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Submission date: 04-Dec-2020 09:59AM (UTC+0500)

Submission ID: 1464324316

File name: Economic_and_cultural_events_that_impacted_the_Hollywood.docx (20.68K)

Word count: 1634

Character count: 8635

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World Cinema II

12/04/20

Economic and cultural events that impacted the Hollywood

Hollywood films are seen to represent almost more than half of the total box-office receipts in US market and foreign markets. Hollywood has proven to be successful due to unmatched competitive advantages in its home base, a widespread distribution network, and the efforts by the US government to push for open foreign doors (Maltby, Richard, and Craven, 78). Over the years, Hollywood has been experiencing transformations bearing in mind that Hollywood and the sound system experienced two major events in its 1940s and 1950s. These events included the great depression and World War II which initially affected the industry and brought about a great downfall to the economy of the United States. Despite Hollywood facing challenging moments during this era of ² great depression and World War II, there is a variety of changes which took place in the industry which transformed its economy and culture by improving it in a great way.

Looking into the background of Hollywood status during the great depression, the rate of unemployment in US worsened. As a result, majority of people lost their jobs across the country. Buying of necessities and basic goods turned to be difficult since the buying power of a dollar was high. During this period, people found it difficult to attend film theatres as many would not afford the shows. Unemployment had reached its optimal leaving a large group of farmers and businessmen discouraged and failed, depression invading homes and hitting hard mothers and children across the nation. Surveys showed that about 25 percent of US was unemployed by end of the depression back in 1933 and at this point people would face stressing times to meet their needs (Morgan, 138).

However, despite the financial challenges faced by the nation, about 60-70 million Americans would attend theaters each week. This raised question as to why people would attend

movie theatres during such troubled times in the nation. The answer to the question was that there is a great relationship between the society, audience and film industry. According to Herbert Gans, the attention of an audience is determined by what was offered previously. If it was acceptable, not matter the arising issues, the audience will still go for it (Morgan, 140). In this case, Hollywood had tried to put customer taste for its films at the frontline making it a cultural object just like other industries back in the time. The films reflected the Americans desires making the Americans desire reflected films. This made it impossible for the Americans to ignore the impact of Hollywood despite how hard it had been hit ² by the great depression and World War II.

In those hard times, the US government started specializing in manufacturing arms. They sold the arms to their allies who were involved in the war. The manufacturing industry grew which as well led to major employment opportunities to people across the country. The economy grew and expanded tremendously in the 1940s. The economy was realized to witness a quadruple in the amount of manufactured commodities, and great improvement in the sales of the goods in other American industries (Morgan, 138). Film industry however was not left behind as many people could now afford cash to pay for the film tickets as they could manage to attend movie theatres since the economy had started stabilizing.

Hollywood has a popular imagination between 1940 and 1950 which included production of escapist movies. These movies were meant to distract the Americans from great economic crisis they had faced. Some of the movies produced has significant message which ranged from explicit to implicit and supported political, social and economic changes which were linked ⁴ with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal Programme (Morgan, Iwan, 136). Additionally, Hollywood took part in challenging traditional gender roles. This was seen in the representation

of women in movies and their roles with the studio system. The role of women in the film making and production was noticed to catch the attention of many audiences especially women. It was believed the Hollywood had started advocating for equity by taking into consideration women as it was not the case in other companies back in the days ³ in the United States.

There was ³ a great flourishing time for the film industry with an increased attendance in most film theatres. At the same time, film production acquired some independence in producing their films. This was realized in 1948 when utmost decision was reached and had a major landmark in US film industry (Maltby, Richard, and Craven, 109). The decision had an impact on the fate of industries independently owning movie theatres and freedom to show their movies in their theatres. Moreover, key issues and dealing arrangements had to be rendered illegal which eventually led to closure and end of the studio systems in Hollywood.

Companies like Warner Bros also started to incorporate musical sounds in films. This lead to many genres of music being adapted into movies in different scenes. The scenes where the music was used included background scenes and in other performances in movies with various singers being used. By the 1950s, major musical films started major trend in the industry. Some of those movies that used music include Girl can't help it. This movie includes a variety of performances where a talentless singer struggled and eventually became famous. In another scene, the character which was played by Jayne Mansfield, eventually became a star in the rock and roll style.

However, there is a wide-range of scenes where Jayne performed portraying multiple issues. An example, her performance in joie de vivre is known to be among the most influential and mind-captivating in the movie. It helps her to express the ideas of womanhood as the main aim as well as development of self-awareness (Neumeyer, 130). The major songs used in the

film are “The Girl Can’t Help IT”, “My Idea of Love” and “Tempo’s Tempo”. The movies did spark influence among individual who love rock ‘n roll music and various musicians as there was an inclusion of genre’s major stars. Some of the major performance stars included Little Richard and Eddie Cochran. The movie’s introduction use music in its background instead of having narrator’s voice or dialogues among characters.

Hollywood presence and fame was drastically changed with an introduction of music in the production of films. This changed ¹ the industry forever as pairing sound with motion pictures would not be a new thing since Edison had commissioned the kinetoscope that was essential in creating a visual accompaniment to phonograph. Therefore, Warner Bros purchased Vitaphone technology which was used in providing prerecorded orchestral accompaniment for the films in production (Neumeyer, 126). This ensured an increased marketability to smaller theatres that initially did not have orchestra pits hence making Hollywood a bigger company over others. By the end of 1927, Warner Bros has wired almost ¹ 150 theaters in the US and had released its second sound film a move which was a major breakthrough for the company.

Moreover, in spite the fact that Hollywood has acquired a competitive advantage over the years, the industry is never ultimately free from a variety of economic threats which emanate from different fields (Kraft, 290). Such threats are as a result of unpredictable shifts due to the structures of customers’ preferences for the motion-picture entertainment. The challenges are brought about by introduction of new electronic distribution technologies. These issues have had different impacts in how competitors run their businesses and its impact to Hollywood in the future. Such technologies are capable of making it possible to dispatch movies directly at a cheaper price to individual purchasers. This has a direct impact on big companies will face contest from small and more effective film companies.

The Hollywood film content faced challenging times from fear of communism.

Communism pervaded US in the late 1940s and early 1950s where Anticommunist began in Hollywood in 1947. At this period, House Un-American Activities Committee already has decided to investigate on communism in movies (Belton, 160). A number of screenwriters and directors were sentenced to serve in prison after refusing to testify. Hundreds of people got fired and a number of creative artists could not work in Hollywood again. These issues resulted to creative stagnation and with a combination of financial difficulties, there was the demise of the studio systems. The company as well could not employ any individual who was suspected to be a communist (Bodek, 342).

In conclusion, Hollywood is seen to have experienced ups and downs which have enabled it to grow to great heights ever since. Having the great depression, and world war II posing challenging times to the film industry, it is important to note there were multiple of transformation these issues led to its growth and expansion over the years. According to Herbert Gans, customers are the point of focus as they determine the growth of an industry depending with whether they accepted what was in offer previously. For that reason, Hollywood has got the attention of Americans through producing movies that reflect their desires making their significance impossible to be ignored what so ever.

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