

WHY DO WE LOVE MOVIES SO MUCH?



by Michelle Goode

CEO - WRITESOFLUID

Whether you're a hardcore moviegoer or someone who loves a good film for a treat, there will always be reasons why you want to watch them. Much like how you choose what TV shows to watch, different movies will have certain appeals.

As a writer and a script reader, watching movies helps educate me. As a regular audience member they can help me escape daily stresses and enjoy the ride, be it emotional, thrilling or scary. One thing links the two experiences, however, and that's inspiration; movies inspire me to write good fiction and make scripts the best they can be for production, and they can also inspire me in reality.

If that heroine can battle the odds to achieve her dream goals, then why can't I? If that guy can change his attitude and have a whole lot of fun in the process, what might I be missing out on by being closed-minded? As one fellow movie-lover commented recently, watching inspiring protagonists can really 'help you tap into different aspects of yourself'.

The "escape" reason is popular. People want to switch off and enter somebody else's world so that they don't have to think about their own. They want to be entertained by somebody else's misfortunes, predicaments and adventures or to be uplifted by funny or light-hearted stories. It can even feel like a game; in a crime or mystery thriller, it can be fun to guess what's going to happen, and most genres allow you to predict the outcome.

Good characters help this process; audi-

ence members want to identify with the characters and root for them to succeed. We've all seen a character's problem and thought, 'damn, I know how that feels', or, on the other end of the scale, 'rather you than me!' Could fictional characters therefore be a way of learning about the world, about relationships and about how to deal with things that happen? Do we take away new thoughts or even warnings?

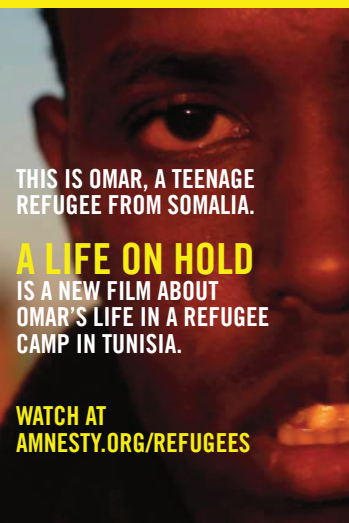
On the other hand, it's sometimes the concepts – the ideas – which make a movie appealing. But can one exist without the other? A film can be based on a great idea, but if the character doesn't appeal to you; you don't care for their acting or for the character's personality, will that great idea work so well? Alternatively, can a good character mean an otherwise low-key concept triumphs?

Of course, we all have different motives for watching movies and will all gain different things from our experiences of them. Some people love the shock-factor, the spine-tingling thrills, the edge-of-the-seat action or the squeeze-the-armrest horror. Some want to see their favourite actor, pretend to be a detective or to have a good cry. Some just want to identify with characters and feel less alone, or to escape their own troubles for some 'fantasy'.

One thing's for sure: movies are like a theme park for emotions. And as long as movies keep tapping into these emotions and provoking reactions, they will always have appeal.

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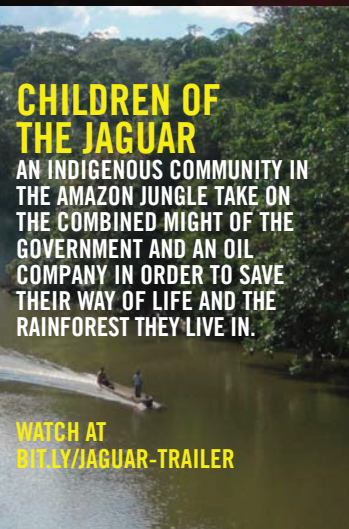
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