects many of Isaac Asimov's robot short stories and essays, exploring the ethical and philosophical questions surrounding artificial intelligence and robotics. It delves into the complexities of human-robot interactions, much like the themes in "*Bicentennial Man*." Readers gain insight into the evolution of robots from mere machines to entities with rights and emotions.

2. *The Positronic Man* by Isaac Asimov and Robert Silverberg

This novel, a novelization of the story that inspired "*Bicentennial Man*," follows Andrew, a robot striving to become recognized as human. It explores his journey through self-discovery, legal challenges, and societal acceptance. The book deeply investigates themes of identity, humanity, and the meaning of life.

3. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by Philip K. Dick

Set in a post-apocalyptic future, this novel questions what it means to be human through the story of Rick Deckard, a bounty hunter tasked with "retiring" rogue androids. The book inspired the film "*Blade Runner*" and offers a philosophical look at empathy, consciousness, and artificial life. It provides an intriguing counterpoint to the optimistic vision of robots in "*Bicentennial Man*."

4. *I, Robot* by Isaac Asimov

A collection of interconnected short stories, this book introduces Asimov's famous Three Laws of Robotics and explores various dilemmas faced by robots and humans. It lays the foundation for many ethical debates about artificial intelligence, autonomy, and morality. The stories balance technical ingenuity with profound human questions, resonating with themes in "*Bicentennial Man*."

5. *Machines Like Me* by Ian McEwan

This novel imagines an alternative 1980s London where synthetic humans exist, focusing on the moral and emotional complexities of relationships between humans and artificial beings. It raises questions about consciousness, love, and the rights of artificial persons. The book complements "*Bicentennial Man*" by challenging readers to reconsider the boundaries of personhood.

6. *Android Karenina* by Ben H. Winters and Leo Tolstoy (adapted)

A steampunk reimaging of Tolstoy's classic, this novel introduces androids into a 19th-century Russian setting. It explores how technology and robotics disrupt societal norms and personal relationships. The blend of classic literature and sci-fi themes offers a unique perspective on artificial life and humanity.

7. *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence* by Max Tegmark

This nonfiction work discusses the future of AI and its potential impact on society, ethics, and human identity. Tegmark explores scenarios ranging from beneficial AI to existential risks, engaging with questions similar to those raised in "Bicentennial Man." It provides a scientific and philosophical framework for understanding AI's role in our future.

8. *How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe* by Charles Yu

A metafictional novel blending science fiction tropes with a deeply human story about time travel, memory, and identity. While not directly about robots, it shares thematic elements of self-understanding and the quest for meaning. Its inventive narrative style complements the introspective journey seen in "Bicentennial Man."

9. *Ex Machina: The Art and Science of Artificial Intelligence* by Matt Kaplan

This book offers an accessible overview of AI's development, including ethical concerns and cultural representations. It discusses how AI is portrayed in media and literature, providing context for films like "Bicentennial Man." Readers interested in the real-world implications of AI will find this a compelling companion read.

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Steven Keslowitz, 2020-01-10 This critical examination of two dystopian television series--Black Mirror and Electric Dreams--focuses on pop culture depictions of technology and its impact on human existence. Representations of a wide range of modern and futuristic technologies are explored, from early portrayals of artificial intelligence (Rossum's Universal Robots, 1921) to digital consciousness transference as envisioned in Black Mirror's San Junipero. These representations reflect societal anxieties about unfettered technological development and how a world infused with invasive artificial intelligence might redefine life and death, power and control. The impact of social media platforms is considered in the contexts of modern-day communication and political manipulation.

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environmentalism, global capitalism, and the techno-scientific Empire. By considering these cycles -which include superhero films, creature films, space operas, among others-as expressions of the genre's basic oppositions, the book facilitates the comparison and juxtaposition of films that have rarely been discussed in tandem, offering a new perspective on the multiple articulations of the SF film in the new millennium.

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film bicentennial man 1999: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Virtual Intimacy and Communication in Film Andrea Sabbadini, Ilany Kogan, Paola Golinelli, 2018-09-03 Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Virtual Intimacy and Communication in Film brings together a group of psychoanalysts to explore, through film, the new forms of communication, mainly the internet, that enter more and more frequently into the affective lives of people, their intimacy and even the analytic room. The contributors, all practising psychoanalysts, analyse the potential and surprising transformations that human relationships, including psychoanalysis, are undergoing. At present, it is difficult to value the future importance and predict the possible disquieting consequences of the use and abuse of the new technologies; we run the risk of finding ourselves unprepared to face this revolutionary transformation in human connections and affects. Will it be possible in a near future that human beings prefer to fall in love with a machine gifted with a persuasive voice instead of a psychoanalyst 'in person'? The contributors explore the idea that virtual intimacy could begin to replace real life, in sentimental and psychoanalytic relationships. Imagination and fantasy may be strengthened and may ultimately prevail over the body, excluding it entirely. Can the voice of the analyst, sometimes transmitted only by telephone or computer, produce a good enough analytic process as if it were in-person, or will it help to foster a process of idealisation and progressive alienation from real life and connections with other human beings? The film *Her* (2013), alongside others, offers a wonderful script for discussing this matter, because of the deep and thoughtful examination of love and relationships in the contemporary world that it provides. Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Virtual Intimacy and Communication in Film will be of great interest to all psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic psychotherapists interested in the ongoing impact of technology on human relationships.

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the ongoing demand for horror - the serial killer; the vampire; the werewolf; the zombie - and draws on his remarkable knowledge of the genre to give us a comprehensive overview of the modern myths that have shaped the imagination of multiple generations of cinema-goers. *Nightmare Movies* is an invaluable companion that not only provides a newly updated history of the darker side of film but a truly entertaining guide with which to discover the less well-trodden paths of horror, and re-discover the classics with a newly instructed eye.

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Turkeys identifies the worst 144 movies of the last 25 years. Christopher Tookey has seen at least 10,000 films. For eight years, he was TV and then film critic for the Sunday Telegraph. For twenty years, he was sole film critic for the Daily Mail and the world's most popular internet newspaper, Mail Online. In 2013, he won the award Arts Reviewer of the Year from the London Press Club. This is a book about 144 of Christopher's least favourite movies. In his opinion, the movies we hate tell us as much about present-day culture as our favourites. All offer insights into the mindset of those who made or commissioned them. Virtually all make us aware of things we might rather not know about our "culture" and "values", or lack thereof. Technically, movies are more advanced than ever before; yet, paradoxically, seldom have so many wrongheaded movies been made. And never have they plumbed the depths of ineptitude, depravity and risibility that they have over the last 25 years. The choice of films Christopher has disliked over the past two and a half decades may be controversial. Some movies he finds ridiculous have achieved critical acclaim. A few have won Oscars. But the fact that The Da Vinci Code, The Hangover II and Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith are among the most commercially successful movies of all time should not disguise the fact that they are also, in his opinion, bloody awful. Tookey's Turkeys will appeal greatly to the general reader and in particular to all film fans, including those who have followed Christopher's reviews over the years. In a companion volume, Tookey's Talkies, Christopher has written about the best 144 films that he has seen over the same period. Featured in The Bookseller, March 2015 Non-Fiction picks, Film, TV & the Performing Arts.

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