

MIT Student

Film Notes

The Crowd (1928) King Vidor

Setting

- New York (on location)
 - The city is constricting and limiting but people go in thinking they have futures of greatness
 - On the day John Simms is born his father said “A little man the words is going to here from”
 - The film emphasizes his “Little Man” ness through a number of different shots, and comparisons with the scale of the city.
 - Simms keeps dreaming nonetheless, his creativity doesn’t ever get hampered despite the conformity that comes from working in the “office”
 - The floor of the firm looks very much like a school room, the manager like a teacher
 - We see the “choreography” of a city/ tight spaces disrupted a number of time
 - When the Simms are fighting and bumping into their furniture and each other while nothing works
 - When the truck hits the daughter
 - But we also see it functioning when people are conforming
 - Men picking up their dates through the revolving
 - The presence of the crowd
 - With death (of Daddy Simms and Daughter Simms)
 - “will cry for only a day”
 - “we don’t know how big the crowd is until we get out of step with it”
 - The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance
 - Birdman actually deals with many of the same themes in the same city
 - The individual trying to have meaning vs the crowd
 - You can stand out by being a clown, but will it mean anything?

Questions

- Do people move to cities because they expect more opportunity or fame?
- *The Crowd* does not give a very optimistic portrayal of dreamers, all the “successful” people are uncreative or conformers.
- Does the film suggest that success can be simply being part of the crowd?

5 Adjectives

- Realistic
- Slice-of-Life
- Struggling
- Optimistic

A limerick

The Little Man hadn't even a name

Nor any reason to be not the same

But his father was already so proud.

 Though he never stood out

 Nor figured it out

 His family remained by his side

So in the end it's no shame

To have earned little fame

You'll always be one in the crowd

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