Movie-Watching, Money-Craving Murderers of the Earth

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Many people watch movies simply for entertainment and pleasure, without realizing that they are slowly and subtly being taught to destroy the planet. Like other works of art, films are created to express various thoughts, messages, and ideas, and viewers tend to absorb these messages, whether consciously or not. From there, the human mind creates a perception of reality based on the arsenal of ideas gathered through constant exposure to art, and thus adopts a certain ideology. Many popular American films have subtle environmental themes that aid in shaping society's views about the importance of protecting and coexisting with the natural world. However, the amount of emphasis placed on these themes is too small, and despite their grave importance, the messages are obscured and undercut by a disproportionate focus on convenient and efficient plot resolution.

Murray Edelman's *From Art to Politics* provides a framework for the argument that films can indeed shape people's thoughts and outlooks on the world. The main premise is that "art is the fountainhead from which political discourse, beliefs about politics, and consequent actions ultimately spring" (Edelman 2). In other words, although it may be tempting to contend that forms of art—including movies—are created to reflect certain political ideas, it is actually the case that political ideas arise only after people face ongoing contact with such art. In addition, Edelman argues that art influences the ways in which people view particular ideas or issues, leading them to categorize things based on perceived value, importance, and relevance. The "creation of [contestable] categories provides one kind of aesthetic lens through which conception and vision are constituted and reconstituted [and] what we 'know' about the nature of the social world depends on how we frame and interpret the cues we receive about that world" (Edelman 109). People classify images and ideas on the basis of universally accepted criteria, and will, from the point of initial contact, regard them based on predetermined attitudes and judgments of like ideas. For example, a character represented in a work of art that acts righteously and does good will be classified as a hero, and therefore be viewed in a positive, respectful light.

In his essay "The Thematic Paradigm" author Robert Ray argues that American movie viewers are particularly attracted to stories that deal with the adventures of an outlaw hero, a sub-category within the general classification

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