

YouTube Cinema as a Tool for Mass Mobilization: From Amateur Filmmaking to Dystopian Narratives

سينما يوتيوب كأداة للتعبئة الجماهيرية: من صناعة الأفلام الهواة إلى السرديات الديستوبية

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Abstract:

This current study examines the evolution of cinema's use as a tool for mass mobilization across various stages, presenting a number of examples, from traditional cinema to amateur cinema, and finally dystopian narratives in the digital age. It adopts an exploratory approach to present various experiences that define the role of cinema in shaping social and political movements. YouTube is highlighted as a platform that has changed the ways cinematic content is viewed and consumed, leading to the strengthening of amateur cinema. Additionally, it focuses on YouTube's role in the spread of dystopian narratives, which reflect society's fears of technology, censorship, and social transformations. This study concludes that cinema, in its various stages, has been and continues to be a powerful means of mass mobilization, while digital platforms have enhanced opportunities for participation and interaction, reshaping the contemporary cinematic landscape.

Keywords: Mass Mobilization; Cinema; Amateurism; Dystopian Narratives; Film Industry.

ملخص:

تعالج الدراسة الحالية تطور استخدام السينما كأداة للتعبئة الجماهيرية عبر مراحل مختلفة، مستهلة بعدد من العينات، من السينما التقليدية إلى سينما الهواة، وأخيراً إلى السرديات الديستوبية في العصر الرقمي. حيث تتبنى نهجاً استطلاعياً لعرض تجارب مختلفة تحدد دور السينما في تشكيل الحركات الاجتماعية والسياسية. أين يتسلط الضوء على اليوتيوب كمنصة غيّرت طرق عرض المحتوى السينمائي واستهلاكه، مما أدى إلى تعزيز سينما الهواة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تركز الدراسة على دور يوتيوب في انتشار السرديات الديستوبية، التي تعكس مخاوف المجتمع من التكنولوجيا والرقابة والتحولات الاجتماعية. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن السينما، في مراحلها المختلفة، كانت ولا تزال وسيلة قوية للتعبئة الجماهيرية، بينما عززت المنصات الرقمية فرص المشاركة والتفاعل، وأعادت تشكيل المشهد السينمائي المعاصر.

كلمات مفتاحية: التعبئة الجماهيرية، سينما ، الهواة ، السرديات الديستوبية، الصناعة السينمائية.

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Introduction:

Cinema has long been a powerful medium for political and social expression, playing a pivotal role in mass mobilization and inspiring revolutions throughout history. Since its inception, film has been used as a tool for emotional influence and political agitation, making it one of the most effective means of shaping public consciousness. Revolutionary and mass cinema was characterized by its powerful narrative style, its depiction of social injustice, and its spotlight on people's struggles against oppression, making it a key vehicle for disseminating revolutionary ideas and unifying protest movements. (Tarrow, 1998, p. 87).

This role can be traced back to the silent films of the early twentieth century, with Sergei Eisenstein's famous film "The Battleship Potemkin" by Soviet film director "Eisenstein" in (1925), which became a symbol of the Bolshevik Revolution thanks to its stimulating editing style, later used in numerous propaganda and revolutionary films (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013, p. 210). In subsequent decades, cinema was used as a tool of struggle around the world, such as Italian neorealist films that documented the suffering of peoples after World War II, or anti-colonial films in Algeria and Latin America, which strengthened liberation movements by depicting peoples' struggles against colonialism and dictatorships. (McAdam, 1982, p. 45)

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, cinema has been used as a propaganda tool to steer public opinion, whether by ruling regimes or revolutionary movements. Numerous films have emerged that embody popular struggle, arouse feelings of enthusiasm and patriotism, and contribute to mobilizing the masses toward specific goals. Moving images influence viewers' consciousness in ways that may exceed the influence of political speeches or newspaper articles. Prominent examples of politically engaged cinema include revolutionary and documentary films such as *The Square* (Noujaim, 2013), which chronicles the Egyptian revolution and highlights the pivotal role of social media in mobilizing citizens and spreading information. Works of this nature have gained prominence in the digital era, as filmmakers increasingly rely on new media technologies to encourage collective action and mass mobilization (Tilly, 1978, p. 132). Rather than merely documenting political events, they actively contribute to protest movements by fostering a shared sense of identity among activists and participants in resistance efforts. (McAdam, 1982, p. 45)

Our current study attempts to shed light on a specific angle of cinema and mass mobilization, which we summarize in the following main question:

How has cinema been utilized as a tool for mass mobilization across different stages, transitioning from traditional cinema to amateur cinema, and subsequently to dystopian narratives within a purposive sample?

In order to answer this question, we pose several sub-questions that attempt to clarify our point of view in dealing with the subject, while presenting examples from the cinematic arena, which we summarize as follows:

- a) **How has cinema been used as a tool for mass mobilization across different historical and social contexts?**
- b) **In what ways has YouTube transformed the display and consumption of cinema content?**
- c) **How does YouTube serve as a platform for the emergence and growth of amateur cinema?**

d) What role does YouTube play in the production and dissemination of dystopian narratives in contemporary cinema?

1. Title Cinema as a tool for mass mobilization

The practice of encouraging and enlisting a wide range of people to take part in political, social, or economic endeavors with the goal of bringing about change or opposing an established state of affairs is known as mass mobilization. Although many associate mobilization with protests, revolutions, and conflicts, it also encompasses advocacy efforts and social change campaigns. Tilly defines mass mobilization as the shift from the passive side of politics to active participation, where individuals engage in various organized activities to support and promote social or political change, or to maintain the status quo (Tilly, 1978, p. 45). Tarrow and other scholars conceptualize mass mobilization as a dynamic and strategic form of interaction between contentious groups and governing authorities. In this framework, social movements do not act randomly; rather, they deliberately exploit political opportunities, draw upon cultural discourses, and rely on organizational structures to influence public opinion and drive collective action (Tarrow, 1998, p. 17). While some scholars broaden the scope of mass mobilization's impact, Manuel Castells, for instance, emphasizes its transformation through digital networks. He defines it as the reshaping of public space via online platforms, which facilitates the rise of new forms of protest rooted in real-time interaction, decentralized coordination, and transnational solidarity (Castells, 2012, p. 67).

Mass mobilization does not happen automatically. Rather, it requires effective strategies and methods, which can be summarized as follows:

1.1 Narrative and ideological framework:

Mass mobilization is essentially dependent on crafting an engaging story that speaks to shared values and experiences rather than just political opportunity or logistical cooperation. Social movements frequently start by situating their fight inside a larger ideological framework that makes use of universally accepted ideas like freedom, human rights, justice, and resistance. People use this narrative structure as a lens to understand their circumstances and see the need for action. According to Snow and Benford (1988, p. 213), successful mobilization depends on the ability of movements to construct a shared interpretive framework—one that fosters a collective identity and aligns individual grievances with a common cause. Through this process of "collective framing," movements can inspire emotional engagement, reinforce group cohesion, and legitimize their political goals.

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1.2 Media and Technology:

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In contemporary social movements, both traditional and digital media play a pivotal role in shaping public discourse and advancing collective action. Activists actively use these platforms to disseminate information rapidly, influence public opinion, and raise awareness about their causes among wide audiences. Castells emphasizes that modern revolutions distinguish themselves by their digital nature, as social movements harness social media to organize, recruit participants, and mobilize supporters swiftly and effectively (Castells, 2012, p. 67). Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, for instance, allow movements to contact with supporters directly and plan events in real time, circumventing the conventional gatekeepers of information.

1.3 Symbols and Visual Culture:

Visual and auditory media, including images, films, songs, and symbols, actively evoke emotional responses that motivate the masses to participate in revolutionary movements and increase the level of mobilization. These cultural artifacts intensify mobilization by engaging individuals emotionally. Jasper asserts that emotions such as anger and hope primarily drive individuals to join protest movements. Songs and cultural symbols actively generate and sustain these emotions within the movement, reinforcing solidarity and commitment among participants (Jasper, 1997, p.106). These cultural expressions shape collective identity by providing narratives, symbols, and rituals that unify participants and give meaning to their struggle. By doing so, movements sustain emotional engagement and foster a long-term commitment to collective action.

1.4. Alliances and social networks:

Mass mobilization rarely stems from individual initiatives alone; rather, it typically emerges through intricate networks of interaction among various social, political, and cultural actors. To enhance their influence and broaden their reach, social movements strategically align themselves with influential institutions and employ diverse channels of communication and representation. In this context, cultural production—particularly cinema—serves not merely as a medium of expression, but as a powerful instrument for fostering solidarity and cultivating collective awareness.

By weaving symbolic narratives with emotional resonance, movements are better able to engage multiple segments of society and penetrate the public consciousness. Consistent with this view, Doug McAdam (1986) highlights the importance of **"indigenous organizational strength"** in facilitating effective mobilization. He argues that movements are more likely to succeed when they are embedded within pre-existing networks, such as churches, unions, student groups, or local associations (McAdam, 1986, p.70). These networks provide essential infrastructure resources, leadership, communication channels, and credibility that enable movements to recruit participants and coordinate collective action more efficiently.

In addition, cinema is considered a crucial tool in mass mobilization processes, whether through portraying revolutionary ideologies or highlighting social and political injustice. Where cinema played different roles in mass mobilization, here are a few examples:

1.4.1 Cinema as a tool for political incitement and framing:

Cinema not only presents political issues, but also plays an active role in shaping them. This can be seen in **Early Soviet films** such as **Sergei Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin** (1925) were designed to motivate the working class against tsarist oppression. In line with this perspective, Monaco asserts that cinema not only reflects reality but actively redefines events and drives audiences toward decisive action.

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1.4.2 Cinema as a revolutionary and historical memory:

Films that tell the stories of revolutionary movements revive memories and create a sense of victimhood and shared identity, motivating audiences to once again take action against authoritarian regimes. Consistent with this view, **Rancière** explains that “Cinema is not only a means of narrating the past, but a way of reshaping it in the collective consciousness and pushing it towards action (Rancière, 2006, p. 44).

1.4.3 Cinema as a tool for building collective identity:

Films contribute to shaping national or class identity by presenting models of heroism and resistance, such as films about national liberation movements; **The Battle of Algiers** (1966) by **Gillo Pontecorvo**, **Paradise Now** (2005) by **Hany Abu-Assad**, **Memories of Underdevelopment** (1968) by **Tomás Gutiérrez Alea**. According to **Bill Nichols** (2010), films play a critical role in constructing collective identities—whether national, class-based, or political—by portraying symbolic narratives of heroism and resistance

In a similar vein, **Bill Nichols** (2010) argues that films play a critical role in constructing collective identities—whether national, class-based, or political—by portraying symbolic narratives of heroism and resistance (Nichols, 2010, p. 112).

Cinema remains one of the most powerful tools for shaping mass mobilization, combining emotional impact, visual narrative, and ideological persuasion. With technological advancements, platforms like YouTube and Netflix have become new and alternative arenas for mass mobilization, reshaping the ways in which audiences are mobilized and motivated to engage in social and political change.

2. YouTube as a screen for displaying content

YouTube serves as a cultural production site for entertainment content, including gaming, music, sports, and celebrity channels. As a dynamic media entity, YouTube has transformed the screen industry by democratizing content creation, breaking geographical barriers, and fostering diverse content ecosystems. Its monetization and analytics tools empower creators while challenging traditional media to adapt to its participatory nature (Dyna Herlina, Firly, & Febrian, November 2023, p.157).

The democratization of content creation and dissemination is among YouTube's most important accomplishments. YouTube enables anyone to submit their material directly, in contrast to traditional media, where gatekeepers (such studios and TV networks) restrict what reaches audiences. This change has resulted in a proliferation of varied content, ranging from news commentary and entertainment to instructional tutorials and vlogs. (Burgess & Green, 2018, p. 25)

In contrast to traditional television, YouTube is available to consumers anywhere, removing restrictions related to language and location. Its function as a genuinely global screen is facilitated by subtitles, auto-translation, and multilingual content. Furthermore, the platform facilitates the development of new content ecosystems by supporting specialized groups that might not be represented in mainstream media. (Cunningham, Craig, & Silver, 2016, p. 377)

Interactive and Algorithmic Content Delivery: YouTube is quite participatory, which sets it apart from conventional displays. The recommendation system makes the screen dynamic and ever-changing by tailoring material to users depending on their interaction and viewing history. YouTube reinforces its function as an interactive display medium by encouraging user interaction through comments, likes, and shares, in contrast to passive television viewing. (Lobato, 2016, p. 293)

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YouTube's Influence on the Screen Industries: Because YouTube has changed consumer behavior, it has put established media sectors to the test. Conventional TV viewing is progressively being replaced by social media-driven programming and streaming services. A new generation of independent digital filmmakers and influencers is also fostered by YouTube's monetization tools, which enable content producers to generate money. (Graig & Cunningham, 2019, p. 58)

3. YouTube is a window into amateur cinema

By providing a platform where aspiring filmmakers can display their creativity, try out different narrative techniques, and reach a worldwide audience without the conventional constraints of the film business, YouTube has completely changed the landscape of amateur filmmaking. The term "amateur cinema" describes the creation of films by people or organizations outside of the conventional film business, frequently on a shoestring or without outside funding. According to Palmer amateur cinema is a type of filmmaking that depends on individual or small-group efforts, with the main objective being creative exploration and personal expression rather than financial gain (Palmer, 2015, p. 3). It is a non-professional filmmaking technique that frequently takes place outside of conventional studios and emphasizes invention, documentation, and personal experience. (Zimmermann, 2018, p. 27)

This platform provides amateurs with several possibilities, which we summarize below:

3.1 Accessibility and democratization:

YouTube's accessibility is one of the main reasons it acts as a doorway to amateur filmmaking. Independent filmmakers may reach a global audience with their work at low production costs and without the necessity for distribution agreements. Creative output has exploded as a result, ranging from web series and DIY documentaries to experimental videos and short films (Cunningham, Craig, & Silver, 2016, pp. 376–391).

3.2 Creative Experimentation:

The creative flexibility YouTube gives amateur filmmakers is one of its best features. In contrast to mainstream cinema, which frequently adheres to commercial storytelling norms, YouTube gives filmmakers the freedom to experiment with distinctive and non-traditional filmmaking techniques. **Burgess and Green** assert that "YouTube has an open structure that encourages innovation, where amateur filmmakers can experiment with format and genre while engaging audiences in ways that traditional film industries cannot (Burgess & Green, 2018, p. 25).

3.3 Global Audience and Community Engagement:

One distinguishing aspect of YouTube is its capacity to link filmmakers with a worldwide audience. Traditional indie films sometimes struggle to get distribution, but YouTube provides fast and extensive access. **Lobato** argue that YouTube is disrupting traditional film distribution by offering a direct channel between creators and audiences, opening up new spaces and forms of direct audience interaction and fostering a culture of sharing." This interaction develops a feeling of community and encourages viewers to contribute input, influencing the progress of amateur filmmakers (Lobato, 2016, p. 293).

3.4 Alternative Pathways to Professional Filmmaking:

Many successful filmmakers got their start on YouTube. Amateur creators have gained recognition on the internet, allowing them to break into mainstream movies according to Craig and Cunningham (2018) YouTube platforms provide an alternative space for talent, allowing amateur filmmakers to attract an audience and introduce the film industry without relying on traditional film festivals or production studios. (Graig & Cunningham, 2019, p. 58) This change has produced remarkable success stories, such as : **Bo**

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Burnham, who went from YouTube to directing award-winning films, such as: **Bo Burnham** (2009), **Words Words Words** (2010), **what** (2013), **Make Happy** (2016), and **Inside** (2021).

3.5 Monetization and Sustainability:

YouTube's revenue structure has opened up new economic prospects for producers. This is done by integrating advertising and crowdfunding for amateur filmmakers, providing sponsorship, and developing career paths sustainably, reducing the focus on traditional funding. Morris and Anderson said “ This unconventional financial support allows amateur creators to invest in their creative work, enhancing the quality of productions “ (Morris & Anderson, 2015, p. 89).

4. Amateur Cinema Challenges

Amateur cinema is a creative sector that enables independent filmmakers to generate their work outside of the established film business, using digital technologies and platforms such as YouTube. However, many amateur film projects suffer failure owing to several problems, including a lack of money, low technical skills, distribution issues, and changes in the algorithms of streaming sites. Burgess and Green state that “shifts in the policies of digital platforms such as: YouTube have impacted the sustainability and dissemination of independent content, making it difficult for amateur filmmakers to generate sustainable and lasting income” (Burgess & Green, 2018, p. 95). On the other hand, Smith asserts that “the lack of professional guidance and low production quality alienate audiences, limiting the reach and popularity of amateur films across platforms (Smith , 2013, p. 47).

In addition to the variable of competition in the face of professional productions, which is a major challenge for amateurs. According to **Craig and Cunningham**, “Amateur filmmakers find it difficult to reach a wide audience due to the control of major studios over marketing and distribution mechanisms (Graig & Cunningham, 2019, p. 112). Not to mention some amateur filmmakers' excessive expectations, which drive them to produce unfinished projects or subpar work, perpetuating the bad view of the sector (Jones, 2016, p. 89) .

Looking at production samples, we can see that many films were removed or did not receive enough promotion on YouTube, particularly those with general or entertainment themes. Here are some examples:

- **Cool Cat Saves the Kids (2015) by Derek Savage:** Critic **Brad Jones** described the film as "one of the most poorly made films for children, lacking any kind of cinematic quality and feeling like a 90-minute advertisement (Jones, 2016, p. 45). While Nathan Rabin said: “Instead of delivering an educational message to children, the film comes across as a series of incoherent scenes with terrible acting (Rabin , 2017, p. 89). The reason for the failure was due to: poor acting, bad script, unprofessional production.
- **Fred: The Movie (2010) by Clay Weiner:** **Roger Ebert** described the film as "an unsuccessful attempt to turn a YouTube personality into a cinematic experience, failing to deliver anything worth watching for 90 minutes" (Ebert, 2010, p. 67). And (Bradshaw, 2011)said: "The film proves that YouTube success does not mean cinematic success, as it seemed boring and tired after only a few minutes" (Bradshaw, 201, p. 1021). The reason for the failure was due to: unattractive story, character not suitable for a feature film.

While films concerned with mass mobilization can be cited as two prominent examples:

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- **Smiley (2012) by Michael Gallagher:** Scott Tobias said: "The film tries to be a thriller but falls into the trap of conventionality and lack of excitement" (Tobias, 2013, p. 75) . While **Mark Kermode** described it as "a film that lacks originality, relying excessively on traditional horror tropes without offering anything new" (Kermode, 2013, p. 94) . The reasons for failure were : weak script, excessive use of clichés..
- **The Thinning(2016) by Michael Gallagher:** John DeFore said, "The concept is interesting, but the execution is poor, with flat characters and an incoherent script" (DeFore , 2016, p. 66). And **Katie Walsh** wrote, "The film feels more like a long YouTube ad than a serious work of cinema" (Walsh, 2017, p. 80). The reasons for failure: weak plot, superficial dialogues.

Figure N° 1. Pictures of the promotional interface for movies on YouTube “Smiley”



Source :(Smiley,
www.imdb.com/fr/title/tt2025667/, 2012)

Figure N° 2. Pictures of the promotional interface for movies on YouTube “The Thinning”



Source :(The Thinning ,
<https://www.imdb.com/fr/title/tt5254868/>, 2016)

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We can conclude a set of reasons for failure that are common to most films on YouTube based on the previous table, which will be summarized as follows:

- **Poor production quality** : Many of these films were produced on a low budget, which affected the quality of cinematography and acting.
- **Content unsuitable for the big screen** : Some successful YouTubers were unable to achieve the same success when adapted to the big screen.
- **Incoherent plot** : Poorly crafted scripts alienated viewers.
- **High audience expectations** : Viewers expected higher-quality content, but the films fell short.

5. Dystopia and the Prospects of Cinema via YouTube

Utopian ideal societies, often described in detail, reflect humanity's longing for a better world. Positive utopias are described as better than their current societies, while dystopias are negative utopias. Perceptions of utopia change over time, with social structures varying based on the reader's societal context. Although "**Utopia**" is a Greek word, it was coined by the Englishman **Thomas More** in 1516 as the title of his book, which established this literary genre. The term combines "**Topia**," meaning "**Place**," with a prefix that could mean either "no" or "good," creating an inherent ambiguity—does it mean "a good place" or "no place"? This ambiguity has contributed to the concept's lasting appeal. (Zsolt , January 2016,p p.30-43).

As a literary movement with a philosophical dimension that refers to a barbaric, unjust society in which chaos prevails in all aspects of life, it is difficult for us to understand it, but if we move on to visualizing films via YouTube, its concept will be clear and obvious to the viewer and recipient.

5.1 Dystopia and the Prospects of Cinema via YouTube

Cinema has always been a powerful medium for conveying ideas and exploring possible futures, with dystopian films excelling in offering bleak visions of future societies. Dystopia is a fictional depiction of a society suffering from oppression, tyranny, and chaos and is often used as a critique of political and social reality (Claeys, 2017, p p.12-23). It is a literary genre that depicts a bleak future characterized by harsh government control, the decline of human values, and the spread of social injustice (Moylan, 2000, p.34). In cinema, dystopia is defined as "a cinematic representation of future societies dominated by dictatorships, extreme technology, or environmental collapse" (Booker, 2010, p.45) . The filmmaking equation has shifted with the rise of YouTube as a visual content platform, providing audiences and independent filmmakers with more chances to experiment with the genre in novel ways. YouTube's dystopian films have evolved into more than just amusement; they are now a potent critical instrument that illuminates technical, social, and political issues. The historian George Orwell stated that "every dystopian film is a reflection of the fears of its age, whether of political tyranny, environmental collapse, or out-of-control technology. (Orwell, 1949, p.211).

5.2 YouTube as a platform for disseminating dystopian films

YouTube has revolutionized independent filmmaking, making it possible for anyone with a creative vision and limited technical resources to produce short films that reflect dystopian fears. Film critic David Lynch argues that "digital platforms have removed traditional barriers to filmmaking, allowing new voices to offer uncensored visions" (Lynch, 2006, p. 89) . Prominent examples of this are short films such as "**The Last Man on Earth** (1964) directed by **Ubaldo**

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Ragona and Sidney Salkow, based on the novel "I Am Legend" by **Richard Matheson**. **A Date in 2025** (2017) directed by **Ryan Turner**, and co-written **Matthew Hart** , which depict apocalyptic scenarios about the end of the world or societies dominated by technology.

Dystopian content on YouTube has several characteristics that set it apart from traditional dystopian films and series. Among these features are the following:

- **Low-cost production but with great visual creativity:** Unlike traditional films, dystopian content on YouTube can be produced on low budgets using advanced visual technologies like video editing software After Effects, Blender, and Unreal Engine. Film critic David Bordwell argues that "independent digital cinema has revolutionized filmmaking, making it possible for any director to create a complete dystopian world using publicly available software." (Bordwell, , 2017 , p. 88) .
- **Freedom to propose and experiment:** YouTube provides a space for dystopian films without traditional censorship restrictions, enabling the exploration of themes such as digital authoritarianism, mass surveillance, and the collapse of societies. Media scholar Shoshana Zuboff asserts that "digital platforms have become a new arena for exploring dystopian realities already taking shape through surveillance technology and artificial intelligence" (Zuboff, 2019,p. 134) .
- **Direct interaction with the audience:** One of YouTube's most powerful features is its real-time interaction with viewers, where filmmakers can receive feedback and adapt to audience feedback. According to researcher Henry Jenkins, "The traditional model of film production was based on passive reception. YouTube has put the audience at the heart of the production process, leading to a rapid evolution in dystopian narratives. (Jenkins, 2006, p. 57)
- **Short duration and strong effect:** Dystopian content on YouTube is often short and intense, with viewers preferring short films that deliver shocking and powerful messages in a short amount of time. Director Christopher Nolan explains that "the biggest challenge in modern dystopian storytelling is not just creating a fantastical world, but delivering it intensely and powerfully in a few minutes (Nolan, 2014 , p. 112.)

5.3 The boom of dystopian short films

Short films are increasingly popular on YouTube due to the nature of the digital audience, which prefers fast-paced, intense content. Director Christopher Nolan asserts that "short films can deliver powerful messages in a limited amount of time, making them an ideal medium for conveying dystopian ideas (Nolan, 2014, p. 47). Examples of successful short films on YouTube include:

- **"The Black Hole" (2008):** It is a short film directed by Phil Sampson and Oliver Williams. It reflects on how greed can lead to annihilation through a simple yet poignant story.
- **"Sight" (2012) :** It is a short film directed by Eran May-raz and Daniel Lazo. It explores the impact of technology on privacy and mind control.
- **"Hyper-Reality" (2016):** It is a short film directed by Keichi Matsuda. The film reflects a dystopian vision of a future world where real life merges with augmented reality to the point where human identity is completely lost.

These films use intense visual and symbolic techniques to present complex ideas about the future of humanity, as Jean Baudrillard believes that "the cinematic image does not merely reflect reality, but creates a new, more extreme and influential reality. (Baudrillard, 1981 , p. 126)

5.4 New Technologies to Support Dystopian Cinema on YouTube

Modern technologies have helped advance dystopian cinema in unprecedented ways, with digital tools becoming available to independent content creators. The most prominent of these tools are:

- **Artificial Intelligence and Graphics:** Filmmakers can now use AI to create realistic scenes of destroyed cities or future societies.
- **Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) Technologies:** These technologies allow viewers to immerse themselves in dystopian worlds, making the cinematic experience more interactive (Murray, 2017, p. 92) .
- **Cinematic effects available through free software:** such as Blender and Unreal Engine allow for the creation of stunning, imaginative environments with limited resources.

5.5 Dystopia as a Critical Tool via YouTube

In the face of tremendous technology breakthroughs, dystopian material on YouTube has emerged as a potent critical tool that examines social issues and repressive structures. YouTube gives producers more opportunity to critique current issues with strong visual styles and daring concepts than popular movies and television shows do.

- **Digital Dystopia and the Critique of Total Surveillance:** Several short films on YouTube, such as "Hyper-Reality" and "Sight", address issues such as digital surveillance, big data, and the control technology has over our lives. Shoshana Zuboff argues that "digital capitalism not only monitors individuals, but also reshapes their behavior to serve its interests" (Zuboff, 2019, p. 134).
- **Criticism of capitalism and the greed of big corporations:** Dystopia has been used to expose the dangers of overconsumption and the influence of intrusive advertising. In **Phil Sampson and Oliver Thompson's The Black Hole** (2008), greed turns into a death trap, reflecting critic Fredric Jameson's view that "modern capitalism markets itself as a utopia, when in fact it is a dystopia in disguise" (Jameson, 2005, p. 198) .
- **Critique of AI Control in Society:** Works such as "A Date in 2025" (2017) by **Ryan Turner** warn of a future in which humans become enslaved to AI algorithms, in line with the view of philosopher Nick Bostrom, who asserts that "the unchecked development of AI could lead to humans losing control over their own future" (Bostrom, 2014, p. 276).
- **Ease of access to critical content for a broad audience :**Unlike traditional cinema, YouTube allows for broad and free distribution, which helps critical messages spread quickly. Henry Jenkins explains that "digital platforms have changed the nature of narrative, making audiences not merely recipients but participants in the production of meaning" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 64) .

The fate of dystopian films on YouTube is tied to the audience's expectations and preferences for the film, its characters, plot, and other elements that are not governed by systematic rules of criticism. We find several films that faced failure despite the overwhelming success at the beginning of their showing on YouTube, including the following:

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- **The Devil Inside (2012) by William Brent Bell:** Although the first box office results were spectacular, the audience's attention was soon eroded by unfavorable word of mouth (Smith , 2013, p. 89) .
- **Always Watching: A Marble Hornets Story (2015) by James Moran:** The Marble Hornets series was one of YouTube's most successful horror projects, but its adaptation into a feature-length film, Always Watching: A Marble Hornets Story, was not a success. As Williams noted, "What worked as an episodic horror web series failed to translate into a compelling cinematic experience" (Williams, 2017, p. 77).
- **A Dark Reflection (2015) by Tristan Loraine:** The Daily Telegraph reported that the film, despite its good intentions and intelligence, lacks the necessary tension, making it unremarkable (Telegraph, 2025). While The Guardian described it as a "heavy drama," indicating its slow pace and weight on the viewer. (Guardian, 2025)
- **Hyper-Reality" (2016) by Keiichi Matsuda:** It was widely circulated on tech forums and websites like Wired and The Verge, where critics described it as a "disturbing vision of a hyper-tech future."The film has a complex visual style that will appeal to those interested in technology and digital philosophy, but it is not aimed at a wide audience like popular dystopian films. Some critics, such as David Bordwell, have pointed out that "successful short films need not only visual dazzle, but a plot that engages the audience (Bordwell, 2017, p. 112). Nick Bostrom argues that "the increasing control of artificial intelligence over our lives may make dystopian cinema more realistic, motivating audiences to confront potential risks" (Bostrom, 2014, p. 276)

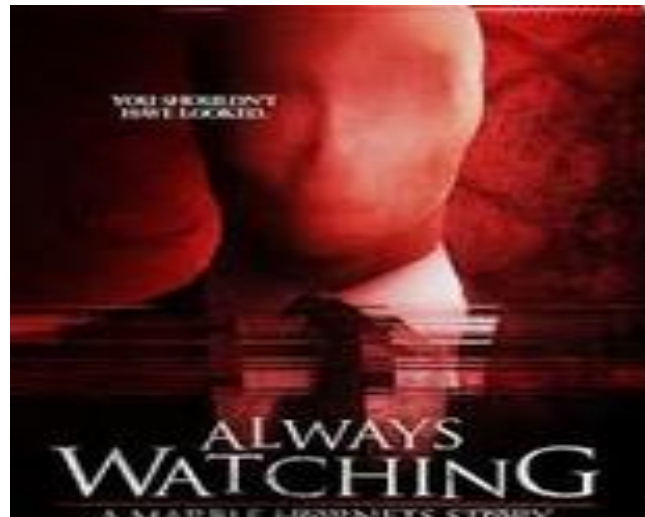
Figure N° 3. Pictures of the promotional interface for Dystopia Movies on You Tube “The Devil Inside”



Source : (The Devil Inside,
<https://www.imdb.com/fr/title/tt1560985/> , 2012)

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Figure N° 4. Pictures of the promotional interface for Dystopia Movies on YouTube “Always Watching: A Marble Hornets Story”



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Source :(Always Watching: A Marble Hornets Story,
<https://www.imdb.com/fr/title/tt2737926> ,2015)

Figure N° 5. Pictures of the promotional interface for Dystopia Movies on YouTube “A Dark Reflection”



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Source :(A Dark Reflection,
https://www.imdb.com/fr/title/tt2662218/?ref_=fn_all_ttl_1, 2015)

In the last corner of the search, it can be said that **YouTube Cinema** remains an inspiring space for amateurs to influence public awareness and social mobilization. Its themes have transcended the confines of entertainment to become effective tools for political and cultural change in various societies and across time. With the rapid development of artificial intelligence technologies, the ability of these platforms to target and influence audiences is expected to strengthen in unprecedented ways, whether through interactive content or dystopian films that warn

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of a future dominated by artificial intelligence and comprehensive surveillance. In light of these transformations, it has become imperative to study the impact of these platforms in depth to ensure their use as awareness-raising and creative tools that serve societies, rather than becoming tools for manipulation and misinformation.

6. Conclusion:

Our current study has attempted to delve into this topic within the dimensions of exploratory research on the cinematic scene via YouTube, by presenting models and presenting different viewpoints of specialists, to extract a set of results that can be defined as follows:

- Cinema and YouTube are tools for mass mobilization, contributing to the rapid and effective dissemination of ideas and the mobilization of audiences. They harness emotions and images to excite and motivate audiences to participate. They also enhance collective awareness through historical and social narratives.
- YouTube is an open platform for amateurs to disseminate content, compared to censored cinema, regarding topics of mass mobilization and revolution.
- YouTube enables direct audience participation, which enhances digital mobilization, but can also be a cause of creative failure.
- YouTube has contributed to expanding the role of amateur cinema in mobilization and mass organization, and has improved upon the example of the Arab Spring.
- YouTube's independent dystopian videos, which address societal worries about technology, mass monitoring, and the erosion of human values, have emerged as a powerful tool for public mobilization.
- YouTube is an open platform that has made it possible for amateur filmmakers to create inexpensive, imaginative short films that explore a dystopian future.
- Digital platforms have removed traditional barriers to filmmaking, allowing new voices to emerge, unfettered by censorship by film institutions.
- Audience response to dystopian films on YouTube differs from their response to traditional cinematic films, as viewers interact directly through comments and reposts, enhancing the impact of these films as tools for mass mobilization.
- YouTube has changed the model of film reception, with the viewer no longer a passive recipient but an active participant in creating meaning and expanding the scope of dystopian discourse.”
- Although some films have succeeded in sparking discussion, several dystopian films on YouTube have failed to achieve the desired audience impact due to weak plots, poor production, or repetitive ideas.
- With the development of artificial intelligence and virtual reality, dystopian cinema on YouTube has become more interactive, enhancing its potential for audience impact.
- Technologies like Unreal Engine and Blender have enabled amateur directors to create rich visual worlds on limited budgets, making independent films competitive with major productions.

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- With technological advancements, the increasing role of artificial intelligence in human life, and the use of data analysis and content targeting targeted digital audiences, YouTube may become more capable of generating widespread mobilization through predictive videos and interactive content. This is achieved by employing tools to manipulate audiences, raising questions about the credibility of content and its impact on mobilization.
- With the rise of dystopian science fiction in cinema and the increasing public desire to watch this type of content, the door will open for new productions, while simultaneously alienating some groups of traditional filmmakers.

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