Filmmaking: Behind the Scenes

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Abstract

Despite the emerging advances in technology, very few people seem to understand and appreciate the importance of art. Specifically, film makers play a more significant role than most people would like to think. Every person on this planet is affected by the film industry in one way or another, just as people are affected by any form of art. Cinematography fills an artistic gap that cannot be filled by photography, music, writing, or anything else. Cinematography is a collage of all of these elements, combined to create an entirely different form of art. Only through the analysis of the life of a film maker can one truly comprehend the hardship and the importance of their work.

Filmmaking: Behind the Scenes

Creative outlets such as film making have always been important aspects in learning, educating, expressing feelings, and entertaining. The media has such a big impact today because of the ease of access to it, which means the attention the media receives is more widespread than ever. Film production specifically is a lucrative, rising industry that is growing exponentially. The main goal of filmmaking has shifted, for some, from purely for entertainment purposes to assisting society in a practical manner. Those coming from an objective viewpoint want to know what the main role of modern film makers is. An important question to consider when analyzing this inquisition is "how have changes in technology and society affected the filmmaking industry, and how will they continue to affect the industry?" To answer this question, one must evaluate the effects of filmmaking as a whole, starting with the most prehistoric attempts at creating films.

History of Film

It is impossible to define what was considered a film during the contemporary time period in which the first set of moving images was captured. Defining a film today, even, is difficult, as any set of moving pictures can be classified as a film. Usually the term "motion pictures" is used to describe a set of images reproduced for an audience on a trajectory surface. However, looking at the technical meaning of a film, anything that occurs in motion at all can be called a film. Everything that happens around a person is a film, whether or not it is entertaining, educational, horrific, or dull. Life in the universe is a film, in a sense.

The physical history of film began after the photograph. Some would say film is a collection of photographs all merged together, however, filmmakers would probably argue that

motion picture and photography are two completely different fields with very different intentions. The absolute inventor of the first film-capturing device is foggy, as is the case with most inventions. It is impossible to determine who the very first person to capture a set of moving images was, although most experts would credit the feat to either the Edison Company or Louis and Auguste Lumière. The location of these parties was such a great distance apart and the projected dates of their creations were so unclear that it is not possible to distinguish which creation came first. The Edison Company is typically credited with the *Kinetoscope*, which was introduced to America in 1894 (Guynn, 2011). Louis and Auguste Lumière, the French competitors to the Edison Company gave tribute to the *Cinèmatographe*, the device which displayed the first screenings of film as well as capturing them (Guynn, 2011). These inventions gave way to the Neanderthal form of film capture and projection that evolved into what modern society considers film.

The current standards of film are obviously immensely different from the basic forms of film demonstrated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Film today is an eclectic field defined by audio and visual theatrics, digitally created images and effects, and extremely high quality captures of scenes that were actually filmed. The advances that the film industry has made in the last century are undeniably remarkable. Such progress in this business reflects the shift of emphasis of American culture as a whole; technology is rapidly advancing. The intricacy of current technology would be simply unfathomable to contemporary citizens of the nineteenth century. In addition, the role technology plays in peoples' lives nowadays is massive. Technology now acts as a crutch to children of the twenty-first century. In this respect, the film industry directly mimics these exponential advances and newfound purposes/effects.

What is the purpose of film?

To understand what filmmaking does for society, one must understand what society does for filmmaking. The effects of technology on the film industry are extremely significant. Gabe DeLoach, an independent filmmaker, said in an interview:

> "Computers have influenced film greatly. Just look at George Lucas
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> going back and altering scenes in his old Star Wars flics. Some of the
>
> most popular films with kids are made with computer generated
>
> graphics. Traditional animation has taken a back seat in mainstream
>
> cartoons and films, I believe. As for the internet, well that has
>
> simply changed everything about our lives, so it isn't fair to try and
>
> boil it down in the film world."

Computers have clearly changed the world in such an enormous way that the way people function has been drastically altered as well. Each day, researchers, scientists, and experts are making new discoveries and creating new inventions and methods that are making life easier and advancing the knowledge of the human race. The products yielded by scientific experimentation are what further our knowledge of the universe and what shed light on our purpose as people. The lucidity of technology directly affects the results produced by it. Fortunately for people of the twenty-first century, technology has advanced to a point where most people can agree that life is much less stressful.

Therefore, it can be said that technology has affected film in the same way it has affected everything else. The widespread field classified as art is only one of the many subjects enhanced

by the growth of technology and science. Specifically, the methods in which artists create films, photographs, music, and various other forms of media are only byproducts of the rapidly advancing science used to enhance peoples' way of life. The computer, for example, has provided the most efficient possible way to create high quality films, and is arguably the most useful tool humans have ever created throughout all history. Through the use of a computer and a camera, both of which are relatively cheap, the average consumer can produce a film uncomparable to films of the early twentieth century. The tools humans have at their disposal have made all tasks, especially film production, infinitely easier than they would have been in the past. The amount of effort it takes to produce a film today is an extremely miniscule fraction compared to what it took to make a film in the 1900s.

What has been filmmakers' contribution to society? First of all, films are produced for a number of reasons. Videos are a form of media, as shown on television, on computers, and on phones. As with most forms of media, the purpose of broadcasted video is usually to inform. The news, for instance, is a commonly used example to demonstrate the importance of the motion picture industry. Without an easily accessible way to gain current information, citizens of the world would not be on the same page, metaphorically speaking. Thanks to the advances made in the film industry, people are all able to receive up-to-date information concerning important matters in the world.

Another very important purpose that filmmakers fulfill is to educate. To elaborate, those who pursue educational careers have long been recognized as some of the most important members of society. Teachers and others who strive to educate the youth hold the responsibility of our future. After all, without a proper education, one cannot hope to benefit himself or others

around him. That being said, there are many ways to educate people. Teachers usually choose to take a hands-on approach with children, assigning them physical tasks such as writing, reading, and solving problems. However, for those who do not have access to a public education, cthose who cannot afford an education beyond high school, or for those who are simply too old to return to school, learning through video is another option. Over the last few decades there have been a growing number of video tutorials that can be found on the internet or in the library that offer lessons on how to do almost anything. It has been proven that learning through video can be just as effective as any other method of learning. The rise of the Internet has expanded the topics covered by educational videos. In addition, the Internet has expanded the incredibly large collection of educational films, giving people the opportunity to learn more so than ever before.

The sole reason for the creation of the Internet was to stream bits of information to other computers, via a national network. In a sense, this is a metaphor for the film industry. Filmmakers produce works through video clips, audio files, and computer-generated images that usually come together to create something beautiful or meaningful. When producing said works, the main goal of filmmakers is to have their films viewed by a large audience, or a specific audience whom they want to impress. Luckily for modern filmmakers, this is easier than ever before, although it is still quite a challenge. The physical capabilities in contemporary society are seemingly limitless: one can send their film directly to a company/audience, post it on the web, take part in a public screening, among hundreds of other methods. However, capturing the attention of the audience is a much more difficult task.

Perhaps the biggest challenge modern filmmakers face is gaining and keeping the attention of the audience whom they want their films to be viewed by. From generation to

generation, the youth are becoming more and more impatient and accustomed to having everything available at their fingertips. This means that filmmakers have to work particularly hard in order to release their films in a timely fashion if they want them to be viewed by the majority of people.

The final purpose of film is to entertain. This aspect is usually overlooked or taken light-heartedly. Most people fail to acknowledge that entertainment plays a semi-important role in our lives. Although entertainment is definitely not a need, everybody desires some form of entertainment to pass the time or to enliven his or her otherwise-dull lives. Entertainment is, however, a serious purpose. Films, especially modern films with high production value, are meant to lighten up negative situations, inspire creativity, and aid the imagination of viewers.

Effects of Society on Filmmaking

By this point, it should be clear enough that the film industry has held a huge significance among society. However, to ensure an accurate analysis of modern cinematography, one must observe the effects that society has had upon filmmakers. Just as film production has benefited the public in many ways, society has greatly improved the film industry. Although there have been negative effects as a result of human nature, society has ultimately led to the further advance of filmmaking.

The first stance one may take in analyzing the effects of society on filmmaking, or any other topic, is the general effect of human nature. The mere presence of humans is an arguably the most important factor in any business, and the foundation for all products, services, and forms of entertainment. Everything people have ever done and will continue to do has been

because of the human population. Arts, products, services, and virtually everything else that has

been created has been was made to make life easier or more enjoyable. Filmmaking is no

different; the film industry is standing today solely because of the human need for entertainment

and means of communication. The reason the film industry is currently thriving is because now,

more than ever, people need an immediate form of information and entertainment, which is

provided in film. The demand for new technology is constantly being met and surpassed by

experts, meaning that the age of information is more prevalent than ever. In the past,

communication was not as necessary because of the simplistic way of living. In modern times,

however, it is important that everybody is familiar with current technology, the web, and the

ever-changing information around them. Whether viewing video files on a mobile phone or

streaming movies on television, it is undeniable that film producers play the important role of

satisfying the demands of society.

Although humanity is at the root of the film industry, society has caused filmmakers

countless problems. Popular demand has influenced the types of films that have become

successful and popular. Unfortunately, the type of films the public demands is the unimportant

one. Documentaries, informational videos, and generally positive films have all become less

abundant in the last decade or so, due to the high demand for thrilling movies. Although it is

good that such films are being produced, the negative side to this is that filmmakers are less

motivated to create powerful, meaningful films. As a result, the overall quality and quantity of

such films has diminished significantly.

In addition, society has placed little value on filmmakers. Although some do venture to

appreciate the art of cinematography, most do not care beyond visiting the theater to see their

movies. Such ignorance has caused the number of independent filmmakers to almost vanish.

Lack of funding has prevented independent film production companies from growing and

prospering, causing many of them to go out of business. Because filmmakers do not receive

social rewards regarding wealth, power, or prestige, a part of the industry has suffered.

Future of Film Production

Obviously film production has come a long way from the prehistoric models of what are

now cameras. The vast amount of pixels that can be captured in a single frame with modern

cameras is unimaginable. The special effects film editors are able to create on a computer are

simply amazing. The impact that the film industry now has on society is incredible. All of this

is irrefutable evidence. However, people are left to wonder, "what is the future of filmmaking?"

Experts agree that there is no way to say for sure, however, most can venture a guess based on

what direction the film industry is currently headed.

Based on the last century, it is undeniable that the film business has risen at an

exponential rate. As previously stated, this is a result of the advances made in technology.

Given the relatively short amount of time it takes for experts to create groundbreaking

inventions, one can assume that in the next few decades technology will continue to grow. This

means that, hopefully, new cameras will be available to the public, more advanced editing

techniques will be revealed/invented, and the overall quality of films will be enhanced. Looking

at the film industry on a small scale, one could say that it is probable that films will continue to

advance every day.

However, looking at the film business from a different angle tells a different story. To

truly analyze the film industry thoroughly, one must separate the term into two parts: large film

companies and independent filmmakers. Blockbuster companies, such as Warner Brothers

Films, represent the corporations made up of hundreds of professionals working together to

create a traditional film, usually a movie. Independent filmmakers, on the other hand, are the

people who work alone or with a smaller group of people to create different types of films that

do not receive as much publicity, such as documentaries and educational films. The blockbuster

companies are always experiencing a rise; because of the astronomical number of dollars they

bring in, they are able to fund more films, purchase nicer equipment, hire more professionals,

and just generally increase the quality of future films. Independent companies usually struggle

to fund their films, which are less popular and usually do not venture past a local screening.

 Besides the smaller audience, smaller film companies have difficulty finding success because of

the lack of patience most people express. People nowadays usually do not have the patience to

give such films a chance, as these films are different from the types of movies and videos they

usually view. Gabe DeLoach put it this way:

> "I wish but I don't see that happening. There may be less money for
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> more blockbusters, but there will always be blockbusters. The key is
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> to make them good... I think what it comes down to is a successful
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> story formula, and many independent films don't follow that formula.
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> Mainstream audiences don't have the patience to watch films they don't
>
> know anything about. If anything, independent cinema is just more
>
> accessible for independent cinema watchers." (G. Deloach, personal
>
> communication, 25 October 2012)

That is an accurate way of explaining it: Blockbuster companies play a less important role and require less creative effort, and generally follow a similar formula. Independent filmmakers deserve the popularity that the large corporations receive because of the artistic ability they express through their films. When broken down into separate parts, it is safe to say that independent cinema will most likely continue to be underappreciated and underfunded while blockbuster film producers will experience a rise.

Filmmakers undoubtedly play an important role in society. Not only do they educate through their films, they entertain audiences and inform people on important issues. Whether viewing the film industry from a split perspective or viewing filmmakers as a whole, it is indefinite that the future of the film industry is hopeful.

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