

Essay on How Do Films and Television Programs Affect Our Lives? Are They Beneficial or Harmful?

The first time I saw a martial arts film in a local cinema, I told myself that I wanted to be a great fighter like Bruce Lee. In my mind, I was already a hero just waiting for an opportunity to show off my fighting skills. In my obsession, I enrolled in a local karate school to learn how to punch, kick and generally dispatch off another person with ease.

What I experienced in school was totally different from what I imagined it to be.

In the first place, I learned that there is no heroism involved in the fighting. Only fools fight among themselves. Furthermore, they get broken hands and bruises all over the body for nothing. Learning karate is an arduous task. It is one that requires discipline and perseverance. After all the tough sessions in the 'dojo', a karate practitioner will have no desire to go out of his way to fight with anybody. He knows what the consequence can be, so he avoids a fight.

So, in this aspect, I would certainly say that films are harmful. They gave me the wrong idea of what martial arts is all about. It is with a bit of sadness when sometimes I see young kids showing off what little knowledge of fighting, they have. I was lucky to have a good teacher who taught me the inner aspects of martial arts. I learned to be humble and gentle, far different from the arrogant film hero who could kill off a hundred bad guys without batting an eyelid.

Violence on television and films also do a lot of harm to the viewers. In one film that I saw, it was nothing but a tale of murder after murder. People got killed all over the place by all sorts of

methods. Guns, knives, bombs and other types of killing tools were displayed unceasingly. It was like a feast where killing is the main activity. I actually felt sick and disorientated halfway through the show and had to leave to retain some semblance of sanity. How would the film affect these who sat through the whole show? I am sure their brains were filled with images of violence. I only hope they do not go out and imitate what they saw.

On a lighter side, we can see how films and television programs had determined the way we live. We use phrases like 'damn if and 'right-on' in our everyday conversation. Where did we learn to use them from? We patronize fast-food restaurants, talk about Clint Eastwood and 007. We give each other nicknames like 'Rambo' and behave as though we are as tough as 'Conan the Barbarian.' We go dating and dance in the discotheques. We ride our bicycles like what Eddie Lawson does on his motorcycle. We dress like a Hong Kong movie star and dye our hair to look like Tina Turner. What else could I say? We are all living a life of unrestrained imitation of what we saw on television and films.

Not all these influences are harmful. It is when they are carried out to extremes that we lose touch with ourselves and so live in a fantasy world.

In real life, nobody can go on fighting with an ax embedded in his abdomen. Only film heroes can do that. Also, we cannot hope to defeat fifty opponents without even raising a sweat. People get killed in real-life car crashes. Only film heroes escape with minor scratches. Reality has little to do with such shows.

Fortunately, not all films and television programs are harmful. Documentaries and educational programs are definitely beneficial. I learned many things about wildlife and our planet by watching these

shows!, I learned about other people, their customs and traditions. In short, these programs gave me a better perspective of the world that we live in, the dangers we face, our heritage and the responsibilities we have if we are to live in peace.

So it is up to you, the viewer, to decide what type of programs you want to watch. You can fill your brains with all sorts of muck about violence and killing or you can learn more about yourself and the world so that you can truly live like what nature intended you to.