

stood at the door with tears streaming down her cheeks. I wanted to grab her in my arms and hug her, but instead I swallowed the dry lump in my throat, smiled and started splashing down the path. As soon

as we heard the door close, Shorty spoke. "Ain't it hell" he said, "we kill some, we love some." "Yeah" the squad leader answered, "God never meant it this way."

Hollywoodism

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(The reader is asked to imagine himself living in another part of the world in the year 9,948 A. D. reading a book about the history of civilization. Please bear also in mind that this is not meant in all respects

DUE to recent excavations of our archeologists in the area which was known to the Americans as Southern California, we have every reason to believe that one city in this area was quite similar in materialistic splendor to the city of Babylon, which just a few thousand years before flourished in Asia Minor. Our excavators agree that this city, called Hollywood, was the center of the curious craft of motion picture making. This is a significant fact since the motion picture, rather than any other phase in American life, epitomizes the shallowness to which American culture had degenerated by the end of the second millennium A. D.

It seems that these films were made in Hollywood and then distributed to all parts of the country so that not one American was too distant from a theatre or temple to see his favorite performers reflected on a screen. Perhaps for many Americans, this devotion to motion pictures was a substitute for religious fervor. A poll taken shortly before the terrible catastrophe befell the North Americans shows that about one-half of the population were members of some

to be a definition of the American motion picture as we know it, but rather a definition which could be inferred from a few archeological facts which the people living on earth 8,000 years hence might uncover.)

branch of the Christian belief, but only a small portion of that one-half actively participated in their religion. That the motion pictures were somewhat of a substitute for religious devotion is shown by the spectators who, upon seeing a favorite on the screen, would sometimes scream or swoon. The sight of a movie celebrity in person caused an even increased furor. On more than one occasion actors by the names of Sinatra and Johnson were thoroughly mauled due to the ecstatic outbursts of movie fans who had the great honor of seeing in person these revered individuals. As a result most dignitaries travelled incognito.

The leaders of this cult of Hollywoodists led lives not entirely unlike that of the Greek gods and goddesses. Certainly, they were equally as promiscuous. A celebrity seldom lived more than a year or two with the same mate. They made marriage vows, the same as did the rest of the Americans, but it seems that these vows could be invalidated at the slightest provocation. These celebrities were given by their patrons fabulous riches. In the year 1947, for instance, seven out of the ten largest salaries

in America went to members of the motion picture hierarchy. These high wages or donations by the American people were usually spent on such luxurious, twentieth century items as extraordinary wardrobes, yachts, foreign automobiles and unusual dwellings.

The citizens of America paid tribute to the motion picture celebrities, and the celebrities in turn paid tribute to idols. Evelyn Waugh, a contemporary but not a member of the Hollywoodists, wrote in the American magazine *Life*¹ that the celebrities worshipped a small, bronze, sexless idol called Oscar. These idols were not indiscriminately given to the celebrities. Each year the entire cult would gather, and the most worthy among them would be given the idols, the possession of which seemed to mark the apex of success.

One practice of the Hollywoodists still puzzles our anthropologists. On the main thoroughfare in Hollywood the dignitaries of this cult made impressions of their feet in the concrete entrance to one of the temples. The significance of this procedure is especially difficult to discern since it has no counterpart in any of the other civilizations of mankind.

It is further noteworthy that the drama presented to the Americans in these motion pictures was not of high quality. One would think that histrionic masterpieces would result from the devotion and money that the Americans gave to the motion picture craft. But the opposite was true. Huge sums were spent on fine clothes, exquisite settings and expensive cameras, but little effort was made to inject intellectual beauty

into the plots. Our literary critics tell us that the American motion picture could not compare with the Greek plays which were written 2500 years before the Americans produced their motion pictures. Evidently the Americans could not bear a tragedy because all of their movies had happy endings. Yet tragedies often evoke the most intellectual satisfaction. Greek works of the late period B. C. and the opera written during the early period A. D. made excellent use of tragedy.

Toward the end of this civilization many films were made with football players performing the acting. It was customary for the Americans each year to select an All-American football team, and from this team one or two individuals would be selected to make a motion picture. Why these football players were supposed to be adept at acting is not quite clear to modern observers.

Another feature of the American motion picture is that evil was always apprehended. This seems rather unnatural since there was such emphasis placed on crime pictures. One would think that a person would not commit a crime if he were certain to be punished.

Some historians have ventured the opinion that the motion picture was one of the prevalent influences which contributed to the collapse of the American civilization. Although not proven, this theory cannot with certainty be denied. Perhaps the motion picture at times acted as a cause to the collapse of America and at other times was merely an effect of the decay which had begun before the motion picture was in existence.

1. Evelyn Waugh, *Life*, September 29, 1947.