

# KILROY CAFÉ

Philosophy for the Modern Age

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# Mindless Entertainment Wasting our Planet

By GLENN CAMPBELL

There is an evil upon this land. It is a parasitic force draining our society of life. It seduces our young people into slavery. It clouds the mind and prevents the individual from accomplishing anything near what he is capable of. It takes whatever it can get from us and gives back nothing.

Entertainment. It's the scourge of humanity.

It's a lot like cocaine. When entertainment is available, most people will ingest as much of it as they can. They may not feel good afterwards, but they keep coming back for more because they're addicted. Withdraw the entertainment, and there are terrible symptoms: tremors, anxiety, profuse sweating. When locked up alone with his own thoughts, the subject claims to be "bored" and makes desperate attempts to fill the void with something, anything to displace his own identity and occupy his mind.

The content of the entertainment isn't important. Video games, romance novels, re-runs of *American Idol*—it's all the same. It's 99.9% meaningless. You sit there for an hour, two hours, eight hours, 16 hours, and nothing at all is accomplished. Soon, half your life is wasted on entertainment, then the other half. You're dead, and all they can say at your funeral is, "He watched a lot of TV."

Nonetheless, entertainment remains legal in most jurisdictions. It is even glorified. Who are the most visible heroes of our society? Are they teachers, humanitarian workers, great thinkers and activists? No, they are actors and performers. We worship poseurs whose only claim to fame is pretending to be someone else.

Their job is to promote the addiction, to keep the illusion going so the corporate sponsors can continue to feed off it. It's a huge conspiracy—the entertainment-industrial complex. Its purpose is to sell the public candy-coated garbage, because that's what makes the most profit. It peddles empty calories instead of real food.

The opposite of entertainment is "function." That's when people have a genuine need that a product quietly and efficiently serves. When a doctor saves a patient's life, that's not entertainment; it's a legitimate service. When you provide people with information that somehow improves their existence, that's not entertainment either. It's education.

Entertainment is certainly capable of such enlightenment, but it rarely happens. Hardly one product out of a thousand is in any way useful or illuminating. The remainder is drivel and dross that people lap up because it engages their emotional circuitry and seems to be meaningful on the surface.

News and documentaries are like that. They seem to be illuminating but really aren't as long as people "watch" instead of "do." Even things you "do" can be entertainment in disguise: surfing, mountain climbing, expeditions to Machu Picchu. The main criteria to distinguish entertainment from function is whether anything is really accomplished.

Entertainment exists because the channels for it exist and someone with a profit motive is willing to pay for access. If you've got 200 TV channels available, they have to be filled with something, and a huge pimping and whoring industry has arisen to feed this machine.

An endless stream of naïve virgins are sacrificed in the volcano of entertainment. Young people are seduced by the apparent glamour of it, the promise of fame and the tiny sliver of hope that the product they generate might be meaningful.

Most are sucked dry by the beast and discarded, realizing only then that they'll have to get a real job.

—G.C.

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