

Are social justice movements having a damaging effect on modern entertainment, and in turn, our culture?

Int. Radio Station - Waiting Room. Evening

*John, a young screenwriter, is sitting nervously in the waiting room alone. He grips his notepad tightly as he carefully reads over his notes. He squirms around in his chair while the radio is playing on the table next to him. It is tuned in to the station he is about to be interviewed on. The host, **Samantha**, is about to cut to a commercial break when she mentions John.*

Samantha: (On Radio)

...and coming up after the break we have an interview with screenwriter, John Riley. He will be talking to us about how he helped write the film adaptation of the much beloved book series, "Voidwalker," set to come out this weekend....

*John turns off the radio just as **Amanda**, the stations producer, opens the door. She is speaking to someone else on her phone, but puts them on hold in order to talk to John.*

Amanda:

Hi John. Your on after the break. I'll come and get you when we are ready, Ok?

John:

Yes, thank you Amanda.

*Suddenly **Ewan**, John's agent, squeezes into the room ahead of Amanda. Ewan is looking out of breath and rather twitchy as he enters the room. When he sees John, he gives him an angry, but concerned glare.*

Amanda:

Oh Ewan, you made it! I was beginning to think you were not coming.

Ewan: (Anxious)

Oh yeah. It was a nightmare getting parked. But there was no way I was going to miss this. Um, do you mind giving me and John a few minutes alone please?

Amanda:

Of course. I'll be back in a few. Ok?

Ewan: (Anxious)

Fantastic. See you then.

Ewan gently closes the door behind Amanda before snapping round to address John. The tone of their conversation is like one had between a stubborn parent and a stern headteacher.

Ewan:

Forget it John! It's not worth it!

John:

Come on Ewan!

Ewan:

No, I'm serious! I appreciate you at least telling me about this before you went live, but via a text! And on the day of the interview! It is a terrible idea! Just answer their questions, don't give away any spoilers and we can talk more about this later.

John:

I'm sorry Ewan, but my mind is made up. I NEED to do this. I am not going to go out there and lie. I have got to be honest.

Ewan:

I don't understand why you are making such a big deal out of all this. It's not like this is anything new: Author writes a really successful book. Studio makes a film of book in the hope that it too will be successful. This happens all the time! What's the problem?

John:

The problem is that, no matter how small my role in it, I helped make a film that disrespects the book and its fans. It has been repackaged into something they hope is easier to sell to critics while trying to pander to the widest audience it can.

Ewan:

You mean they want to try to make a lot of money?

John:

Yes, but in the most shallow and dishonest way possible. And your right, this is not the first time this has happened, and at this rate, it will not be the last. But that does not mean it should be allowed to continue, nor does it mean I shouldn't say anything about it. Something has to change. I have to say something!

Ewan:

And what do you hope to tell everyone? That what their selling stinks and that they should stay clear!?

John stands up to answer Ewan's question with confidence.

John:

To tell them why this has to stop!

Silence befalls the room as the two are locked in a tense stand-off. Despite the nervous shaking of his hand, John does not back down. Eventually, Ewan turns away in a deflated manner. He addresses John again, but with a beseeching manner. As if this is his last attempt to reason with John.

Ewan:

Ok, now listen carefully. We have only been working together for a few years now. It's not long in this line of work. But in that short amount of time, you have shown everyone how talented a storyteller you are and gained the praise and respect that comes with that talent. It's why you got the chance to work on this film in the first place. I mean, do you remember your reaction when I told you they wanted to hire you as a screenwriter?! You were beside yourself! Screaming, "This is going to be the next Harry Potter!"

Ewan and John both smile as they recall that joyful memory. But it is short lived, as Ewan gets back to the point of his argument.

Ewan:

But in this business, your reputation can be a fickle thing. If you don't handle it with care, you can lose it. And a stunt like this...it could mean that you lose it for good.

John shrivels in fear as he knows Ewan's warning could come true. He takes a deep breath, approaches Ewan and puts a hand on his shoulder.

John:

Ewan.... I can't thank you enough for everything you've done for me. I would not have made it this far if you had not been there to guide me. I understand what your trying to do, but my mind is made up. I cannot continue to do what I love and accept that things are fine the way they are. I have to tell people the truth.

*There is a pause between the two. Ewan is about to speak before the ringtone of John's phone breaks the silence. John reaches for his phone to see the caller is **Lucy**, the main producer for the film. The hair on John's skin stands on ends just at the thought of answering her call.*

John:

It's Lucy.

Ewan:

Well are you going to answer? Wait, does she know what your planning on doing?

John:

Of course not. She would never agree to this. She would have cancelled the interview if she found out.

Ewan:

Well you better answer her. You know she will just keep trying until you do.

John stares like a statue at the phone for a few seconds before eventually answering Lucy's call.

John:

Hello Lucy.....Yes, I got to the station ok. Yes, Ewan is here too. Ok, give me a sec...

John puts the phone on loudspeaker so he and Ewan can speak to Lucy. Ewan composes himself as he moves in to join John on the call. An American with a Californian accent speaks to them in a calm but authoritative tone.

Lucy:

Ok can you all hear me?

Ewan: (Reluctantly)

Yeah, loud and clear Lucy.

Lucy:

Wonderful. So with this being the home stretch before the premiere this weekend, we just need everyone to get over the line without incident. Just hype up the film the best you can and we are done. You know what your going to say John?

John looks down at his notepad and hesitates in answering her. Ewan spots the notepad and recognises John's handwriting. Ewan jumps in to answer Lucy while John listens in silent suspense.

Ewan:

Yeah he's got this, no problem. You got nothing to worry about.

Lucy:

Well ok then. I'll leave you boys to it then. Take care now.

Lucy hangs up before John or Ewan could say anything else. Any sign of resistance from Ewan seems to have faded away and has been replaced with one of calm acceptance.

Ewan:

I guess you gotta do what you gotta do, huh?

John:

I guess so.

Ewan:

So how are you going to convince this lot to go along with this? I'm pretty sure they would be more interested in talking about the film.

John:

Well I thought the idea of a writer for a blockbuster film wanting to talk about how bad modern films are on live radio would be too good a story to pass up on.

Ewan stares at him in bewilderment, but has already given up trying to convince John otherwise.

Ewan:

Well...lets hope your right. Otherwise...

Amanda enters the room and hold the door open for John.

Amanda:

Ok John, we are ready for you.

John and Ewan shake hands, both aware of the potential storm that lies ahead.

Ewan:

Well,....good luck John.

John:

Thanks Ewan!

Amanda leads John out of the room, but just before he leaves he turns back to face Ewan.

John:

Look um,...we both know there will be some backlash to this. Especially from Lucy and the studio. But I will make sure to leave you out of it. I'll tell them it was all my idea.

Ewan:

Thanks. But on the small chance that it goes brilliantly, tell them it was mostly my idea.

They both share a nervous laugh as John exits the room and follows Amanda down the hallway.

CUT TO

Int. Broadcasting Studio. Day

Amanda opens the door for John to enter the broadcasting studio. There, Samantha is sitting alone in a big black soundproof room with a round table in the centre and a few microphones and computers sprouting from its centre. On one side of the studio is a giant window, revealing the studio control room, where a few people can be seen working on their own computers. Samantha is answering messages on her phone when they walk in, and gets up to greet John. She is smartly dressed and has a clean and crisp English accent.

Samantha:

Good evening John, and welcome to the studio.

John:

Hello Samantha. Thank you for having me.

Samantha:

Oh no, thank you. We have all been really looking forward to seeing Voidwalker, but getting the chance to hear more about it from one of the writers is a real treat. Just as long as you do not spoil anything for us!

All three of them laugh, but John does so only to hide his nerves. Seeing the studio for the first time almost makes him sick.

Amanda:

Well we will be going live again in a few minutes, so I will leave you both to get ready. I'll be in the control room next door.

Samantha:

Ok, thank you Amanda.

John:

Thank you.

Amanda leaves the studio and closes the door behind her.

Samantha:

Right, well everything is set up and ready for you. So if you just take a seat I will go over a few last minute checks before we are back on the air.

John sits on the opposite side of the table to Samantha with the window to the control room on his right. He puts his notepad on the table and frantically examines his notes one more time. Samantha sits down and tends to the last of her preparations.

Samantha:

Ok John, if you could just put those headphones on and speak into that microphone in front of you for a few seconds so the guys in the control room can make sure the levels are ok.

John puts on the headphones before pulling the microphone closer to him and speaking into it.

John:

Testing. Testing. One, two, three.

Samantha turns to the men in the control room who give the thumbs up.

Samantha:

Great! We have a few minutes to wait, but when we do go live, a red light will turn on beside our microphones. I will welcome back the audience, introduce you and then we can start the interview.

John is about to put the headphones on but then stops. He pushes the microphone to one side, leans across the table and signals Samantha to lean in and join her. She spots his gesture and also leans in away from her microphone.

John: (Softly)

I know your all expecting me to talk about the film, but I think we can both agree that almost everything worth saying about the film has already been covered, right? I mean, the premiere is this week and most of the cast have already answered every burning question there is, don't you think?

Samantha is at first surprised at Johns statement, but after briefly thinking it over, she cannot help but agree.

Samantha: (Softly)

Well an interview with one of the films writers is better than nothing. But, I see what you mean. We are late to the party and this interview is unlikely to do as well as others have. But what is your point?

John: (Softly)

My point is that I think we can use this time to discuss something more important. Something I think not only your regular listeners, but also fans of entertainment in general would be interested to hear.

Samantha briefly looks back to the control room and sees her producer Amanda, who is busy talking to the editors, before turning back to John.

Samantha: (Softly)

Maybe. But that depends. What do you have in mind?

John has one last short think about what he is about to do, before answering her.

John: (Softly)

Why I think social justice movements are having a negative effect on the entertainment industry, and in turn, our culture as a whole.

Samantha reacts with wide eyed astonishment. She looks like she is interested in Johns proposal, but unsure whether or not it is a good or bad idea.

Samantha: (Softly)

Are you sure you want to talk about something like that?

John: (Softly)

To be honest, it was the only thing I was planning to talk today.

Samantha lets out a short chuckle in surprise as she thinks about it seriously for a moment. The silence is interrupted by Amanda coming through on the speakers.

Amanda:

Thirty seconds guys. Get ready.

Despite Johns eagerness to get things going, Samantha will not be rushed. Eventually, she shrugs off any lingering sign of alarm from her face and talks to John as if she were a manager addressing her clientele.

Samantha: (Softly)

I think that would be something my listeners would be interested in hearing. So how are we going to do this?

John: (Softly)

Well, I was thinking I could just go through my list of problems here and if you have any questions.....feel free to ask and I'll do my best to answer them.

Samantha ponders it for a moment, before sitting up straight and speaking normally again to John.

Samantha:

Fair enough. Just as long as your ok dealing with the potential ...feedback, you will get from doing something like this.

John: (Somber)

Oh don't worry.....I know what I'm doing.

They both put on their headphones as the radio jingle begins to play. A red light in front of their microphones turn on by themselves. Samantha begins to welcome her listeners back while John prepares himself.

Samantha:

And welcome back to the show, with me your host, Samantha Parker. The much anticipated film adaptation of the best selling book series "Voidwalker" is set to premiere this weekend. And here to give us his insight into the filmmaking process itself is one of the writers for Voidwalker. Please welcome, Mr John Riley!

Samantha plays an applause sound effect for John as she welcomes him onto the show. He is fidgeting in his chair as he begins to speak.

John:

Thank you for having me Samantha. It's good to be on the show.

Samantha:

Likewise John. So as I understand it, you were not originally part of the films writing team, but was brought in at a later date. Is that right?

John:

Correct. I was brought onboard around the halfway point of the films pre-production phase. Many key ...elements of the films story had already been decided on, so my job mostly consisted of making sure characters got from point A to point B in a manner that did not contradict anything in the Voidwalker story. I was the only writer there that had read all of the books when I was younger and I remember them pretty well. So I guess you could say I was a glorified lore expert, pathfinder and script editor all rolled into one!

They both laugh. Samantha's sounds more natural than John's.

Samantha:

Well it's nice to know they had an expert like yourself on the writers team. So we originally brought you onto the show to talk a little about the film, but I understand you want to talk about your concerns with the entertainment industry and the effect it has on us and our culture?

John is surprised at how quickly Samantha is in getting to the point, but is grateful that she is going along with his last minute change to the interview. He keeps his composure and responds.

John:

Um, yes. That's correct.

Samantha:

Ok then, let's start with what worries you about modern entertainment.

John is still taken aback at how quickly things are moving, but he glances at his notes, takes a breath, and begins to answer her question.

John:

Well the short and simple answer would be that there is a greater emphasis on indoctrination over entertainment. By which, I mean the main priority of modern content seems to be centred around making people accept a certain belief, rather than making content for their amusement or enjoyment. And the belief they are wanting people to adopt and accept are those of social justice movements. This shift in focus has been adopted by many films and tv shows over the past few years and are hailed as progressive steps forward for the industry, despite the financial and/or critical failures they may receive.

There is a short pause as Samantha processes what John has said before she continues the conversation.

Samantha:

So how does that result in a negative effect on us as individuals and our culture as a whole?

John:

Because our modern entertainment is essentially an evolution of early myths. They are our modern myths, if you will. Fictional stories about a person or thing that do not fit neatly into historical records, but are used as a foundation for a culture because of the lessons or values they promote to a society. So if our modern myths are being influenced by a biased agenda, then they can be morphed into a form of propaganda that unnaturally challenges and shapes the values our culture currently operates by, in order to coincide with said biased position.

John looks up from his notes to see Samantha staring at him in anticipation. In the corner of their eyes, they can see Amanda in the control room waving her arms trying to get their attention with a confused look on her face. Without looking away from John, Samantha waves her concerns away and gives a thumbs up. Amanda stops her waving, but continues to watch with a perplexed expression.

Samantha:

Well I'm sure people would like to know how you came to that conclusion. So can you go into more detail about how and why social justice is such a negative force for our modern entertainment?

John:

Well in order for people to follow along, why don't I first breakdown what social justice is? Then I can go through the various different methods used to promote social justice, why they are bad, how it affects our entertainment and why that is bad for our culture.

Samantha:

Very well then.

John feels his phone vibrate in his pocket, but ignores it as he continues to speak.

John:

So social justice is the belief of fair and equal distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges within society and the promotion of political correctness. People who fight for this belief are referred to as, "Social Justice Warriors", or "SJWs" for short. Now on the surface, such a belief is admirable, however it has morphed into aggressive attempts to dictate what is and is not acceptable language or behaviour within society. And I really do mean dictate, because if you do not play along with whatever worldview or opinions SJWs have, you are branded as an enemy. Which in today's world means you will face immense backlash online through social media, where they will scour your past for anything they can use to sully your character or get you cancelled.

Samantha:

That's cancel culture your talking about there. So your saying SJWs promote cancel culture and use it against anyone who may challenge their opinions?

John:

Yes. They are unafraid of using it to try and quell any opposition that may come up against their world views or goals. Another method they seem to favour is labelling individuals or groups that disagree with them as racists, sexists and other undesirables in order to silence them. Examples of this can be seen by those defending criticism of key female characters in Star Wars: The Last Jedi. Anyone who criticised the film was labelled a sexist....

Samantha:

Well there were people who bullied and harassed the actors of those female characters. Kelly Marie Tran for instance suffered so much online abuse that she had to leave Twitter. You surely can't be defending that kind of behaviour.

John:

Oh, absolutely not, and unfortunately such behaviour continues to happen in wider society. But I am against attempts to put everyone who criticises something into one group and label them all as bad people because of a small vocal minority. It's like watching protestors on the news. If a small group of people behaved aggressively, in an otherwise peaceful protest, it would be wrong to say that all participants in said protest were behaving violently. Their goal is to intimidate those with conflicting opinions into silent submission. That way, no debate against their views can occur, so they can win any argument by default. What makes it worse is that studios, cast and crew will praise their defenders and join them in condemning those who criticise their projects.

Samantha:

But why would they do that?

John:

Why not? It's in their best interest to do so. The less noise generated from those who criticise their work, the better chance their projects have in succeeding. However, this tactic does not pardon them from also becoming an enemy of SJW's in the future. In fact if they pander to them one moment, but say or do something against their opinions at another, they will also become a target. Case and point with J. K. Rowling. She willingly retconned multiple parts of her Harry Potter books to appeal to SJWs cries for more diversity within pop culture and mainstream media. But when she defended a woman stating that men cannot change into woman on Twitter, the same crowd of people turned on her and wanted her cancelled because they believed she was being a hypocrite and was standing against their progressive ideals. Which brings me to another issue that suffers from encouraging and pandering to social justice: diversity.

Samantha:

Wait, do you mean SJWs are against diversity, or that they are for diversity and use tactics, like cancel culture, to try and silence people who are against it?

John ponders Samantha's question then looks over his notes carefully for a few seconds.

John:

In a way, both.

Samantha looks at him with the same perplexed expression Amanda still has on her face.

John:

What I mean is that they are in favour of more diversity in all fields of the entertainment industry... so long as it is the kind of diversity they deem acceptable. Remember what I said earlier about how they wanted to dictate what is and is not acceptable? When it comes to diversity, they do the exact same: pick and choose what parts are ok and vilify anyone who disagrees.

Samantha:

So what amount of diversity do YOU believe is acceptable in today's modern entertainment?

John thinks to himself for a moment before answering.

John:

It depends on the context of the project in question and how diverse it allows you to be by its own nature.

Samantha:

And what do you mean by that exactly?

John:

Well I'll give you an example to help me explain it better.

It's at this point John pushes his notes aside, implying that he knows this part so well he doesn't need them.

John:

One of the best examples of a show that was able to cast a diverse range of actors, and not be accused of doing so in order to pander to social justice movements, was the Game of Thrones series. This was because characters were written into the story in a way that made sense in the context of the world they existed in. Black and asian actors played black and asian characters that came from hot and sunny countries in their world, because that's where they would naturally come from. Same thing for the white characters from damp and colder countries. Casting took place in an organic way that stayed true to the world of the show. Another show that achieves this well is The Expanse. The science-fiction show is set hundreds of years in the future where racism and sexism have been made obsolete. Therefore, they can cast a wider variety of actors based on the context of the world the show takes place in.

Samantha:

Ok, those sound like good examples, but can you give bad examples?

John:

Oh yes, there are plenty. The Great Wall was a film criticised for casting Matt Damon, a white American, in a film based around the Chinese Song Dynasty: a period between 960 and the 1270's. The film was accused of whitewashing in the hope of getting larger box office success, but this ended up hurting the films reception from critics and audiences. Another example was M. Night Shyamalan's adaptation of Avatar: The Last Airbender. They cast white actors in a film about East Asian and Inuit characters. The

film even spawned a new term called racebending; where a characters race or ethnicity is changed from what they were originally, in order to suit the new medium it is being interpreted in.

John feels a continuous vibration coming from his phone as he gets a phone call. He quickly takes it out to see it is Lucy and that he has missed multiple messages from her. He turns his phone off as Samantha starts to speak to him.

Samantha:

So in your examples, the diversity of a cast should make sense based on the world of the show or film they are in. What about those that ignore all that and go for the diverse casting anyway?

John:

Well again, it depends on the context of the project, but you run the risk of people accusing you of hiring a particular actor because of their race or gender rather than their ability to act. This was what happened to the likes of 2016's Ghostbusters, Oceans 8, Doctor Who, Star Trek Discovery and Terminator: Dark Fate. They all heavily marketed the fact that they had female leads in the hope that they could cash in on the SJW's obsession of more diversity, just for the sake of diversity. Unfortunately, all of these examples have, or are, failing. But the real travesty is what they were trying to achieve. They were hoping that appealing to SJWs cries for more diversity would be enough for their work to be successful. Which is not what diversity is about! Diversity is not just about having a mix of gender, race and skin colour, it's also about a mix of ideas, opinions and perspectives. This is an extremely damaging practice because it promotes the idea that diversity is a strength, while at the same time cherry picking what kinds of diversity is suitable.

Samantha:

Like what you were saying earlier? Picking and choosing what they believe is acceptable behaviour and language.

John: (enthusiastically)

Exactly!

John's eager response was mostly due to relief that Samantha was following what he was saying. He quickly composes himself before moving on.

John:

This is also similar to how woke behaviour and virtue signalling can have an effect on how we critique films and their themes.

Samantha:

I'm sorry, but can you explain what those two terms mean please? For those listening who do not know...

John:

Right, sorry. Well to be woke means to be aware of a social or racial injustice. People who demonstrate woke like behaviour tend to point out problems without offering a solution, or do not know or care how their desired outcome is achieved. Now, virtue signalling is where people express their opinions on something in an attempt to show off their good character or superior moral compass. So when you combine the two, you have SJWs pointing out what is wrong with the world in order to seem like good people, but provide no rational or logical way to solve these issues.

Samantha:

Ok, so how do they tie into harming our modern entertainment and culture?

John:

In two ways: They affect the way in which we critique the themes of a particular show or film. And they favour subjectivity over objectivity when evaluating the entire finished product.

Samantha:

That's quite a bit to take in. I hope your going to break them down too.

John:

Well, I'll try.

They both laugh briefly. Any lingering nerves or fears John may have had at the start of the interview seems to have disappeared. He quickly checks his notes again before continuing.

John:

So let's start with themes. Themes are the driving intent of a film or show that binds the plot, characters and dialogue together. And what happens on screen supports those themes. Now it does not matter how many themes a film or show has, so long as it stays consistent with their themes. But they also serve as lessons that can be learned and go on to influence our society. I'll give you a few good examples. Slavery and racism are the main themes for 12 Years a Slave. The film shows us how racism is a learned behaviour and a wicked human instrument used to justify slavery. Power and its ability to influence us for the worse is a theme of Breaking Bad. After learning how much money, power and respect he can make from methamphetamines, Walter White transforms from an innocent chemistry teacher into the drug lord Heisenberg. A theme of Star Wars: A New Hope is, unsurprisingly, hope. Luke Skywalker goes from being a young boy yearning for adventure to being the new hero for the rebels and the revival of the Jedi. A new symbol of hope emerging from the next generation.

Samantha:

And so the bad examples are films or shows that are not consistent with their themes?

John:

Correct, because their themes are made irrelevant if not backed up by the context of the film. Which leads to what's happening now. SJWs will claim a film or show has a particular theme or message behind it, even if what happens on screen contradicts them or suggests otherwise. They will even try to pave over plot holes or justify characters illogical decision making in order to protect the film or show, just because they think it has a theme or message worth talking about.

Samantha:

Well, that sounds like they are trying to make excuses for the film or show their watching.

John:

I know! It's insane! This seems to be becoming the new norm for mainstream entertainment and is made even worse by their desire to charm SJW audiences that want a chance to show how woke or virtuous they are. This same audience will go into a film or show already convinced they know what it is about and will deliberately reinterpret it in order to align with their ideas, or so they can claim it is a problematic film. That was exactly what they did with with The Joker. They believed it was making a hero of an incel mass murderer before they even got a chance to see it. And as a result, they labelled the film as dangerous and wanted it cancelled. Studios and commissioners are noticing this pattern of behaviour and want to avoid any negative reception from these vocal groups by making content that makes them happy. However, it has backfired; for almost all of the examples I have previously mentioned, for many films and tv shows coming out now, and will continue to fail them in the future. The common reception by wider audiences so far has been to ignore or criticise these shows or films for catering to such social justice agendas in the first place. For valuing the approval of the SJWs over good storytelling. So if a story does not have a clear theme, or its themes conflict with what happens on the screen, the audience is often left confused as to what to make of it. And if that happens, your left asking yourself, "what was the point of all that?" So the damage they can do to our culture is that they promote ideas that do not reflect society's current ideals. Combined with the SJWs tactics of silencing their critics, it means that they can go on to pick and choose what values they believe should be passed on to future generations.

There is a pause after John finishes speaking as Samantha again takes the opportunity to absorb what John has said.

Samantha:

Ok, so that was the threat woke behaviour and virtue signalling poses to themes. What about the other one you mentioned? How they favour subjectivity to objectivity? Are they not both important in how we judge what makes good art?

John:

Well yes. When critiquing art, subjectivity is explaining what something makes you think and feel specifically. While objectivity is explaining what happened, how it happened and how effective it achieved this. These are both important ways to evaluate what makes good art and must both be given the same amount of attention in order to appreciate how well something was crafted, as well as the thoughts or emotions it creates in us. However what is happening is an increase in people, SJWs as well as mainstream critics, valuing subjectivity more than objectivity when critiquing modern media. Mostly because this helps them push their biased narratives. They are effectively trying to change the way we judge media so that their feelings are celebrated as being correct. They will even try to blend the two together to try and validate their opinions, but then come to a heavily subjective conclusion and claim that you cannot criticise how something made them feel or think because it is simply their opinion.

Samantha:

But shouldn't their feelings about a particular piece of media matter? Or be enough to justify something they believe deserves merit?

John:

To an extent, yes. The first thoughts or emotions a piece of media or art draws from you does matter. I'm not denying that. What I am concerned with though is people choosing to ignore or shut out any new information that may challenge or change what they originally felt or thought. They are convinced the first reactions they got are correct and they react to anything else as a personal attack. But they are just new pieces of information they did not have at the time that can help them better understand why they felt or thought the way they did, or discover what they thought or felt was wrong or inaccurate.

Samantha:

Well in that case then, can you give any examples where an analysis of what happens on screen clashes with what it made people feel or think at the time and changes how people can interpret it?

John:

Oh yes, of course. Most plot holes in films and shows are examples of how you can objectively prove that, despite what people may have thought or felt on their first viewing, can be changed with new information. In Toy Story, if Buzz Lightyear believes he is real and not a toy, why does he freeze like all the other toys when their owner Andy shows up? In Lord of the Rings, why do they not just use the giant eagles to fly all the way to

Mordor and destroy the ring? In Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, why do they not use the device that lets them travel back in time ever again? In Shawshank Redemption, how does Andy Dufresne reattach the poster covering the hole he dug for 20 years from the other side? Now I may have blown some people's minds with some of those examples....

Samantha: (Humorously)

Yeah, I think you ruined Toy Story for me. I never considered that one to be honest!

John:

But that's the thing! Using objectivity to notice and point out those plot holes is not an attempt to try and destroy those films for people or say they are bad because of them. Nor does it mean you should value an objective analysis of art more than a subjective one. All of the films I just mentioned are good films that have plot holes in them. That is an objective fact. However, that does not mean that it makes them any less enjoyable for people or mean we can just ignore them because the rest of the film made us feel good. But for those who value woke behaviour and virtue signalling, this does not matter. They will adamantly use subjectivity to defend anything that aligns with their views while trying to disprove their critics. This can lead to them using tactics like the straw man argument; creating a new argument and refuting it rather than the argument that was originally proposed. Because to them, being right matters more than proving how you are right. This is a clear example of cognitive dissonance. On the one hand, they want their opinions respected, but on the other they will openly lash out at those for having theirs.

Samantha:

That links back to what you were saying earlier, doesn't it? They pick and choose what is the right thing to say or think.

John:

Exactly. And the effect this has on our culture cannot be understated. It tears down any standards of what is good or bad in support of a participation medal mentality. This suits SJWs perfectly, as they can use it as a way to promote shows and films that line up with their values, while condemning those that do not. But as a byproduct, this mentality also helps promote the idea that it is ok to spread misinformation. As long as they can justify how it makes them feel, they believe it to be the truth and will proclaim it as truth. This is incredibly dangerous for the future of our culture as it could lead to greater confusion as to what is truly right and wrong. Which side do you believe? It could even kill any chance to have any rational conversations about what is fact and what people believe to be fact. And if people are not willing to accept that they are wrong about something, then there will be no room for self growth, no learning from our mistakes and an increase in ignorance as individuals and as a society.

John takes a moment after he finishes speaking to catch his breath. At the same time, Samantha takes a glance at her computer, where she can see multiple messages and emails from listeners pouring in.

Samantha:

Well I think that is a good point to take a break, after which we will come back to discuss this topic further and read some of our listeners comments. But before we do, I would just like to ask you one more thing. Why do all of this?

John is surprised at the question. Samantha continues before he has a chance to answer.

Samantha:

I mean, it's clear you have put the time and effort into researching this and feel very passionate about it, but I would like to know why you have decided to talk about this with me on the radio. Why did you come here to talk about social justice movements and their influence on modern entertainment? And what do you hope to accomplish from doing so?

Before John can answer, he notices Ewan is in the control room. He is watching the interview with a small grin on his face while Amanda is still bewildered at what is going on. John smiles back at Ewan before answering Samantha's question.

John:

Because sometimes, the hardest thing for us to do is to admit that there is something wrong with something we love. I originally got into writing because I enjoyed telling stories. And I enjoyed working with others to make my stories better. But now? I am almost afraid to make anything new because of the potential hate it will get for not being what others expect it to be. At first I thought this kind of behaviour was just temporary, but after working on Voidwalker, I now see that it is almost everywhere and is potentially going to get worse.

Samantha:

Wait a moment...Do you mean that some of the things you just talked about are going to be in Voidwalker?

John:

If people pay attention, then yes. They will spot almost all of the problems of social justice movements that I have just gone over. As for what I hoped to accomplish from all this? I guess you could say I just want our modern myths to get back to basics and focus more on telling good stories, rather than trying to tell us what to think. But ultimately it was to open up a conversation about the current state of our modern myths and how they are being twisted by social justice movements from both internal and external sources. Art should not be forced to conform to someone else's political bias.

Adaptations of others work should be treated with the respect they deserve and not repurposed to fit someone else's ideals. And we should be judging people not by the way they think, but by the way they act and what they contribute to this world. Now I know I made my thoughts on the matter very clear and that there will be many who will disagree. No doubt there will be some who will critique what I have said today or my past work, and I accept that. Actually, I encourage it. My own friends criticise my work. Because I always want to grow; as a writer and as a person. And I acknowledge that I am going to make mistakes along the way. For example, I said I wanted to talk about modern entertainment, but failed to mention other artforms like music, stand-up comedy or theatre. This is not because I could not be bothered researching these topics, but because I feel I do not know what it is like to work in those particular fields of entertainment. I would actually love to hear from anyone in those fields and see if they are experiencing things similar to what I have mentioned. But when I make mistakes, I will try to learn from them so that I can improve.

The more John talks, the more animated he seems to become.

John: (Assertively)

But I am seeing fewer people wanting to do that. Instead, despite any evidence proving otherwise, they are defending their positions as absolute and regarding anything else as being wrong or offensive. They then surround themselves with like-minded people in order to seek vindication, rather than maturity. This leads to them creating echo chambers filled with people who agree with what they believe or say, rather than challenge their perspectives. And if any of their peers say anything out of term, they will converge on them like a shoal of Piranhas. The quality of the message is being ignored for the one that is louder and reaches more people. Now hopefully, there will be pushback against this social justice nonsense and the rules of causality will kick in. With all the recent films and shows promoting the SJW mentality, there will hopefully be a wave of films and shows that counteract them or prove how wrong they are. We might even get more films like Blazing Saddles or Monty Python. But if things continue the way they are, it will replace any kind of meaningful conversations with drumhead trials and witch hunts; where the mob mentality takes over and people are found guilty without any chance to defend themselves.

John realises he is getting rather agitated and is able to calm himself down. He takes a loud sign before finishing what he has to say in a rather tired manner

John: (tired)

In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act. And the truth is that if this is allowed to continue ...then we are going to lose our ability to communicate the morals, values and beliefs we hold dear to the future generations. The foundations of our civilisation will be soiled and allowed to crumble. They will be shouted down by the social justice propaganda machine, that cares more about being in the right than being

right. That cares more about fixing the problems they see in society, before working on the problems they have as individuals.

John finally finishes talking and sits back in his chair satisfied, but also exhausted. Samantha begins to end the interview for the break.

Samantha:

Ok, well thank you very much John. You went through quite a lot there so I think we can all agree that you have earned a rest. After the break we will return to this topic and answer some of your emails, so stay tuned.

The radio jingle starts to play as the red lights on their microphones and the red box above the door turn off. John sits back in his chair with a sigh of relief. He looks over to the control room to see Amanda talking frantically with the editors. But Ewan is just standing there watching him with the same grin on his face. He then gives him a thumbs up and walks out of the control room. Samantha then leans over to speak to John.

Samantha:

Well it looks like you were right. What you just did was way more interesting than talking about Voidwalker.

John smiles.

John:

Yeah, just about.

Samantha:

So what happens next?

John stretches in his chair while he answers.

John:

Well, I'm almost certain I'm going to have a few interesting phone calls to deal with after this. Then there will be a few meetings. Maybe even a demand for me to make a public statement about what I said. "I was tired and did not know what I was..."

Samantha:

No, wait. What I meant was, what happens next with what you were talking about?

John finishes stretching and ponders Samantha's question for a moment. He has a small chuckle to himself before answering.

John:

I'm not entirely sure. But regardless of what happens next ...I hope I get to have a civil conversation about it.

John then turns his phone back on. He has missed multiple calls and texts from Lucy. He calls her back and does not have to wait long before she answers.

John:

Hello Lucy. How are you?

The End