

The History of Cinema

Movie Making &
The Organisation
of the Industry



Demonstrate understanding of a specific media industry

» **This unit will review:**

- » The history of film-making
- » The development of the Studio system
- » The organisation of the Studio - Management & Financing.
- » The roles, responsibilities and relationships in the film-making process.

- The production process
- Key Personnel
- Relationships
- » The Controls (the system checks & balances)
 - Internal
 - External
- » A Case Study - The making of ...



The Seven Ages of Film

Pioneering Age

1896 - 1912

From Sideshow to Art
Form



The Seven Ages of Film

The Silent Age

1913 - 1927

The emergence of
Hollywood
World War I and the
exodus from
Europe



The Seven Ages of Film

The Transition Age

1928-32

From Silent to Sound



The Seven Ages of Film

The Hollywood Studio Age

1932 - 1946

Domination by the
Studio
Genre movies
World War II



The Seven Ages of Film

The Internationalist Age

1947 - 1959

Hollywood Studio
decline

The challenge of TV



The Seven Ages of Film

The New Wave Age

1960 - 1980

From France to the
world

Technological
innovation

Small scale productions

Strong social / political
value to film.



The Seven Ages of Film

The Mass Media Age

1980 - present

Film & movies as part of
the global
entertainment /
communications
media

Digital production



The Seven Ages of Film

A Closer Look



The Seven Ages of Film

Pioneering Age

1896 - 1912

From Sideshow to Art
Form



History

**Mechanisms for
producing
moving images
had been
demonstrated
from the 1860s. -
zeotropes
praxinoscopes
kineoscopes**



History

These relied on the “persistence of vision” to provide an illusion of movement if the images were moved at sufficient speed past the viewer.



History

The development of the motion picture projector and film stock allowed the development of film.

Early motion pictures were static shots showing an event or action with no editing or other cinematic techniques - *as this series showing a nude walking demonstrates.*



DIRECTOR

History

- » Early films were a visual art until the late 19th century when they developed into a narrative with a series of scenes linked together to tell a story.
- » Scenes were broken up into multiple shots of varying sizes and angles.
- » Camera movement was used to add to the story development.
- » Music was used to create mood using a pianist / organist using either sheet music or a score as they accompanied the screen action.



Film History

- » The first audience to experience a moving film did so in 1895. The film, by the Lumiere brothers was called “Workers leaving the Lumiere Factory (1895)”
- » Their film “Train Entering the Gare de Ciotat (1895)” caused people to faint with fear as the train loomed from the screen into the theatre auditorium.
- » These films did not carry a story or narrative - they merely showed a moving image on the screen.



Film History



A colourised still of the Train Entering the Gare de Ciotat Station.

August (1862-1954) & Louis (1864-1948) Lumiere



Playing Petanque (1895)

Film History

» Realising the potential of a good story George Melies (1861-1938) utilised film to create fantastic stories that took his characters and audiences to the moon and beyond.



The Changing Process Of Cinema

The changes in the process of film making involved several factors:

1. Current events & achievements. (political climate)
2. The creativity of the film-makers who influenced the team of crafts-people involved in the films.
3. The technical developments that could be exploited.
4. The capacity of a sufficient audience to appreciate the results.



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The Changing Process Of Cinema

- » The division between film and movie creates two views of quality and purpose.
- » MOVIES = This is a commercial product = popular entertainment with a mass circulation of copies of the movie. The audience being largely passive.
- » The product of an industry dominated by the producer (money) in which there is no individual film-maker but a team under the producer's control. (The studio system.) The director is hired to create the movie from the script. The final version is, however, the responsibility of the Producer and Editor.
- » The director of a movie is known as: *metteur en scene* = an interpreter of a score / script.



Progressions - The Silent Film

- » **FILMS:** Film makers experimented with the use of the camera to develop new techniques that would enhance their ability to tell a story.
- » **1913:** Giovanni Pastrone (*Cabiria*) moved his camera laterally and slightly above the level of the foreground thus changing the perspective of the audience from that they'd previously had in the Luniere films.
- » **1923:** Carl Mayer directing *Last Laugh* for F.W.Murnau proposed a forward movement of the camera at dramatic moments as if to thrust the audience into the action.



Progressions - The Silent Film

The man who exploited this change was D.W. Griffith (1875-1948. USA) whose film “The Birth of a Nation (1914) created an explosive examination of the development of the American nation from the Civil War.

The films until then were narrative and anecdotal this followed several threads of narrative - the friendly families in the North & South, political events in Washington, warfare with friends in opposite camps, exploitation of the South, white & black, carpet baggers from the North and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan.



Progressions - The Silent Film

Griffith's success was also his undoing. His films - *Intolerance* - *The Mother & The Law* and *The Fall of Babylon* put him into debt. As a result Financiers ceased to regard the film-makers as the king-pins of production and decided to build up the film-star in their place - to put control in the hands of the producer, aided by his team of organisers and writers. (*The Hollywood System*).

This favoured the **movie** over the **film** and reduced the risk for the banks.

It also meant that the *actor* was out of place in the movie world as his / her versatility would make them unrecognisable and therefore valueless commercially.

But they also introduced the language (french = way of speaking) of the film - long shot / mid shot/ close-up and their variations. These terms allowed the editor to construct a movie or film to produce identified reactions from the audience.



Progressions - The Silent Film

- » F.W.Marnau (1888-1931) influenced the film making process with the introduction of the design tool - the storyboard. This is a script visualised by drawings of every basic change of camera angles in the film.
- » Marnau was influenced by the swing to the right in Germany post W/W I where business took advantage of the high inflation rate to mass produce films at cheap rates.



Progressions - The Silent Film

- » The storyboard design focus introduced techniques like “visual punning” that (e.g) involved showing the passage of time by tracking towards a candle flame then dissolving into a lighted gas jet or electric bulb from which they would track away to the next sequence of the story.
- » This technique was replaced by nouvelle vague that introduced jump cuts to show or allow the passage of time and space.
- » This was known as “kultur-film” in Germany.
- » World War I signaled the advance of the movie from the USA. This was because Europe was fighting a four year long war, costing 10 million dead. The following 10 years of prosperity in the USA allowed the industry to gain dominance.



The Seven Ages of Film

The Transition Age

1928-32

From Silent to Sound



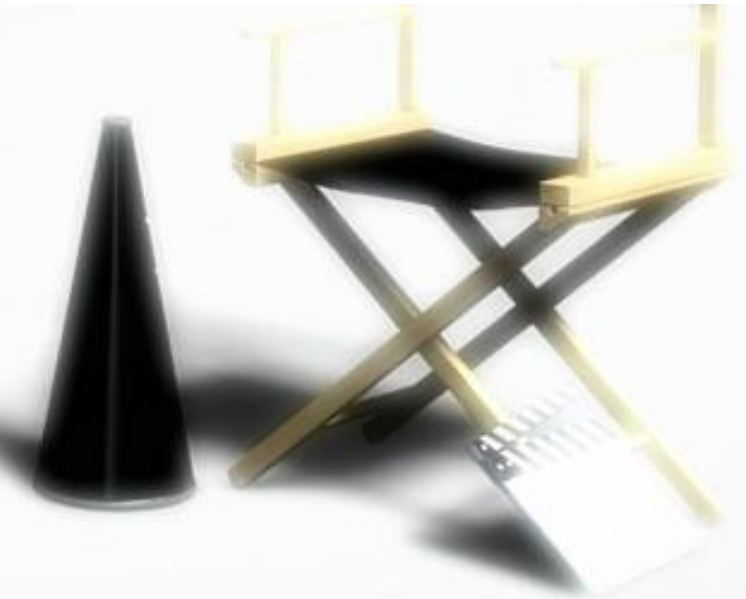
The Advent of Sound

- » Sound and film were slow to accommodate each other.
- » Sound technology was clumsy and difficult to link to the speed of the film.
- » Sound made it difficult to film in the open air, to film without interfering with lighting, without interfering with the way the actors spoke and with the number of cameras able to be used.
- » Sound forced film to adapt and develop new narrative techniques.



The Advent of Sound

- » Historical events and the sound film.
- » The depression (1929-35) encouraged the development of the conventions of the gangster movie (the urban western) and comedies that saw ordinary folk standing up against corrupt big business.
- » World War II encouraged the development of the propaganda film and again helped the USA gain dominance of the movie making business.
- » The impact of the technology is seen in Citizen Kane (Oson Welles 1941)



The Seven Ages of Film

The Hollywood Studio Age

1932 - 1946

Domination by the
Studio
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History

- » The increased costs of movie / film making had created the Studio System with its complex financing and control systems designed to ensure that the mix of expensive technology, cast of actors and associated technicians and financiers would return a profit.
- » The previous slides outlined the technical developments and their links to the Studio system.
- » The period 1920-50 marked the “Golden years” of the system.

History

» The period 1920-50 was the Golden Age for the Studios. Films were produced rapidly and regularly. Often following a formula: Western, slapstick comedy, Film Noir, musical, cartoon, biopic... depending on the studio.



History

- » The Studios Controlled the Directors:
 - Gibbons & Stothard - MGM
 - Cecil B deMille - Paramount
 - Newman & King - Twentieth Century Fox
- » The Studios Controlled the Actors:
 - Bogart & Bacall - Warner Bros
 - Garland - MGM



History

The Studio: A factory for film production.

Technicians, Directors and actors all on salary and expected to work as required by contract.

e.g. Between 1930-39 the big directors: Curtiz made 44 films (Warner Bros), Leroy made 36 and John Ford made 26.



History

The Studio System meant that a Director had little control over final product as final editing was done by post-production unit with Studio executives often making final decisions.

RESULT:

Studios had recognisable styles:
MGM - glossy production values
+ middle brow content.

Paramount = European

Universal = Horror

Republic = Western



History

This meant that films across all studios had intellectual conformity that reflected public concerns, shared myths & mores as the films were designed to fit into the market rather than reflect the concerns of the Directors.



History

World War II

Studios became
propaganda machines
for the War Effort.

Films patriotic and focused
on concerns of those on
the home-front as they
worried over those on the
battle field as *the stills*
from “Freedom Comes
High” (1943) shows



The Seven Ages of Film

The Internationalist Age

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The challenge of TV



History 1947-59

WWII delayed the TV age but post war the threat of TV re-emerged.

1946-51 Studios ordered to divest theatre chains - reluctance meant that they failed to capitalise on the possibilities of the TV as a medium for film.

Result: A period of mergers and consolidations as the Studios lost their power.



History 1947-59

Desilu took over RKO for TV production.

Revue took over Republic.

Warner Bros sold their back catalogue to Seven Arts who sold it to United Artists. Seven Arts took over the back catalogue of Fox, and then in 1967 bought out Warner Bros Studio.

- » Decca Records bought out Universal.
- » MCA bought Paramount's back catalogue then Decca, then Universal.
- » Gulf & Western bought Paramount Studios in 1968.
- » Transamerica took over United Artists.
- » **RESULT: Conglomerates dominated the US Film industry by the end of the '60s.**

History 1947-59

RESULT:

- 1) A horizontal control of the media with the Media Conglomerates able to exploit Film, TV, Books, CD, record, DVD publication for mass profit.
- 2) Individual contracting systems for “talent” rather than salaried staff favoured by the Studios. Actors, Directors, Technicians were contracted for single movies.
- 3) The advent of the “Blockbuster” disaster genre as the Conglomerates look to mass saturation marketing and maximised profit.
- 4) Smaller Production houses move into specialised niche audience orientated films e.g Woody Allan

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The New Wave Age

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The Seven Ages of Film



French Cinema - the art form

New Wave 1960-80

The death of the Studio system had international effects allowing the re-emergence of competition from Europe - particularly Sweden, France and Britain.

The collapse of the Studio System also encouraged the Film Festival circuit giving a screen to films made outside of the USA conglomerates.

- » The New Wave allowed the nascent European Film industry a time to recover from the US domination that had emerged as a result of WWII.
- » However the resurgence of USA post 1980 meant that European film-makers moved into TV production - particularly in the UK.



The Seven Ages of Film

The Mass Media Age

1980 - present

Film & movies as part of
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Digital production

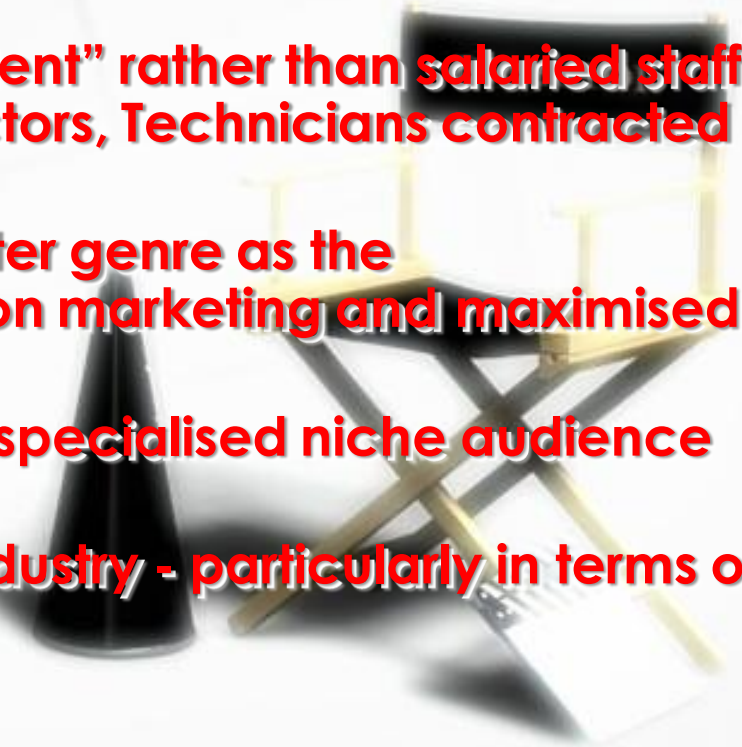


Mass-Media Age 1980 - Present

The growth of the Conglomerate in the 1950-70 period allowed for the emergence of Mass-Media industry.

REMEMBER that:

- 1) A horizontal control of the media with the Media Conglomerates able to exploit Film, TV, Books, CD, record, DVD publication for mass profit.
 - 2) Individual contracting systems for “talent” rather than salaried staff favoured by the Studios. Actors, Directors, Technicians contracted for single movies.
 - 3) The advent of the “Blockbuster” disaster genre as the Conglomerates look to mass saturation marketing and maximised profit.
 - 4) Smaller Production houses move into specialised niche audience orientated films e.g Woody Allan
- This has changed the face of the Film Industry - particularly in terms of production and distribution.



Mass-Media Age 1980 - Present

- » Modern Film industry has cross fertilisation from other nationalities” industries: e.g. India, Asia & Australasia.
- » Examples of films: *Bride & Prejudice*: Bollywood interpretation of classic English text *Pride & Prejudice*. A similar cross fertilisation happened with *Vanity Fair*.
- » *Matrix* utilised effects from Asian film: *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*.
- » *Utu*, a NZ film, was effectively a Western transposed into a NZ setting.



References

- » **Web-based:**
- » **Wikipedia - History of Film** - this site has numerous hyper links to specific sites on Studio System and international film industry.

- » **Texts:**
- » **How to Read A Film: Monaco. OUP. 1981**
- » **Studying the Media: O'Sullivan, Dutton & Rayner. OUP. 2003**

