



The manifestations of musical expression in the world of cinema

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Abstract

In the twentieth century, the arts shone through new means, as humanity finally acquired a unique ability to depict the entire world on a blank screen using the art of light. Furthermore, they managed to capture time and moments in their eternal manifestations, embracing all events, whether grand or trivial, in a memory that knows no forgetfulness. Indeed, this new art emerged on celluloid strips, taking us on an extraordinary journey to embrace the various facets of the arts as a whole.

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1. *Introduction*

Cinema has taken a hundred years of human existence and added thousands of years of knowledge, beauty, and the capacity for innovation to it. No one could have foreseen when moving images first appeared that this invention, originally just an innovative game, would one day become a new tool for expression and exploration, a magical device providing the audience with insights, dreams, and fantasies, an endless source of poetry, emotions, and music.

It is truly a magical art with far-reaching effects, having significant dimensions in human life, influencing minds, and becoming a vast field for advertising, promoting ideas and principles, igniting revolutions and mobilizing or liberating people, or drowning them in the depths of illusion and false dreams. It can also corrupt and make people indifferent and apathetic towards pressing issues in the face of opposing forces that besiege them. It can even present superficial content. From this perspective, cinema is undoubtedly a universal art, as it requires no translation or explanation; it is a language that sweeps the world and connects with a diverse audience. It is an exceptional means of instant communication and building relationships among viewers. Cinema possesses a unique power to influence emotions, taking audiences on journeys where they

experience various feelings, ranging from happiness and sadness to violence and challenge, and sometimes even peace and friendship.

From a more important perspective, it becomes almost impossible to discuss the world of cinema without considering its industry. The film industry plays a fundamental role in the development of American cinema heritage and is a primary contributor to its construction. Despite the prosperity it has witnessed, it has suffered sudden fluctuations and numerous conflicts during this period.

We will now quickly shed light on this period and explain the most prominent transformations and changes that the cinematic art has undergone. Cinema has contributed to enriching its various genres and developing its unique language. From here, we witness significant fluctuations on two fronts: a decline on one hand and a rise on the other.

The film industry has witnessed tremendous evolution over the decades, with these technological and scientific advancements representing significant turning points. Cinema began with silent films, but it quickly transitioned to talkies, and this major leap permanently altered the face of the seventh art.

With the advent of television, the film industry became one of the most important industries competing for the attention of the

masses. Film genres diversified significantly, including blockbuster films and widely popular police films. In this context, American Westerns emerged with stories of cowboys and dreamy romance.

This cinematic evolution was not limited to presentation and technology but had a significant impact on content and cinematic style. The ideas and themes focused on in films changed, and the industry became a influential cultural force.

The narrative film industry underwent significant changes during World War I and took a different, more vibrant path with the introduction of sound. This development, as David A. Cook asserts, later evolved to encompass all narrative films in the 1920s – regardless of their value or quality. These films were distributed with a booklet containing suitable musical excerpts and instructions for their timing after the film's screening. The first composed film score was for the 1908 film "Assassination of the Duke of Guise" by Camille Saint-Saëns, commissioned by the Film d'Art company . While musical films followed a different aesthetic curve, they were by no means lacking in artistic value compared to other elements in cinema, such as the beauty of the novel's text, the craftsmanship of acting, the suitability of sets, costumes, and makeup. They formed a cohesive visual material that swept through cinema halls at the beginning of the sound era with notable works like "Broadway Melody" directed by Harry Beaumont, "Applause" directed by

Rouben Mamoulian, and "The Love Parade" directed by Ernst Lubitsch. The latter, Lubitsch, made a fortune for Hollywood with his musical dance films, including "The Smiling Lieutenant," "One Hour with You," "Monte Carlo," and "The Merry Widow. "

World War II had a profound impact on film music in European cinema. During this difficult period, film scores were used exceptionally to convey emotions, national themes, and wartime events. There was a tendency to emphasize national musical compositions in films to promote cultural identity and national spirit during this challenging time.

Producers and directors used film music to add additional dimensions to their films and convey specific messages. Music played a significant role in expressing national conflicts and human emotions during the war period. It was a means to unify and encourage people during these challenging times.

Furthermore, film scores were increasingly used to transport viewers to different atmospheres and help them engage with the events and characters on screen. In fact, music became an integral part of the cinema experience and had a significant impact on European films, enriching their content during World War II. As Elmer Rice eloquently described this musical fever, "The air was filled with the reverberations, saturated, if that were

possible, with rich harmonies that spread around us and above us. Music possessed us. We could feel it, and we could almost see it, so compelling was its rhythm. The reader may imagine himself threatened by music at every moment of his life, whether awake or asleep, and covering him as if it were a comforting garment. It was a kind of narcotic, a chronic addiction, a continuous intoxication. It was irresistible, it was fatal. " As a result of the musical comedy, American cinema entered the era of musical comedy. During this stage, musical comedy films, social melodramas, and other genres proliferated. For example, musical films and musical comedies required a specific type of simplicity, where their narratives were filled with spectacles and singing. Once a phase of dealing with literature began, the era of grand musical performances started to contract. Literature, in its dense form, took precedence on the screen, replacing the dominant musical spectacles that often occupied more than half of a film's duration .

The increasing interest in cinema and its growing evolution highlighted the need for music that elevates and translates the language of movements, scenes, and ideas to create a suitable garment for the work, making it elegant before the audience, as Gubéry described it: "...the music that explains the meanings, that aims to create a continuous, resounding, and dramatic aural impact. American cinema has accustomed

us to this musical deluge that accompanies films so faithfully that one can almost follow the film with their eyes closed. There are individuals who have gained fame in this specialization, such as Max Steiner, Richard Hageman, Miklós Rózsa, Franz Waxman, and Dimitri Tiomkin. "

This led to many studio houses producing a variety of films worldwide, increasing the demand for cinema theaters.

It's evident that cinema has evolved with this culture over decades in the context of social life, often under the control of studio houses with vested interests. These interests often stifle and subdue the art, and as long as film production is subject to financial investment and obedient to the ingrained contempt for the enchantment of the audience, studio houses in the cinema, especially in the United States, have been powerful entities. Major film companies often operated as autocratic regimes.

In a striking paradox, new forms of studio houses emerged during the era of sound cinema. Around forty sound studios appeared almost simultaneously, leading to an extreme trend in sound usage through the intensive production of courtroom films to the point where the audience became weary of this genre that relied heavily on dialogue .

The film industry grew and flourished in the minds of Hollywood visionaries who found in cinema a powerful means to

express their ideas and stories. For many, American cinema became an attractive and highly successful destination, thanks to the influence of the United States as a global power and its dominance over world culture.

In this context, the U.S. film industry gained significant control over various arts and crafts associated with the film industry and employed millions of people. The primary danger in American cinema was not the size of the industry or the wealth it generated but the dominance over theaters during the silent film era.

Later on, the film industry evolved into a more organized entity, with production companies introducing new technologies and innovations to support the industry. Advanced technological devices emerged in the world of technology, greatly influencing the quality of films and box office revenues. Over the years, the rules of the film industry became more stringent, with production companies imposing strict regulations on the world of cinema. At the same time, the industry witnessed multiple fluctuations and sudden collapses that affected it in various ways.

As Mahmoud El Zawaawi emphasized, "The new perspective in the film industry had a negative impact on the creative field, and although it produced more than 7500 films between 1930 and 1946, the majority of critics believe that the number of films

that have retained their artistic status to the present day does not exceed 200 films."

The emergence of businesspeople and investors in the American film industry marked a significant turning point that radically transformed and developed the cinema industry. With entrepreneurs dominating film production, the industry adopted new levels of progress and professionalism. Substantial funding was used to advance technology and attract top talent in the field of cinema, resulting in the production of high-quality and innovative films.

These developments had a dramatic impact on American and global cinema. Films began to achieve great success and attracted broader audiences. This industry became a fundamental part of the American economy and was able to employ numerous individuals in the cinema field, both within and outside the United States. This helped solidify cinema as a significant force in the entertainment and art industry worldwide.

The exportation of American films saw a significant increase from 36 million feet in 1915 to 159 million feet in 1916. By the end of World War I, the United States produced 85% of the world's films, and 98% of films screened in America. Control over the American market became paramount. It was now possible, with confidence, to produce films exclusively for the American market and subsequently distribute them in international markets for

further profits. From that moment, there was no longer an incentive for American producers to make films except for the American market with American themes carrying American ideology .

With the evolution of the global film production and distribution industry, American companies began to hold a significant share of the global cinema market. American films started to achieve great success worldwide, and this was due to several factors:

1. High Quality: American films were known for their quality and diverse content, which attracted a wide audience.
2. Large Funding: Substantial investments by entrepreneurs and companies in the American film industry allowed for the development of high-quality films.
3. Technological Advancements: Advanced cinematic techniques and visual effects contributed to enhancing the viewers' experience.
4. Global Market Dominance: American companies possessed strong global distribution networks, enabling their films to reach audiences all around the world.
5. The English Language: English became the international language of cinema, making American films more

widely accepted among English-speaking and non-English-speaking audiences.

Marketers realized that films had become an integral part of the complex media phenomenon, closely linked to the expansion of marketing specific products. The connection between the film and the product became increasingly significant.

There is another cost within the film industry, albeit primarily applicable to major productions, which is the distribution cost to exhibit a film in numerous theaters across different cities and states simultaneously. When a film begins its release in a thousand cities at the same time, it requires extensive advertising to turn the film's distribution into an event, increasing its prominence and generating more buzz around it .

These insights provide a historical perspective on the evolution of the film industry and the interplay between its artistic, commercial, and economic aspects. During Hollywood's golden age, eight major companies known as the "Hollywood Studios" were established, and they exerted significant control over the film industry. These giant companies represented the driving force financially, technologically, and creatively behind the industry's development.

However, as is the case with many industries, large economic and financial forces can become pivotal in guiding the

industry's direction. In the cinematic context, the information mentioned earlier highlighted that companies like Morgan and Rockefeller had a substantial impact on the film industry by controlling sound equipment, funding, and support.

This economic and financial influence can affect film production and content, where economic decisions play a significant role in shaping the industry's trajectory. This is an important discussion about the balance between art and commerce in the film industry, where a balance must be struck between profit and maintaining quality and creativity. Historically, the industry has witnessed significant changes and setbacks influenced by these financial and economic dynamics.

Today, competition in the film industry has narrowed to become a struggle between the two major powerhouses for a balance of power between the eight major studios and their associated distribution and exhibition outlets .

What you describe reflects significant transformations in the film industry and the impact of commercial aspects on decision-making in film production. In the commercial cinema, financial and commercial aspects can play a crucial role in shaping the industry. This can sometimes lead to a preference for profit over considering the artistic and creative aspects of films.

As a result of these commercial constraints, the future of artistic and creative cinema can be negatively affected. Production decisions in the film industry may sometimes be more profit-driven, regardless of artistic quality or creative vision. This can have a detrimental impact on artistic and creative films that carry strong artistic visions.

The discussion of these issues is crucial to ensure the sustainability of the film industry and the balance between artistic and commercial aspects. This challenge requires collaborative efforts between artists, producers, and the audience to maintain the quality of films and promote creativity within this complex industry.

The use of sound in the film "The Jazz Singer" was a significant turning point in the history of cinema. It took several years of research and development and the involvement of many inventors and technicians to achieve this technological advancement. The fact that the Warner Bros. brothers considered the idea of producing talking pictures after it was rejected by other major Hollywood studios demonstrates how courage and innovation can lead to significant industry transformations.

The use of sound in cinema allowed for the addition of an important element to films, which is spoken dialogue, sound effects, and film scores. This had a profound impact on the audience's experience and

allowed directors and actors to express themselves more deeply and broadly in their work. Talking cinema quickly became the prevailing style and brought about a major transformation in the world of cinema.

The Warner Bros. studio's venture, which was on the verge of bankruptcy, resulted in this studio becoming one of the most important and successful studios in Hollywood, thanks to the success of the film "The Jazz Singer ." You are correct that the film "Don Juan," which was produced in 1926, featured a synchronized musical score and sound effects but did not include audible dialogue. It was indeed an important precursor to the full-fledged talking pictures, as it demonstrated the potential of synchronized sound in film. However, "The Jazz Singer," released in 1927, is often credited as the first feature film with synchronized dialogue or spoken words. While "Don Juan" made significant advancements in sound technology, "The Jazz Singer" marked a more substantial shift in the industry by incorporating both music and spoken dialogue, setting the stage for the era of talking pictures.

The introduction of sound into the film industry was not just a technological shift; it was a genuine revolution in the cinematic experience. This transformation improved the audience's connection with movies and allowed for the addition of music, sound effects, and spoken dialogue. As you

narrate, this transition led to a radical change in the American film industry, gradually phasing out silent films in favor of talkies.

Spectacular, musical, and dance films were among the first to benefit from sound technology. This made cinema a more powerful medium for entertainment and artistic expression and significantly contributed to increasing industry revenues. The cinematic revolution had a profound impact on global entertainment and culture, shaping the evolution of the industry in the decades that followed.

The musical evolution that influenced the field of cinema in the early 1930s created a new platform for a fresh cultural dialogue, touching the hearts and minds of many. As Garnier says, "Images, music, and spoken words are part of cultural traditions. As a result, cinema and the production of music records (records, tapes, books, magazines) were quickly recognized by everyone as cultural industries. "

Music added an aesthetic dimension that was by no means inferior to the artistic and cultural level of other elements. Both Ralph Stevenson and Jean Dubre affirm this: "Talkies gave us a more sensitive listening experience, teaching us to appreciate the quality of sounds such as the wind rustling through tree leaves, the natural sounds, and even the deep breath of a sleeping man. The fleeing footsteps in a waterlogged forest in King Vidor's 1929 film 'Hallelujah,' the

cacophony of trains during the battle in 'Under Paris Skies,' and the deafening roar of the storm in John Ford's 1935 film 'The Informer'. "

During the same period, specifically in 1938 and 1939, the American film industry experienced a very serious drop in box office revenues. This was primarily attributed to the consequences of the economic recession. As the situation continued to deteriorate, it was further attributed to the lack of renewal in the Hollywood star lineup. The board of directors of the troubled bank issued a directive for the maximum reduction in production costs.

This national marketing crisis, where Hollywood films were entirely covering their costs domestically, with foreign sales being their primary source of profit, continued to worsen due to the low income from foreign sales. This drop was attributed to the political situation in Europe and the gradual closure of German and Italian markets to American films, as well as the widespread embargo imposed by these countries .

The studio system in the film industry has witnessed the consolidation of control by major companies during certain periods. This system, which became prominent during the Golden Age of Hollywood in the past few decades of the last century, allowed these companies to control all

aspects of the film industry, from production to distribution and exhibition.

The capitalistic integration system referred to the increased integration of capital and investment in the film industry. This expansion of capital base for these companies involved banks, electronics companies, and other investors. This expansion of the capital base contributed to financing production and technological development in the film industry .

However, this system sometimes led to assembly-line approaches aimed at prioritizing profit over artistic quality. This can affect the content and quality of films, making them reflect marketing and profit priorities rather than artistic and creative ones. The industry becomes subject to commercial and economic pressures that influence its direction.

Additionally, the studio system has also contributed to supporting and encouraging it. These studios ensured the distribution of their works through networks and distribution channels they owned. This, in turn, prompted major studios to make exclusivity contracts with celebrity stars to produce specific types of films. Workers in the film industry had fewer opportunities outside the studio system .

The American film industry, particularly in Hollywood, is deeply intertwined with the capitalist system. It is subject to its constraints, crises, and contradictions. It serves as a key medium for the ideological

superstructure, and its role is painstakingly defined at each level of its existence. As a product of the capitalist system and its ideology, its ultimate subordinated role is to produce another film that aids in the survival of yet another film.

However, each film within this cycle has its unique attributes, and a blanket statement that every Hollywood film reinforces or disseminates American capitalist ideology oversimplifies the complex relationship between cinema and ideology. It's the intricate details (which are rarely uniform across all films) that define the subtleties of cinema and ideology.

In essence, while the American film industry, driven by capitalist imperatives, often reflects capitalist ideology, the specifics vary from one film to another, and a comprehensive analysis should consider the individual characteristics of each film within the broader context of cinema and ideology .

Musical films in Hollywood reached their peak of success in the 1950s with movies like "An American in Paris" in 1951, "Singing in the Rain" in 1952, "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers" in 1954, and "Gigi" in 1958. This period also included a number of musical films based on Broadway plays that were performed in New York, such as "Oklahoma" in 1955, "Carousel" in 1956, and "South Pacific" in 1958.

Indeed, cinema has the capability to transcend reality. We can say that cinema is a medium that stands midway between painting (with its visual aspect) and music (which cinema easily acquires its musical quality through harmonious fusion). Furthermore, it is both an art of space like painting and an art of time like music.

The public's interest in cinema music, especially when the song "Moon River" appeared in the well-known film "Breakfast at Tiffany's," saw a significant increase. A million copies of the song's record were sold. The film "Singing in the Rain," produced in 1952, is considered the greatest musical film ever produced by Hollywood during that period. It also topped the charts of best musical and entertainment films for many critics and artists. Film critic Leonard Maltin, in his book "Movie and Video Guide," described it as "the greatest entertainment film in history, without question. "

Musical and entertainment films were popular in the film industry during the last five decades, especially in the late 1950s and beyond. These films combined musical elements, dance, and live performances, targeting a wide audience.

These films were characterized by their songs, dances, and acrobatic performances, offering entertaining experiences for viewers. Most of the time, these films were driven by commercial and profit-oriented

motives, attracting large audiences and generating good financial revenues.

Examples of this genre include films like "The Sound of Music" and "West Side Story," which not only provided musical and dance entertainment but also featured dramatic stories that combined various elements of the arts. These films remain a part of the history of cinema and continue to be enjoyed by audiences to this day.

Zafer Henry Azar affirms this by saying: "During this time – the fifties and sixties – the Hollywood film industry received real shocks and jolts, succeeding over the last 15 years in launching dozens of police, emotional, political, and comedic (or musical) films that stand out for their artistic, ethical, and intellectually decent level of success (we especially remember, for example, 'Love Story' by Arthur Hiller)."

Musical and entertainment films enjoyed great popularity in the 1960s with movies like "West Side Story," "My Fair Lady," "The Sound of Music," and "Oliver!" These films combined musical elements and live performances and achieved significant success during that period.

However, the popularity of musical films waned in the late 1960s as the interests and artistic tastes of the audience changed. This genre of films primarily focused on musical performances and dances, often neglecting the content and the storyline. The songs were frequently created specifically for the

films and were more about musical performance than integrating songs effectively into the film's context.

As a result, the audience's preference for films that emphasized dramatic and comedic aspects led to a decline in the popularity of musical and entertainment films. This shift in cinematic direction affected the quality of films produced and resulted in substantial financial losses for this genre.

Music, therefore, is a crucial element in the art of film, and it's not uncommon for it to play a disproportionately significant role. In some cases, the "craftsmanship" of the image can be a matter of strong attachment. The musical sensation can become so profound that the image, when genuinely accompanied by music, extracts the most excellent expression from it, or rather, insinuation. Here, the imagination becomes active, and the explicitness is lost from a linguistic perspective.

The truth is that there is a real danger that music can replace the image and weaken it. Musical and entertainment films lost their popularity in American cinema since the mid-1960s, and most films of this cinematic genre produced since then suffered significant financial losses. The decline in the popularity of musical films coincided with the waning popularity of Westerns, even if it happened by chance.

The film "The Sound of Music," produced in 1965, is a significant milestone in the

history of American musical and entertainment films. It was the last distinguished musical film produced by Hollywood until that time and one of the most popular musical films in history .

It is worth noting here that music, as important as it is in cinematic films, can be very detrimental if not used correctly. Excluding musical and singing films, upbeat or danceable music is not suitable as film music. In this case, it should be more felt than heard. The 1960s witnessed notable musical films produced by Hollywood, including the "James Bond" films and musical dance films such as "Mary Poppins" and "The Sound of Music," which was produced in 1965. However, this success was short-lived. As Mahmoud Al-Zawai mentioned, "Musical and spectacle films lost their popularity in American cinema since the mid-1960s, and most films of this genre produced since that time suffered significant financial losses. "

Once again, Zafar Henry Azar emphasizes, "After the severe shock it experienced throughout the 1960s, it lost over half a billion dollars from 1968 until 1972." This wave continued until the 1970s and coincided with the use of "rock," "pop," "western disco," and "country" music in films like "Saturday Night Fever" by John Badham, and "Coal Miner's Daughter," and "The Honey-Suckle Rose" by Jerry Schatzberg, where country music was notably employed .

This is how musical and musical films capitalized on the phenomenon of entertainment. These films served the arts of singing, dancing, and new popular arts. The increasing interest in cinema and its growing evolution revealed the presence of musical works that are unforgettable, and the 1980s and 1990s were considered a qualitative leap towards major Hollywood production companies adopting scenarios for large-budget historical films. Prominent examples include "The Immortal Beloved," "Rob Roy," "Jefferson in Paris," "The Madness of King George," "Braveheart," and "The First Knight."

The achievements in Hollywood weren't limited to historical epics, and sophisticated electronic music was employed in the cinematic field. It's important to recognize the success of many films that continue to this day and don't rely on real musical instruments but rather use electronic software. Some of the most famous and successful film scores in this regard include "Titanic," produced in 1997, and "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King," produced in 2003 .

The use of sound in films allowed the American film industry to evolve and shine on the global stage. American cinema began to set a worldwide standard for the film industry, thanks to sound technology and creative ideas that manifested in the era of talking films.

The term "Americanization" refers to the cultural dominance and prevailing influence of the United States on various cultural aspects around the world, including cinema. American films have played a significant role in promoting this term, as the power of American cinema lay in spreading its culture and values to a global audience. Later on, American films became an important source of influence on global cinema and culture

Margins

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