

Special Effects Cast Shadow Over Storyline

Hollywood films have always been divided in two categories, the big budget action-adventure extravaganza and the quiet low-budget Indies. In addition to that, there is also a subcategory: the technology driven films and the human stories.

Recently in American cinema, there has been a large number of those technology fiestas including most Peter Jackson's deliveries of the three installments of the Lord of the Rings. Then Harry Potter, Spielberg's War of the Worlds, Spiderman 1 and 2, amongst countless others.

There have also been a few surprises in the story / character-driven independent flicks like Machiavelli Hangman (<http://www.hangmanmovie.com>), Napoleon Dynamite, Million Dollar Baby and Sideways.

It has been a rule of thumb that when a film can be one or the other, but it can never be both. Unfortunately that statement has come to be known as truth. Although some films like Spiderman 2, despite their gigantesque budgets, have tried to come close to a decent story, they haven't been able to recreate the golden age of cinema.

Before those great human stories that James L. Brooks brought to the screen like Terms of Endearment and As Good as it Gets, there were big-budget films that also dealt with the great complexities of the human psychology. Think of films like Lawrence of Arabia, Ben Hur, Gone with the Wind, Godfather 1 and 2.

These days, big budget is indirectly proportional with storyline. The closest that modern times have come to those ageless classics was Gladiator with its lavish set design and locations, but even then, the story was slim.

Titanic became the most expensive film to ever be produced and although it won 11 Oscars, it was criticized all around for its lack of story.

Those filmmakers who didn't have financial backing when they started, are the ones who got themselves used to writing with low-budgets in mind. And those who had the means all along to produce the best-looking films didn't see the necessity to concentrate so much on human stories.

Hollywood has to wake up and find a reasonable medium between the two so that we can go back to the time of those great classics that will live on beyond the years and the dollars. We are finally in an age of filmmaking where exciting new technologies are being introduced into the market, special effects and animations are achieving eye-popping visuals. Instead of relying completely on these strengths, filmmakers have to learn to incorporate them into the whole meaning of the film.

About the Author

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