

Ted Gioia writes *The Honest Broker*, a Substack [newsletter](#) about music and culture.

This is from the [posting](#), “The 6 Laws of Dying Hollywood Franchises”:

Let’s summarize what we learned from the rise and fall of the western genre.

Genres die slowly, especially popular genres with large mass audiences. In those instances, the decline can continue for decades after a genre’s commercial peak.

The final stages of decline are marked by total market saturation – reaching ridiculous levels. Far more product is churned out than even the core audience can absorb.

The proliferation of merchandise aims to expand the franchise, but actually accelerates the pace of decline.

During the period of decline, the average age of the core fan base gets older. Youngsters may continue to have some interest in the genre, but without the enthusiasm of the old days.

Even more ominous, the box office stars start showing their age – and are far too old to lead any movement. They are hired out of desperation, because holding on to old fans is now more important than attracting new ones.

As a result, everything about the genre starts to feel stale. The stories were fresher twenty years ago. The lead stars were definitely fresher twenty years ago. The only thing that isn’t stale is the movie popcorn out in the lobby – and even that’s not a sure thing.