

“Everything, Everywhere, All at Once” Hollywoodization and Lack of Authenticity in Today’s Mainstream Cinema

Authors : Haniyeh Parhizkar

Abstract : When Sarris came up with the "auteur theory" in 1962, he emphasized that the utmost premise of auteur theory is the inner meanings and concepts of a film and that a film is purely an art form. Today's mainstream movies are conceptually closer to what the Frankfurt School scholars regarded as "reproduced" and "mass culture" years ago. Hollywood goes on to be a huge movie-making machine that leads the dominant paradigms of films throughout the world and cinema is far from art. Although there are still movies, directors, and audiences who favor art cinema over Hollywood and mainstream movies, it's an almost undeniable fact that, for the most part, people's perception of movies is widely influenced by their American depiction and Hollywood's legacy of mass culture. With the uprising of Hollywood studios as the forerunners of the movie industry and cinema being largely dependent on economics rather than artistic values, this distinctive role of cinema has diminished and is replaced with a global standard. The Blockbuster 2022 film, 'Everything, Everywhere, All at Once' is now the most-awarded movie of all time, winning seven Oscars at the 95th Academy Awards. Despite its main cast being Asian, the movie is produced by American incorporation and is heavily influenced by Hollywood's dominant themes of superheroes, fantasy, action, and adventure. The New Yorker film critic, Richard Brody, called the movie "a pitch for a Marvel" and critiqued the film for being "universalized" and "empty of history and culture". Other critics of Variety pinpointed the movie's similarities to Marvel, particularly in their storylines of multi-universe which manifest traces of American legacy. As argued by these critics, 'Everything, Everywhere, All at Once' might appear as a unique and authentic film at first glance, but it can be argued that it is yet another version of a Marvel movie. While the movie's universal acclaim was regarded as recognition and an acknowledgment of its Asian cast, the issue that arises here is when the Hollywood influences and American themes are so robust in the film, is the movie industry honoring another culture or is it yet another celebration of Hollywood's dominant paradigm. This essay will employ a critical approach to Hollywood's dominance and mass-produced culture, which has deprived authenticity of non-American movies and is constantly reproducing the same formula of success.

Keywords : hollywoodization, universalization, blockbuster, dominant paradigm, marvel, authenticity, diversity

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