

Do films offer anything more than an escape from reality?

The question of whether films offer anything more than an escape from reality has always been a debatable one. Some people feel that films merely offer us a respite from everyday lives while others feel the opposite. In this essay I will examine the issue from various different perspectives and then deliver my judgement in the concluding paragraph.

From a lay man's perspective, films are often regarded as a way to escape the pains of their day to day responsibilities. It is an opportunity for them to explore the imaginary world created by film makers, leaving behind the harsher realities of real life and the working world. When we get engrossed in watching Captain America and Iron man save the world, we often forget about the bills that must be paid and the responsibilities that must be fulfilled. That, for most people, is often a key benefit of watching films.

On closer inspection however, films often offer us a plethora of benefits that surpass a mere escape from reality.

From a social perspective, films often offer us a subtle form of social commentary that enable us to tackle difficult social issues without offending people outright. Films give us an opportunity to explore our collective belief as a society as well as that of our own. In the X-men series of films, a constant theme that runs throughout each movie is the question of whether or not the mutants in the film should be accepted or persecuted. This often runs parallel in our society today, in which the 'mutants' otherwise known as 'immigrants' or 'foreign talent' are something shunned by the local population for their differences. The X-men films

then, offer us a look at the various perspectives regarding immigration and outsiders. They also provide the necessary subtle social commentary on the hot button issue of immigration today - be it in Singapore or the USA. From this we can see that on top of offering an escape from reality, films also offer our society an opportunity for reflection and introspection within our societies.

From an economic perspective, films offer us an entire industry of economic growth as well as job opportunities. This ranges the gamut from Hollywood in the US to Bollywood in India as well as entirely different Chinese film industries in Hong Kong and China. The film industries in these countries are known to generate entire economies for these places, and the multiplier effects that arises from this leads to an overall growth in the amount of job opportunities available as well as tax revenue collected. Even in places that are not traditional film making power houses (such as Singapore), jobs have been created by the presence of film making firms. One such example would be Lucas Films, a Singapore based firm that creates the movie magic for George Lucas's Star War film franchise. Similar economic benefits accrue to the film making industries in HK and China. From this we can see that films don't just offer an escape from reality - they help create economic realities.

Sometimes, far from offering an escape from reality, films can take us deeper into real world issues. Example of such films include All Gore's Fahrenheit 911 and the film Supersize Me, both of which examines real world issues and problems today. Fahrenheit 911 looks at the realities of Global Warming while Supersize Me looks at the real world problem of excessive fast food consumption. Both these films examine the implications of our real world living environment. They give us insights into how we can better ameliorate the problems we are facing today. From this we can see that as opposed to helping us escape from reality, films can offer us a deeper investigation into our current realities - in the process educating and enlightening us on various real world issues.

Last but not least films also serve as a call for help in situations where reality is all too harsh. The films that depicts genocides in Rwanda or the sufferings of those held in ISIS controlled territory helps to broadcast to the world the atrocities being committed in these places. This gives us a strong call to action. We know we must do something to help alleviate the sufferings of our fellow human beings.

From the various paragraphs above, we can see that films definitely offer something more than an escape from reality. The use of the words 'anything more' signifies that the possible contribution of a film is limited in scope when in effect, films offer us so much more. In sum, I support the stand that films offer us so much more than an escape from reality.

(777 Words)