



FILM: **DON'T LOOK UP**

FDG RATING: 2.7 😐😐😐⬜⬜

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Adam McKay: *director*
Jennifer Lawrence: *actress*, Kate Dibiasky
Leonardo DiCaprio: *actor*, Dr. Mindy

DATE: February 20, 2022

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **DON'T LOOK UP**

In *Don't Look Up*, two astronomers, Dr. Randall Mindy and Kate Dibiasky, discover a comet on a collision course with Earth. They urgently try to meet with our country's leaders to communicate the massive total destruction the comet will cause on impact but are met with simplistic, ignorant indifference as everyone dismisses the pending event, being more concerned with immediate day-to-day occurrences, no matter how trivial.

The film had a split reaction in our discussion group with the majority saying it was too heavy-handed; too broad in its comedic brush stroke. Others thought it was a silly waste of talent. But those who appreciated the non-stop satire about how we live our lives today, were treated to "a single-minded focus to ridicule the entire system that has made modern America such a laughingstock in the world," (a pin-point comment by an online reviewer). More than just a parable about humanity and our leaders denying climate change, "the impending comet and the crisis surrounding it are used as an effective metaphor by McKay to critique everything from modern society's obsession with pop culture, how technology controls us rather than the other way around, and also takes aim at how media and news channels sensationalize even the most trivial of stories." Everything in our lives is measured by social media "likes" and numbers of retweets as well as by the stock market. In the film, the situations appear ridiculous, but it is an actual mirror of our reality. When Dr. Mindy and Kate (outstanding performances by DiCaprio and Lawrence) finally get an opportunity to communicate to the masses by being guests on the popular talk show, *The Daily Rip*, their message is completely overshadowed by the enamored reaction to the hunky nerd (remember when similar enamored tweets reverberated about Dr. Fauci?) while Kate is called a "mad lady" because of her emotional outburst. The two have already been rebuffed by Madame President (Meryl Streep) who says she and her staff will "sit back and assess the situation". Cate Blanchett and Tyler Perry parody stereotypical talk show hosts perfectly.

Discussion participants who focused narrowly on the climate change denial theme, felt that the science is too complicated so the film was not successful in driving home that point. Others caught and appreciated all the tongue-in-cheek character allusions to Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg, Jay Z, Beyonce, Megan Kelly, Jared Kushner, and of course Donald Trump. Meryl Streep clearly enjoyed her role as a parody of the past President. Ariana Grande was one of our favorites, showing how pop culture is way too elevated.

One discussion participant thought the filmmaker should have given the viewership more credit for intelligence and made his metaphor more subtle, and noted that the screen was just exploding with talent that really had nowhere to go. Most agreed that Mark Rylance as Sir Peter Isherwell, was spot on as a mash-up of iconic, self adsorbed, business billionaires such as Steve Jobs, (Isherwell's keynote presentation looked eerily like an Apple keynote). And he has built his own spaceship (a nod to Jeff Bezo's phallic rocket). Isherwell is the founder of Bash, the tech conglomerate that ultimately dooms the planet through a combination of greed and total incompetence.

Entertaining, humorous, amusing, while hitting very close to home, perhaps too close for some, *Don't Look Up*'s cumulative score landed a downward 2.7 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)



See you at the movies!

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