The Movie Culture of U.S.

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Abstract. Film is a dynamic, more three-dimensional way to spread culture. It can reflect the beliefs and values of a nation and create a more solid and vivid national image. Hollywood movies are the most representative cultural export. Hollywood movies transmit American customs, ideas and culture to people. The popularity and popularity of movies make American culture enter every country quickly. Its influence is enormous, and it also has a positive influence on the development of American culture. This paper will mainly study the influence of U.S. movies on culture. Research data were obtained by collecting professional journal and library materials. After research and exploration, it is found that U.S. movies have a very important influence on the development of culture and become a means of cultural export.

Keywords: history · movie · culture · influence · social issues

1 Introduction

Film has a complex relationship with culture. It can influence popular culture, but at the same time, it can reflect the ideology, common concerns and beliefs of every stage of society. Movies are American storytellers. Due to the diversity and constant changes of American culture, movies are also able to record the problems and events of every period in the United States. This paper will explore the influence of U.S. movies on popular culture. This paper will first explain the history of U.S movie, and then explain the relationship and contradiction between U.S. movie and popular culture. Because film is a documentary about the development of a country, it can accurately and truthfully reflect the social situation and give people the opportunity to learn from it. Take director D. W. Griffith, who made the film The Birth of a Nation in 1915 as an example. The film had a profound impact on both the film industry and American culture as it captured the social and cultural tensions of the era, documenting the anti-apartheid story of the American South during and after the Civil War. As American Studies specialist Lary May (1997) has argued, "Griffith's films dramatized every major concern of the day" [1]. Although the film is controversial, it just proves the authenticity of the film content and reflects the mainstream ideology and cultural beliefs of the society at that time. The influence of film culture is vast and lasts for a long time. In the development of human beings, films are needed to help us grow better.

2   Analysis

2.1   The History of U.S. Movie

The first film was made by Edward Muybridge. The film is actually formed by a group of photos. He photographed horses running on the track. He recorded every action of horse running through 12 cameras, and then connected these photos to play quickly, forming a movie. In 1990, the development of the film industry made real progress. People learned to edit and began to have requirements for the film background. The public also had a great interest in movies, so cinemas began to try to attract more audiences by playing promotional films. Before the first World War, the United States used cinemas to show the promotional videos of the first World War. Therefore, after the end of World War I, the United States ushered in a cultural boom, and a new industrial center is rising: Hollywood, the birthplace of American films [2].

The original center of American cinema was New York. In 1894 The world's first commercial film festival was held in New York City, using Thomas Edison's kinetoscope. Thomas Edison was an American inventor who designed the motion picture projector and became the forerunner of the motion picture industry. But the weather in New York was a pain. It rained all the time and filming could not go on. At the same time, the studios where the films were being shot were too expensive, leading filmmakers to consider moving their studios to another city that was more suitable for filming. After exploring, they found that Los Angeles was the perfect place to shoot a movie. The weather is clear and the terrain is rich enough for all types of filming. Thus, the suburbs of Los Angeles became America's official movie factory, Hollywood [3].

In 1910, director D.W. Griffith made his first movie in Hollywood: In Old California. Then the film studios in Los Angeles began to grow and sound films were introduced. At the same time, Hollywood entered the golden age by hiring a lot of film talents and filmmakers. The Golden Age of Hollywood lasted for more than 20 years, during which movies were produced like an assembly line. Although there were different types, the content style was generally the same. What is surprising, though, is the variety of movies produced on the assembly line. The silent films of the past have been replaced by more sound content on the screen: comedies, cartoons, film noir, musicals and so on. It basically covers audiences of all ages [4]. Movies of this era are full of variety. But with the advent of television and antitrust suits brought against Hollywood by other American studios, the Hollywood studio system declined, but they began to change the way they told stories. Since the 1950s, American movies have gradually been divided into two categories: blockbusters and independent films. Blockbusters usually rely on star power and heavy advertising to attract large audiences. Independent films require studios to supplement their blockbusters with independent productions, but they do so on a shoestring budget. However, these on-screen developments have largely shaped U.S. movie, no matter what happens to the industry.

Even though Hollywood is not in the golden age, it is still the face of American films. For the United States, film is not only an intermediary to spread culture, but also a tool to improve productivity in special times, like other industries. After the first World War, the U.S. economy developed rapidly, and through the funds accumulated in the war, the production equipment was updated, the production scale was expanded, and

the production industry was actively developed. During this period, film has become the best tool for propaganda and appeal. At this stage, the film industry was used as a means to improve productivity. According to the national conditions, the film industry created wartime films, which tend to be patriotic, and they let the American people understand the needs of the country, and encourage them to work actively. Through documentaries and educational pictures, Hollywood has made people understand the war and have a general understanding of wartime needs, which has greatly improved the patriotism of the American people. It can be seen that the influence of film on society may be far-reaching, which may lead to social or political reform, or the formation of ideology.

2.2 The Relationship Between U.S. Movie and Popular Culture

The development of film also leads to the development of culture, because the media, this kind of communication medium covers a large number of audiences. As a global industry, movies can spread information to a large audience. At the same time, movies can reflect the popular culture, beliefs and values of every stage of the country. They also help shape and solidify the beliefs of a culture. What is important is that American films occupy most of the market share and play a leading role in the whole film industry. The music in American movies, the text, and the American customs depicted on the screen can be indicators of the various stages of cultural development.

Hollywood movies are the most influential movies. After 1929, Hollywood films were no longer just about pleasing the masses, but gradually began to relate to values. It was also at this time that Hollywood movies began to slowly influence American social values [5]. Moreover, since film is a mass cultural product, it needs to please people from different backgrounds and cultures. As a result, over time, Hollywood will produce films based on broader social trends and circumstances. For example, nowadays, Hollywood movies express many hot social issues such as human rights and gender equality. It is actually interacting with people, it is responding to society.

The important thing is that the publicity effect of the film is huge. Citing social hot issues as film content can not only attract the audience's attention, but also draw more people's attention to social problems. Besides promoting social issues, films can also reflect a country's culture. There are a lot of propaganda about American customs in Hollywood movies, which attract a lot of people to imitate. The propaganda of American culture in the movie also plays a guiding role in consumption for the audience at the economic level. For example, the American fast food that often appears in the movie: McDonald's and KFC, and the classic American street food: pizza. These have become the consumption objects that audiences around the world chase. Hollywood movies not only lead the world's filmmakers to imitate, but also make the image of America more deeply embedded in people's hearts [5]. It not only influences people's behavior, but also influences mass culture and plays a leading role. In addition, Elezaj (2019) also mentioned in his article: "Every movie is set and developed in a particular culture. They are an integral part of us; they mirror what we believe in and how we coexist as people. It is easier to see our concerns, attitudes, flaws, and strengths in films than it is to decipher them from our daily interactions" [6]. Thus, movies reflect culture. Popular culture and cinema are mutually influenced. Movies are based on culture, and culture is influenced by movies. As a representative of movies, Hollywood movies can

not only publicize America's emphasis on freedom and human rights, but also promote the Americanization of popular culture.

2.3 Social Issues in the U.S. Movie

Moreover, in addition to influencing popular culture, movies can also convey social issues. At present, the most representative film that conveys social issues is Peter Farrelly's Green Book. This movie is about racial discrimination. The title of the film, "Green Book" is a historically authentic black guidebook. In 1962, at the height of the white supremacy movement in the United States, Victor Hugo Green, a black postman, wrote a pamphlet pointing out hotels and restaurants where blacks could stay and eat. Racial discrimination has always been a sensitive issue in the United States. However, the film also shows many levels of entanglements: racial discrimination, racial inequality, master and servant, social status of musicians, family relations and so on. The social issues conveyed by the film also involve the real historical facts of the United States. "Because segregation was pervasive not just in the South but throughout the country, Black travelers not only met with the inconvenience and humiliation of being turned away from businesses but also had to be ever mindful of the threat of racist violence, including Lynching" [7]. Green Book became the solution for black travelers at that time.

Racial discrimination is a problem left over from history, but the social ideology is constantly progressing, and the American people are constantly trying to eliminate this unfair phenomenon. In the present society, there is also a gradually received attention and concern: women's rights. In today's social environment, men have more conveniences: higher positions, higher salaries, fewer family responsibilities, etc. This is unfair to women. Hence, in the long-term unfair social environment, women's rights have been mentioned more and more. The film "North Country" tells the story of a divorced woman who works in an iron ore company in her hometown, but is molested and disrespected by her male colleagues, but she fights back to get justice for the female miners in the factory. The film inspires women who suffer unfair treatment at work to have the courage to fight back. The influence of film is huge, it can promote the solution of social problems, can make those oppressed people have confidence and motivation to fight for their rights.

In fact, filmmakers have been making movies that address social issues. McDonald's and KFC, fast food brands once chased by the global audience, focus on high-calorie food such as cola, hamburger and French fries. These foods are widely praised because of the consumer boom. Gradually, however, the diet revealed problems. At this point, the filmmakers seized on the problem and exposed it to the screen. "Super Size Me" is a film that documents the effects of excessive fast food consumption, long-term high-calorie diet on the body, and explores the corporate influence of fast food industry. It also criticized the fast food industry for not paying attention to the health of food, but promoting unhealthy eating habits and making profits by doing so. In the time when McDonald's, KFC and other fast food restaurants are popular, there are many overweight and obese people in society. One of the most important factors contributing to this is eating too much fast food with high fat content. The movie "Super Size Me" puts social issues into the movie, so that young people have more understanding of fast food, so that they can eat healthy and control their weight more effectively [8].

In addition to these issues which have been widely concerned and discussed by the society, there are also some social problems which are easy to be ignored but should not be underestimated. Films that reflect social issues actually show historical moments in the culture. "Defined broadly, social problem films (sometimes called social-consciousness films, message movies, or other similar phrases) are films that dramatize some set of concerns, which they depict as broadly representative of the conditions of their historical moment" [9]. In addition, the culture output in the film reflects the problems existed in the mainstream culture of the society to a certain extent. Therefore, Barber goes on to explain that film exists not just to entertain, but to give valuable advice to one's time. It should be about crafting crafts that one can use to educate oneself. Although movies can reflect culture and integrate with culture, what they should consider more is their directivity to people. People are easily guided by the widespread culture, so movies should be more cautious and take into account the audience's experience [10]. There is therefore a wider context to consider when considering the connection between film and culture. After the film aired, McDonald's responded by eliminating its iconic Supersize fries and drinks in order to simplify its menu and offer customers options that support a "balanced lifestyle." It can be seen that movies can urge society to solve problems faster.

3   Conclusion

Overall, film is a dynamic, audio medium for transmitting culture and information. Kubrak (2020) mentioned the influence of movies on people in his article: "The studies reveal the influence of films on people's beliefs and opinions, stereotypes and attitudes. Movies can have a significant impact on gender and ethnic stereotypes, change attitudes towards certain groups of people and cause newly formed opinions on various issues" [11]. American movies actually become a means of influencing culture and people. And because this kind of media has great influence, it is highly valued in every country. In the United States, the content of movies is made to be easy to understand and have a smooth storyline to attract the audience from beginning to end. Promoting American culture to the world through movies attracts more people. Movies can shape characters, guide people and make people feel real when they watch them. Therefore, films with cultural value will be encouraged to become the main media of cultural transmission in the future, which also represents the importance of films for the promotion of American culture.

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