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Forcing Inclusivity is Unnecessary

Some people want to increase the number of minorities in movies by creating laws that would force filmmakers to include marginalised people in their films. Focing inclusivity in this way is not necessary, specifically when it comes to the film.

If inclusivity were to be forced through law, it would restrict the artistic freedom of the people who make films. Writers and directors would not be able to tell the stories they want with the characters they want. This leads to stories made without a heart just to fill a quota instead of what the filmmaker wants, which does not lead to the highest quality films.

This law also would go against the first amendment. Free speech would be undermined for the sake of seeing more diversity on screen. This is not a worthy trade, as the foundations of our country would be violated. People have the right to say what they want, which is extended to what films they want to make.

This also would affect who gets what job in the film industry by saying what kind of person needs to be hired. If a quota were made that we need a certain amount of people of one race or gender, many may lose their job.

Over time the culture is evolving to be more inclusive as audiences get more and more used to seeing minorities on the silver screen. For example, according to four annual GLAAD RISD studies, the amount of lgbt people being included in the top 100 grossing films has grown from 14% to 18% from 2014 to 2017 (GLAAD 2013, GLAAD 2014, GLAAD 2015, GLAAD 2016, GLAAD 2017). That is a 4% change in three years, and if we keep seeing this growth as our culture shifts it will not be long until lgbt characters are not as niche.

This study was also only the top 100 best earning films from the largest studios, which is not necessarily the movies with the most money or heart put into them, but instead what is the most popular. The study also accounted for 47 “arthouse” films from major studios, of which 17% were inclusive to lgbt people. Although this is down from 21% the year before, at least it is up from their original 11%. This number fluctuates a little more because of the smaller sample size, but generally it is going up.

When it comes to racial diversity, University of Annenberg did a study over the top 100 grossing films of 2014 and found that 18% of films did not have speaking Black characters, but that means that 82% did (SMITH 8). This is pretty good representation, considering that 14% of the U.S. is of African American descent (U.S. Census).

Even with the more worrying statistic of 51% of the movies studied not having any Asian characters in them, 49% of them did. If someone were to randomly walk into a movie in 2014, they would have a near fifty percent chance of seeing an Asian character, which is pretty good considering that, according to the United States census in 2010, Asians make up 5.6% of the total United States population, although this is quickly on the rise (U.S. Census).

Some people say that if there are not laws to force inclusivity, minorities will be silenced. If we make laws to force inclusivity, we will silence majorities. If, for example, the amount or white people in movies was limited, many filmmakers would not be able to tell the stories they want to with the characters they want. The freedom of artists should be put above showing characters that are minorities. That is not the kind of representation we want to see. Instead, we should encourage them to make films about marginalised people.

Having these laws in place would not foster creative ways to talk about the struggles of minorities, it would instead lead to just having characters to fill a quota. More token characters would be created just to get around this law, not actually with well written characters. Instead, let artists create what they want as opposed to what others think is better.

If we were to force women into fifty percent of the roles in movies from the worrying 29% it is now, it would not solve the problems we are having (SMITH 2). Instead we would end up forcing women into roles that were not made for them and ruining some movies. Instead, an effort should be made to demand more female characters instead of just forcing women into random roles. You cannot force inclusivity and expect good results.

Even if we were to do something seemingly simple as to average out the amount of women writers in film from the worrying 29% of writers, that would leave 21% of the current writers out of work. This is not what should be done, a way should be found to bring more writers in without just kicking many of them out.

In conclusion, we do not need to force inclusivity because it would restrict freedom of speech, control the job market, and generally is not necessary because of how the trends in film are changing to generally be more inclusive of minorities and women. Some may say it will silence minorities, but forcing inclusivity silences majorities while not addressing the real problems. Forcing inclusivity does not end well, and it should be avoided.

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