

HOW HOLLYWOOD UNDERMINES THE FAMILY

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What would you say if I told you that, every day, an American business drops metric tons of toxic waste on your country and in your homes?

I'm not talking about chemical waste or nuclear waste but toxins far more lethal – the byproducts of what's called entertainment, which are destroying the social environment.

I refer to Hollywood, whose primary products are sex, violence, perversion, nihilism, attacks on religion and a thoroughgoing anti-family ethic. They are produced both for domestic consumption and export.

It wasn't always so. As fans of old movies know, in the 1930s and '40s, Hollywood was unabashedly pro-family. It treated parents with respect, took sex seriously, portrayed it discreetly, affirmed faith, and generally promoted those values that foster social cohesion.

In movies of that era, fathers were wise and benevolent. Mothers were loving and nurturing. And children were, for want of a better word, nice. In movies like "Since You Went Away," "The Best Years of Our Lives," "A Tree Grows In Brooklyn," the "Andy Hardy" series and "I Remember Mama" – family life was celebrated.

This worldview was charmingly encapsulated at the end of '1939's "The Wizard of Oz," with little Dorothy's heartfelt declaration, "There really is no place like home." "Movies of that

era called us home. Then, families were portrayed as the warm center of the universe.

Today, Hollywood tells us that, at best, families are irrelevant, and, at worst, oppressive, suffocating and an obstacle to self-fulfillment and happiness.

Occasionally, the entertainment industry gets it right -- makes a movie that puts families in a positive light. In this regard, two of the best were “Blast From The Past” (which came out 1999) and “The Family Man” (2000).

In “Blast From the Past,” a young man is born in a fallout shelter in 1962, and raised there by his loving, if eccentric, parents on values that were dominant in America in the 1950s. He emerges 35 year later bemused by the world around him but, above all else, a gentleman -- kind, considerate and principled. These are values, he tells the young lady he falls in love with, that he learned from his parents.

At the beginning of “The Family Man,” we meet the central character, a successful venture capitalist – rich, powerful, self-centered and self-satisfied. He lives in a penthouse, drives an expensive car, romances beautiful women and negotiates billion-dollar mergers. He assumes his life is perfect and tells a stranger (who could be an angel) that there is absolutely nothing he needs.

The protagonist falls asleep one evening in his Manhattan condo and wakes up the next day – Christmas Day, as fate would have it – in a modest, middle-class dwelling in New Jersey -- married to his college sweetheart, with two young children, working as a salesman in his father-in-law’s tire store.

In the course of the movie, he learns that love, family and children are far more fulfilling than material possessions, power

and freedom. By the end of the movie, the hero is back in his Manhattan existence – longing for the life he was allowed to glimpse. Like Scrooge in “A Christmas Carole,” he has discovered the real meaning of life.

But such films are very much the exception. They could almost be regarded as echoes of a bygone era.

Today, the typical family portrayed in movies is comically or tragically dysfunctional. To one degree or another – children are rebellious, if not self-destructive. Parents are well-meaning fools or monsters. We’ve gone from the 1950s sit-com “Father Knows Best” to Father’s a beast, or a moron or a raving lunatic.

By the way, in the United States, this is true of entertainment television and even commercials. In comedies, men are usually depicted as buffoons who bumble through life guided by women who nature has endowed with the common sense they lack.

Typical of the way Hollywood treats families today was a 2006 comedy – nominated for an Academy Award – called “Little Miss Sunshine.” The movie revolves around the road trip of a family that includes: a father who’s a failed motivational trainer, a mother who’s a chain-smoking neurotic, an uncle who’s a suicidal homosexual, a brother who worships Nietzsche and a grandfather who’s a drug addict. This is Hollywood’s idea of family life in the 21st century.

For better or worse, usually worse, Hollywood is the dominant influence in the lives of many inhabitants of planet Earth. Its power to move us with moving pictures reaches beyond metropolitan areas and into Third World villages and even jungle clearings.

Ask yourself the following: How many serious books does the average teen-ager read in the course of a year? How many political speeches or sermons does he or she hear in a typical month? Now, compare this to the number of movies he sees in the average week.

Cinema is an idea transmission belt – taking values from the cultural elite and distributing them to the masses, who, all too often, absorb them like a sponge.

Movies are to our generation what cave drawings, tales told around a fire, illuminated manuscripts, sermons, theater and books were to generations past.

What are the ideas Hollywood inflicts on an unsuspecting public? What messages do movies convey?

1. Casual sex – In movies, couples fall into bed long before they fall in love, often within hours of their first encounter. Generally, cinematic sex has no negative consequences. No one contracts a sexually transmitted disease. There are no pregnancies. No one feels betrayed. No one is devastated when a relationship ends. A notable exception to this was the 1987 film “Fatal Attraction,” where a woman becomes obsessed with a man she has an affair with and ends up terrorizing him and his family.

2. Violence often is the answer – While preaching pacifism in international affairs, Hollywood magnifies and glorifies violence in every day life, whether in horror movies, action films or even comedies. Adolescent males, who hardly need encouragement in this regard, are instructed that the world is a jungle and they’d better be the most dangerous animal if they hope to survive.

3. Tradition is bad. Change is good -- Hollywood tells us that the values of the past were shaped by prejudice, avarice, and

ignorance of science and psychology. Time began around 1967. If your parents and grandparents did it, it's old-fashioned, outdated and just plain dumb. George Santayana said those who fail to learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them. Hollywood tells us that history has nothing to teach us. Ironically, Hollywood itself is guided by a dead hand – whether it reaches from the grave of the French Revolution or the Sexual Revolution of the 1960s.

4. Manhood and womanhood are defined almost exclusively by physical attributes or feminist dogma. Hollywood tells us that modern woman is distinguished by a pretty face, a lithe, youthful body, independence– and a career. The defining characteristics of manhood are rugged good looks, a muscular body and a willingness to resort to force. Or, in the alternative, it tells us that real men express their emotions freely and cry a lot. Hollywood also insists that the principal differences between men and women are physical – that psychologically or spiritually, men and women are identical, even interchangeable – that men can nurture as well as women and women can soldier as well as men. You might say Hollywood is committed to spreading gender confusion.

5. If you're unhappy, it's your parents fault. – Hollywood tells children that they have no obligations to their parents. After all, they didn't ask to be here, did they? (Ceccile B. DeMille made "The Ten Commandments." Hollywood has forgotten the 5th. Commandment.) On the other hand, if a young man or woman ends up a social statistic, it's because there's something dark and sinister lurking in their past. Their father was abusive. Their mother was withdrawn. Conversely, instead of loving them too little, their parents loved them too much. Or their parents were harsh disciplinarians – or, their parents were too lax. Or their parents warped them with religion. Hollywood teaches adolescents and young people that their families are the all-purpose excuse for all of their emotional problems.

6. Instincts are a better guide than reason – Screenwriters are children of Rousseau, celebrating primitive man. Hollywood teaches that our problems come not from within (weakness or character flaws) but exclusively from without. Like parents, society corrupts individuals who are naturally good. (Instead of original sin, Hollywood believes in original goodness.) Thus, if we could just overcome social conditioning, we'd all be happy, psychologically healthy and wise.

7. Sacrifice is a four-letter word – Hollywood says it's OK to sacrifice to win the big game or sacrifice for fame and fortune, or sacrifice to get the woman or man of our dreams. But sacrifice for others, sacrifice for our country, sacrifice for our families, sacrifice for total strangers, sacrifice for our ideals – this Hollywood considers suicidal. According to Hollywood, you are the center of your own universe – the ego-driven engine of Planet You.

8. Religion – especially traditional religion – is highly suspect – In the World according to Hollywood, religion does more harm than good. It promotes fanaticism and bigotry and is an excuse for exploitation and lust. Up until the early 1960s, members of the clergy overwhelmingly were portrayed positively – priests were kindly, rabbis wise and pastors devoted. In movies today, the typical man of God is a charlatan, a con man, a lecher or – best case scenario – a superstitious simpleton. Hollywood finds lifelong service to God incomprehensible, and thus questions the motives of the man in the pulpit and the people in the pews. Its suspicions are invariably confirmed.

9. Like organized religion, nationalism is trap. Hollywood believes that nationalism causes war and is a way for corrupt rulers control gullible masses. Since those who make movies are at home anywhere they can find five-star hotels, four-star restaurants and limousines, love of country is mystifies them. This is ironic in that, were in not for American patriotism of the World War II

generation, Hollywood wouldn't be free to make movies ridiculing patriotism.

Not surprisingly, Hollywood's worldview reflects the way people in Hollywood think and act. Actors, actresses, producers, directors and studio executives are, to put it bluntly, abnormal.

Most have been through drug and/or alcohol rehab several times. Multiple marriages (serial polygamy) is the norm. While professing to identify with the masses, they lead lives of privilege and indulgence most of us can hardly imagine. While preaching environmentalism, they attach 40-car garages to their homes, for guests who'll drive there in gas-guzzling cars with "Stop Global Warming" bumper-stickers. When an actor says he's religious, he usually means Scientology or Buddhism.

How does Hollywood's worldview translate into a perspective on the family that defies faith, tradition and logic? Simply put, there are family values and there are Hollywood values.

Family values include fidelity, respect, love, loyalty, sexual restraint, nurturing and mutual support.

^ Hollywood values are the exact opposite. The worldview which shapes today's movies includes:

- Sexual liberation – The glorification of pre-marital sex (including adolescent experimentation), adultery, promiscuity, homosexuality and the sexualization of children. In other words, as alluded to earlier, actors and actresses, etc. want the rest of us to live the way they do. Forget about marriage; characters don't even have to fall in love before they begin shedding their clothes. The 2005 film "The 40 Year Old Virgin," was based on the premise

that an unmarried 40-year-old man who was sexually inexperienced was a freak of nature. The next time you go to a romantic comedy, take a stop watch with you and time how long it takes for the couple to have intimate relations after they meet. You'll only need the second hand.

- Live-for-the-moment – The family ethic is based on restraint, self-sacrifice and sublimating our own short-term happiness to the greater good – all of which makes long-term happiness possible. The Hollywood ethic is based on the immediate gratification of whims. It tells us that not to express our feelings – and act on them uncritically – is unhealthy, neurotic and self-destructive.
- The cult of the imperial self – Hollywood says putting anything ahead of your own happiness – including family obligations – is idiotic, if not neurotic.
- Militant feminism – the bizarre and amply refuted notion that so-called gender-roles are socially imposed and that to believe otherwise is “sexist.” Think of all the films where 110-pound women, who look like anorexic fashion models, pulverize 190-pound men, who look like football players. Hollywood actually believes that 1997’s “GI Jane” reflected reality. That was the movie where Demi Moore (who previously starred in “Striptease”) became a Navy SEAL, the elite of the elite of U.S. Special Forces. But the family is based on gender roles. “Mr. Mom” notwithstanding, a man can’t care for a toddler as well as a woman. Men and women are endowed with physical and psychological attributes which compliment each other. The more we try to obliterate those differences, the harder family life becomes.

- Radical secularism – the belief that religious expression is dangerous and a hindrance to happiness and self-fulfillment. In film after film – including “Kingdom of Heaven,” “King Arthur,” “V for Vendetta” and “The DaVinci Code”-- Christians are portrayed as sadistic, violence-prone, hypocritical and/or repressive. But it’s faith that validates the natural family. The Bible is a handbook of family values. These norms didn’t originate with the religious right or 1950s television, but with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – and Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah. Undermine traditional religion and you will inevitably sabotage the family.
- The normalization of homosexuality – the idea that some people are born homosexual and are unable to change, that all voluntary sexual activity is equally good and that homosexual liaisons must be afforded the same recognition and respect as heterosexual marriage. Note all of the movies where homosexual characters are happy, helpful, well-adjusted and generally appealing – so unlike members of the typical Hollywood family. In the 1999 film “American Beauty” (which won no fewer than 5 Oscars), the heterosexuals are all immature, inane or ugly, in a psychic sense. Only the neighborhood gay couple is presented appealingly. Like promiscuity, pre-marital sex and adultery, homosexuality undermines the family. The natural family will not thrive where competing models are affirmed.

The family ethic rejects each and every one of these nitwit notions. It posits moral absolutes and demands that sexuality be sublimated by monogamous marriage, marital fidelity, putting others before self, gender differentiation and a Biblical ethic.

These dueling worldviews— Hollywood’s and the traditional family’s – couldn’t be further apart.

If you’d like to know how well Hollywood values work, compare the divorce rates of Beverly Hills and Biloxi, Mississippi – or the number of Manhattanites in therapy versus the number of residents of Rapid City, South Dakota who are going through the proverbial mid-life crisis.

Hollywood’s arsenal includes seductive images splashed across the screen, stories that stack the deck in favor of its agenda, and beautiful faces selling social poison. All we have is truth and reality.

Of all the challenges to the natural family – including bureaucracies, courts, academia, feminism, homosexual activism and the sexual revolution – this is the most daunting. As noted earlier, film pervades every aspect of our lives, attacks our values and inculcates its attitudes relentlessly.

What’s the answer to Hollywood’s corrosive influence? There are Christian films (like “Bella,” and “The Ultimate Gift”). There are the distinct minority of decent, family-oriented films that should be patronized and promoted. The young, in particular, need to be educated to understand how Hollywood attacks virtue, to recognize cinematic brainwashing when they see it.

We must find new ways to expose and counter this omnipresent foe. Otherwise the real-life family of the future will look like the Hollywood family of today. Not a pretty picture.