

The unnecessary glorification of the tortured artist

NAMREEN SHAIYAZ

For artists, their art is a conduit for them to express their emotions. Many artists tap into their baser, more honest side to produce their work.

However, most people seem to believe that art which comes from darkness is the only valid kind, and gives it more precedence over art that is birthed from more positive emotions, thinking such work to be shallow. To explain this phenomenon, it is important to think of why people actually consume art.

For many, consuming art can feel comforting. Not everyone is gifted with the ability to articulate their feelings in the way they want to, so they turn to artists to feel seen and understood.

However, this connection does not happen with happier art. Many people see light-hearted creations or uplifting work as not having any profound takeaways or being anything notable. This is why tragic and so-called "artistic" works are the ones that are usually critically acclaimed, and are recognised more as reflected in reviews and award shows.

The problem that comes from this is that it pushes the idea that artists must



suffer for their creations to be good. Many young artists feel the pressure to only create art about their darker side, and neglect the part of them that might want to produce something that isn't very intense. Making art on a heavy topic usually requires one to go into a miserable state of mind and this puts a strain on one's mental health.

For a lot of people, creating art about their trauma can help them alleviate their pain and help cope with it. The painter John William Godward was known for his paintings of beautiful women drenched in opulence, which contrasts sharply with the unhappy and traumatic life he lived. On the other hand, artists like Caravaggio are lauded for their violently grotesque

works which are supposed to reflect psychological realism. Both these artists were tortured souls, but one is remembered for the aesthetic value of his art, and the other for the meaning behind his.

It might also just be a matter of choice, or a change in mindset. K-pop group BTS made their start by writing music which was more angsty and rebellious. Not surprising, considering that they debuted as teenagers. As they have grown older, their music has become less painful and aggressive, and is now more about self-love and learning to accept themselves. Just because they are no longer singing about being sad does not mean they have downgraded.

At the end of the day, art is simply a representation of what an artist chooses to share with the world. One who spreads joy is not lesser than the one sharing their hardships. Both are valid in their own rights, and should be given the same level of appreciation.

Namreen has been stuck in the void for too long. Send help at namreen.shaiyaz@gmail.com

OPINION

I can't keep up with the MCU. Here's why.

SABIL SADAT ZAHIR

The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) is probably the biggest pop culture franchise in the world. Despite it not stopping to churn out movies anytime soon, it is safe to say that the MCU has already run its course.

With *Avengers: Endgame* (2019), they wrapped up the storyline they have been building since its start, and key players in the universe such as *Iron Man* and *Captain America* completed their respective character arcs. It is evident that continuing the franchise now after its climax is only bringing up its inherent flaws.

The biggest strength of the MCU is perhaps also its biggest problem, and that is the shared universe its movies occupy. Essentially, you already have to be a pre-existing fan invested in the world. A new viewer interested in watching *Doctor Strange 2* would have to not only watch the first *Doctor Strange* film, but also *WandaVision* and *Spider-Man: No Way Home* to understand what's happening. In the initial phases, this was easier to follow, but at this point the MCU has progressed so far, that new viewers will miss out on the appeal of interconnectivity.

The newer movies and Disney+ shows seem more focused on fan service and advertising the next MCU project. Shows like *WandaVision* and *Loki* focused more on setting up the next big crossovers, with the latter being riddled with plot holes which most fans overlooked. If you're looking for a standalone movie to enjoy for the merit of the singular storyline, it cannot be found in an individual MCU project in recent memory.

Another inherent problem with the shared universe strategy is that these projects need to conform to the same tone or format. The first act of *Shang-Chi* seemed

like a breath of fresh air and the start to a great martial arts film. By the third act, they just went with a full epic CGI battle like every other Marvel movie. Some of these projects could've benefited from having completely different tones.

The MCU has always been more of a Cliffsnotes version of the source material. For instance, the Hawkeye series took elements of an acclaimed comics run and essentially presented a rather bland and toned-down version of that storyline. Granted, accuracy does not matter when it comes to making a great adaptation, but often with MCU, you are getting a lesser version of the same thing.

I am not trying to echo Martin Scorsese here, nor am I hating on something just because it is popular. The famous Hydra catchphrase "Cut off one head and two more shall take its place" has become applicable for the MCU now. There are so many branching projects that at one point it will become one too many to follow.

For superhero films and shows to be better, there needs to be a stronger focus on standalone stories rather than world building. It is high time that Marvel ended the franchise or let it evolve into something else.

Sabil spends most of his time making memes and trying to stay as hopeful as possible. You can contact him at sabil.sadat616@gmail.com

