



Silent Cinema



Sub: Film Studies (Fe
3)

By: Farah Faisal
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What is Silent Cinema?


- Cinema is a technique that projects a series of **frames** quickly and successively in order to create an **impression of motion**.
- It is a spectacle capable of moving masses and has served to create a new **language**, a different way of saying things, using different **techniques**, special **effects**, tricks and forms of **expression** that turn it into an **art**.
- We can refer to **silent film** as a form of **primitive cinema**, which has **no sound** of any kind. This is because the technology that existed at the time did not allow it.
- Silent film is a series of **images** and **movements** within a film that consists only of the image and movements of the **actors**, in other **words**, it has no **sound** within the **film** itself.

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- Silent film or silent cinema were basically that, films that had neither **voice** nor **music**.
 - To provide more **drama** and **excitement** to the films, the **music** in the silent film was played live in sync with the action that was slowly happening on the screen, and pianos, organs and other **musical instruments** were used.
 - Silent film producers brought famous films such as Ben-Hur, The Ten Commandments, The Circus and many more.




Characteristics of Silent cinema

- Among the main characteristics that could be observed in silent film the following can be mentioned:
- The **exhibits** of silent films were generally not really **silent** because they were accompanied by **live music**.
- Small towns usually had a **piano** to accompany the screenings.
- It was the main source of **employment** for the **musicians** of the time.
- It does not have any kind of **synchronized sound**.
- **Theatrical performances** based on more and more emphatic gestures were common.

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- The silent film was filmed in **rolls of 35 mm** and at slower speeds than the films with sound, it is for this reason that they tend to seem artificially fast, which emphasizes its unnatural aspect.
 - The **title writer** became quite a silent film professional, even got to be mentioned in the credits just like the **screenwriter**.
 - Usually **fast rhythms** were used for chases, more **serious sounds** when reflecting moments of mystery and **romantic melodies** for love scenes.
 - Most of the films were shot in **black and white**.



Origin



It can be said that the origin of silent film began around **1894** and lasted until **1929**. It reached **maturity** shortly before sound films appeared in the late 1920s. At the time, the visual quality of silent film was quite good, and it was not **distorted** as many people would have us believe.



History



- Before the 1920s, most of the movies that existed had no sound at all, they were basically silent. Before **sound** was added to movies, it was known as the “**silent era**” among film scholars and historians. The art of moving images grew until it reached full **maturity**, and before silences were replaced by sounds and images that had the ability to speak, many experts believe that the **quality** of cinema diminished in the **process**.
- As they gradually began to develop the **film industry**, filmmakers also discovered that music was an essential part of any film, as it gave the **audience** a great deal of emotional signals about what was happening on the screen.



Invented by.

- ➡ The silent film was invented in **1895**, with the projection of **Workers** leaving a factory, and was invented by the **Lumière brothers**, in the Indien salon in Paris, they thought their invention was a scientific matter.



Elements



- **The printed titles:** as they did not have audio to exchange speeches, some **titles** were used to clarify **situations** or to imply important **conversations** such as declarations of love, fights, thoughts.
- **Music:** it was the only thing that was used in the film projections. It was **played live** and was an **essential** part of the plays. Cinemas almost always had a pianist to accompany the films, some even had **organists** or full orchestras.
- **The presence of a narrator:** sometimes the projections had a **narrator** who related the actions or who was in charge of describing the situations with voice-over.
- **Body language and facial expression:** they were basic and had to be well handled by the actors, body expressions had to be correct so that the audience could **understand** what was **shown** on the screen.
- **The overacting:** it was an **exaggerated performance** to emphasize the main actions.



Significance

- Its importance lies in the fact that it was the first step towards having on the **big screens** what we enjoy today. If it weren't for its invention, **modern cinema** wouldn't have been a reality today. At the time, it was also a source of **work** for many artists and mainly for musicians.



Important Silent Movies.

- Some of the most important and outstanding films of silent film were:
- **Louis Le Prince's Roundhay Garden** (1888), which was the first silent movie and lasted only two seconds and showed two people walking around the Oakwood Grange Garden.
- **Dawn**, the first silent movie to win the Oscar for best film.
- **Sunrise** by F.W. Murnau, 1927
- **Man with a Movie Camera** by Dziga Vertov, 1929
- **The Passion of Joan of Arc** by Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1928
- **Battleship Potemkin** by Sergei Eisenstein, 1925
- **The General** by Buster Keaton, 1926
- **Metropolis** by Fritz Lang, 1927
- **City Lights** by Charlie Chaplin, 1931