

Question 1

This chapter notes that violence holds a significant place in American mythology and the Hollywood landscape. From the Westerns of the 1950s to the action films of today, violence has been a central theme in American cinema. This is partly due to the fact that violence is seen as a means of resolving conflict and restoring justice in many American myths and narratives. As Christians, we should approach the subject of violence in popular culture with discernment and caution. While there are certainly examples of films that use violence in a responsible and ethical manner, many films glorify violence and treat it as a means of achieving power or dominance over others. Christians should be careful not to glorify or celebrate violence in any form, but should instead seek to promote peace and reconciliation in all areas of life.

One way that Christians can engage with the subject of violence in popular culture is by analyzing the underlying messages and values that are conveyed through violent films. By critically evaluating the themes present in violent films, Christians can gain a deeper understanding of the cultural forces that shape our society and the ways in which we respond to conflict and violence depending on the situation at hand. In the Bible, there were many kings who had won wars due to God's protection and guidance. This means that context and reasoning for the violence matter rather than being against violence altogether.

Question 2

Hollywood films often depict violence as a means of resolving conflict and achieving power, the Bible portrays violence as a consequence of sin and disobedience. In the Bible, violence is often portrayed as a tragic and destructive force that results from humanity's fallen nature. The story of Cain and Abel, for example, illustrates the devastating consequences of jealousy and anger, while the story of the Flood depicts the consequences of widespread sin and corruption.

While there are definitely examples of violence in the Bible, these instances are often presented in a nuanced and complex manner. The wars and conflicts depicted in the Old Testament, for example, are often accompanied by warnings about the dangers of violence and the importance of seeking peace.

In contrast, the violence we see in Hollywood films is often presented in a simplistic and one-dimensional manner, with little regard for the complex social, cultural, and psychological factors that contribute to violent behavior. Moreover, Hollywood films often glorify violence and present it as a means of achieving power or dominance over others, rather than as a tragic consequence of sin and brokenness. An example would be most Marvel movies that have an abundance of violence that shows little regard for the life of the "enemies" to the protagonist, only to kill them.

Question 3

One example of popular artwork that depicts violence appropriately is the film "Schindler's List," which portrays the violence and atrocities of the Holocaust in a way that is respectful and honest, while also highlighting the bravery and compassion of those who sought to resist it.

Another example is the film "The Passion of the Christ," which depicts the violence of Jesus' crucifixion in a way that is both graphic and spiritually profound, emphasizing the sacrificial nature of Jesus' death and the power of God's love and grace to overcome violence and death.

In addition to these examples, there are other films and works of art that use violence in a nuanced and thoughtful manner, highlighting the complexity of human nature and the tragic consequences of sin and brokenness.

Question 4

Though violence is not necessarily artistically necessary, violence has been a part of human culture and storytelling for centuries, and there are certainly cases where it can be used in a responsible and ethical manner to explore important themes and ideas. Movies that retell stories such as the war in an educational and honoring way is an example. The artistic use of violence should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the context, purpose, and message of the work in question. While violence can be used in an exploitative or gratuitous manner, it can also be used to provoke thought, stir emotions, and prompt reflection on important ethical and moral issues.