

From Script to Film: The Fading Voice of the Screenwriter

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Abstract : On January 15th 2015, Peter Bart, editor in chief of Variety Magazine, published an article in the aforementioned magazine posing the following question "Are screenwriters becoming obsolete in Hollywood?" Is Hollywood losing its interest in well plotted, well written scripts crafted by professionals? That screenwriters have been undervalued, forgotten and left behind since the beginning of film, is a well-known fact, but are they now at the brink of extinction? If fiction films are about people, stories, so, simply put, all about the script, what does it mean to say that the screenwriter is becoming obsolete? What will be the consequences of the possible death of the screenwriter for the cinema world? All of these questions lead us to an ultimate one: What is the true importance of a screenwriter? What can a screenwriter do that a director, for instance, can't? How should a script be written and read in order not to become obsolete? And what about those countries, like Portugal, for example, in which the figure of the screenwriter is yet to be heard and known? How can screenwriters find their voice in a world driven by the tyrannical voice of the Director? In a demanding cinema world where the Director is considered the author of a film, it's important to know where we can find the voice of the screenwriter, the true language of the screenplay and the importance this voice and specific language might have for the future of story telling and of film. In a paper that admittedly poses more questions than answers, I will try to unveil the importance a screenplay might have in Hollywood, in Portugal and in the cinema and communication world in general.

Keywords : cinema, communication, director, language, screenplay, screenwriting, story

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