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The Cinematic Landscape of the Americanisation Strategy in Hollywood: Americanisation, Popular Culture and Minorities Representation.

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Abstract

This paper intends to focus on the conception of Americanisation through a cinematic portrayal. The American cultural customs promoted in Hollywood movies may label a cunning ideology of steering global audiences and communities. The ubiquitous occurrence of American popular culture in movies can be a disruptive factor in expunging cultural distinctiveness outside the United States of America. In addition, the American predominance as a global power and the English language expansion all over the world made it easier to influence a larger audience. Moreover, movies industry tends to edit cultural aspects of the other to accommodate the American audience which soon after becomes a mere portrayal of stereotypes when aired. Even minorities that construct an important segment of the American social and cultural system struggle with their representation in Hollywood which gives a bigger scale of the problematic. The conventionalized consciousness sponsored by Hollywood leans for instance on glorifying the American white man as the supreme human being who could heroically find the ultimate resolution for himself as well as for the others. This would later be taken for granted by the global audience as they try to copy the American perspective to see the world appropriately. As a consequence, these communities lose interest in their own cultural scope as if they were inadequate to keep up with the American version. However, we can say that the nature of American culture was originally built on the basis of a melting pot including different cultures. The cosmopolitan nature of American culture might not be the reason behind altering the world into a replica of the United States, instead United States' reliance on foreign cultures have made it a replica of the world.

Key Words: Americanisation; Popular culture; Stereotypes; Minorities; Hollywood; Diversity.

Introduction:

Since the beginning of film making, Hollywood had a problem with representation. For over a hundred years the predominant “white” facet of the industry kept a very uptight scope delivered too its audience. The popular culture fostered by media in general and films in specific implies a certain approach to influence and control. The American cultural product is globally recognized, and yet the focus is still stereotyping the content. The poor quality of representation makes it even worse because of racial, ethnical, and even gender characterizations.

The need for representation and recognition made a slight improvement in the last few years through some of the blockbusters where the leading roles were given to African American actors for instance. However, the majority of producers and filmmakers have not considered implementing the marginalized categories to take part in their projects. Lack of diversity is extremely obvious. The set-up of the industry screams misrepresentation, and it is not even about recognition. While trying to give a space to the minorities, roles are ridiculously portrayed by white actors which deepens the issue. Several efforts try to advocate the matter of agency and representation, and written scenarios tackling minorities is getting more noticed, yet still on the overall scale they still struggle to establish a firm spot in Hollywood for the marginalized.

Americanisation Ideology (Utopian Socialism)

As the greatest country on the planet, the United States attained a dominating position and started leading the global scene. One way or the other, the globe is exposed to the American culture as a way of controlling the masses, and embracing those costumes and glorifying the American values inflicted by popular culture spread by the media. The Americanisation of the world is a brainwashing process that goes through nurturing the audience that all what is American is best. This would turn the whole world into a bigger version of the United States where everybody shares in the same principles, and if you don't upgrade to those standards you will be marginalised.

Film industry takes a huge credit in supporting the cultural criterion which means a solid guarantee to sustain the American individual's supremacy. By doing so, Hollywood would increase the potentials of feeding ideas under the umbrella of living the American dream. Even so, the problem stretch out to be a matter of trivia because of phony principles of equality. The American society suffers greatly from an endless discourse of discrimination

and racism, and that is the biggest reason to suspect and investigate the shallow image of the utopian cinematic America.

Americanisation is the remake of foreign film productions into US versions intended for the American viewers with an American cast as well. These new versions have to conform to the American culture. Altering the distinctive cultural features of the original work might be a cheeky attempt to gain two birds at once, the first one is promoting for Hollywood's generosity in representing the global cultural heritage, while the second one is adapting only what's good for the American audience and neglecting all the cultural uniqueness of the original works. Consequently, this would allow Hollywood to carry on dominating the international film scene.

The process of Americanisation goes beyond modifying the originality of the foreign product, aiming to erase numerous features that do not go along with the American ideology. The foreign audience would gradually start loosening up on their own values and priorities as a desperate attempt to fulfil the American way expectations. This kind of influence emphasizes the importance of how the collective unconscious could be manifested by individuals as an example of Carl Jung's Archetypes,

“So far as we have any information about man, we know that he has always and everywhere been under the influence of dominating ideas. Any one who alleges that he is not can immediately be suspected of having exchanged a known form of belief for a variant which is less known both to himself and to others.” (2014)

Accordingly, when a certain viewer is exposed to Hollywood productions, it only seems right to follow the pack, and it is not only about a small number of films, but it exceeds to be some sort of a cult where there are certain standards that cannot be adjusted in most movies. This means that the individual psyche can be tempered with through the integration of personal and collective unconsciousness. Therefore, it is clear how much damage could be caused by popular culture when it invades the international film scene. For that reason, Media nowadays has become a great tactical weapon to implant a new fashion of “Totalitarianism”. Hollywood attracts the audience, both local and global, with allusive perspectives in mind, financial gain and ideological dominance.

Minorities Representation

The dream of diversity in Hollywood is far from being realized. The acute discussion of favouring the “white” over people of color and men over women still has no clear answer. According to UCLA report “Hollywood Diversity” movie casts include only 20% of people of color, although they make up 40% of the population. Moreover, the annual report aims at highlighting the scale of progress concerning the agency of minorities in Hollywood, yet there seems to be no tangible improvement on the cinematic scene.

Inadequate results suggest that the decision makers are satisfied with the financial revenue, and how superficially they handle the matter of representation as long as they hit the economical objectives. Claiming that Hollywood is a platform of equal chances is still a far-away dream because of the misrepresentation of blacks, Asians, Latinos, Muslims, women, and anyone who does not live up to the American ideal. Labelling roles on the basis of color, religion, gender, and other standards is an unreasonable scope towards achieving equality and diversity.

Hollywood, whether intentionally or not, maintains a “systematic racism” where playing it safe is the main concern. For example, why Asians would be restricted to computing “geek” roles or specifically play martial arts characters, and why should Muslims be portrayed as violent and uncivilized. These are the reasons of stereotyping and categorizing the minorities as if it is their predestined fate. In addition, what makes someone American is not his ethnical background but rather the alleged American values. Here we notice some sort of a paradox, within the same community that recommends freedom and equal rights, the reality is completely different where the classic supreme white man rules all.

The United states of the world

The nature of the relationship between the US and the rest of the world is quite complicated. Sometimes we believe that the entire world is trying to replicate whatever US creates and promotes for. Diversity is supposed to be the foremost drive in the construction of the American culture. This country was built on the basis of multiplicity, freedom, and equal opportunity for everybody to live in a land of dreams. Yet, it appears that those principles faded away, instead came the vibe of making everything American with certain rules and limitations which defies freedom and multiplicity. Also, the suggestion of racial supremacy opposes equality of chances which suggests that the American original values were gradually abandoned.

Modeling the American lifestyle has become an everlasting trend for everyone wants to be American. Almost everything we eat, use, or watch is American, and we strive to replicate

the experience of that individual and that community. However, in a way the American individual is a product of a foreign land, so he could never live separately from the rest of the world, and yet we cannot deny of United States' lead in all sorts of fields.

Identity loss is the outcome of being exposed to American cultural virus, and peoples should gather around their cultural beliefs more and create their own legacy towards success. Sometimes the reasons of failure do not have to be as a result of discrimination, what if these individuals are just not good enough, looking for whatever excuses to blame it on racism and uniformity. The issue of identity blows up even in the most democratic country in the world, other nations should learn a lesson from that.

Americanisation threatens the foreign cultural heritage by limiting diversity. Even the mixture of the American society does not get the appropriate amount of representation. Bias in the United States is the biggest evidence of misrepresentation and conformity, and the cinematic interpretation works as an armor to protect and advocate the imaginary values of Utopian America. The issue of identity goes back to historical and political reasons, and when politics is mixed with art the latter loses its transparency. However, the American culture is indeed ahead of its rivals, and that is the result of a melting pot policy that embraces all and keeps only what is best.

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