

# **The Climb of Controversial Film Content**

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# Abstract

This study looks at the change in controversial content in films during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Original films made prior to 1968 and their remakes produced after were compared in the content areas of profanity, nudity, sexual content, alcohol and drug use, and violence. The advent of television, post-war effects and a proposed “Hollywood elite” are discussed as possible causes for the increase in controversial content. Commentary from industry professionals on the change in content is presented, along with an overview of American culture and the history of the film industry.

Key words: film content, controversial content, film history, Hollywood, film industry, film remakes

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

The MORAL IMPORTANCE of entertainment is something which has been universally recognized. It enters intimately into the lives of men and women and affects them closely; it occupies their minds and affections during leisure hours; and ultimately touches the whole of their lives. A man may be judged by his standard of entertainment as easily as by the standard of his work. So correct entertainment raises the whole standard of a nation. Wrong entertainment lowers the whole living conditions and moral ideals of a race.

## The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930

The Hays Code was developed in hopes of keeping the morality of the nation intact as the film industry took off. In the 1930's and 40's, a parent did not have to worry about the amount of violence or nudity in a film. The content was well censored and America could rest easy that the films they went to see would be wholesome, American cinema. Through the years, though, the Hays Code disappeared and the ratings code took its place. Hollywood was tired of being censored and wanted the chance to make movies centered on not-so-wholesome themes. This caused the Motion Picture Association of America to step back and consider their options. The possible backlash of not creating a ratings system would be tremendous, but too strict a ratings code could have big-name studios knocking at its door. So in 1968, Jack Valenti, president of the MPAA, created the official ratings system of the film industry. "The emergence of the voluntary rating system filled the vacuum provided by my dismantling of the Hays Production Code. The movie industry would no longer 'approve or disapprove' the content of a film, but we would now see our primary task as giving advance cautionary warnings to parents so that parents could make the decision about the moviegoing of their young children" (Valenti, 2005, para. 24).

The institution of the ratings system opened the door for filmmakers. They could now include violence, nudity, profanity and sexual scenes in their films without being censored. Some

filmmakers took full advantage of this, which would earn them an “X” rating back then, an NC-17 today. Others just appreciated the opportunity to make their films more realistic.

Over the years though, critics, authors and regular Americans have taken notice of the abundance of the newly allowed content. The increase of profanity, sex, and violence in movies has provoked the public to conclude that maybe it’s just too much. Filmmakers argue that it’s merely representative of society. If this is so, then are filmmakers assuming increasing this kind of content in movies is acceptable because it is present in society? Whatever the case, not everyone approves of this type of content in movies, nor do they see it as representative of our society. In the book, *Hollywood’s America: Social and Political Themes in Motion Pictures*, Powers and Rothman comment on this argument:

One tendentious set of arguments had to do with whether television and movies only mirror the society they depict or play more of a role in shaping the attitudes of audiences. Critics, scholars and medial people have staked out a variety of positions on this question, although most parties agree that visual media, in particular, do play some role in affecting the attitudes and behavior of their audiences. (p. 40)

Communication theories for years have attempted to draw conclusions between a person’s attitudes and behaviors and the media they consume. Social Learning theory explores the idea that people will imitate the actions and attitudes of those seen on television or in film. Baran and Davis (2006) comment that, “Humans learn from observation. There has been some question, however, about how much and what kinds of behaviors people learn from the media” (p. 195). Violence has always been an outstanding behavior that some claim is learned through media. Some scientists, however, see mediated violence as a cathartic experience, expunging any violent tendencies from viewers. During a 1972 Congressional hearing on violence in the media,

the idea of catharsis was discussed, but in testifying to the effect of violence on viewers, CBS' Joseph Klapper stated:

I myself am unaware of any, shall we say, hard evidence that seeing violence on television or any other medium acts in a cathartic or sublimated manner. There have been some studies to that effect; they are grossly, greatly outweighed by studies as to the opposite effect" (as cited in Baran & Davis, 2006, p. 194)

For example, an article in the *Economist* stated that, "Americans increasingly dislike what they see in their homes and cinemas--and Hollywood itself senses something is wrong" (1992). Thus, even Hollywood is picking up the hint that Americans think media is going over the edge. When Jeffrey Katzenberg was head of Disney's studio in 1992, he knew this wave of dissatisfaction would soon be coming his way. He released the following statement, "When our critics charge that we show violence that is too graphic, sex that is too gratuitous, or feature lyrics that are too inflammatory, we're all too quick to offer the defense that it's only a movie or piously invoke the First Amendment" ("Hollywood," 1992). More Americans are taking notice of the downward spiral of the industry: "A large segment of the public senses that the trash has risen to eye and ear level, and it smells rank... Once the U.S. cinema was ruled by sentiment; now it is tyrannized by cynicism," a story in *Time* (Corliss, 1992, para. 2) magazine reported.

In Senator Bob Dole's 1996 bid for the Republican nomination for President, he stopped through Kansas on his campaign trail and emphatically pointed out the problem with our film industry today. Dole did however, touch on the strides some industry folks are making towards improving film content. Dole (1995) quoted Mike Canton, the president of Universal Pictures, "Any smart business-person can see what we must do--make more 'PG'-rated films. Together...we can make the needed changes. If we don't, this decade will be noted in the history

books as the embarrassing legacy of what began as a great art form. We will be labeled, ‘the decline of an empire’” (p.13).

Are films mirroring society? *USA Today* reported that family films, with G and PG ratings, out-earned R-rated films by a margin of 5 to 1 in 2004. The only “R” film to place in the top 10 was *The Passion of the Christ*. As impressive as these numbers are, 63% of all releases in 2004 carried the “R” rating. If the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) claims that the “attitudes of their board members mirror what’s going on in society at large” (Andersen, 2004, para. 7), then our society would seem to earn an “R” rating itself. This isn’t the case, is it?

In the recent movie *Sideways*, a film that earned the Best Picture Golden Globe in 2005, a scene showing a fully naked man was included. Is this what the typical American sees in everyday life? Is this what Americans desire to see? If this is what the industry deems award-worthy, then the question that begs to be asked, is, why? Even the media appear to be complicit in this trend toward the obscene. Papers from across the country including *The Baltimore Sun*, *USA Today*, and *The Hollywood Reporter*, praised the film for its honesty and mentioned nothing about its overuse of sexual content, including numerous sex scenes and coarse language. This film did, of course, earn an “R” rating from the MPAA. Ten years ago, this scene would have been cut just to earn the “R” rating.

In moving from a time when Catholic priests decided what was allowed in films, and studios actually listened to them, to a time when God is openly mocked in theaters, our culture has taken a turn for the worse and there’s no better place to see this than your local megaplex. Writers scream “Artistic freedom!” in order to justify gross and distasteful content and to keep from receiving possible bad reviews. We watch these movies wondering if people in another part of the country, or world, are like that; we can’t imagine that going on in our hometown. Some



are saying morality in our country is on the decline, and the indecency in film is a major contributor. As these sources and others will show you, censorship has declined over time, which has led to the increase of drugs, profanity and violence in film. Do movies through the years represent our society's moral fiber? Can we draw a connection between what we see on screen and what we see in real life? For the majority of Americans, the answer is no. Why then does Hollywood feel the need to include such content? Is there a Hollywood elite that has its own set of standards and morals that are being seen on the big screen?

With the negative side of film examined, I will move into the positive steps that have been taken and are being taken to restore film to the quality of the Hays era.

### **The Censorship Push for Morality: A Hollywood Reality or a Hollywood Joke**

As much as Americans like to complain about immorality running rampant in media, there are some positive steps being taken to clean up film and television. As a major medium in today's society, television has also seen a trend of shocking displays presented to the American public. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently has been blowing the horn on "broadcast indecency," which is "language or material that, in context, depicts or describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community broadcast standards for the broadcast medium sexual or excretory references.' And its web site adds with emphasis: 'Context is key!'" (Soloman, 2005, para. 9).

Since Janet Jackson's "wardrobe malfunction" at the 2004 Super Bowl, the FCC has tightened its standards in broadcasting. On March 4, 2004, Clear Channel Communications was "the first of what could be more media outlets that paid an increased fine for broadcast indecency violations," an article in *Quill* (2004, para. 1) reported. The company paid a \$755,000 fine to the FCC after one of its talk show hosts made sexual comments during his broadcast. Other Clear

Channel shows and hosts, such as the *Elliot in the Morning* show, and Howard Stern, have also been charged with fines, and in some cases, job termination.

As was evident in movie production in the earlier part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the 1994 film *Forrest Gump*, chose to make the screenplay more viewer-friendly than the novel on which it was based. The changes to the novel were influenced both by marketing decisions and box-office draw potential. Screenwriters knew the original dark and immoral novel would not play out as well as a morally upright version. “Virtually every decision made in altering Winston Groom’s novel for the screen...can be seen in retrospect as a kind of self-censorship-for-profit reconceptualizing of a Candied-like novel...”(Lavery, 1997, p. 23).

In another attempt to promote decency in media, Wal-Mart, Kmart and Blockbuster video have all established “self-imposed standards of decency” (*Human Events*, 1996, 4). Blockbuster, for example, refuses to carry NC-17 or X-rated movies due to the image they want to uphold, “From the beginning, we’ve been a family-oriented store, and the average customer is walking in with his or her kid. Our point of differentiation from day one was that we were going to be a clean, brightly lit store the whole world could come into and shop at” (“Wal-Mart,” 1996). Similarly, Wal-Mart and K-Mart have both created policies that prohibit the sale of any music that carries a parental advisory warning with it. Kmart spokesman Dennis Wigent defends the company’s decision to ban certain music from their stores, “If we feel that there are lyrics or cover art that would be offensive to our customers, from nudity to demeaning women or minority groups, we will not accept that” (“Wal-Mart,” 1996).

One can also argue that the entertainment industry has taken steps to improve itself, as the quality of its subject matter is also on the decline. In order to gather scientific data on this subject, this study will analyze the differences in content between movies produced before the

institution of the Motion Picture Association of America's ratings system and their remakes, or films that were made to echo or imitate the original, made afterwards. An example of this would be *The Nutty Professor* from 1963 and the remake made in 1996. The following questions will be researched and addressed in this study:

- (1) Do the original films and remakes being studied contain the same type and amount of controversial content?
- (2) If the type and amount of controversial content has changed, what is the proposed or implied reasoning behind the change?
- (3) What, if any, do these changes in content infer about our culture?

### **Terms Defined**

Remake: A film in which the storyline, characters and setting are similar to, or imitative of, an earlier film.

Controversial Content: Content in a film that provokes strong disagreement or disapproval, for example, in public debate (i.e. profanity, violence, nudity).

Obscene: Offensive to conventional standards of decency, especially by being sexually explicit.

Culture: The beliefs, customs, practices, and social behaviors of a particular nation or people (i.e. U.S.A.).

Next, I will briefly overview the history of film, history of film censorship, the relaxation of film censorship, and American culture during the 20<sup>th</sup> century in order to build a foundation on which to base my study.

## Chapter II: Review of the Literature

In setting the foundation for my study, a literature review covering the history of film, history of censorship in film, the relaxation of censorship, and an overview of American culture from the 1920's until now will follow. These areas are important to look at in order to understand where film started, and how it got to where it is today. Was film produced to reflect society at large, or was it the brainchild of those involved, which in turn affected society? In studying these areas we can follow the progression of film through the last century and also see if the change in American culture was a factor in film's evolution.

### **Brief History of Film as it relates to this study**

Louis Lumiere's invention of the cinematographe in 1895 was a major milestone in film production. The suitcase-sized cinematographe was portable and multi-faceted, serving as a camera, film processing unit, and projector all in one. Thomas Alva Edison also invented a camera, but unfortunately the bulky, non-portable device was not conducive to filmmaking. During the first twenty years of film history, silent films were the only ones able to be produced and films were short in nature, no more than a couple of minutes long. By the early 1920s, silent films were lengthened and deepened in content.

With the production of D.W. Griffith's full-length epic, *Birth of a Nation*, the growth and potential for film was realized. "In this film Griffith utilized crosscutting (parallel editing) effectively, particularly at the climax. He also portrayed battle scenes magnificently, with action in one set of shots moving from left to right, while action in another set of shots moves from right to left" (Yahnke, 2007a, para. 5).

In 1929, a means of synchronizing recorded sound with moving image was created, further

advancing the film industry. After this development, the film industry exploded with the advent of celebrities. During the period 1934-1946, various studios such as 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, Paramount Pictures, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Columbia Pictures and Warner Brothers were part of the American Studio System, wherein long-term contracts were taken out on both directors and talent. Actors and actresses included in the category of “stars” were Clark Gable, Claudette Colbert, Gary Cooper, Spencer Tracy, Judy Garland, John Wayne, Henry Fonda, Jimmy Stewart, Cary Grant, Joan Fontaine, Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, and Ray Milland. The 1940s were considered the classic era of Hollywood because the directors were able to maintain a “consistent style and achieved a vision of their genre – Capra of the sentimental comedy, Hitchcock of suspense, John Ford of the American Western, Howard Hawks of the fast-paced comedy of dialogue” (Yahnke, 2007b, para. 10). Notable films from this decade included: *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Gone with the Wind*, *The Philadelphia Story*, and *Citizen Kane*.

With the 1950s came the advent of television and the waning interest in movies. As an attempt to bring viewers back to the theaters, studios released science fiction films with aliens and monsters instead of big-budget epics. In the 1950s the focus shifted from battles between people to battles within a person’s soul. Smaller films were finding their own niche among the established “big Studio film” and films were beginning to be made that appealed to different age groups. “In the 1930s the studios could afford to make one product for everyone. But as the leisure/entertainment industry changed in the 1950s, the studios began to appreciate that certain films could be profitable marketed to specific segments of the audience” (Lewis, 2002, p. 133).

The 1960s continued to see controversial stage plays opted as possible movies that would challenge people’s faith, values, and thinking. Racier plot lines, in-depth dialogue, and scenes

never before having graced the silver screen began to make their way into the theaters. “By 1965 roughly 60 percent of the films in general release were met by some sort of local censorship action, all of it targeted at the nation’s exhibitors” (Lewis, 2002, p.127). Studios in this decade found little sympathy from censorship organizations because of their blatant disregard for the morally upright content that was preferred by those censoring. Films touched on the issues of homosexuality, infidelity, rape, and murder, among others, which had not been made a public spectacle except on stage. “Late sixties culture ... was characterized by insurrection on the campus, riots in the streets, rise in women’s liberation, protest of the young, doubts about the institution of marriage, abandonment of guiding slogans, and the crumbling of social traditions” (Lewis, 2002, pp.136-137), and the movies reflected that state of affairs. Jack Valenti took over the Motion Picture Association of America in 1966 with this view in order to prove a ratings system was needed, “It would have been foolish to believe ... that movies, the most creative of art forms, could have remained unaffected by the change and torment in our society” (Lewis, 2002, p. 137). The change in culture, Hollywood claimed, resulted in a change in film.

The 1970s followed suit and saw the continued production of films that would “reflect” the society in which they were made. Psychological portraits, cynicism, rebellion, and disenchantment seemed to be among the best sellers in film themes. These themes carried with them more intense sexual scenes, violence and profanity, which continued to push the envelope of censorship, being justified as a mirror of society. Also in the 1970s came the advent of the “blockbuster,” with the release of *Jaws* and *Star Wars*. With a budget of \$9 million, Spielberg’s *Jaws* became the highest grossing movie in history until George Lucas’ *Star Wars*. Much of the focus in the film industry at this time was on the production of action and youth-oriented films with impressive special effects.

The 1980s stuck with a sure thing: the film genre of the 1970s. Instead of branching out, directors continued to make blockbusters including disaster movies, buddy movies and “rogue” cop movies. The 1980s also ushered in teen angst movies like *The Breakfast Club*, *Sixteen Candles*, and other John Hughes classics. Steven Spielberg and George Lucas continued their winning streak during the 80s with blockbusters like *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Return of the Jedi*, and *E.T.:The Extra-Terrestrial*.

During the 1990s “the belief was sustained that expensive, high-budget films with expensive special effects (including shoot ‘em-ups, stereotypical chase scenes, and graphic orchestrated violence) meant quality. However, the independently-distributed film movement was also proving that it could compete (both commercially and critically) with Hollywood’s costly output” (Dirks, 2007a, para. 2).

As the industry gained more and more momentum in the 90’s, budgets grew into the millions as did star salaries. Dirks summarizes the 1990s in this way:

Pressure on conventional studio executives to make ends meet and deliver big hit movies, increased during the decade. Higher costs for film/celebrity star salaries and agency fees, spiraling production costs, promotional campaigns, expensive price tags for new high-tech and digital special effects and computer generated images, costly market research and testing (to develop risk-averse, formulaic, stale, and over-produced films), scripts created by committee, threats of actor and writer strikes, and big-budget marketing contributed to the inflated, excessive spending (for inferior products) in the Hollywood film industry. True character development, interesting characters, credible plots, and intelligent storytelling often suffered in the process. (Dirks, 2007a, para. 3)

Important to this study, in the 2000s, filmmakers saw the potential in remaking or adapting

older films and television shows. Such films were *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Freddy v. Jason*, *Alien v. Predator*, *The Dukes of Hazzard*, and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. “These films were low cost to produce; didn’t require much originality, big-name (and salary) actors or extensive marketing (because of brand-name recognition); and they had ready-made legions of faithful...devotees” (Dirks, 2007b, para. 3). Also popular in this decade have been films based on comic books, serials, animated films and fantasy-themed films such as *Spiderman*, *The Lord of the Ring* trilogy, *Shrek*, and the *Harry Potter* films.

### **History of Film Censorship**

It was often a case of inherited American standards—products of a Christian civilization—against alien customs variously described as ‘modern,’ ‘liberal,’ or ‘pagan.’ Hosts of Americans clung firmly to their own ideals and strongly resisted the invasion.

-Will Hays, first President of the MPPDA

Going back almost 100 years to the Chicago City Council, an ordinance was enacted giving the Superintendent of Police the authority to “issue permits of the exhibition of motion pictures. Permits could be refused if, in the Superintendent’s judgment, a film was ‘obscene, portrays a depravity, criminality or lack of virtue of a class of citizens of any race, color, creed of religion...’” (Jowett, 1990).

In the 1915 Mutual Case recorded as *Mutual Film Corporation v. Industrial Commission of Ohio*, the Supreme Court refused to grant cinema the same free speech rights as the press and literature. This empowered other state boards nationwide, and for half a century films were seen as entertainment and products of business rather than works of art. The Supreme Court commented that:

It cannot be put out of view that the exhibition of motion pictures is a business pure and simple, originated and conducted for profit, like other spectacles, not to be regarded, nor



intended to be regarded by the Ohio constitution, we think, as part of the press of a country or as organs of public opinion. They are mere representations of events, of ideas and sentiments published and known, vivid, useful and entertaining no doubt, but as we have said, capable of evil, having the power for it, the greater because of the attractiveness and manner of exhibition. (Lewis, 2002, p.91)

With the growth of film came the growth of its celebrities and the allure of the Hollywood lifestyle. As early as 1922, studios instituted morality clauses in their talent's contracts to ensure they would not have to buy out an actor's contract because of a big scandal. These clauses helped the studios regulate the actors' and actresses' actions, as they were an extension of the studio itself. In the 1920s, celebrity scandals broke, beginning the long history of public relations in the film history. One such scandal was the rape of starlet Virginia Rappe by one of Paramount's biggest stars, Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle. The studio decided to recall all of Arbuckle's films and cancel his contract in an attempt to prove the industry's commitment to content regulation. When the scandal hit, 36 state legislatures were considering film-censorship bills. The industry promised tighter regulation and the succession to Hays and the Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors of America, diminishing the threat of widespread censorship. Thirty-five of the 36 states dropped their bills. Consequently Hays' hiring coincided with the first newspaper story on the Arbuckle case, implying that he was entering as an industry censor. This looked to legitimize the industry, similar to Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis' hiring as the Major League Baseball's first commissioner, which coincided with the 1919 throwing of the World Series by the Chicago White Sox. Hays had served as the first Post Master General on Warren Harding's cabinet, and was a Presbyterian elder. He was reportedly an "ugly little man" with crooked teeth who looked nothing like a movie star; a perfect fit for an industry censor.

Along with a seal of approval from the MPAA, films were also under the influence and approval of the Catholic Church. A negative review could condemn a film unless changes were made. “The influence of the Catholic Church on Hollywood became abundantly apparent in 1930, when the moguls of the film industry allowed Daniel Lord, a Jesuit priest, and Martin Quigley, a Catholic layman...to formulate the Motion Picture Production Code” (Phillips, 1998, p. 79). This code was created to regulate the film industry’s system of self-censorship. In 1934, American bishops started the Catholic Legion of Decency “to rate the moral suitability of movies for its Catholic constituency” (Phillips, 1998, p.79). This ratings system was also followed by non-Catholics and due to the absence of an industry rating system, studios tended to censor movies according to the Legion’s standards; the industry rating system would be created in the late 1960s. The Catholic Church, in effect, controlled the moral content of films for almost four decades.

These ratings were subjective and followed the teachings and practices of a conservative Christian faith. Examples from the Production Code included these provisions:

- (1) No picture shall be produced that will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin.
- (2) Correct standards of life, subject only to the requirements of drama and entertainment, shall be presented.
- and (3) Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation. (Brooke, 2003, para. 4)

In 1934, Hays decided to hire Joseph Breen to head up the Production Code Administration. Being a Catholic activist, Breen was well connected with the ideals and values in the Legion of Decency and the MPAA. “The inclusion of the church in the operation of the cinematic enterprise was good public relations and it was also a business necessity” (Lewis,

2002, p. 101). However, a film would come along to challenge the regulations put in place by the various censorship committees. In 1953, *The Moon is Blue* had been picked up by United Artists, although Breen had communicated to the studio that it would not be given a seal of approval. If the studio decided to release the film without the seal, it would be charged a \$25,000 fine, which the studio was not concerned about. United Artists ended up seceding from the MPAA and released the film to much publicity. Two new theater chains picked up the movie and soon after, so did independent theaters. The movie ended up as a top 20 box office hit. Even bans from local censorships board did not hurt the film's run. Otto Preminger, the film's producer/director called for a revised production code, one that separated and distinguished films based on content.

In the 1950s more films such as *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Born Yesterday*, *A Place in the Sun*, and *The African Queen*, proved popular despite their anti-production code themes. The PCA knew that a call for more adult-themed movies was underway. Because of the large audience now identified, the MPAA changed a bit of the Code; the first of many changes to come. The MPAA approved "responsible depictions of crime," and the words "Hell" and "damn" were allowed when used in context and not excessively. The change in the Code came more from the dwindling attendance at the box office, which perked when adult movies were being released, and less with free speech.

"Once studio executives accepted the fact that they were no longer making movies for everyone, the development of a system to classify rather than censor movies was inevitable" (Lewis, 2002, p.114). Those in the film industry realized the choices in television shows, comic books, magazines and other forms of entertainment were all specialized for different ages; the studios needed to follow suit.

By the mid-1960s, cultural and societal changes timed the Production Code's guidelines. In 1966, when the film, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* was released, many of the Code's standards were broken. Upon receiving thirteen Oscar nominations, the film's content seemed to mock the Code's strict regulations and proclaim that controversial content was not controversial to all. Beginning in 1968, after this precedent, the Motion Picture Association of America, which was founded in 1922 as the trade association of the American film industry, rated movies on the basis of suitability for children or adults.

The MPAA's Ratings Board is made up of 10 - 12 people, each of whom is required to be a parent and live in the Los Angeles area. Kniffel (1999) explains the process of rating films:

They watch over 600 movies a year, apply their standards, and tell MPAA officials whether movies should be rated G, PG, PG13, R, or NC-17. In the case of NC-17, filmmakers are informed of exactly what scenes produced the rating and how they would have to be altered or expunged to achieve an R. (p.40)

Although the MPAA claims that there has never been any suspicion of pressure from studios in its almost 40-year history of applying ratings, controversy still surrounds the organization as its practices have been questioned in a documentary titled, "This Film Is Not Yet Rated," which focuses on independent and studio-backed filmmakers. New legislation is being released yearly in an attempt to build a sense of structure around the movie industry's standards. Screenonline.org offers updates on legislation about film and its content.

### **Relaxation of censorship in the American film industry**

Although the MPAA has stood by its ratings code for the last 40 years, not all agree that its institution was the savior of the film industry. Bowman writes: "What has happened since the end of the Hays Code and its replacement by the Motion Picture Association's 'rating' system

has been an aesthetic and moral collapse of standards, especially in the last decade or so...”  
(Bowman, 2003, p.70).

In Vincent Brook’s article, *Courting Controversy: The Making and Selling of Baby Doll and the Demise of the Production Code*, America’s entry into World War II is discussed as the reason for relaxation of the Production Code. Men had seen the terrors of war and had come home with a new perspective on life. This perspective differed from the squeaky-clean films that were being shown. Filmmakers took hold of the changes caused by World War II, thus changing film content to represent the images and themes soldiers had been exposed to. Director, Robert Rossen, discussed the post-war effect on the film industry at *Life* magazine’s “Round Table at the Movies”:

Unlike the 1930s, when Hollywood’s economic problems were a major impetus for stricter Code enforcement, the film industry’s postwar woes fueled outcries for Code liberalization... ‘We have a new audience, an audience that has grown up out of the war and been in contact with the greater realities. (as cited in Brook, 2001, p.350).

Censorship historians Leonard Leff and Jerold Simmons commented that the new audience “expected the screen to reflect the values and morality of the [postwar era], not of the early 1930s” (Brook, 2001, p.350). These values included a change in Americans’ views towards divorce, infidelity, premarital sex, and prostitution, according to Brook (2001), which created the call for more adult-themed movies. Films were now looked at as a vehicle for reflecting the society in which they were made. The Kinsey Report confirmed the postwar theory, claiming that the “war’s brief encounters, casual sex, and quickie marriages pointed to that fact” (Brook, 2001, p. 351). Brook reported that during the controversy surrounding *Gone with the Wind*, and the use of the word “damn,” producer David Selznick called out for “pictures different from the

norm, pictures unhampered by a rigid Production Code” (Leff & Simmons, 1990, p.104). The films that fit this description turned into the “film noir cycle.” These films echoed the idea that the world was “inherently corrupt” and the “heightened anxiety and alienation” that followed World War II was shown in the tone of film noirs. Femme fatales and detectives following the creed, “the end justifies the means,” were the main characters in such films. These films carried themes and plots that would not be present in the rigid Production Code-following films.

Aside from the war’s influence on the changing views of Americans, television also played a role as more and more Americans were staying in their living rooms, instead of going to the theaters. Film industry executives began to conclude that only “exceptional subject matter” would steal people away from their TV sets. In a letter to Jack Warner, of Warner Brother studios, the director of *Baby Doll*, Elia Kazan, writes of the dilemma: “...we are now obliged, as a matter of preservation, to put on the screen of Motion Picture Theaters only what they cannot and will never see on their screen at home...We’ve got to break our own taboos and strike out for increasingly unusual material. Either that or just quit and sign up with the TV guys” (as cited in Brook, 2001, p. 353). During the 60’s and 70’s, films started to contain more sexuality and nudity in order to lure audiences into theaters and away from their televisions. However, the American public was growing tired of the same type of content, and theater attendance had drastically declined by almost 40 million.

Although films were still being made that contained such content, the film industry had to think of something better to entice audiences into movie houses. The “blockbuster” was born with the release of *Star Wars* and *Jaws* and their special effects. This type of film plus the emerging other genres that came into being in the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s were driving Americans back into theaters. However, with rising ticket prices, up 3.2 percent from 2004 to 2005, and the

advent of DVD's and pay-per-view type ordering systems at home, some prefer to wait and avoid the high prices at the theaters. U.S. theater admissions decreased 8.7 percent in 2005 to 1.4 billion. New effects and animation have been used in recent films like *The Ring*, *The Grudge*, *Sin City* and *300* in order to draw people into the theaters. Extensive advertising campaigns including non-stop commercials, radio blitzes and Internet ads have been used by studios in hopes of luring audiences away from their television and into theaters. In 2005 alone, marketing costs for MPAA member company subsidiaries/affiliates increased by 33 percent. With the new advances in film and television, it's hard to say if the battle between the two will ever be won. And with some companies looking to dually release films in theater and for purchase in stores and on the web, theater attendance will be something that studios will be following very closely for years to come.

The war's impact, along with the advent of television, contributed to the relaxation of the Code and ultimately, led to the repudiation of standards used during the Hays Code days.

### **Overview of American Culture: 1920's – Present**

In studying American culture through the last century, we can trace the changes in culture and the changes in film, and see if there is, in fact, a correlation. Movements, events, music and wars can all affect a culture and the way the people within it live and relate to one another. The following overviews contain political, international, entertainment, lifestyle and many other areas of American culture. Each plays a different (yet overlapping) role in shaping a person's or an entire country's way of thinking and living.

#### **1920s**

After the First World War, Americans had begun to focus their priorities differently, "Americans had grown tired of responsibilities and crusades" (*The Jazz Age*, 1998, p. 20). They

no longer campaigned for world peace, or world leadership, but moved away from the Wilson attitude of American government. The times were bringing with them a new sense of freedom and pleasure. Freud was publishing his sexual theories, while Albert Einstein unveiled new discoveries that peaked America's interest. Americans craved excitement and escape, something that movies would begin to offer even more effectively this decade. The country was experiencing an economic boom. Prices stabilized, savings and life insurance doubled, mass production techniques improved the steel and other industries, work days decreased from 12 to eight hours and the emergence of the chain store was underway. "America was a nation of giddy consumers for whom wishful thinking had become a way of life" (*The Jazz Age*, 1998, p. 74).

The Gross National product soared from \$74 billion in 1921 to \$104.4 billion by decade's end. Americans were buying up new and better products including electric refrigerators, faster cars and shinier bathroom fixtures. Radios began large-scale manufacturing in the 20's and between 1922 and 1930, the number of families that owned a radio had increased to more than 13 million. Chain stores cut costs on everyday products due to volume purchasing and grocery stores were offering foods at prices never before seen. The success of the industry had many hopeful, and many cautious.

The excitement of city life did not reach all, though. In rural areas life went on as usual, no jazz clubs to attend, no wild parties, no new fashions. Black citizens were being met with a resurgence of racism when the Klu Klux Klan reformed, boasting four million members by 1924. Although prohibition had hit hard in major cities, youth in rural and urban areas were among the worst offenders – smoking, secret drinking and sex. The "unrestrained hedonism" of the time could be seen across America.



Film and music were growing in popularity. Jazz was the new craze, and talkies came into being, offering an escape to viewers. Attendance at theaters doubled to 80 million between 1922 and 1929. Serious composers like George Gershwin took the new jazz sound and made it their own, while legendary jazz artists like Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith wowed audiences. Not only were film and music big, but also sports came into their own. Babe Ruth reigned in baseball and Bobby Jones dominated golf producing a new kind of reporter: the sports writer. During this decade, *Time* and *The New Yorker* were created, along with tabloids, which always contained the latest gossip. Americans were loving their decade of decadence, but as economist Roger Babson commented, “Sooner or later a crash is coming, and it may be terrific” (*The Jazz Age*, 1998, p. 74).

### 1930s

In fact a crash did come. On October 24, 1929, the stock market plunged to an all-time low. In the next three and half years, unemployment in the labor forces was at 25 percent, 40 million people were in poverty and hourly wages had dropped 60 percent. Hostility was running rampant throughout the country, including Washington, where the White House had to chain its gates. President Hoover spent every day on the phone, and with his staff, trying to come up with possible solutions to the country’s depression. It wasn’t until Franklin Roosevelt came into office in 1934, that the country started feeling some relief.

In his first 100 days campaign, \$500 million was spent on food and shelter for the poor. His New Deal would restart the economy, but it would take the rest of the decade to crawl out of the hole America seemed to be sinking in. Adding to the hardship Americans had already faced, natural disasters plagued the nation as well. In 1937, the Ohio River flooded Louisville, leaving one million without food or shelter. In the Southwest, New Mexico experienced the great dust

storm of May 21, 1937, leaving many dead from suffocation. While rural areas were being hit by natural disasters, gangs and violence were overrunning major cities.

By 1935, the Justice Department estimated that crooks outnumbered carpenters four to one, grocers six to one and doctors 20 to one. Among the crooks were Bruno Richard Hauptmann who kidnapped Charles Lindbergh's son, John Dillinger who was seen as a Robin Hood of sorts, Baby Face Nelson, Ma Barker and her boys and the infamous Bonnie and Clyde. J. Edgar Hoover, tired of crime overtaking the country, formed the F.B.I., or the Federal Bureau of Investigation. By decade's end, all of the most wanted criminals in America had been caught or killed.

In the ranks of labor, labor unions started, first with General Motors and their encouraged sit-ins. The steel industry followed with cries for safer working conditions and better pay. By 1937, unions had recruited 7.7 million workers.

Over in the entertainment industry swing music was taking off and movies were still offering an escape. "No one who spent time at the movies during the '30s would have known that the nation was down in the dumps" (*Hard Times*, 1998, p.160). Films of the decade included *Snow White*, *Dracula*, and *King Kong*. Eighty-five million Americans attended the cinema weekly. And after 1934, films were guaranteed to be viewable by everyone, as the National Legion of Decency and the Hays Code took over content censorship, banning long kisses, adultery, double beds, the words "damn" and "hell" and even nude babies. But as Americans were beginning to enjoy life again, the next decade would bring about a war that would challenge all of that.

## 1940s

The 1940's would prove to be the decade in which America proved itself to the rest of the world. A second world war was underway, as Germany's chancellor, Adolf Hitler, was determined to take over Western Europe. But not only would Germany be a problem, Japan was presenting itself a threat as well. On December 7, 1941, Japanese strike forces attacked the U.S.'s Pearl Harbor. A day after, Congress and the House passed a declaration of war. Because of the war with Japan, the U.S. government did not want to take any chances with Japanese inside its own borders. Internment camps were built to house the 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry that were forced from their homes; 77,000 were U.S. citizens.

President Roosevelt rallied Americans around a global cause as British forces and others would become the Allied forces in an attempt to halt the advancement of German soldiers. On June 6, 1944, the Allied forces would hit the five beachheads of Normandy, France, in order to move into Paris and liberate French citizens from German occupation. This would prove to be the catalyst that would win the Allied forces the war against Hitler and his regime. After the defeat of Japan, following the atomic bombing of two Japanese cities, the war would officially end May 7, 1945.

During wartime, Americans came together in more ways than one. America's economy was the most productive on earth. For example, by 1944 a B-24 bomber was produced every hour, a jeep every two minutes, and overall America was producing 50 percent more armaments than the Axis powers. Food was strictly rationed, along with gasoline, and women were turning in their nylons for military use and their day jobs for military ones; by the war's end more than 300,000 women had joined the Marines, Navy and Coast Guard. The United Service Organizations was formed as a way to help out the soldiers abroad. Entertainers were flown to military bases to help boost morale.

Although the war was over, readjusting to life beforehand would not be so easy. In 1947, pink slips were issued to almost two million women, as the returning soldiers needed jobs. The cost of living shot up 100 percent, but the government offered help to soldiers in the form of the G.I. Bill of Rights, which offered tuition coverage, low-interest loans and more. This led to college graduates rising to twice that of a decade earlier and an educated middle class with disposable income. Pre-fabricated houses were popping up all over the country as new families settled into their utopian-style neighborhoods. The economy was returning to a period of growth and prosperity. In 1946, more than 2.2 million couples wed and the next year saw 3.8 million babies born, which would coin the term “Baby Boomers.” Although times were looking up, the “Red Scare” still penetrated much of America, especially Hollywood. A new genre of film, “film noir,” came into being in the 40’s, illustrating the fear and anxiety America still felt towards Eastern Europe. These films would also usher in characters that ignored authority and the Hays Code. The 1950s would continue the trend of prosperity and sit the entire family down together for dinner in front of a fabulous new invention.

### **1950s**

The 1950’s ushered in many innovations in American culture. CBS introduced America to color television, with a show hosted by Ed Sullivan. The gamut for programming was as broad as Americans themselves. Now families came together to watch their favorite shows, kids sang along with Howdy Doody and the Miss America pageant was televised for the first time. Life was good in suburban America. But the post-war threat of communism was still present. Red hysteria took over America as Senator Joe McCarthy announced having a list of 205 known Communists in the State Department and Alger Hiss was convicted of perjury during post-war

communist investigations. But with the election of Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1952, this red hysteria would soon be laid to rest.

In the southeast, segregation was still practiced even though civil rights laws were being passed in Congress. In 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat in the whites-only section of a public bus. Although her arrest was a small victory for the whites, it was a big victory for African Americans. *Brown v. Board of Education*, decided in 1954, made it unconstitutional to segregate public schooling, a ruling that would later extend to colleges in 1956. Also that year, segregation in public transportation was ruled unconstitutional as well. And in 1957, President Eisenhower would send federal troops to Little Rock, Arkansas to escort nine black students wanting to attend an all-white high school. Integration was slow, but steady, as African-Americans started to obtain the same rights and freedoms as their fellow white citizens.

Other events this decade included the space race between America and Russia. In 1957, the Russians launched Sputnik into orbit, the first man-made satellite. The following year America would launch Explorer I. In other travel news, National Airlines would start regular jet service from New York to Miami, and the Federal Aid Highway Act would start the construction of 41,000 miles of interstate highways. And with the consistent addition of new and better models of cars, 27 million tourists were finding their way to national parks.

The 1950's would be the last decade where church and state were unified, as "In God We Trust" became the U.S. motto and was added to coins and currency. Also, President Eisenhower would insert "Under God" into the national pledge of allegiance. The film industry, however, was steering away from this ideal of public religion, as filmmakers began including more sexual content as the television was crushing box office attendance. Adult content was added to movies in hopes of luring the public back into theaters to see content they would not see at home on

television. The following decade, however, would bring about new ideas and thoughts. The 1960's would prove to be a pivotal decade in American culture.

## **1960s**

The space race, civil rights, and anti-war sentiments are just a few phrases that describe the 1960's. This decade would bring about a shift in the ideals and attitudes of American life, as some struggled to be equal, some to protest a controversial war and some to express these new ideals through film. A new change for America was the election of John F. Kennedy, the youngest man and only Catholic ever to be elected to the office. His vitality and spirit raised American hopes, and his wife, Jackie, was an ever-present reinforcement of these characteristics. Reporters clambered to get pictures of the president, first lady and their children; America was in love with the first family.

The civil rights campaign continued into this decade as in 1961, Freedom Riders traveled throughout the southeast pushing the president to ban segregation on interstate bus travel. Segregationist acts also continued, as in 1963, when Alabama's governor defied a court order to let two black students enroll at the University of Alabama, and later that year, four black girls and 22 adults were injured when a bomb exploded in a Birmingham church; the KKK would be to blame. A leader would emerge though, to lead the charge for equal rights. Martin Luther King, Jr., led marches, held rallies, gave speeches, including his famous "I have a dream" speech, and even won a Nobel Peace Prize. His efforts would prove successful as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 would prohibit discrimination in employment, lodging, publicly-owned facilities, union membership and federally funded programs. Later in the decade the ban on interracial marriage was lifted and another Civil Rights Act was passed. Another leader to emerge, although different

in practices, was Malcolm X. His influence was short, but powerful as he was assassinated in 1965. The Black Panther Party, big on violence, also emerged this decade.

The biggest controversy of the decade, however, was the Vietnam War. Trying to shield itself from the power of North Vietnam, America entered on the side of South Vietnam to help fight off the powerful communistic country. America was divided in support and anti-war demonstrations became a popular and serious activity of college students. In 1967, 150,000 demonstrators gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington to protest American forces in Vietnam, and in 1968, Columbia University students would take over the campus in an attempt to show the administration the seriousness of their non-support for the war. Out of this decade came a pro-peace generation: the hippies. Touting the phrase, “make love, not war,” this group offered love and acceptance to any who were searching. Their “Mecca” of sorts was San Francisco in the Haite-Ashbury district. Here they were given food, clothes, lodging and medical assistance from others that supported their ideals. In 1969, the culmination of the hippy era took place in New York State at a three-day music festival called Woodstock. There, bands like The Grateful Dead, Jimmy Hendrix and Janis Joplin offered an atmosphere of togetherness. The hippy following was strong and memorable, but would slowly die out in the 1970s.

As the decade came to a close, events took place that would affect America in the following years, most notably the election of Richard Nixon in 1968. In 1969, America won the space race, as Apollo XI’s lunar module landed on the moon. This would open up the space program for many more successes and some tragedies. In the film industry, directors were taking more chances, claiming that the events of war and the advent of television required them to take more chances in content:

Struggling to lure audiences away from their television sets, movies in the '60's got bigger, more expensive to make (and to see), more spectacular, and more venturesome. They took on more mature themes. They got sexier and bloodier. And they sparked so much controversy that the film industry in 1968 was forced to replace the Production Code, its means of self-regulation since the 1930s, with a censor-appealing ratings system of Gs, PGs, Rs and Xs. (*Turbulent Years*, 1998, p. 81)

### **1970s**

Schulman writes of the 1970s: "We have arrived at a plateau in our history, the years of middle age and decline" (Schulman, 2001, p.49). In the early 1970's, there were signs of decline everywhere. South Vietnam was falling to the communists, Watergate erupted, producing distrust in American government, and the economy had worsened. President Nixon's participation in the Watergate scandal shook America at its core. Although there had always been some dislike for every president, Americans still ultimately respected and trusted their leaders; Watergate changed everything. Americans were now more suspicious than ever of those in power, and it would take time and new leaders to restore the trust the people once had in their government.

However corrupt the government was becoming, one positive stride was being seen in American culture: civil rights at its peak. Blacks flooded college campuses and the percent of those graduating high school and attending college was as many as white students. Black public officials were being voted into office, black southerners were being elected to Congress and the first African-American admiral was promoted in the navy. While blacks were seeing a surge in hiring, unfortunately it was mostly in government jobs. White-owned businesses were still practicing their own hiring policies, most of which still practiced segregation. Government jobs



were under equal opportunity employment so most blacks had jobs through government offices. On television, though, a huge step was made as *The Jeffersons* premiered, introducing America to a prosperous black family and an interracial couple. Other minorities were recognizing the advance in civil rights for blacks and wanted the same for themselves. Asians and Native Americans were all seeking cultural recognition through college courses, museums and exhibits. By 1980, nearly half of immigrants were coming from Asia.

In the music scene, a new sound emerged in clubs: disco. The dances and songs associated with the new sound brought disenfranchised groups together. Blacks, females and homosexuals could now have an outlet, since rock music was becoming increasingly white, male and macho. The disco sound found a mass audience and a place in film, “A white-suited Travolta, right hand awkwardly pointed overhead in disco dance, became the archetypal image of the 1970’s America—a graphic depiction of its polyester fakery, its senseless hedonism, its supposed cultural bankruptcy” (Schulman, 2001, p. 144). The 1970s were coined the “Me Decade,” as it ushered in an obsession with self-exploration. Widespread eclectic religious revival was taking place as some were dabbling in Eastern religions, yoga and New Age practices.

In the film industry, movies were exploring dark subjects and exposing the established sources of authority. Corporate cinema looked for ways to appeal to mass audiences, as old filmmaking processes were crumbling. The institution of the ratings code opened the door for new film content and a huge wave of sexuality flooded the movie scene.

In 1973, the “Battle of the Sexes” opened up the athletic arena to females such as Billie Jean King, who unexpectedly toppled the veteran tennis player, Bobby Riggs. After the event, female high school participation in sports was at 32 percent by 1978. In the working world, the

1970s were the first time in American history that most women worked outside of the home. This upward turn in American culture would continue in the 1980s as President Reagan and “His ready smile and preternatural optimism would mock the malaise, the irony, and the foreboding that soaked through seventies America. The times they were a-changin’” (Schulman, 2001, p. 217).

## 1980s

The 1980’s could be seen as the light at the end of the tunnel. After the turbulent 1960s, and scandal-ridden and war-torn 1970s, the 1980s were like a breath of fresh air to the American people. President Reagan, who received the highest popularity ratings of any president, was in office, the economy was booming, health was at the forefront of many Americans’ minds and celebrity worship was coming into its own. This decade would see the emergence of the technological advance of the century, children’s playthings would be a top market and for a second time this century, the stock market would plummet.

At the beginning of the decade, millions of people tuned in to watch Diana Spencer wed Prince Charles of England. The fairytale courtship and wedding sparked the interest of the entire world. With this wedding, celebrity worship was born. Movie stars, musicians, and political figures all had the American public in the palm of their hands. Television series, like *Dallas* and *Dynasty*, pro-sports stars like Joe Montana and Magic Johnson, and talk show hosts like Oprah Winfrey and Jerry Springer all had the American people wondering what would they do next?

Besides an obsession with celebrities, Americans were also concerned with the state of their physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. Health club memberships spiked and fitness videos found their ways into millions of women’s homes. Spandex, leg warmers and brand name sneakers were must-haves for workouts. Other fashions also dominated the decade as music

inspired purchasing habits. Madonna's unique style translated into mobs of teen girls showing up to concerts, the mall and parties dressed in lace, off-the-shoulder sweatshirts and mini-skirts. The hip-hop scene also had its share of influence as baggy pants and heavy chain necklaces were worn.

The 1980s saw the biggest surge yet in toys. Retail sales of playthings hit a \$13.4 billion record with the introduction of Cabbage Patch Kids, Teddy Ruxpin, My Little Ponies and Transformers. And when the Nintendo hit in 1985, the video game empire was officially born. But with all of the impulse buying and maxed-out credit cards in America, something was bound to go wrong. On October 19, 1987, the stock market fell 36 percent, dropping total share values half a trillion dollars. Black Monday had put a sudden halt to the overspending in America.

The U.S. experienced heartache with its happiness—after launching for a routine space mission, the Challenger shuttle exploded in mid-air in 1986. By 1989, 100,000 cases of AIDS had been diagnosed and that same year San Francisco saw its worst earthquake in years as 67 died, 3,000 were injured, 14,000 were left homeless and the city was left with \$10 billion in damage. In the northern most part of the U.S., Alaska's Prince William Sound experienced one of the most devastating ecological disasters during the decade, the Exxon Valdez oil spill. By the end of the \$2 billion clean-up efforts, 580,000 birds and 5,500 sea otters had died, and Exxon had paid \$5 billion to area fishermen.

But probably the biggest newsworthy event of the decade came with the advent of the personal computer. Businesses were taking advantage of the information-sharing ability of computers through a modem. Children were using computers to play games, and magazines sprung up devoted to the new technology. By decade's end, Microsoft accounted for 40 percent of all computer sales. The film industry saw the potential in the new technology as well, as

bigger and better special effects were added to movies. Others, though, saw the potential in a new type of film, the teen-angst film. The “Brat Pack” took center stage as their partying and romantic lives were chronicled for all the world to see. Tabloid television took form in *Entertainment Tonight* as the American public could follow celebrities’ every move five days a week. Never before could the American people be so involved and imitate the lifestyles of their favorite stars. Celebrity worship would continue into the 1990s, but the advent of computers was at the forefront of America’s mind.

### 1990s

The 1990s can be termed the digital age. Computers became a way of life in American culture. With the advent of the Internet, the world grew smaller and smaller and information was being sent faster. From the computer came inventions for everyday life, including PDA’s, camcorders and digital cameras. Every part of everyday life used some type of technology. Movies were taking advantage of the tech craze, as special effects got bigger and better. Studios were able to shoot entire films in one location in front of a green screen. The possibilities were endless.

Another craze that took hold was extreme sports. Snowboarding, mountain biking and climbing, and BMX bikes took their place among the youth of America, even creating their own tournament of sorts called The XGames. In 1998, the world recognized these extreme sports as snowboarding was added to the roster of winter Olympic sports.

At the other end of American happenings were a war, a cheating president and the introduction of terrorist bombings. Operation Desert Storm introduced Americans to Saddam Hussein, a dictator characterized as a “madman.” The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq prompted 300,000 Allied troops from 19 nations to station themselves in Saudi Arabia in order to protect

oil reserves. In order to avoid another Vietnam disaster, news-wise, coverage was handled differently, allowing reporters only certain access to sites. Desert Storm would fall to the favor of the Allied troops, until 2003 when America would again be visiting the Middle East.

In the White House, President Clinton was making strides to reduce the national debt, decrease unemployment and increase the nation's expansion. His personal life, however, overshadowed all of that when the Monica Lewinsky scandal broke. Aside from scandal, the President was facing his first bout with terrorist bombings; the first at the World Trade Center and the second in Oklahoma City.

In the media, news coverage of the O.J. Simpson trial, Princess Diana's death and school violence, including the tragedy at Columbine, Colorado, had America glued to news stations. On network television, shows like *Friends* and *Seinfeld* were enjoying huge success and long runs. On radio stations you could hear almost anything—country-turned-pop, grunge, rap, and techno. The “age of anything” translated to the big screen as well, as Indie pictures, blockbusters, historic epics, romance-comedies and murder-thrillers all had their place at the box office. The 1990s truly were the digital age, as every part of life had some type of technology associated with it. The turn of the century, however, would carry that practice even further.

## **2000s**

Present day truly has ushered in some of the most innovative and creative inventions known to man. From plasma televisions, to mp3 players, to gaming consoles, to the technology in cars, Americans would be nowhere today without technology. The music industry, movie industry and even military depend on these innovations to help them stay above their competition, or enemies, in today's world. These advances have caused our society to become faster and more demanding than ever. The ability to pick up a phone in order to talk to and see

someone makes us forget that it always wasn't this way.

Travel has become cheaper and easier with the introduction of budget airlines and numerous online travel websites. More Americans than ever are taking vacations and taking advantage of leisure time. The health market has remained strong with new health foods coming out everyday and gyms competing with one another for the best deal. We have everything at our fingertips; nothing is beyond our reach.

The 2000s have also proven that anyone can have his or her 15 minutes of fame. With reality shows reaching an all-time high, farmers, to teens, to animals are all part of the weekly line-up. And for those people who'd rather not share the spotlight, 24-hour news stations have shown us how opinionated celebrities, politicians, authors and even regular people can be. Online blogs and websites, like YouTube, make it possible for anyone to air their dirty laundry via the Internet. One of the most talked-about subjects this decade so far has been the war in Iraq. Just hitting its four-year anniversary, Americans are divided in their support for the campaign. Republicans and Democrats prove they too are in disagreement about the President's choices and continue to propose bills in order to stop the war. With the 2008 election right around the corner, candidates use the war as their number one platform, promising to do whatever their potential constituents want. Although no one knows when America will pull out of Iraq, one thing is for sure: they can stay up-to-date on one of their many hand-held gadgets.

The film industry is more varied than ever before. Horror movies employing new digital effects, multi-million dollar epics filmed in five to 10 different locations, independent films raising eyebrows and the explosion of musicals are just a few of the many genres of films out in your local theater. And with the cross-marketing that studios are taking advantage of, it wouldn't be surprising to see your favorite movie turned into a ride at a nearby theme park.

American culture has come a long way since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the creation of film. Important events, trends and people throughout American culture have affected the film industry and have made their way into the movies as storylines. We can look at the progression of American culture and somewhat trace it through film. Whether it is the cause for more or less censorship, the growing popularity of celebrities or themes and plots in movies, American culture is an ever-present factor in the change of the film industry.

Next, the methodology chapter will explain how I will attempt to study the content in old films and compare it to the content in their remakes.

## Chapter III: Methodology

In conducting a study analyzing the differences in content between original films and their current remakes, a content analysis was selected as the most appropriate means of analysis.

My hypothesis is as follows:

**H1:** The increased amount of adult content, specifically profanity, sexual scenes, violence, drugs and alcohol, and nudity, in films produced before 1968 has increased in their remakes filmed after 1968.

The categories for this study were devised after researching the MPAA ratings code. Profanity, sexual content, violence, drug and alcohol use and nudity are all taken into account by the ratings board when viewing films. A rating is then given to a film after all of these categories, including their presence and levels, have subjectively been reviewed. Although the ratings board is subjective in their viewing and ratings of films, as specified in the literature review, only profanity is objectively considered, specifically the word “fuck.” This means that each board member considers the overall tone and content of the film and assigns a rating that he or she thinks would be appropriate. I, however, have decided to objectively consider all of the content and record each instance present in the films under review. In doing this, I can quantitatively compare content in original films to their remakes. Detailed categories will be as follows:

**Profanity & Vulgarity** including \*hell\*, \*damn\*, \*shit\*, \*fuck\*, \*asshole\*, \*bastard\*, \*bitch\*, or any other variation of these words.

**Sexual Scenes** including the act of sex, the implication of sex, petting, and open-mouth kissing. Scenes lasting longer than five seconds will be timed and counted as one instance.

(Scenes between married couples will also be counted.)



**Violence** includes scenes with hitting, kicking, shooting, stabbing, or any other act that is meant as harm to another person, including self-defense. Extended scenes, such as battle scenes or fighting scenes, will be counted as one instance but timed to reflect the quantity of the content. Verbal abuse will also be counted which would include any language that is meant to harm another person mentally.

**Drug & Alcohol Use** includes scenes with smoking (will be indicated as such), alcohol consumption, illegal drug use, and prescription pill abuse.

**Sexual References** includes any dialogue about male private parts, female private parts or language of a sexual nature.

**Nudity** includes scenes with full nudity or partial nudity including breasts and/or buttocks.

### **Movies for Analysis**

For this study, I will view original movies filmed prior to 1968 and their remakes filmed after 1968. This is because the MPAA instituted its ratings system in 1968 due to the inability of moviegoers to foreknow the content in films. With the institution of the ratings code, filmmakers were given more freedom in their content than ever before. This study will take a select sample of original films and their remakes in order to study possible differences in content between the two. In choosing which films to include in this study, their popularity was taken into account so as to credit the study. When films have been seen, or at least heard of by a large audience, it helps to create more of a correlation between society and the movies that have possibly influenced its change or vice versa.

I first visited the websites of the American Film Institute, Motion Picture Association of America and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. I searched on these websites for

lists of film remakes, but did not find any such lists. When the previous method did not work, I used the Google search engine, entering the phrase “film remakes.” The following sites were used in acquiring names of movie remakes: [www.movie-remakes.com](http://www.movie-remakes.com), [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org), [www.virginmedia.com](http://www.virginmedia.com), and [www.answers.com](http://www.answers.com). Films that I, myself, had heard of, and the consistent presence in the search results, were criteria used in choosing films for review. An initial list of \_\_\_ films was created, but was decreased due to the inability to locate certain films for viewing. Netflix, Blockbuster, both online and in person, and the local Midlothian, Virginia, library were all searched for the films on the initial list. After these changes were made to the list, 35 films remained, which appear in Appendix B.

The viewing of these films occurred between February 2006 and March 2007. The categories detailed above were listed for each movie viewed and the corresponding content was recorded. The instances for each category were then counted up and reported in the Results chapter, along with commentary on the content present in each film. A complete listing of recorded content for each film is in Appendix C.

## Chapter IV: Results

The results of this study were somewhat expected due to a pilot study I had completed ahead of time. In all of my readings it was clear that the adult content being discussed in this study has seen an increase in films over the last few decades. As I watched the films under analysis, my hypothesis was proven correct, as the levels of profanity, violence, nudity, and sexual references had increased from the original film to its remake. In this section I will briefly discuss each pair of movies and the findings related to a proposed increase in certain specified content. Some of the discussions that follow include specific numbers related to content increases, however, all numbered and detailed increases of content for the films are presented in Appendix B. As you will see, some films indicated a large increase in certain areas of content, while others produced no increase at all.

### *Psycho (1960) / Psycho (1998)*

The two films are almost identical in content and dialogue. It seems that the director of the remake wanted to keep to the original as much as possible. So much so, it is uncanny. Down to the very words, gestures and sets, the two films mirror each other in almost every way. Neither film has any profanity, but both have the same amount and type of violence and nudity. The famous stabbing scene in the shower is even executed the same way. In both films, the stabbing motion is shown, but not the knife actually entering the victim's body. Besides the nature of the film, which is quite dark, both films are predominately "clean" as far as content goes.

### *The Manchurian Candidate (1962) / The Manchurian Candidate (2004)*

Each film contains the same four categories of content: violence, profanity, sexual content, and drug or alcohol use, though the amount and extremity to which they are shown varies. In the original the violence is there, but not shown completely. In films before the ratings

code was instituted, violence could be present, but the actual scene of a bullet entering someone or a knife cutting someone, could not be shown. This remains true for these two films. However, in the remake, the violence and disturbing images are more present for the viewer to see in their entirety. As far as profanity is concerned, there is a 250 percent increase in profanity from the original to the remake. As was the case with most of the movies I reviewed, the largest increase was in profanity. The sexual content and drug or alcohol use is very minimal in both films and do not in any way overshadow the violence and profanity.

***Mr. Deeds Goes to Town (1936) / Mr. Deeds (2002)***

These two films are a perfect example of films reflecting changes in the production or ratings code. The only similarities between the two are some of the character's names and the storyline. The original contained a few instances of alcohol and smoking and a few instances of punching. Other than that, the film is completely "clean." During that era, though, it was odd not to see drinking and smoking in a film; the content could almost be counted as normal. In the remake, however, the profanity greatly increases, as does the violence and sexual references. In the original, no profanity or sexual references are even present, but the remake contains 36 expletives, two instances of the middle finger, and five phrases or references of a sexual nature, including a scene of a fully naked man from the back. The violence depicted in the remake includes punching, kicking, and miscellaneous additional violent acts.

***The Mummy (1932) / The Mummy (1999)***

The differences between these two films are so vast, that the only similarity exists in the title. The original is slow and tame. The remake on the other hand, is what the 1990s became so famous for in film: special effects. From the extensive battle scenes where the viewer will see stabbing, shooting and machete slicing, to the unnerving shots of scarabs being poured onto a

man as he is buried alive, the remake is definitely revamped for the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The brutality is increased monumentally, as every other scene includes some kind of fighting or killing. The profanity is increased as well, as 13 expletives are present. Also, a series of scenes depicting ancient Egypt shows the pharaoh's mistress wearing only body paint, her backside completely exposed. The majority of the remake is comprised mainly of violence and action.

***The Nutty Professor (1963) / The Nutty Professor (1996)***

The remake of *The Nutty Professor* is another example of a film being updated to “reflect” the culture in which it is released. The sexual and profane content in the remake of this film is almost too much to count. The original has no such content and carries in it only some instances of alcohol and smoking. The remake on the other hand is highly offensive to anyone that does not use profanity or overt sexual references on a habitual basis. The film has as many as 33 sexual references and as many as 65 expletives. Smoking and alcohol are displayed in a house party scene and at a club.

***Dial M for Murder (1954) / A Perfect Murder (1998)***

These two films are also very different as far as content goes. The storylines are very similar, but it is obvious that the presentation of those storylines are in line with the supposed culture at their times. The original is tame compared to today, containing only instances of alcohol and smoking and two violent scenes, including Grace Kelly's character being strangled and then stabbing her assailant in the back with scissors. The remake opens with two people naked in bed rolling around on top of one another, although no body parts are shown and there are instances of open-mouth kissing. The majority of the content increase comes in the way of profanity, 17 expletives to be exact, half of which are a form of the word “f\*\*\*.” The violence is

more gruesome as the viewer sees a meat thermometer being stabbed into the attacker's neck, a second stabbing, and a person being shot to death.

***Sabrina (1954) / Sabrina (1995)***

These two films are very similar in nature except for slight changes in the storyline. Both have instances of alcohol and smoking; the original actually contains more than the remake. Both contain instances of profanity, the original containing one and the remake containing two, and both have the same scene with Linus punching David out. Other than that, the remake tries to stay in line with the feel of the original, including content.

***The Shop Around the Corner (1940) / You've Got Mail (1998)***

The main differences between the original and the remake are the use of profanity and sexual references, although minimal. The remake contains eight expletives and five sexual references. The original has instances of smoking and the remake has instances of drinking. Although the original has less of the discussed content, it does have the thematic element of adultery in it, whereas the remake does not.

***Cheaper by the Dozen (1950) / Cheaper by the Dozen (2003)***

In the case of these two films, both were made to be family-friendly. The original is "clean" of any of the content under analysis, and the remake, although containing fighting between the children and some very subtle references to sex, would still be considered appropriate for all age groups.

***Father of the Bride (1950) / Father of the Bride (1991)***

As is the case with most of the older films, alcohol and smoking are a staple in the original *Father of the Bride*. Other than that content, the original is completely void of any of the other content under scrutiny. The remake does contain instances of alcohol and smoking, but no

more than the original. It does, however, contain some subtle references to sex. With the exception of the overt line, “Fasten your condoms,” both films are quite family-oriented and neither possesses any content that would raise a red flag.

***The Ladykillers (1955) / The Ladykillers (2004)***

Out of all the films I reviewed, this remake has the largest increase of an area of content under study. The profanity in the remake is overwhelming at times. For example, when a certain character is in a scene, profanity simply is his language. This movie has at least 167 expletives, if not more. The majority of the expletives are a form of the word “f\*\*\*.” The violence in this remake is also more graphic than the original, as the murdering and death of characters is actually depicted, as in a person’s neck shown breaking as he falls down the stairs and a gun being shot in a person’s face. The remake of this film is definitely a stark contrast to the original in the areas of profanity and violence.

***Charade (1963) / The Truth About Charlie (2002)***

The content under scrutiny that appears more in the remake of this film than in the original is not numerous. The nudity entails a side view of a woman’s breasts and a frontal shot of a woman through a shower curtain, although blurry. The alcohol and smoking instances are limited, and I would like to note that the movie is based in Paris where smoking and drinking are regular occurrences. The profanity in the remake only numbers a couple of instances. Both films depict violence, including fighting and shooting, but neither shows a close-up of a bullet actually hitting someone. Both films are somewhat mild and the remake does not contain too much of an increase of any of the content being discussed.

***War of the Worlds (1953) / War of the Worlds (2005)***

The remake of this movie could not differ more from the original. The storyline is still somewhat the same, but the overall presentation of the movie is in line with the huge action-adventure blockbusters of today. The violence that is present in the remake is not exactly the violence that is being discussed in this thesis, as it is coming from extra-terrestrial machines. The special effects and digital animation that are used shows the killing of humans in far more graphic and disturbing way than the original. Obviously, with the technology studios possess today, they are going to take advantage of it to try order to pull in audiences. The profanity is increased in this film, as 16 expletives are present. This comparison is different from the others due to the way in which the violence is presented. Should this “alien” violence count in the same way human shooting and stabbing does? It quite possibly can, as this violence can be just as jarring and effective as other forms of violence can be on a viewer. It would be interesting to study the effects of digitized violence versus human violence on a viewer.



## Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusions

As discussed earlier in the Introduction and Literature Review, there have been various theories advanced to explain the increase of certain content in films throughout the years. Post-war effects on culture, television popularity and a biased view of a “Hollywood elite” have all been proposed. All have valid claims and have found some measure of support. The mixture of the three, I think, has caused the more controversial content in movies over time to increase. Whether or not this increase is a reflection of society or an influencer on it, has yet to be settled; film content is probably a mixture of both processes in this case as well.

The results of this investigation have demonstrated clearly that some controversial content has increased over time from an original film to its remake in most of the films examined. The largest increased content area overall was profanity, which begs the enduring question as to whether society is growing more profane, or if Hollywood itself is the inspiration for the language in films. The only detailed guideline in the MPAA’s ratings standards concerns the use of expletives. If a movie has more than one use of the “F” word then it receives an automatic “R” rating. But violence, nudity, sexual references and the like are all taken into account as a whole; how the overall tone of those elements affect a film has yet to be explored. Raters have no guidelines for those content areas. They only look at it from a parent’s point-of-view and subjectively give it a rating. Does it not seem that language is of the utmost importance to the MPAA, whose raters are supposed to represent the feelings and attitudes of parents and society at large? Yet it appears that Hollywood follows their own agenda in this case. It seems that Hollywood is unconcerned if its films are slapped with an “R” or even “NC-17” rating. In fact, I found in the MPAA’s market snapshot for 2005 that 58 percent of the films released since 1968 have been given an “R” rating even though according to the MPAA, that category only

accounts for 10 percent of the highest grossing movies from 1968 to 2005. If I were a filmmaker, I would focus my content more towards the “PG-13” and “PG” crowds, but my suspicion is that filmmakers do this as an expression of artistic freedom, if not in the interest of advancing their own, personal worldview. In his book, *The Universe Next Door*, James Sire discusses the different worldviews, or the way in which a person views reality. In the book’s epigraph, he states that, “For any of us to be fully conscious intellectually we should not only be able to detect the worldviews of others but be aware of our own--why it is ours and why in light of so many options we think it is true” (as cited in InterVarsity Press, 2007, para. 2). Along these same lines, Michael Medved’s book, “Hollywood v. America” takes the idea that filmmakers and Hollywood pushing their own agendas and worldviews on Americans ever further. He discusses how Hollywood “glorifies brutality, promotes promiscuity, excuses profanity and debases the family.” It is possible, then, that filmmakers could be using their movies for propaganda purposes, so it is important for us to be aware of the content present in the films we watch.

A quote from the book, *Hollywood’s America: Social and Political Themes in Motion Pictures*, comes to mind: “Conservative critics, however, have argued that Hollywood now represents a new cultural elite, possessed of liberal social and political views at odds with those of the public it entertains” (Powers, Rothman, & Rothman, 1996). Is Hollywood correctly taking into account the attitudes and ideals of the public it entertains? Do filmmakers care that although they put out more “R” rated movies than all other films combined, audiences overall do not care to see them? I do not wish to sound unsympathetic towards filmmakers who have the hard task of creating a movie they hope will bring in some revenue, but if we are to look at the numbers, it would seem that 58 percent of filmmakers in Hollywood would rather risk poverty than fall in line with family-friendly filmmaking . I guess they really are “starving artists.”

It makes one ask: why does most of Hollywood want to put so much controversial content before the public? Where are they coming up with their ideas for movies? While Powers et al. believe that “Although the new Hollywood elite caters to its audience, it also, by its own admission, seeks to lead it and holds liberal views in disproportionate numbers” (Powers et. al, 1996, p. 46). The directors and artists coming out of the 1960’s and 1970’s were in tune with their generation’s sentiments at the time, affecting the content and tones of their films. During the Vietnam War, newsreels and pictures were being seen in homes on televisions, recording the brutality and destruction of war. People were able to see dying and suffering firsthand. Many came back from the war changed forever because of their experiences. The innocence of much of society was taken away with this one event. Society throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century changed drastically as wars were fought at home and abroad. Immigration and integration introduced much of white America to other cultures, which brought with them different ideals and attitudes towards drinking, sex and violence. Like in *Charade* and *The Truth About Charlie*, Parisians are laxer concerning drinking, smoking and sex. Foreign directors see a huge market in America and weave their own culture into films, which may or may not relate to traditional American culture.

Another possible cultural element in filmmaking that I noticed while viewing these films is how profanity is depicted as more present among certain races. In both *The Nutty Professor* and *The Ladykillers* remakes, profanity and sexual jokes are in almost every scene. In *The Ladykillers*, the African-American male spews so much profanity, that it was hard for me to keep an accurate tally. Yes, there was profanity in the other films I reviewed, but it did not come close to the quantity contained in these two films. Is profanity a larger part of some cultures over others? Is profanity a type of comedic element? This observation could be used to theorize why more profanity is used in certain types of films over others, and why it appeals to certain cultures

over others. Another possibility is that profanity is a part of a stereotyped depiction of racial behavior. However, a more in depth study would need to be undertaken to draw an accurate conclusion about this topic.

### **Television Popularity**

As discussed in the Literature Review, the popularity of television caused box office numbers to dwindle, prompting filmmakers, like Kazan, the director of *Baby Doll*, to brainstorm ways to increase revenue, "...we are now obliged, as a matter of preservation, to put on the screen of Motion Picture Theaters only what they cannot and will never see on their screen at home... We've got to break our own taboos and strike out for increasingly unusual material. Either that or just quit and sign up with the TV guys" (Brook, 2001, p. 353). This quote reveals to us that the studios knew the fight they were in for. They recognized the growing popularity of the new medium of television and knew that their films had to have something people wanted to see. Human curiosity is an interesting thing. In the case of the racier plots and semi-nudity, Americans rushed to the theaters to see something they couldn't see at home. Is that why filmmakers today are adding more nudity and sex scenes to films? Unless a person subscribes to H.B.O. or Showtime, there is no possible way a person will see on T.V. what they can see in the theater.

Filmmakers know this, and take advantage of it; the racier the content, the more enticing it is to our human nature. However, after a long romance with sexual content in films, my research showed that Americans grew tired of it. They felt they had seen all there was to see and wanted something different. Even famed director Frank Capra commented on this happening in a 1972 *Saturday Evening Post* article stating, "...in the 60's and 70's pornography and brutality were the plagues that reduced weekly attendance from 60 to 20 million" (Capra, 1972, p. 22). It

is interesting that the same content that was increased in two decades to attract audiences, ended up backfiring. It seems that the movie industry tries to rotate content or at least make so many different kinds of movies available, that no one will grow tired of going to their local megaplex. In this study, profanity and violence had the largest areas of increase, so perhaps where sexual content was the draw during the 50's and 60's, these two types of content are what filmmakers are using as their draw in today's cinema.

I do not think anyone will ever be able to pinpoint the exact reason why controversial content has increased through the years in movies. They are so many different contributing factors that one reason would not be justifiable. The decline of American values and morals over the last century, though, has been proposed as a possible reason. An article in *Time* (1979) addressed "The Fascination of Decadence" as the country's moral decay was examined. British author, Malcolm Muggeridge commented on the decline of western culture: "What will make historians laugh at us is how we express our decadence in terms of freedom and humanism. Western society suffers from a largely unconscious collective death wish" (as cited in Morrow, 1979, p. 4). He likens western society to the "final days of the Roman Empire. Detailing the similar signs of decay and decline in our Western culture—the denial of truth, the erosion of standards, the elevation of personal pleasure as the highest good—he saw little hope for our contemporary world" (Zimmerman, 2006, p. 1).

Movies are reflecting this decline, even in the last decade the descent has been rapid. Our ratings system is not working anymore. Without a standardized ratings system, viewers are not aware of the specific type and amount of content in films. An "R" rated film from 10 years ago would most likely earn a "PG-13" nowadays. Is that saying our culture is becoming more lenient or is the MPAA? The breakdown of values and morals in this country, I believe, is a huge cause

for the breakdown in film content. And I also believe that the breakdown of these elements is even greater and faster in Hollywood. Is the material that Hollywood produces the cause for the rest of society's collapse, or is it just a reflection of where the rest of the country will be in 10 years? With the influence and power media and entertainment have over people, and the way Hollywood seems to be going, it won't be long before the rest of the country is following suit. Although this study only looked at a small sample size of films, the change in content was clear. It could be theorized that this sample represents the larger scope of films in general, and that a larger sample size would support that even further.

### **Future Considerations**

For this type of study, I would first recommend that a larger selection of films be reviewed. The more examples a person has to verify the claims set forth in this thesis concerning controversial content increasing from earlier movies to current movies, would provide more plausibility to the study. Secondly, I would suggest interviews with the producers and/or directors of these films in order to gather information pertaining to why they added such content into the remake of the film. This might provide better insight into the mindset of Hollywood. Instead of theorizing why this content is present, answers could be drawn directly from those responsible for the film's content. This would also help in finding out information pertaining to Hollywood's personal influence in film.

As discussed in the previous chapter, it would be interesting to conduct a study focused on profanity and sexuality, and how the choices relate to certain races or cultures. Do some races not find certain material as offensive as others? Why or why not? Also, concerning other countries and their cultures, should certain content be given the same rating in different cultures that view it differently? In Europe, they are much more open about sex, but very harsh on

violence in films. In America we are just the opposite. Why is this? Some propose a universal ratings code, but in light of these facts, would it actually work? A study researching the causes for how and why content is viewed differently in different countries would be interesting as well.

After researching why content has or has not increased over the years and the cause for it, filmmakers' own ideology and worldviews could be a possible answer to the question. A study looking at different screenwriters' and directors' own worldviews and then comparing them with their own films, would shed some light on why certain content is present in their films. As a Christian, I do not support alcohol abuse, profanity or violence. Therefore, if I were to make a film, that content would not be present. However, if a person's worldview or standards did support that type of content, it would make sense to see it show up in his or her films. Instead of looking at Hollywood and its morals as a whole, it would be beneficial to study the filmmakers and their own morals within that culture as a possible answer to why certain content continually shows up in certain filmmakers' work.

# Appendix A

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# Appendix B

## Original List

<u>Original Film</u>	<u>Remake</u>
<i>Psycho</i> (1960)	<i>Psycho</i> (1998)
<i>Ocean's Eleven</i> (1960)	<i>Ocean's Eleven</i> (2001)
<i>The Manchurian Candidate</i> (1962)	<i>The Manchurian Candidate</i> (2004)
<i>Mr. Deeds Goes to Town</i> (1936)	<i>Mr. Deeds</i> (2002)
<i>The Mummy</i> (1932)	<i>The Mummy</i> (1999)
<i>The Nutty Professor</i> (1963)	<i>The Nutty Professor</i> (1996)
<i>Dial M for Murder</i> (1954)	<i>A Perfect Murder</i> (1998)
<i>Sabrina</i> (1954)	<i>Sabrina</i> (1995)
<i>The Shop Around the Corner</i> (1940)	<i>You've Got Mail</i> (1998)
<i>Cheaper by the Dozen</i> (1950)	<i>Cheaper by the Dozen</i> (2003)
<i>Father of the Bride</i> (1950)	<i>Father of the Bride</i> (1991)
<i>The Ladykillers</i> (1955)	<i>The Ladykillers</i> (2004)
<i>Charade</i> (1963)	<i>The Truth About Charlie</i> (2002)
<i>War of the Worlds</i> (1953)	<i>War of the Worlds</i> (2005)
<i>12 Angry Men</i> (1957)	<i>12 Angry Men</i> (1997)
<i>Bedtime Story</i> (1964)	<i>Dirty Rotten Scoundrels</i> (1988)
<i>The Fly</i> (1958)	<i>The Fly</i> (1986)
<i>Guess Who's Coming to Dinner</i> (1967)	<i>Guess Who</i> (2005)
<i>Lolita</i> (1962)	<i>Lolita</i> (1996)
<i>Death Takes a Holiday</i> (1934)	<i>Meet Joe Black</i> (1998)

*Ocean's Eleven (1960)*

*Ocean's Eleven (2001)*

*The Bishop's Wife (1947)*

*The Preacher's Wife (1996)*

*Scarface (1932)*

*Scarface (1983)*

### **List Used for Study**

#### Original Film

#### Remake

*Psycho (1960)*

*Psycho (1998)*

*Ocean's Eleven (1960)*

*Ocean's Eleven (2001)*

*The Manchurian Candidate (1962)*

*The Manchurian Candidate (2004)*

*Mr. Deeds Goes to Town (1936)*

*Mr. Deeds (2002)*

*The Mummy (1932)*

*The Mummy (1999)*

*The Nutty Professor (1963)*

*The Nutty Professor (1996)*

*Dial M for Murder (1954)*

*A Perfect Murder (1998)*

*Sabrina (1954)*

*Sabrina (1995)*

*The Shop Around the Corner (1940)*

*You've Got Mail (1998)*

*Cheaper by the Dozen (1950)*

*Cheaper by the Dozen (2003)*

*Father of the Bride (1950)*

*Father of the Bride (1991)*

*The Ladykillers (1955)*

*The Ladykillers (2004)*

*Charade (1963)*

*The Truth About Charlie (2002)*

*War of the Worlds (1953)*

*War of the Worlds (2005)*

## Appendix C

### *Psycho (1960)*

Nudity: female character in bra and slip; female character changing – just in bra and slip; breast view during shower scene

Violence: two instances of male character hit over head with item

### *Psycho (1998)*

Nudity: male buttocks exposed; female character in bra and slip; female character changing – side view of breasts; female buttocks exposed; magazine with female breasts exposed on cover

Violence: male hit in face with gold club; male hit in head with frying pan; male hit in face

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of cigarette smoking and alcohol drinking

### *The Manchurian Candidate (1962)*

Violence: Fighting (4 sec. of hitting); strangling; shooting through forehead; fighting (38 sec. of punching, kicking and tossing); silenced pistol shot twice through heart; shooting two people through head; suicide with gun shot through head

Profanity: “hell” (3); “damn” (1)

Sexual content: making out (3 instances of 5 sec.)

Nudity: girls shown in only bras (2 instances)

Smoking/Alcohol: cigarette smoking and drunkenness in a war setting

### *The Manchurian Candidate (2004)*

Violence: torpedo shot into tank; gunfire between troops (28 sec.); machine gun shot at helicopter (6 sec.); suffocation of troop with saran wrap; generic war scenes; drilling into skull (drill going into skull unseen); drawings and sketches of people being killed; blood pouring from

person's forehead; cutting one's self to remove implant; war-themed video game; person shot in forehead; strangling; drowning of two people; shooting of two people

Language: "ass" (5); "shit" (5); "damn" (3); "fuck" (1)

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption

***Mr. Deeds Goes to Town (1936)***

Violence: punch in the face (2 instances); punch in stomach; slap in face

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption

***Mr. Deeds (2002)***

Violence: punch in the face (2 instances); person thrown into garbage cans; person hit over the head with garbage cans; person's face slammed into table; girl thrown into table; women kicked into table

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption including drunkenness

Profanity: "ass" (10); "shit" (15); "hell" (6); "damn" (4); "bitch" (1); middle finger (2)

Sexual content: "tap that"; "bonin' other guys"; "squeeze my girlfriend's big fake boobs"; "little miss slut-slut"; "dirty tramp"

***The Mummy (1932)***

Sexual content: "gay with the virgins"

Violence: spearing of slaves (spear going into body not shown)

***The Mummy (1999)***

Nudity: woman painted in body paint with buttocks exposed

Violence: stabbing; shadows of stabbing action; shadows of mistress stabbing herself; scarabs poured on man being buried alive; battle scene with shooting, stabbing and slicing (1 min. 55

sec.); hanging; shooting scene (5 sec.); man burning alive; shooting scene (8 sec.); fighting with punching and choking (5 sec.); shooting (9 sec.); battle scene with shooting, stabbing and slicing (30 sec.); two men burning alive; shadow of man being sucked alive; plowing through mob of people in car; shooting scene (4 sec.); slicing through people with machete; chopping man's arm off; people being thrown; holding man up by neck; stabbing in stomach

Profanity: "ass" (1); "damn" (7); "hell" (3); "sons of bitches" (1); "bastards" (2)

***The Nutty Professor (1963)***

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption

***The Nutty Professor (1996)***

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption

Profanity: "damn" (15); "ass" (33); "shit" (11); "bitch" (5); "hell" (5)

Sexual content: "King Kong with titties"; men's underwear ad with hamster poking through crotch; "scrotum"; "make me moist"; "Who's suckin' whose titties?"; "Last time he touched a breast, it was in a bucket of KFC"; aerobics class with pelvic thrusts and butt rounds; "dick" (7); "titties" (8); "jimmy"; license plate reading "PNS CAR"; "mother had an affair with Mr. Ed"; pelvic thrusts; open-mouth kiss; "having relations" (5); "pumpin in the shed"; "When I'm alone I like to have relations with myself"; "poppin' out"; "pop goes the weasel" (2); "thong made of licorice"; male character in bed with three girls in lingerie; video showing girls running in underwear; "keep those legs crossed"; "Reek havoc on Sherman's ass"; "Is that a test tube in my pocket or am I just happy to see you?"

***Dial M for Murder (1954)***

Violence: strangling; stabbing scissors into back

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption

***A Perfect Murder (1998)***

Violence: strangling, man stabbed in neck with meat thermometer; person stabbed in stomach; man shot three times; woman thrown across room; punch in face

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption

Profanity: “fuck” (8); “ass” (1); “hell” (4); “shit” (1); “damn” (2); “bastard” (1)

Sexual content: couple rolling around in bed – exposed bodies shoulders up (two instances); open-mouth kissing

***Sabrina (1954)***

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption

Profanity: “ass” (1)

Violence: punch in face

***Sabrina (1995)***

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of alcohol consumption

Profanity: “damn” (1); “hell” (1)

Violence: slap in face; punching in face

***The Shop Around the Corner (1940)***

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of cigarette smoking

Violence: man thrown across floor

***You’ve Got Mail (1998)***

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of alcohol consumption

Profanity: “damn” (2); “hell” (3); “bastard” (1); “ass” (1); “bitch” (1)

Sexual content: “cyber sex” (2); “sex” (1); feeling woman’s leg; open-mouth kissing; “having my eggs harvested”

***Cheaper by the Dozen (1950)***

No controversial content

***Cheaper by the Dozen (2003)***

Violence: fighting between kids including hitting and wrestling

Sexual content: couple lying under blanket while narration explains they just had sex; “sleep together”; “couldn’t keep her off me”; making out (7 sec.)

***Father of the Bride (1950)***

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption

***Father of the Bride (1991)***

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of alcohol consumption

Sexual content: kissing on neck; feeling up leg; “fasten your condom”; “that wasn’t all you couldn’t keep off me”; “all the places we did it”

***The Ladykillers (1955)***

Smoking/Alcohol: instance of cigarette smoking

Violence: punch in face; gun shot at person; five gunshots that did not hit anyone

***The Ladykillers (2004)***

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption

Violence: person’s head slammed on counter; face slapped; strangling; person shot in face; wrestling over gun

Profanity: “fuck” (86); “shit” (18); “ass” (28); “damn” (22); “bitch” (5); “bastard” (1); “hell” (5)

Sexual content: “pussy”; “prick”; “whore”

***Charade (1963)***

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of alcohol consumption



Violence: man thrown from train; fighting over gun including kicking and punching; gun shots

Profanity: “ass” (1)

***The Truth About Charlie (2002)***

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption

Violence: man thrown across floor; flashback scene of enemy fire on soldiers

Profanity: “shit” (2)

Nudity: side view of woman’s breasts; blurry frontal nudity of woman through shower curtain;  
brief scene with stripper

***War of the Worlds (1953)***

Smoking/Alcohol: instances of cigarette smoking

Violence: punching; man thrown through window; fighting including punching

***War of the Worlds (2005)***

Violence: laser ray killing people; punching; man hit over head with a lead pipe; man hit over  
head with a shovel

Profanity: “damn” (4); “shit” (7); “ass” (1); “hell” (4)

Sexual content: “dick”; “balls”

# Appendix D

## **The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930 (Hays Code)**

If motion pictures present stories that will affect lives for the better, they can become the most powerful force for the improvement of mankind

A Code to Govern the Making of Talking, Synchronized and Silent Motion Pictures.

Formulated and formally adopted by The Association of Motion Picture Producers, Inc. and The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc. in March 1930.

Motion picture producers recognize the high trust and confidence which have been placed in them by the people of the world and which have made motion pictures a universal form of entertainment.

They recognize their responsibility to the public because of this trust and because entertainment and art are important influences in the life of a nation.

Hence, though regarding motion pictures primarily as entertainment without any explicit purpose of teaching or propaganda, they know that the motion picture within its own field of entertainment may be directly responsible for spiritual or moral progress, for higher types of social life, and for much correct thinking.

During the rapid transition from silent to talking pictures they have realized the necessity and the opportunity of subscribing to a Code to govern the production of talking pictures and of re-acknowledging this responsibility.

On their part, they ask from the public and from public leaders a sympathetic understanding of their purposes and problems and a spirit of cooperation that will allow them the freedom and opportunity necessary to bring the motion picture to a still higher level of wholesome entertainment for all the people.

## **General Principles**

1. No picture shall be produced that will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin.
2. Correct standards of life, subject only to the requirements of drama and entertainment, shall be presented.
3. Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.

## **Particular Applications**

### **I. Crimes Against the Law**

These shall never be presented in such a way as to throw sympathy with the crime as against law and justice or to inspire others with a desire for imitation.

1. Murder
  - a. The technique of murder must be presented in a way that will not inspire imitation.
  - b. Brutal killings are not to be presented in detail.
  - c. Revenge in modern times shall not be justified.
2. Methods of Crime should not be explicitly presented.
  - a. Theft, robbery, safe-cracking, and dynamiting of trains, mines, buildings, etc., should not be detailed in method.

- b. Arson must subject to the same safeguards.
  - c. The use of firearms should be restricted to the essentials.
  - d. Methods of smuggling should not be presented.
3. Illegal drug traffic must never be presented.
  4. The use of liquor in American life, when not required by the plot or for proper characterization, will not be shown.

## **II. Sex**

The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing.

1. Adultery, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated, or justified, or presented attractively.
2. Scenes of Passion
  - a. They should not be introduced when not essential to the plot.
  - b. Excessive and lustful kissing, lustful embraces, suggestive postures and gestures, are not to be shown.
  - c. In general passion should so be treated that these scenes do not stimulate the lower and baser element.

### 3. Seduction or Rape

- a. They should never be more than suggested, and only when essential for the plot, and even then never shown by explicit method.
- b. They are never the proper subject for comedy.

4. Sex perversion or any inference to it is forbidden.

5. White slavery shall not be treated.

6. Miscegenation (sex relationships between the white and black races) is forbidden.

7. Sex hygiene and venereal diseases are not subjects for motion pictures.

8. Scenes of actual child birth, in fact or in silhouette, are never to be presented.

9. Children's sex organs are never to be exposed.

### **III. Vulgarity**

The treatment of low, disgusting, unpleasant, though not necessarily evil, subjects should always be subject to the dictates of good taste and a regard for the sensibilities of the audience.

### **IV. Obscenity**

Obscenity in word, gesture, reference, song, joke, or by suggestion (even when likely to be understood only by part of the audience) is forbidden.

**V. Profanity**

Pointed profanity (this includes the words, God, Lord, Jesus, Christ - unless used reverently - Hell, S.O.B., damn, Gawd), or every other profane or vulgar expression however used, is forbidden.

**VI. Costume**

1. Complete nudity is never permitted. This includes nudity in fact or in silhouette, or any lecherous or licentious notice thereof by other characters in the picture.
2. Undressing scenes should be avoided, and never used save where essential to the plot.
3. Indecent or undue exposure is forbidden.
4. Dancing or costumes intended to permit undue exposure or indecent movements in the dance are forbidden.

**VII. Dances**

1. Dances suggesting or representing sexual actions or indecent passions are forbidden.
2. Dances which emphasize indecent movements are to be regarded as obscene.

**VIII. Religion**

1. No film or episode may throw ridicule on any religious faith.
2. Ministers of religion in their character as ministers of religion should not be used as comic

characters or as villains.

3. Ceremonies of any definite religion should be carefully and respectfully handled.

### **IX. Locations**

The treatment of bedrooms must be governed by good taste and delicacy.

### **X. National Feelings**

1. The use of the Flag shall be consistently respectful.

2. The history, institutions, prominent people and citizenry of other nations shall be represented fairly.

### **XI. Titles**

Salacious, indecent, or obscene titles shall not be used.

### **XII. Repellent Subjects**

The following subjects must be treated within the careful limits of good taste: 1. Actual hangings or electrocutions as legal punishments for crime. 2. Third degree methods. 3. Brutality and possible gruesomeness. 4. Branding of people or animals. 5. Apparent cruelty to children or animals. 6. The sale of women, or a woman selling her virtue. 7. Surgical operations.

### **Reasons Supporting the Preamble of the Code**

**I. Theatrical motion pictures, that is, pictures intended for the theatre as distinct from pictures intended for churches, schools, lecture halls, educational movements, social reform movements, etc., are primarily to be regarded as ENTERTAINMENT.**

Mankind has always recognized the importance of entertainment and its value in rebuilding the bodies and souls of human beings.

But it has always recognized that entertainment can be a character either HELPFUL or HARMFUL to the human race, and in consequence has clearly distinguished between:

- a. Entertainment which tends to improve the race, or at least to re-create and rebuild human beings exhausted with the realities of life; and
- b. Entertainment which tends to degrade human beings, or to lower their standards of life and living.

Hence the MORAL IMPORTANCE of entertainment is something which has been universally recognized. It enters intimately into the lives of men and women and affects them closely; it occupies their minds and affections during leisure hours; and ultimately touches the whole of their lives. A man may be judged by his standard of entertainment as easily as by the standard of his work.

So correct entertainment raises the whole standard of a nation.

Wrong entertainment lowers the whole living conditions and moral ideals of a race.

Note, for example, the healthy reactions to healthful sports, like baseball, golf; the unhealthy



reactions to sports like cockfighting, bullfighting, bear baiting, etc.

Note, too, the effect on ancient nations of gladiatorial combats, the obscene plays of Roman times, etc.

## **II. Motion pictures are very important as ART.**

Though a new art, possibly a combination art, it has the same object as the other arts, the presentation of human thought, emotion, and experience, in terms of an appeal to the soul through the senses.

Here, as in entertainment,

Art enters intimately into the lives of human beings.

Art can be morally good, lifting men to higher levels. This has been done through good music, great painting, authentic fiction, poetry, drama.

Art can be morally evil in its effects. This is the case clearly enough with unclean art, indecent books, suggestive drama. The effect on the lives of men and women are obvious.

Note: It has often been argued that art itself is unmoral, neither good nor bad. This is true of the THING which is music, painting, poetry, etc. But the THING is the PRODUCT of some person's mind, and the intention of that mind was either good or bad morally when it produced the thing. Besides, the thing has its EFFECT upon those who come into contact with it. In both these ways, that is, as a product of a mind and as the cause of definite effects, it has a deep moral significance and unmistakable moral quality.

Hence: The motion pictures, which are the most popular of modern arts for the masses, have their moral quality from the intention of the minds which produce them and from their effects on the moral lives and reactions of their audiences. This gives them a most important morality.

1. They reproduce the morality of the men who use the pictures as a medium for the expression of their ideas and ideals.

2. They affect the moral standards of those who, through the screen, take in these ideas and ideals.

In the case of motion pictures, the effect may be particularly emphasized because no art has so quick and so widespread an appeal to the masses. It has become in an incredibly short period the art of the multitudes.

**III. The motion picture, because of its importance as entertainment and because of the trust placed in it by the peoples of the world, has special MORAL OBLIGATIONS:**

A. Most arts appeal to the mature. This art appeals at once to every class, mature, immature, developed, undeveloped, law abiding, criminal. Music has its grades for different classes; so has literature and drama. This art of the motion picture, combining as it does the two fundamental appeals of looking at a picture and listening to a story, at once reaches every class of society.

B. By reason of the mobility of film and the ease of picture distribution, and because the possibility of duplicating positives in large quantities, this art reaches places unpenetrated by other forms of art.

C. Because of these two facts, it is difficult to produce films intended for only certain classes of people. The exhibitors' theatres are built for the masses, for the cultivated and the rude, the mature and the immature, the self-respecting and the criminal. Films, unlike books and music, can with difficulty be confined to certain selected groups.

D. The latitude given to film material cannot, in consequence, be as wide as the latitude given to book material. In addition:

a. A book describes; a film vividly presents. One presents on a cold page; the other by apparently living people.

b. A book reaches the mind through words merely; a film reaches the eyes and ears through the reproduction of actual events.

c. The reaction of a reader to a book depends largely on the keenness of the reader's imagination; the reaction to a film depends on the vividness of presentation.

Hence many things which might be described or suggested in a book could not possibly be presented in a film.

E. This is also true when comparing the film with the newspaper.

a. Newspapers present by description, films by actual presentation.

b. Newspapers are after the fact and present things as having taken place; the film gives the events in the process of enactment and with apparent reality of life.

F. Everything possible in a play is not possible in a film:

a. Because of the larger audience of the film, and its consequential mixed character.

Psychologically, the larger the audience, the lower the moral mass resistance to suggestion.

b. Because through light, enlargement of character, presentation, scenic emphasis, etc., the screen story is brought closer to the audience than the play.

c. The enthusiasm for and interest in the film actors and actresses, developed beyond anything of the sort in history, makes the audience largely sympathetic toward the characters they portray and the stories in which they figure. Hence the audience is more ready to confuse actor and actress and the characters they portray, and it is most receptive of the emotions and ideals presented by the favorite stars.

G. Small communities, remote from sophistication and from the hardening process which often takes place in the ethical and moral standards of larger cities, are easily and readily reached by any sort of film.

H. The grandeur of mass settings, large action, spectacular features, etc., affects and arouses more intensely the emotional side of the audience.

In general, the mobility, popularity, accessibility, emotional appeal, vividness, straightforward presentation of fact in the film make for more intimate contact with a larger audience and for greater emotional appeal.

Hence the larger moral responsibilities of the motion pictures.

## Reasons Underlying the General Principles

### **I. No picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it.**

Hence the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrong-doing, evil or sin.

This is done:

1. When evil is made to appear attractive and alluring, and good is made to appear unattractive.
2. When the sympathy of the audience is thrown on the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil, sin. The same is true of a film that would throw sympathy against goodness, honor, innocence, purity or honesty.

Note: Sympathy with a person who sins is not the same as sympathy with the sin or crime of which he is guilty. We may feel sorry for the plight of the murderer or even understand the circumstances which led him to his crime: we may not feel sympathy with the wrong which he has done. The presentation of evil is often essential for art or fiction or drama. This in itself is not wrong provided:

- a. That evil is not presented alluringly. Even if later in the film the evil is condemned or punished, it must not be allowed to appear so attractive that the audience's emotions are drawn to desire or approve so strongly that later the condemnation is forgotten and only the apparent joy of sin is remembered.
- b. That throughout, the audience feels sure that evil is wrong and good is right.

## **II. Correct standards of life shall, as far as possible, be presented.**

A wide knowledge of life and of living is made possible through the film. When right standards are consistently presented, the motion picture exercises the most powerful influences. It builds character, develops right ideals, inculcates correct principles, and all this in attractive story form.

If motion pictures consistently hold up for admiration high types of characters and present stories that will affect lives for the better, they can become the most powerful force for the improvement of mankind.

## **III. Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.**

By natural law is understood the law which is written in the hearts of all mankind, the greater underlying principles of right and justice dictated by conscience.

By human law is understood the law written by civilized nations.

1. The presentation of crimes against the law is often necessary for the carrying out of the plot.

But the presentation must not throw sympathy with the crime as against the law nor with the criminal as against those who punish him.

2. The courts of the land should not be presented as unjust. This does not mean that a single court may not be presented as unjust, much less that a single court official must not be presented this way. But the court system of the country must not suffer as a result of this presentation.

### **Reasons Underlying the Particular Applications**

**I. Sin and evil enter into the story of human beings and hence in themselves are valid dramatic material.**

**II. In the use of this material, it must be distinguished between sin which repels by its very nature, and sins which often attract.**

a. In the first class come murder, most theft, many legal crimes, lying, hypocrisy, cruelty, etc.

b. In the second class come sex sins, sins and crimes of apparent heroism, such as banditry, daring thefts, leadership in evil, organized crime, revenge, etc.

The first class needs less care in treatment, as sins and crimes of this class are naturally unattractive. The audience instinctively condemns all such and is repelled.

Hence the important objective must be to avoid the hardening of the audience, especially of those who are young and impressionable, to the thought and fact of crime. People can become accustomed even to murder, cruelty, brutality, and repellent crimes, if these are too frequently repeated.

The second class needs great care in handling, as the response of human nature to their appeal is obvious. This is treated more fully below.

**III. A careful distinction can be made between films intended for general distribution, and films intended for use in theatres restricted to a limited audience.** Themes and plots quite appropriate for the latter would be altogether out of place and dangerous in the former.

Note: The practice of using a general theatre and limiting its patronage to "Adults Only" is not

completely satisfactory and is only partially effective.

However, maturer minds may easily understand and accept without harm subject matter in plots which do younger people positive harm.

Hence: If there should be created a special type of theatre, catering exclusively to an adult audience, for plays of this character (plays with problem themes, difficult discussions and maturer treatment) it would seem to afford an outlet, which does not now exist, for pictures unsuitable for general distribution but permissible for exhibitions to a restricted audience.

### **I. Crimes Against the Law**

The treatment of crimes against the law must not:

1. Teach methods of crime.
2. Inspire potential criminals with a desire for imitation.
3. Make criminals seem heroic and justified.

Revenge in modern times shall not be justified. In lands and ages of less developed civilization and moral principles, revenge may sometimes be presented. This would be the case especially in places where no law exists to cover the crime because of which revenge is committed.

Because of its evil consequences, the drug traffic should not be presented in any form. The existence of the trade should not be brought to the attention of audiences.

The use of liquor should never be excessively presented. In scenes from American life, the necessities of plot and proper characterization alone justify its use. And in this case, it should be shown with moderation.



## **II. Sex**

Out of a regard for the sanctity of marriage and the home, the triangle, that is, the love of a third party for one already married, needs careful handling. The treatment should not throw sympathy against marriage as an institution.

Scenes of passion must be treated with an honest acknowledgement of human nature and its normal reactions. Many scenes cannot be presented without arousing dangerous emotions on the part of the immature, the young or the criminal classes.

Even within the limits of pure love, certain facts have been universally regarded by lawmakers as outside the limits of safe presentation.

In the case of impure love, the love which society has always regarded as wrong and which has been banned by divine law, the following are important:

1. Impure love must not be presented as attractive and beautiful.
2. It must not be the subject of comedy or farce, or treated as material for laughter.
3. It must not be presented in such a way to arouse passion or morbid curiosity on the part of the audience.
4. It must not be made to seem right and permissible.
5. In general, it must not be detailed in method and manner.

**III. Vulgarity; IV. Obscenity; V. Profanity;** hardly need further explanation than is contained

in the Code.

## **VI. Costume**

General Principles:

1. The effect of nudity or semi-nudity upon the normal man or woman, and much more upon the young and upon immature persons, has been honestly recognized by all lawmakers and moralists.
2. Hence the fact that the nude or semi-nude body may be beautiful does not make its use in the films moral. For, in addition to its beauty, the effect of the nude or semi-nude body on the normal individual must be taken into consideration.
3. Nudity or semi-nudity used simply to put a "punch" into a picture comes under the head of immoral actions. It is immoral in its effect on the average audience.
4. Nudity can never be permitted as being necessary for the plot. Semi-nudity must not result in undue or indecent exposures.
5. Transparent or translucent materials and silhouette are frequently more suggestive than actual exposure.

## **VII. Dances**

Dancing in general is recognized as an art and as a beautiful form of expressing human emotions.

But dances which suggest or represent sexual actions, whether performed solo or with two or

more; dances intended to excite the emotional reaction of an audience; dances with movement of the breasts, excessive body movements while the feet are stationary, violate decency and are wrong.

### **VIII. Religion**

The reason why ministers of religion may not be comic characters or villains is simply because the attitude taken toward them may easily become the attitude taken toward religion in general. Religion is lowered in the minds of the audience because of the lowering of the audience's respect for a minister.

### **IX. Locations**

Certain places are so closely and thoroughly associated with sexual life or with sexual sin that their use must be carefully limited.

### **X. National Feelings**

The just rights, history, and feelings of any nation are entitled to most careful consideration and respectful treatment.

### **XI. Titles**

As the title of a picture is the brand on that particular type of goods, it must conform to the ethical practices of all such honest business.

### **XII. Repellent Subjects**

Such subjects are occasionally necessary for the plot. Their treatment must never offend good taste nor injure the sensibilities of an audience.