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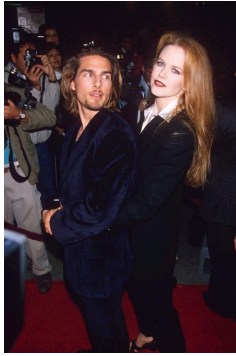
Arts & Entertainment Media

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Why Do We Love To Watch Films?

Film. One word that holds such importance in our everyday lives. The string that holds the cultural tapestry of society. It's ability to evoke emotions we didn't even know were there, its way of taking us on an adventure or transporting us back in time. It speaks to our deepest desires, secrets, hopes, dreams, fears, and aspirations. It is important to give recognition to cinema in terms of its huge cultural impact dating to the golden days of Hollywood, all the way back to the 20s. Though, I believe films in the 20th century specifically have added a very special sweet touch to our society today. This critical commentary will examine and breakdown our true love affair with the silver screen.

Going all the way back to the 20s, actors hold a very unique status in comparison to other celebrities and professions in our world. Actors are influential, but also hold such a special kind of skill and talent. They have a job where everyone has the chance to appreciate their craft. They gain respect for the blood, sweat, and tears they put into every project. Actors such as Julia Roberts, Tom Cruise, Drew Barrymore, etc. especially during the [90s](#) and [2000s](#) have had a strong cultural impact on our current society. Things like clothes trends, likes and dislikes, even down to what you eat could be influenced or subconsciously have been affected by an actor down the line. They are known as icons for movies we all grew up watching and imagining our lives like the movies they act in. These movies affect our values and beliefs that we bring into our own real lives, but I will get into that later.



When you think about the whole experience of watching a movie, there are so many elements that add excitement to our everyday lives. Going on X (previously known as Twitter), and seeing a new movie announcement & trailer release. Allowing us to sit in our anticipation and think of how fun it will be to go to see it. As a movie lover, going to the theater to see a film is probably a Top 5 feeling of best places to be. Whether you are alone or with company, it is always such a privilege to go to the movie theater. Another huge plus is the obvious snack selection. I personally am an extra buttered popcorn and Coke ICEE girl, but from sour patch kids to nachos to even a soft pretzel, the options seem limitless. There is such a distinctive [lore of movie theater popcorn](#) with seeing a movie, and everyone in our society knows about it. It's a part of the reason why the movie community is so connected.

Imagine this, you walk into the movie theaters and immediately smell the buttery popcorn. You buy your tickets and make your way into your theater. You spot your row and you smile as you finally walk into your selected seats and start to get comfortable. The lights dim down, the room is quiet, and the film begins to start. The volume is raised, and everyone cannot take their eyes off the big screen. The experience is already immediately enhanced, and the passion and emotion can be felt more deeply. Finally the best part of this whole experience is the

new memory you get to hold onto. That feeling you get watching your new favorite movie is now transportable, hence the creation of a comfort movie.

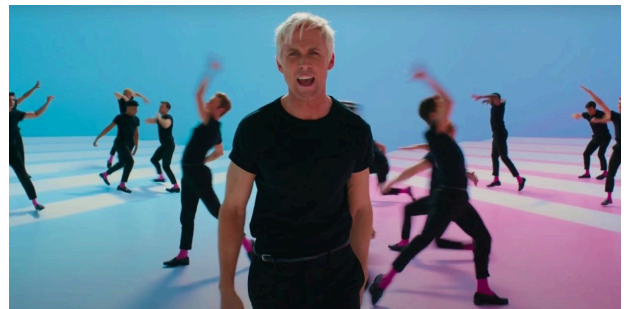


Culturally, films have taken inspiration from real life events and moments from history. In this 20th century, especially in the past decade, films have had such a large cultural impact, and we as a society have seen the growth of culture in filmmaking and screenplay adaptations. Some examples of some very well crafted films recently include [Barbie](#), [Killers of the Flower Moon](#), and [American Fiction](#). All of these films were nominated at this year's Oscars for 2024 Best Picture, and are included in several other categories.

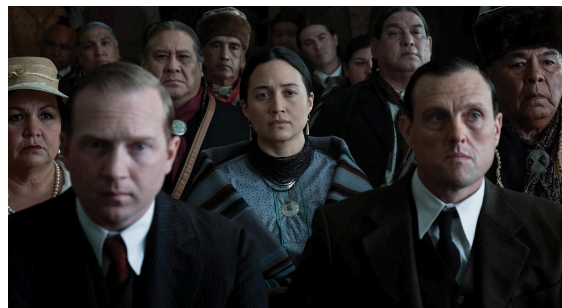
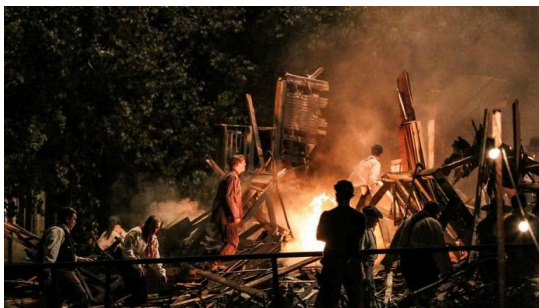
Starting off strong with "[Barbie](#)", Greta Gerwig and Margot Robbie have brought together some amazing and talented women to showcase women in a bright, fun light. The Barbie's in this film include President Barbie, Astronaut Barbie, and many others. But, what makes this film special is we follow Stereotypical Barbie, and her growth as she travels from perfect Barbie World, to real life. She sees that women aren't held to the same standard, and she starts to experience feelings that are so important to the everyday human experience like sadness,

shock, and self insecurities. The movie comes to a point in the end where Barbie now realizes that women can do millions of things in Barbie World, but in the real world it still won't be "enough". She comes to the conclusion that she doesn't want to exist for the stereotypes that exist for her, but rather live for herself and find out more about her. Women don't need to have amazing hair, or perfect legs with no cellulite, or even holding a certain high-paying job. The point is to show women just simply existing, and that being okay. It seems like a pointless concept in hindsight, but was such a necessary movie. Showing women in every aspect of life, and the joys of just growing up as one.

The irony of the film after it hit social media was the media's reaction. When the announcement for the Oscars came out, Ryan Gosling was not only nominated for Best Actor as Ken, he was also asked to perform "[I'm Just Ken](#)" at the Oscars as well. Meanwhile, Greta Gerwig was not nominated for Best Director, as Barbie's director and Margot Robbie was not nominated for Best Actress, as the main character, Barbie. This just goes to show that a movie like this brings up talking points that we still need to discuss and deal with within today's society.



Next, we have “[Killers of the Flower Moon](#)”, including leads [Leonardo DiCaprio](#) and [Lily Gladstone](#), sheds light on how history has treated Native American women as “people not worth investigating” with the many murders and disappearances. An impactful and important stepping stone in Hollywood, is having an Indigenous women like Lily play the role in a way that is so natural and simplistic yet informative. Human storytelling is so important because it gives us a space to be empathetic, without even thinking about it. A story like this stays with you, and may even change you as a person. You now live with more awareness and hope for the future of humans.



The last film of focus is “[American Fiction](#)”, a screenplay turned film adaptation starring Jeffery Wright, covering an interesting view of the “dynamic that exists in terms of messaging and misrepresentation of the Black community. A satire of the stereotypical “Black story” and calling out white expectations of the themes of Black literature. Though all these films do deep dives into topics that exist in our culture, but aren’t always truthfully talked about, there is

always going to be room for improvement and growth. But, as a viewer, I enjoy films like this where I can relate it to things I observe in life and the people around me.



The power of cinema is so profound, we don't even realize how it [impacts](#) and [influences](#) our morals, values, and beliefs. Watching a film is a way of blurring the lines between fiction and reality. We don't always do it intentionally, but sometimes it's easier to give in the world we only have to observe, not exist in. At the end of the day, films are just storytelling in video form. Especially with films that are based on real life events, being the observer we immediately see that and think, "What would I do? ", "Do I agree with this?". It is such a great gift to have access to something that possesses the ability to "transport audiences and viewers to different worlds".

A great example is the film, "The Shawshank Redemption" showing "[moral values like honesty, hard work, unconditional love, kindness, compassion, and co-operation](#)". Themes like these are crucial to the human experience and to help guide them throughout their lives. I

watched this movie for the first time as a child, and I still remember certain scenes from the film that I hold with me today. It told a story pertaining to social and class inequality and growing up in a place where the diversity wasn't a high percentage, I understood the societal rules that came with it. Especially, when it came to institutions of mass incarceration. This is why I believe film is so important, whether the themes are positive or negative, regardless they are crucial to our society.

Critics discuss this exact concept and break down the reasons for our communal love for films. Critics of The New York Times, [Manohla Dargis and A.O. Scott](#), go back and force discussing the future of cinema and if it will still affect culture like it currently is and has in the past. A great point brought up by Dargis, "Movies, unlike branded entertainment, need to live in the world, not just on personal devices. This isn't about the putative romance of moviegoing, but how people experience art and culture, because while we're talking about infrastructure, we are also talking about pleasure — the pleasure of the cinematic object, and the pleasure of your company and conversation". At the base of its existence, film is simply storytelling and everyone can enjoy a good story.

A not credited writer and critic at [Pratt College](#) compares films that were released that had real life effects. According to Pratt, some examples are, "the film "Fight Club " inspired underground fight clubs in real life, that spread beyond just the US all over the world". The film "The Day After Tomorrow" brought the conversation of global warming to life. Even the children's movie "Bambi", causes a huge drop in hunting because the movie depicts a mother deer being killed by a hunter in front of the baby: the Bambi effect. It is truly crazy how much influence films hold with us as humans. [Multilingual's](#) Sarah Morris, discusses the undisputed raw power of movies' ' analyzing how themes from movies translated into our world politically,

socially, and economically through history. As this main theme continues to be repeated and brought up, it is clear that many people agree with the intense level of influence films hold on our world.

“Every film can reflect society and transform opinions”

As you can see, the lasting result of films comes from not only their ability to entertain, to make us feel, but to also stay with us and continue to shape our perceptions, morals, beliefs, and overall self identity. As a society, we have collectively found a strong connection with the power of cinema. We feel it and embrace those feelings, experiencing every moment whether it fits into our reality or not. Like Alice looking into the hole following the white rabbit, we follow the storyline and open the window into this fictional world, and bring all we see and imagine into our own world. The impact of films on our culture is undeniable, and it has created a community for all of us to enjoy.