

What Do We Learn From Movies?



Hi, this is Elijah Lim. "What do we learn from movies?" Now, most of us, if not all of us, have watched a movie or two in our lifetime. And of course, movies are meant to entertain us, meaning that when we go to movies, we are amused. Now, the word "amuse" comes from the word "muse", which means "to think." "Amuse" therefore means "NOT to think." And when we are entertained, by and large that's exactly what we do - we don't think. We just sit there, we take in the scenes the sounds,

the noises, the conversation, the attitudes, that are being portrayed in the movie on the screen in front of us, and all the sounds and the words and the nuances that come in through our ears from the surround speakers. And of course the cinema is dark, there is an illusion that it is just me there watching the movie. And unconsciously we are taking in whatever we see and whatever we hear and we are subconsciously accepting it as truth the more we watch movies of similar genre. Now people who make movies make movies not to educate us, but to entertain us. They have to ensure that the movies appeal to our appetites. And if you look at all the movies that are available today, what do you see?

Do you see lots of violence? Do you see lots of resistance to authority? Do you see authority figures abusing their powers? Well, take a look around us. What's happening in real life? You know, reel life, r-e-e-l, is actually a reflection of real life. But there's the scary part. Because it's a reflection of real life, we think that reel life, r-e-e-l, is a picture of what real life ought to be like instead of the other way round. How many times have people come up to you and said "Hey, that was a great movie! I think, you know, just like what the movie, the characters in the movie did and how they succeeded in doing this and that, we should do the same thing. Well, I've had people come up to me many, many times and saying similar things, and I don't know about you, but if I were to answer the question "What do we learn from movies?" A lot, actually. And I'm not too sure that we WANT to be learning a lot of those things. So be careful what movies you watch. Be careful that even if you watch movies that you feel that you really shouldn't be watching, filter it out! Bring home the lessons that you learn. Ask yourself "How can I apply what I have learned after watching this movie?" Or what NOT to do, in most cases, I would say! And then we would answer the question very well - "What do we learn from movies?" And to me, precious little, actually. I learn, by contrast, much more from documentaries. But then again, documentaries are not as popular as feature films. Because documentaries tell you what is fact. And for most people who have been brought up to appreciate the world of entertainment, that is not as appealing, it doesn't fulfill the appetites as much as a feature film would. But I would ask you stop and take stock. Run through the list of all the movies that you have watched over the last week, the last two weeks and that includes movies on your television set, on your



computer, on your iPad, iPhone, on your Samsung or whatever it is that you use for watching videos or movies, and ask yourself, "What is the percentage of those movies that actually were worth watching?" Be selective, because we do learn a lot from movies, whether we like it or not. The real question is, "Do we choose the movies that we watch wisely?" And I think that if we answer that question, the first question becomes moot. So this week, choose your movies wisely. Enjoy watching them, and use your brains after you watch the movie, and even during the movie. Happy movie watching, stay sane!