

Smith, G. (2010). "It's just a movie": Why you should analyze film and television. In What media classes really want to discuss: A student guide (chapter 1). Retrieved from: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=557321>.

Synopsis

The author begins his piece by stating that there are several reasons behind analyzing films and TV shows that need to be more thoroughly explained. He goes through his reasonings starting with how multiple professionals creating Hollywood films and TV shows ensure everything in the final production is free of errors or random events. The author goes on to discuss that there is no one correct interpretation of any film or TV show and that the ideologies of present day play a large role in how an audience may interpret an action or event that takes place. He also elaborates on the importance of “reading into” films to better understand the plot without having every detail laid out in plain sight. The author then debunks a few common misconceptions about analyzing films. He explains that the classics aren’t the only works that should be looked at because more contemporary works can provide insightful knowledge about culture and society as well. His final point encompasses the main idea of the piece. By analyzing a film, the viewing experience will be enhanced rather than ruined or underappreciated. Overall, the author expresses multiple viewpoints as to why the pleasure of watching a film/TV show can be enriched with analyzation.

Key Concepts

- **Italian Neorealism-** “...a filmmaking movement that began in the physical and economic devastation of post- World War II Italy.” Filmmaking used it “as a way to distinguish their look from the Hollywood norm.” “Hollywood itself incorporated some of neorealism’s features (location shooting, episodic storytelling) beginning in the 1950’s to give its films a more realistic feel” (p. 3).
- **S-M-R Model-** “...a sender trying to relay a message to a receiver...By comparing the sender’s intention with the receiver’s understanding, one can discover how effective the communication was” (p. 4).
- **“Reading Into”-** “Film and television rely on the audience to supply information that is only hinted at...” The viewers can comprehend events “without the film/TV show actually showing us...” (p. 7).

Key Quotes

- “But can we reduce the film to what the director consciously intends? At times we all express the beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions of our era without necessarily being conscious of doing so” (p. 5).
- “A movie’s meaning does not lie solely within the film itself but in the interaction of the film and audience” (p. 6).
- “The basic faith underlying education is that an examined life is better, richer, fuller than an unexamined life” (p.10).

Essential Question

- How should a viewer go about analyzing a piece of media?