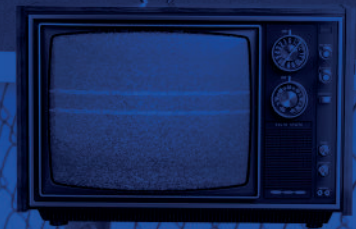


# Usta Speaks

12th edition

## The Pursuit of Happiness

# 12th edition



# Usta Speaks

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# Editorial: Cinema and Television

In the past, USTA Speaks has been about relevant topics more or less transversal to the modern experience. The last few editions of USTA Speaks were about issues that might compromise some of us in one way or another, like the way we went through a pandemic or how modern women have shaped our understanding of the world around us. This edition of USTA Speaks, however, talks about something common to our modern experience of the world: Cinema and Television. Unless you grew up under a rock, you had access to a TV set in your childhood; you witnessed the development of contemporary culture through that screen. From the soap operas to the reality shows our mothers loved to watch; from the cartoon programs we watched after school to the news that were on during lunch: Television had an impact in our everyday life, whether we wanted it or not.

The influence Cinema and Television had in the first years of the century was blown up once we entered the digital revolution. The trends that once were national became global when the biggest platforms took a hold of the screens in computers, cellphones and those Television sets that became smart and another window to the digital world. When we entered this era of technology, media became an even bigger part of our national and personal identities. The access that the internet provided allowed us to find movies outside of what was on TV or the local cinemas. We discovered movies and television shows that resonated with the deepest parts of ourselves, and we found communities around those audiovisual products that became our favorite. There is no doubt that, on a personal level, what we consume in terms of media shapes who we are as a person, but what about the impact movies and television have on society as a whole?

That's the question we aim to answer in this edition of USTA Speaks. The articles we have selected for this edition reflect on the ways movies and tv series have influenced society: on the values, beliefs and behaviors that are introduced, reinforced and changed by those products that reach massive audiences and deliver such strong messages. The following articles reflect not only on the positive effects audiovisual media has left in our society, but they also dive into the parts of us and our way of living that become darker with the influence of cinema and television. We hope you enjoy the selection of articles and that they make you think about the ways your favorite shows or movies have made you the person you are today.



**Jessica Galvez Granada.**

Lead editor

Universidad Santo Tomás, Villavicencio.





"I believe in the power of story. I believe that stories have an important role to play in the formation of human beings, that they can stimulate, amaze, and inspire their listeners"

*Hayao Miyazaki*



# The role of cinema in the formation of human beings

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## Abstract

*This article discusses the importance of cinema in history to understand how movies have shaped society, its influence on values and human behavior, and to see how it has contributed positively and negatively to the development of social dynamics, especially, in understanding the role of cinema in the formation of human beings.*

### \*KEYWORDS

movies society modernity media

películas sociedad modernidad medios

Since the beginning of time, humankind has told stories. However, more than a century ago, the narrative arts acquired a new tool: cinema, making it impossible for anyone who reflects on the subject to ignore the positive contribution of this medium in human formation, helping in the rapprochement and diffusion between cultures, and capturing reality while serving as an entertainment instrument. Nevertheless, cinema, like all things, is full of risks. Being such a powerful dissemination weapon, it can share messages of all kinds. As society progresses, it is formed and informed through cinema. Films of all kinds are shared daily and are available to anyone who has the necessary means to access them. It is with the magic of cinema that another method has been created to capture the reality of everyday life, giving meaning to the most mundane issues that surround us in our day to day, thus stimulating new ways of thinking about gender roles, sex, love, religion, patriotism, honor, ethics, morality and thousands of other issues, allowing the viewer to question what they are consuming and reflect on the message that the story is transmitting. Cinema is an instrument that asks questions and raises emotions, thus impacting the person who sees it on all sensory levels.



We can think of cinema as a vehicle between the language of the artist and the spectator. That is, beyond the rational articulation of what is to be transmitted, it redefines that meaning through an emotional component. Movies usually have a message that goes beyond the plot, it is never just about what is seen on screen. The director tries to enter the viewer's life through the staging that takes place, whether it is a narrative about life, about culture, about war or about a fantastic world. A film will reveal something new about ourselves. That is why even the most absurd movie hides a message that the viewer must understand and interpret, of course. This does not eliminate the fact that there are some films that have a simple and clear message, as would be the case of those films that tell stories of real people who have overcome adversities, because beyond moving the viewer, it inspires and motivates you to keep going, giving you a different perspective on life.

However, since it is a dissemination tool that anyone can use and of which we are all recipients, it is necessary to use it with caution, since it is not a harmless medium. From becoming a weapon of political propaganda to misinforming the masses, cinema can be dangerous in the hands of those who understand its role in the formation of human beings and want to negatively influence reasoning processes, creating socio-emotional barriers in each individual and promoting hate speech among different cultures. The most direct example was during the Cold War that two countries dedicated themselves to the creation of patriotic films that reinforced the idea of an enemy. I would like to say that although years have passed, people are aware of the impact of cinema, and these types of films are no longer produced, the mark they left can still be felt in some areas of those societies. Bad habits, behaviors and attitudes are a recurring situation on the big screen, leaving the viewer the responsibility of consuming this content intelligently, without being influenced by negative discourses and without giving in to the temptation to replicate them.

Cinema allows us to observe life; it is a universal element that mobilizes the senses, the intellect and the reasoning. That is why it has become a very important means for the formation of human beings. Likewise, it is through the empathy that a person generates with a situation or with a character on the screen that they manage to develop a better understanding of themselves and everyone around. In order to learn from what we see, it is necessary to have a film education, this is what allows us to distinguish the real from the accessory, to look at an image and decode it. In this way, we will learn not to be influenced by generic discourses but to have our own critical position of that art narrative we consume. Cinema is a universe, good and bad, complex and simple, everything and nothing at the same time, which shows how society has advanced and how it has gone backwards simultaneously. It is a world of ideas at our disposal, depending on us to choose the message that we will take from a movie, because you are never the same after the credits roll by.





*"I may not be very smart, but I do know what love is"*



Mom says that life is like a box of chocolates:  
you never know what you're going to get

*Forrest Gump*

*Forrest Gump, 1994*







# Media and the Perception of Reality

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## Abstract

*This article explores the possible negative influences of digital entertainment, such as movies and series on our way of thinking and how society relates to the world. It analyzes different aspects of everyday life that are affected by these types of media and warns the reader about its influence on people's actions, whether it be violence, reinforcing gender stereotypes, or affecting social and romantic relationships.*

## \*KEYWORDS

Digital entertainment violence personal relationships

Entretenimiento digital violencia relaciones personales

Since the emergence of cinematography, movies and content such as series and soap operas have generated quite an impact on people's perception of reality and the way we think about the world and ourselves. In the modern world, series and television have risen their ranking in terms of popularity, becoming one of the most influential mediums of modern culture. It is true that television is used as a means of entertainment, but the reader should also bear in mind its impact on society. According to psychologist Albert Bandura, these entertainment outlets can act as monitoring models to observe their influence when it comes to thinking and perceiving modern reality (1986). In addition to this, the lack of diversity in the entertainment industry can generate negative and unrealistic stereotypes and it even limit opportunities for some social groups (Hunt et. al, 2018). Observing this, it is possible to notice the social impact of movies, series and television in terms of how generations have developed around digital entertainment.

The argument of some critics about movies and series normalizing violence, sexism, homophobia and other negative attitudes has taken quite a lot of strength when studying social phenomena and the behavior of people in large areas of everyday life (Freedman, 2002). However, films and series can be used

as tools for social education and even to influence people's conscience from childhood, providing important values for life. Taking into account the above, it is ideal to explore these perspectives and study the considerations of how human behavior is influenced by television entertainment and its variants.

## **Movies and TV shows affect the way we think about ourselves and others**

Movies, series, and these digital forms of entertainment have a major impact on the way we think about ourselves and others. They are a powerful mirror of society, shaping our perception of the world and influencing our beliefs and attitudes. This is how psychologist Albert Bandura argues that digital entertainment, which includes movies, series, soap operas, and animations, are often role models for many people. For example, when a child who watches animated series usually develops a perception of good and evil through the dynamics of the hero and the villain (Bandura, 1986). Moreover, movies and television shows have the ability to challenge social norms and promote social change. By portraying diverse characters and exploring important social issues, they can raise awareness, generate empathy, and inspire collective action. When we see characters from different backgrounds, cultures and identities, it broadens our understanding of the world and encourages acceptance and inclusion. Nevertheless, stereotypes and traditional roles can also limit opportunities for disadvantaged groups. Female characters portrayed as sex objects reinforce inequalities and promote narrow views of what women can achieve. The way women are perceived in society can affect the self-esteem and aspirations of girls and young women (Freedman, 2002). These are only some of the ways that the entertainment industry influences society in the 21st century, both positively and negatively.

## **Movies and series influence our attitudes toward violence and crime.**

The digital entertainment industry produces television programs, series, and animations which often contain scenes that portray violence and crime. According to several studies, exposure to violence through this medium may desensitize viewers, leading to this type of attitudes and tolerance towards them becoming increasingly normal (Bushman & Anderson, 2001). In addition, the interaction with this type of content may affect people's perspective when distinguishing right from wrong, or fairness from injustice (Vittrup & Snider, 2019). These methods of entertainment are the result and origin of cultural clashes. Since the beginning of the entertainment industry, programs that showed everyday life as the perfect and correct way of living were highlighted; sadly, this led to the side effect of many people taking those models of life too seriously. Once we consider this, the question of its possible implications arises.



## Movies and TV shows can influence the way we think about relationships

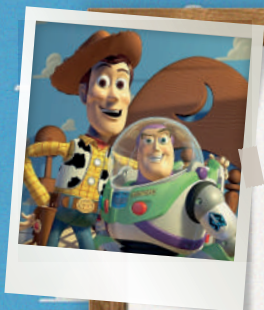
Media influences the thoughts, behavior and even the emotions of people, so much so that it has come to influence personal relationships. The variety of content can lead people to have different ways to maintain a love relationship. Some scenes show love in different ways and even show it in a perfect way, without problems or obstacles, which leads to the current society having issues sustaining a stable love relationship in real life (Gallego, 2008). Family relationships can be influenced by the expectations and perceptions created in movies and television (Arditti & Kauffman, 2019). It should also be taken into account that movies, series and digital entertainment should not be taken as role models. Likewise, it is necessary to consider that these representations can generate social and emotional pressure on people to make their own families conform to an unattainable and limited ideal. In addition, the images on screen often focus on traditional family relationships and do not always reflect the diversity of family structures and dynamics present in today's society. In conclusion, it is important to keep in mind that movies and series are fictional constructs. We must be critical when consuming them, always maintaining a realistic and respectful perspective of the complexity of human relationships.

Even after all that's been said, although films and productions can generate a beneficial impact by promoting diversity, challenging social habits and fostering compassion, it is relevant to consider the pernicious effects they can have. Manifestations of violence, gender stereotypes, and lack of diversity can influence the way we think, act and interact with others. It is essential that content producers assume their responsibility and work to solve these problems, encouraging a fairer and more positive representation in the television offer. Content creators and viewers must also be aware of the problems that this leads to; it is crucial for them to be critical and open to question the stories and messages that are portrayed in these stories, to prevent them from negatively influencing the society around them. It is expected that the progress in this type of content be more guided to represent positive inclusion, since today's audiences are more inclined to promote social change in a more constructive way.

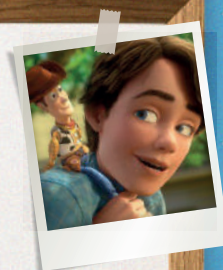
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**TOY  
STORY**



WHAT MAKES  
*Woody special*  
IS THAT HE WILL  
*never leave*  
*you, ever.*



ANDY





# Value Formation Through Movies and Series

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## Abstract

*This text explores the power of movies and series in our society, especially those aimed at younger audiences. It analyzes how these forms of entertainment transmit values and lessons through stories and characters that connect with the emotions and dreams of viewers. It takes as examples emblematic films, which portray the universal themes of friendship, imagination, and the struggle against adversity.*

## \*KEYWORDS

Movies series values

Películas series valores

Adventure, laughter and wonder are just some of the many emotions we feel when we watch movies and series. They are not mere entertainment, but powerful tools capable of shaping our perspectives and influencing our lifestyles. Movies and series reflect and influence how we view or relate to the world and the challenges we face, and how we aspire to live and grow. In this article, we explore how movies and series, especially those aimed at younger audiences, have left an indelible mark on the shaping of our society. From childhood, we become attached to characters and their stories, learning from their struggles, triumphs and problem-solving skills. Through characters like Simba, from The Lion King, Toy Story's Woody, and Harry Potter, we discover the importance of friendship, creativity and self-improvement. These heroes convey life lessons that ultimately have a significant impact on our lives. Reflecting and influencing the way we behave and act. Movies and series are an integral part of our culture and society; they provide us with confidence and optimism when facing life's challenges and remain by our side throughout our journeys.

In multiple dimensions, society has been profoundly affected by two types of media: cinema and series. Since its inception, cinema has been able to adapt to the changing preferences and needs of its audience, offering diverse formats, genres and styles, while remaining true to its nature as an art form and form of expression. In the beginning, cinema was a novelty that captivated audiences by presenting stories on the big screen that reflected or reconfigured their daily reality. Cinema has greatly influenced the world's

perception of things. It has the power to change people's aspirations and their thought processing capacity. If people feel identified or moved by a particular film, their emotions are drastically affected. Film, in addition to being a source of entertainment, has also been used as a medium to educate people, criticize society and bring social issues to light. Thus, it is in a unique position to show the different realities of our world.

Children and family films, true gems of the seventh art that have inspired and educated entire generations, transmit fundamental values through captivating stories and memorable characters. These films have a special appeal that transcends age and time, connecting with the emotions and dreams of millions of people. Films like *The Lion King*, *Toy Story*, and *Harry Potter* not only delighted millions of young viewers but left a lasting impression on our society by portraying universal themes such as friendship, imagination, and the struggle against adversity. Through these visual stories, the public can understand the power of collaboration, which enables us to meet challenges with the support and solidarity of our friends and allies. We also learn the importance of authenticity, which drives us to be true to ourselves and to express our identity and our feelings with honesty and freedom. In addition, we are inspired by valuable lessons about overcoming obstacles with courage and determination, which show us that we can achieve our dreams and goals if we do not give up in the face of difficulties and failures.

On the other hand, series, which have created a cultural and social phenomenon, have expanded the narrative horizon of cinema by offering multidimensional, intricate, and diverse narratives that unfold over numerous seasons. By delving into multifaceted characters, plots and themes, series have given rise to original and enriching stories. In addition, the series have formed groups of enthusiasts who come together to exchange perspectives and viewpoints on characters and plots, thus generating an exceptional social and cultural impact. By addressing universal problems and issues, series have served as a means of entertainment, reflection and dialogue.

Telling deeper stories and addressing important issues in society, politics, history, and culture is now done through television series. These programs offer a captivating way to explore and unravel characters and relationships over the course of several episodes. Through them, the viewer can witness the motivations, development and transformation of characters, without missing any of the action. Series also create fictional worlds that captivate the imagination and curiosity of the audience who feel part of them and live them intensely. Moreover, series can generate emotions, reflections, debates and learning in viewers, which in turn identify with or question the stories they see. On the other hand, the way of producing and consuming films and series has changed significantly. Thanks to new technologies and digital platforms, films and series have become more accessible and varied, offering a greater diversity of genres, styles, formats and perspectives. Audiences also have more freedom and control to choose what to watch, when to watch it and how to watch it, as well as to interact with other viewers and creators through social networks and digital media.

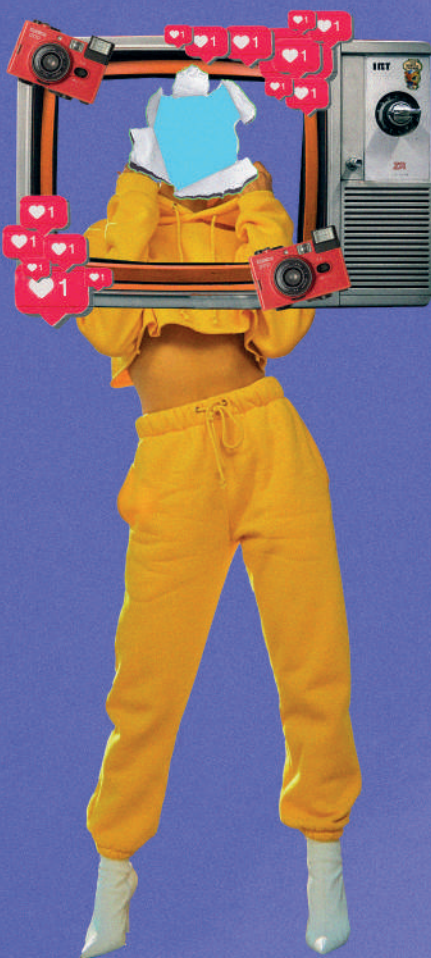


Movies and series reflect universal themes that affect us all as human beings. One of which is friendship, that is shown as a fundamental value to share experiences, feelings, and learning with other people who appreciate and respect us. Another theme is imagination, which is presented as the creative capacity to come up with stories, characters, and worlds that fascinate us and make us dream. A third theme is the struggle against adversity, which is represented as a constant challenge to overcome problems, conflicts and fears that prevent us from achieving our happiness. Through these visual narratives, we understand the power of collaboration, which allows us to face challenges with the support and solidarity of our friends and allies, who help us grow and improve as people. We also learn the importance of authenticity, which encourages us to be true to ourselves and to express our identity and our feelings honestly and freely, without being influenced by others' pressures or expectations. We are also inspired by the valuable lessons of overcoming obstacles with courage and determination, which show us that we can achieve our dreams and goals if we do not give up in the face of difficulties and failures but look for solutions and alternatives. Movies and series are, therefore, a source of entertainment and personal improvement.

In conclusion, the article analyzes the impact of cinema and series on society from different dimensions. It points out that both media are forms of art and expression that reflect and transform reality, influencing people's values, beliefs and emotions. They have adapted to the changes and demands of their audiences, offering variety and quality in their stories and furthering the interconnection between them and the society from which they emerge. Cinema and series educate, criticize and debate about different realities and problems of the world, generating awareness and reflection. Finally, cinema and series create art and culture, expressing different visions and narrative styles. The phenomenon of television series as a narrative medium allows telling deeper and more complex stories that address important issues of society, politics, history and culture. Series create fictional worlds that captivate the imagination and curiosity of the audience, who feel part of them and live them intensely; they can generate emotions, reflections, debates and learning in viewers, who identify with or question the stories they see. The way of producing and consuming films and series has changed significantly thanks to new technologies and digital platforms, which offer greater diversity, accessibility and interactivity.









# Stereotypes and Discrimination in Cinema and Television

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## Abstract

*Movies and television have captivated our attention, but they have also influenced the way we perceive the world and ourselves. In some cases, they have generated stereotypes and discrimination within society, due to factors such as a lack of diversity, sexism, satire, and cultural exclusion. Therefore, it is necessary for the industry to challenge these stereotypes and promote equality in its content.*

### \*KEYWORDS

Stereotypes discrimination diversity equality  
representation

Estereotipos discriminación diversidad igualdad  
representación

Movies and television not only entertain, but also have the power to influence how we see the world and ourselves. Throughout history, they have been responsible for creating and perpetuating stereotypes and discrimination. In this sense, both cinema and television have contributed to the degradation of society, "making femininity, gender and sexual diversity, blackness, indigenouness, fatness, ugliness, poverty, disability, and old age invisible and satirical. The media has collaborated in naturalizing the discourse of difference, inequality, and inferiority" (Pineda, 2015). The industry has kept alive a type of entertainment full of stereotypes and discrimination through devices such as gender discrimination, satirical representation of some social groups, and general lack of diversity and representation in movies and television.

For decades, movies and television have presented stereotyped and discriminatory characters and situations, especially regarding women. The representation of women as sexual objects and the underrepresentation of their achievements and abilities have been a constant issue in mass media. In movies and television shows, women are often relegated to secondary and stereotyped roles, such as the

“pretty girl” or the “damsel in distress”, while men have more complex and diverse roles (Lauzen, 2019). Additionally, the unrealistic beauty standards promoted in these media have contributed to the normalization of discrimination based on physical appearance (Thompson & Heinberg, 1999). Therefore, the existence of discrimination and stereotypes in the industry has been palpable, and to build a more egalitarian society, it is necessary for cinema and television to challenge these stereotypes and promote diversity and gender equality. Ultimately, these are powerful media that can influence how we perceive the world and others. Therefore, it is essential for them to take responsibility for combating discrimination and stereotypes and promoting equality and diversity in their content.

Movies and television have also used satire and ridicule to represent certain social groups, perpetuating stereotypes and discrimination. For example, LGBT+ characters have often been portrayed as caricatures or superficial people, reinforcing the mistaken idea that sexual orientation or gender identity are ridiculous or negative traits (Ryan & Gamson, 2006). Additionally, characters from different ethnicities and cultures are often portrayed in an exaggerated and simplified way, perpetuating racial and ethnic prejudices (Noble, 2018). Therefore, minority groups such as black people, the LGBTQ+ community, and people with disabilities, among others, have been subject to discrimination. This satirical and discriminatory representation can have negative consequences in society, including exclusion and even physical violence. To overcome these stereotypes and promote inclusion and equality, cinema and television must advocate for authentic and diverse representation of all social groups.

Another problem that contributes to the perpetuation of stereotypes and discrimination in film and television is the general lack of diversity and representation in the industry. Often, characters and situations are presented that reflect a single cultural perspective, leaving out many other communities and underrepresented groups (Hunt et al., 2018). According to a study by the University of California, Los Angeles, "racial and ethnic minorities are significantly underrepresented in virtually every area of film and television production" (Smith, 2016, p. 7). The lack of representation in the industry means that many people do not see their experiences and perspectives reflected in the media, which can perpetuate the idea that only one cultural perspective is valid (Hunt et al., 2018). Valuable experiences and perspectives are excluded, which can lead to certain privileged groups being the only ones considered when it comes to representation on the big screen, while others are relegated to marginalization and discrimination. For example, limited representation of African American characters in television shows and movies has deepened segregation and inequality in our society, as the lack of representation and exclusion can influence society's perception of them and can affect their ability to obtain employment and opportunities in real life (Hunt, et al. 2019). Therefore, it is important for the film and television industry to work to include a variety of voices and perspectives in their productions, which can help build a more inclusive and diverse society, which ultimately is essential to ending discrimination and stereotyping.

Hence, the entertainment industry has promoted stereotypes and discrimination in its productions, particularly regarding gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, culture, disability, and other marginalized social groups. Women have been portrayed as sexual objects and have been denied representation of their



abilities and achievements, with unrealistic beauty standards being imposed on them that generate discrimination based on their physical appearance or gender. Additionally, LGBT+ people and those of different ethnicities and cultures have been portrayed as caricatures, given negative or ridiculous roles, reinforcing prejudices and perpetuating discrimination. There is also a lack of diversity in the industry, which means that many cultural perspectives and valuable experiences are ignored and excluded, therefore, to combat these problems, it is necessary for the film and television industry to promote diversity and inclusion in their content and production, taking responsibility for challenging stereotypes and discrimination and promoting equality and authenticity in their representation.



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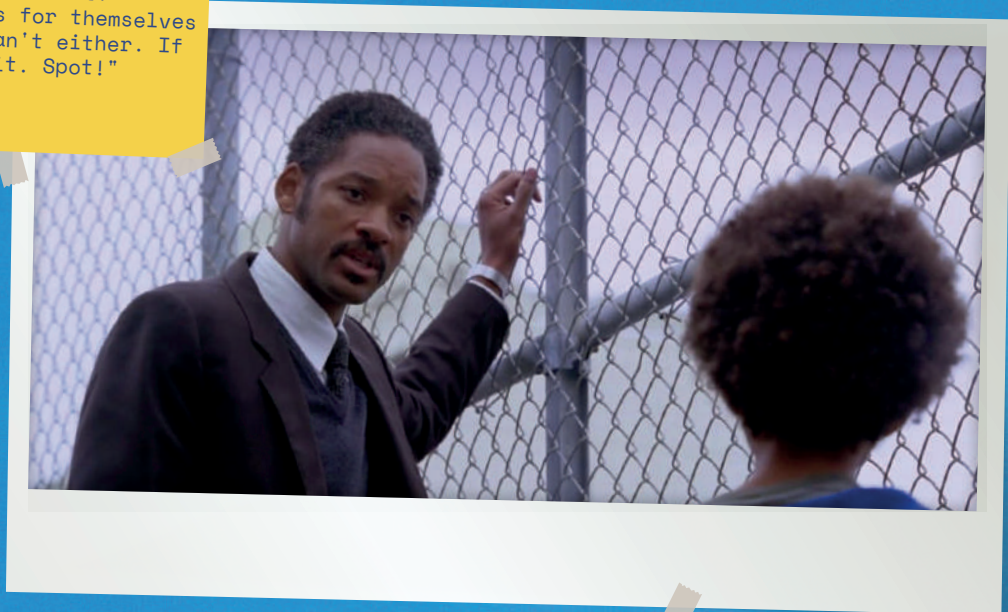
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"Never let someone tell you that you can't do something. Not even if I'm the one saying it. If you have a dream you must protect it. Sometimes people can't do things for themselves and so they tell you that you can't either. If you want something, go and get it. Spot!"

*The Pursuit of Happiness*



*The Pursuit of Happiness, 2006*



# How the cinematographic industry makes us change our minds.

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## Abstract

*This essay talks about the way in which the cinematographic industry shapes human behavior. It brings examples from the movie "The Pursuit of Happiness", the series "Squid Game" and the documentary film "Super-Size me" to support the claim that the seventh art can influence society, in the way that people think and act.*

### \*KEYWORDS

Cinematographic industry The Pursuit of Happiness

Squid Game Super-Size me

Industria cinematográfica En búsqueda de la Felicidad

El juego del Calamar Super engórdame

Does the cinematographic industry shape society? Cinema was named in 1911 by Riccioto Canudo as "the seventh art" because it is an object or an experience created through skill, expression, or imagination. The seventh art encompasses the six previous arts, which are architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dance, and poetry (Zona Cinco, n.d). This art is an entertainment tool and has the capacity to change beliefs and values in society, being an inspiration through sceneries and situations that make people develop critical thinking and evaluate their current beliefs and values, as well as change them. Examples of the before are the movie The Pursuit of Happiness, the series Squid Game and the documentary Super-Size me, which talk about topics that appeal to feelings and common values to the human experience.

A notable example of how movies can change the way people see things is the 2006 movie "The Pursuit of Happiness", starring Will Smith. This film is about an unemployed father named Chris Gardner; his wife is exhausted from that situation and decides to leave her home. The star loses everything and has to do whatever he can to provide his son with the best life possible. This movie shows us values like resilience, happiness, perseverance, love, generosity, hard work and effort. However, how can this film change us? It

is about the responsibility of having a family, how parents work hard to give the best to their children, and the economic and emotional difficulties that a lot of people come across in their life. In an interview by Kam Williams to Will Smith, he reveals that “He [Chris Gardner] personified the American Dream. It felt to me that the reason that America has been successful in this world is based on the idea that Chris Gardner is possible” (n.d). When people watch this movie, they think we have to look for solutions and keep going despite the situation. People cannot allow a bad moment to define their life; it is necessary to work hard because there will be precarious circumstances, but it is up to us to know what face to put on and what decisions and actions to take in those circumstances. Movies have this kind of influence in society; however, are they the only ones that generate it? What about television series?

Movies are not the only audiovisual tools to promote social change; the 2021 Netflix series, “Squid Game”, starring Lee Jung Jae, also contains a powerful message to appeal to the masses. The series tells the story of a man who lives with his mother and daughter, he does not do anything with his life, has a lot of debt and uses the little money he gets to bet on horse races. One day, he meets a guy who offers him 100.000 if he wins a children’s game. If he loses, the guy gets to slap him. The game appears innocent, but soon takes a dark turn (Abdul, 2021). This series has a lot of disturbing aspects, like violent scenes and the way characters suffer due to their debts. Lee Jung Jae said in an interview made by Stephen Colbert in 2021 that the success of the series is due to the fact that a lot of people felt represented by the themes it develops, in the pain for economic troubles or violent situations. Lee Jung Jae mentioned that “the level of violence that is depicted in the show contains a message of wanting to retrieve back the humanity that we lost in this extremely competitive cruel society” (2021). Every day people are in a competitive environment where those who do not have enough money have to do what they need to survive another day; it shows the face of the suffering that some people experience on a daily basis. Despite this, The Squid Game teaches its audience that people cannot become rich without any type of effort, that the consequences of our decisions are uncertain, and that if the world is not equal, people can still change it. The cinematographic industry is not just about fiction stories shown in movies and series, documentaries reveal real situations that have the power of influencing human life too.

“Super-Size me” is a documentary film launched in 2004, directed and starred by Morgan Spurlock. He made an experiment where he only ate McDonald’s food for 30 days; the objective was to show people how this kind of food affects the body in a physical and psychological way. The experiment had two variables: the eating habits and the health of the person involved. To demonstrate his point, he was monitored by three doctors: a general practitioner, a cardiologist/gastroenterologist, and a nutritionist/exercise physiologist during his experiment. The director wanted to demonstrate that eating junk food is extremely unhealthy and harmful through a criticism of the fast-food industry. The way he shows this point of view is using ethos, pathos and logos. We can see the ethos when he gives statistics and talks about the topic showing he really knows what he is talking about, giving validity to his experiment. Pathos is used by Morgan when he shows how he feels: he vomits and says that he thinks McDonald’s food is destroying his life. And logos is evidenced through the specialists he sees during the experiment, when they talk about how the food has harmed his body (IPL, n.d). The pillars of rhetoric indicated before are



tools used by the cinematographic industry at large to persuade the human mind; people feel addressed by these strategies and change their habits; in this case, their eating habits. Morgan Spurlock said in an interview made by Paula Crossfield “I do think the film did open people’s eyes, and at least opened the door to an even bigger conversation.”, added, “I think the biggest thing that happened after that movie was that it really turned me into someone who reads labels. It made me a really conscious consumer in a way I never had been” (2010). As we can see, the cinematographic industry not only shapes the viewers, but also the people who work within. This film is a heavy criticism of the fast-food industry: it aimed at changing society’s perspective on this kind of food using persuasive tools to convince and play with human values. After watching this documentary film, maybe a lot of people will think a bit more before eating some type of food.

The seventh art has the ability of reinforcing or changing beliefs and values in our society; it shapes us in that it can be a motivation to continue persevering, as seen in the movie “The Pursuit of Happiness”, or in that it is a reflection of the darkest aspects of the society we live in, as shown in the series “Squid Game”. It can even persuade audiences to have different eating habits by playing with our emotions and awareness, as the documentary “Super-Size me” did. The last examples mentioned before support the idea that this art can influence society’s thinking and actions.. However, does the cinematographic industry just make an impact on the areas I just discussed? Probably not, as this industry is so powerful that its impact goes beyond that, as it even reaches areas like economic development.



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