

“Celebrities have done more harm than good in today’s society.”

Is this a fair comment?

By Jaime Niam(16A11)

In today’s society, celebrities of all sorts – actors, singers, authors and internet stars – do indeed have an immense influence on people. As public figures subject to intense scrutiny, there is the pressure for celebrities to be extremely mindful of their behaviour, and make sure that their influence is leveraged upon to bring positive impacts to society. This, though, is not always the case, and many have brought harm to society with such negative influences, further magnified due to widespread coverage of their faults. However, it is unfair to assert that celebrities have brought more harm than good to today’s society, as their talents, craft and influence have definitely brought many benefits to society, providing a go-to source of entertainment and even serving as powerful advocates for certain pertinent societal issues.

On one hand, the common argument for celebrities bringing more harm than good to society is the lack of discipline on their part, leading them to indulge in morally repugnant activities that only serve as a negative influence on their fans or simply society in general. It is not uncommon for the news to be peppered with salacious celebrity scandals and recounts of their inappropriate public behaviour. This clearly brings many detriments to society as the celebrity has not only failed to contribute meaningfully to society, but has instead disrupted the order of it, sending the wrong signal to their young, impressionable followers. Two of the most influential singers of their generation, Whitney Houston and Amy Winehouse, lost their lives to substance abuse and drug overdose, and such an undignified death should surely not be the image perpetuated within society. In addition, instances of celebrities being public nuisances seem to have become a norm, from famous pop star Justin Bieber spitting on “annoying” fans to Ariana Grande spouting vulgarities at the paparazzi. Such uncouth and juvenile behaviour clearly conveys an extremely negative message to their fans, who look up to these major influences and possibly subscribe to and emulate their behaviour. Especially since these celebrities are perpetually under public scrutiny and are clearly aware that their everyday actions will be covered in extreme detail across the media, their hiccups are even more unforgivable and influential than ever. Therefore, celebrities have done more harm than good to society as their ill-discipline and juvenile behaviour spreads negative influences amongst society.

Yet, it is unfair to claim that celebrities have only abused their influence by taking liberties with their fame to indulge in whatever they please, no matter how detrimental to society. Many celebrities have done the complete opposite, and used their influence positively to advocate pertinent social causes. Actress Emma Watson, who played Hermione Granger in the popular “Harry Potter” series, is a UN advocate for women’s rights and frequently delivers thought-provoking speeches to spur people on to join the feminist movement, fighting for gender equality in modern society. This is evidently an honourable role and definitely brings good to society, in that widespread awareness is created of an important societal issue imperative for progress. This also serves as a form of empowerment for what has always been considered to be the “weaker gender”. Celebrities have also come together and combined their influences for charitable causes before, such as the major collaboration between influential American sensations in the song “We Are The World”, as a sign of support for the victims of

the 2010 Haiti earthquake. With all these positive efforts to leverage upon their societal influence to spread global awareness on important issues, and hopefully spur some action within society, celebrities have definitely brought more good than harm to society as they are clearly endorsing a culture of mutual support and togetherness.

Celebrities have also used their wealth for extremely charitable and tangible causes, bringing good to the less privileged sectors of society. For example, the most-subscribed and arguably biggest YouTube sensation by the screen name of Pewdiepie has channelled over millions of dollars from his profits to charity, even engaging his fans to join him on such meaningful endeavours. Similarly, a fellow YouTuber – Kevjumba has built a school for children in Africa, while Ryan Higa, yet another Internet sensation, does an annual series in which he and his group of friends hand out food to the homeless on the streets of New York on Thanksgiving. Evidently, celebrities have not only advocated a society built on support, they have actually taken tangible actions to truly show their belief in such a culture, utilising their wealth to provide aid and contribute to a better standard of living for the financially-challenged in society, making sure they do not get left behind. Such charitable deeds undoubtedly represent a true, sincere desire to bring good to society, especially since they have been manifested in tangible, observable actions, and hence, it cannot be denied that celebrities have done more good than harm to society.

In addition, on top of the meaningful and more charitable benefits that celebrities have conferred upon society, they have also brought good to what may seem like a minute yet equally important aspect of personal life – bringing joy and entertainment to an otherwise mundane existence, by sharing their crafts and talents with the world. The countless sold-out world tours of popular singers and billions of views on YouTube channels testify to the desire of society to be able to indulge in quality content, and enjoy what celebrities have to offer to the world. Adaptations of books into movies also suggest that authors have done a good job of enthralling their audience with their stories, prompting the demand for even more of the franchise. Besides simply providing entertainment to the ordinary masses, celebrities' crafts have also shed more light and attention on growing industries, and provided society with even more platforms to engage themselves in. YouTuber Pewdiepie not only uploads interactive playthroughs of games for his fans to enjoy, but also helps sponsor game-makers by playing their creations and generating viewership on their products, greatly aiding the gaming industry. In fact, he has even collaborated with gaming companies and innovated his own games, killing two birds with one stone by providing an additional source of entertainment for fans and fuelling growth in an increasingly popular gaming world. The same can be observed in the music industry on competitive series like "The Voice", where celebrities take in budding singers as their mentees and cultivate them into confident performers, generating great viewership and introducing new talents and faces into the booming entertainment industry. Thus, celebrities have invariably enriched the mundane lives of the ordinary, bringing endless entertainment and material for us to consume and enjoy, even lending great help to various expanding industries.

In conclusion, I believe that celebrities have done far more good than harm in today's society. While instances of negative behaviour from celebrities do exist, these are but a minority amidst the sea of contributions they have lent to society. Not only have the positive impacts of the work of celebrities been recognised on a more micro level by enriching the personal lives of many, their contributions

extend to the macro as they have indeed offered much to the various sectors of society and benefitted the lives of many. Therefore, they have definitely brought more good to society with their wealth and status.

Comments:

A small degree of repetition of ideas across paragraphs. Otherwise, overall, a consistently argued piece. Good knowledge of examples to supplement and enforce points. A good read!