

Hollywood World Views

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Communication Studies 142 – Film as communication

Hollywood World Views

- Part 1
- Movies are visually and aurally dramatic stories.
- Movies are a visual and aural medium.
- Cinematic composition, color, light, music, and sound effects confer EMOTIONAL states and embody SYMBOLIC MEANING and IDEAS with a deep effect.

- Most movies are all about drama.
- Drama is relationship in action.
- It's "existential" rather than intellectual.
- Existential: Relating to existence or concerned with an individuals freely made choices.
- We follow characters working through their moral dilemmas and personal journey's, so we learn through them.
- Most movies are first and foremost stories.
- Storytelling draws us into truth by incarnating worldview through narrative.

- Movies put flesh onto the skeleton of abstract ideas about how life ought or ought not to be lived.
- Movies convey the values and worldviews that we hold dear as well as some we detest.
- By learning to be more aware of worldviews, we will be better equipped to appreciate the finer elements of what is going on in our movie watching experience.

- However, the danger of reducing a movie to its world view alone is the potential of failing to see the value of other elements that contribute to the whole of the film:
- Cinematography
- Music
- Editing
- Acting
- And other aesthetic aspects that all contribute richly to the total experience of cinema.

Part 2

- “Movies corrupt the values of society.”
- “Movies have too much sex and violence.”
- ”Movies are worldly and a waste of time.”
- If we believe these statements, we must be careful of becoming CULTURAL ANOREXICS.
- If you become one of these, you might find yourself “cut-off” from participating in your culture’s discourse of popular art.

- “I just want to be entertained.”
- “You shouldn’t take movies too seriously.”
- “The sex and violence don’t bother me ...in fact I enjoy them!”
- CULTURAL GLUTTON
- This person consumes popular art with passive discrimination.
- Cultural gluttons prefer to avoid analyzing movies beyond their entertainment value.

- Cultural gluttons, when challenged by cultural critics to discern the messages within the movies, balk at such criticism as being too analytic or reading into things.
- Even many filmmakers themselves when questioned on the meaning of their films will be in agreement with these persons.

Cultural Glutton?

- 1) Do you watch every movie that interests you without considering beforehand whether its subject matter is appropriate?
- 2) Do you think movies and television are only entertainment without any real messages?
- 3) How many hours a week do you spend on entertainment?
- ...Now compare it to how much time you spend on activities that will help you grow intellectually or spiritually.
- 4) How many times have you enjoyed a movie that you later came to realize was offensive to your beliefs or worldview?

Cultural Anorexic

- 1) Do you generalize all movies as “worldly” or consider any depiction of “immoral actions” as wrong without concern for context?
- 2) Are you unable to appreciate anything good in a movie because of some bad you see in it?
- 3) Do you consider art and entertainment to be a waste of time and therefore spend all your leisure time on other activities?
- 4) How many times have you been incapable of interacting with those around you because you were out of touch with cultural experiences?

Stories

- They are about something.
- They narrate the events surrounding characters who overcome obstacles to achieve some goal and who, in the process, are confronted with their personal need for change.
- Most great movie storytelling is often about *redemption* – the recovery of something lost or the attainment of something needed.
- Stories are the primary way in which we think and organize our understanding of reality.

Worldviews

- James Sire
- Author and college professor of philosophy and English literature.
- Worldview:
- “ ... a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently, or inconsistently) about the basic makeup or our world.”
- The worldview questionnaire I gave you to fill out.
- Professor Sire goes on to say, “,,, worldviews all tend to have rock-bottom answers to at least seven basic questions,

Prof. Sire's Seven Basic Questions

- 1) What is really real?
- 2) What is the nature of external reality?
 - ... the world around us.
- 3) What is a human being?
- 4) What happens to a person after death?
- 5) How is it possible to know anything at all?
- 6) How do we know “wrong” from “right”?
- 7) What is the meaning of human history?

David Noebel

- An American author and religious leader.
- Worldview is ten integrated disciplines:
 - 1) Theology.
 - 2) Philosophy.
 - 3) Ethics.
 - 4) Biology.
 - 5) Psychology.

David Noebel

- 6) Sociology.
- 7) Law.
- 8) Politics.
- 9) Economics.
- 10) History.
- Every worldview is a system of beliefs that seeks to address each of these elements of our existence.

Worldviews Communicated through most Hollywood Movies.

- Most movies are not wholly evil or wholly good.
- Most movies are a mixed bag of values and ideas:
- ...some good and some bad ...
- ... but most worth engaging in and discussing.



Harry Potter and the World of Wizardry!

- Bad for Youth!
- Occultism!
- Anti-Authority Values!
- ...but also ...
- Courage.
- Loyalty.
- Sacrifice.

Movies

- Most movies both reflect and influence society.
- Some movies may be more influential than others, but it's important for moviegoers to understand what they are consuming and the nature of their *amusement*.

Amusement

- “Without thought.”
- “To delude or deceive.”
- Remember a time when we went to movie theaters?
- When the lights went down, after the commercials and previews of coming attractions, and the main feature began:
- We suspended our disbelief, along with our critical faculties.
- By knowing something of the craft of storytelling, of its structure and nature, you might be less inclined to treat the film as mere entertainment.