

What's Wrong with Hollywood

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Hollywood is not failing. It has failed. The desperation, the criticisms, the foolish solutions, the wholesale cutting of studio staffs and salaries, the various new technical improvements, the “bigger picture”, and the “ultra-low-budget picture” have failed to put a stop to the decline.

The fact is that film making, although unquestionably predicated on profit and loss like any other industry, cannot survive without individual expression. Motion pictures cannot be made to please solely the producer's image of the public. For, as has been proved, this pleasure results neither in economic or artistic success.

On the other hand, the audience itself, other-directed and mass-minded as it is, may condemn pictures such as *Twelve Angry Men* or *The Goddess*. These pictures may lose money, but they have inspired applause from those who still think freely and for themselves. These pictures have gone beyond Hollywood “formulas” and “ingredients”, and will affect strongly the future of American motion pictures.

More often than not, the mass audience will not accept a new idea, an unfamiliar emotion, or a different point of view if it is presented in one or two films only, just as it will not immediately accept new ideas in life. However, the new thoughts must eventually lead to change.

This is not to say that individual expression need only be so-called point-of-view films or films that stimulate thought: Certainly the standard of the musical can and must be improved too; the treatment of comedy should reach in other directions; the “epic” and “Western” pictures and the “love story” must also search for more imaginative approaches and fresher ideas.

However the probability of a resurrection of the industry through individual expression is slim, for the men of new ideas will not compromise themselves to Hollywood's departmental heads. These artists have come to realize that to compromise an idea is to soften it, to make an excuse for it, to betray it.

In Hollywood the producer intimidates the artist's new thought with great sums of money and with his own ego that clings to the past of references of box office triumphs and valueless experience. The average artist, therefore, is forced to compromise. And the cost of the compromise is the betrayal of his basic beliefs. And so the artist is thrown out of motion pictures, and the businessman makes his entrance.

However, in no other activity can a man express himself as fully as in art. And, in all times, the artist has been honored and paid for revealing his opinion of life. The artist is an irreplaceable figure in our society: A man who can speak his own mind, who can reveal and educate, who can stimulate or appease, and in every sense communicate with fellow human beings. To have this privilege of worldwide communication in a world so incapable of understanding, and ignore its possibilities, and accept a compromise – most certainly will and should lead the artist and his films to oblivion.

Without individual creative expression, we are left with a medium of irrelevant fantasies that can add nothing but slim diversion to an already diversified world. The answer cannot be left in the hands of the money men, for their desire to accumulate material success is probably the reason they entered into filmmaking in the first place.

The answer must come from the artist himself. He must become aware that the fault is his own, that art and the respect due to his vocation as an artist is his own responsibility. He must, therefore, make the producer realize, by whatever means at his disposal, that only by allowing the artist full and free creative expression will the art and the business of motion pictures survive.

***Film Culture*, n. 19, Spring 1959¹**

¹ Disponível em:
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