

Victor Fowler Calzada, the Head of Publications of the Cuban International School of Film and Television asked me to respond to a thesis for [Miradas](#), their electronic magazine. Their next issue will be focused on the impact of new technologies on recent audiovisual creations. This is what I wrote:

What stroke me today, reading the New York Times online (through the LBO-talk list), was a remark about the 2006 Oscars nominations, by [Mahnola Dargis](#):

"These days big studio movies do not, as a rule, excite the intellect or stir the soul: that's what specialty titles like "Brokeback Mountain" are for. In the last few decades, the American movie industry has become increasingly split between high-concept spectacles engineered to attract as many viewers as possible (think flypaper) and niche products pitched to specific audiences. In this climate, films released through a studio specialty unit, like "Capote" and "Good Night, and Good Luck," are just one niche among many, like horror or teen flicks. Their principal value doesn't come from ticket sales, but from the prestige and awards they confer on a parent company. In Hollywood, as a friend recently quipped, 'Quality is now a genre.'"

That's film in the age of the Internet. 'Quality is a genre' can be said of all media, old or new, digital or analogue. Computers will help you keep costs low, distribute your content for next to nothing, and do amazing special effects. But quality is another matter all together. It's a niche, not a value. Goodbye Kant. Unlike what most people believe, quality is not a subjective, let alone objective, attribution that can be attached to a work. It is a genre. You can work in that genre. It is not a special effect of the technology. It is not the result of talent, a genius, or life-long learning. Quality is a way of production, like quality food.

"What are you doing?" And then you can say; "I am into quality theory."