

The Role Shaping of Film Makeup in the Evolution of Social Concepts: Taking Representative Works from Different Historical Periods as an Example

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Abstract: This paper explores makeup's role in shaping cultural and societal ideals through film across historical periods. It delves into makeup's evolution within culture and society, demonstrating its reflection of changing societal attitudes. The study examines contemporary views and makeup portrayal, particularly the impact of feminist movements on modern cinema. Makeup in films serves as a dynamic tool, mirroring societal progression and fostering diversity. In conclusion, film makeup plays a crucial part in cultural evolution, depicting shifts in societal perspectives and influencing viewpoints. Contemporary cinema's makeup, shaped by current societal perceptions, embraces diverse representation. Influenced by feminist movements, it presents female characters with increased independence and diversity, contributing to a broader discourse on societal values and actively shaping the ongoing evolution of cultural norms.

Keywords: Movie Makeup; Social Concepts; Hollywood Era; Feminism

1. INTRODUCTION

Movies, as a paramount medium of cultural expression, encapsulate a rich tapestry of societal notions and principles (Hall, 1997). Within this context, makeup, a crucial element of cinematic artistry, plays a pivotal role in shaping and portraying characters (Di Giovanni, 2016). Evolving in sync with societal constructs and ideological shifts, film makeup has undergone distinctive transformations across various historical epochs (Fischer-Kowalski & Haberl, 2007). The history of global cinematic evolution unfolds as a dynamic narrative (Kellert, 2003). Originating from early experiments in the late 19th century, traversing silent cinema and the introduction of synchronized sound, this journey culminates in a

contemporary, globally interconnected film industry (Altman, 2004). Figure 1 succinctly illustrates this developmental trajectory, providing a panoramic view of world cinema's historical progression. The pivotal epochs, including the era of silent films, the advent of synchronized sound, cinematic new waves, and the digital revolution alongside globalization, significantly influence cinematic technologies and industries. Moreover, they mirror persistent societal, cultural, and artistic aspirations within the realm of film (Crane, 2016; Garnham, 2005; Witkin, 2003). As a pervasive cultural and artistic phenomenon with global resonance, cinema transcends geographical boundaries, diffusing its impact across diverse cultural enclaves and ethnic cadences. This fosters a harmonious nexus among disparate cultures and social groups (Miyao, 2007).

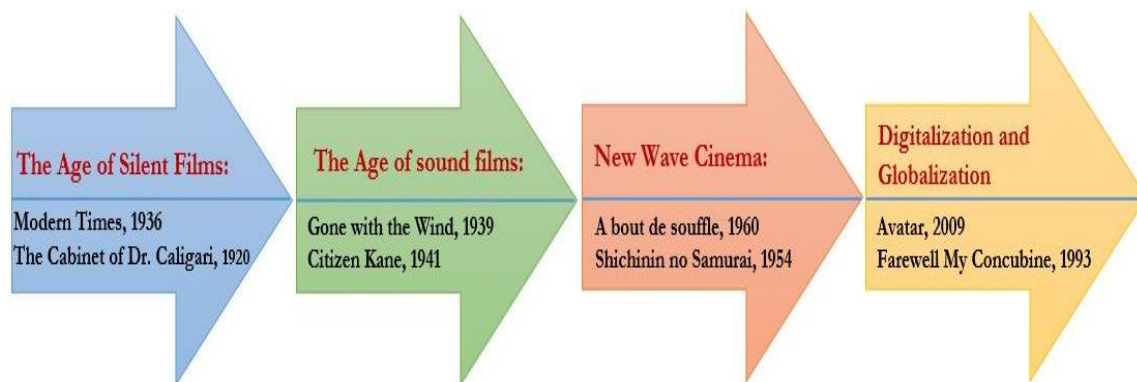


Figure 1: World Film Development History and Representative Films

Throughout history, particularly during the early era of silent films, makeup application was constrained by both technological limitations and cultural considerations, primarily focusing on conveying emotions and character traits (Turim, 2013). As film technology progressed and societal perspectives underwent a transformation, the role of makeup in movies grew increasingly diverse. It evolved into a pivotal instrument for delineating character identities, personality traits, and historical contexts (Dwyer & Patel, 2002; Grodal, 2009). This research endeavor aims to comprehensively investigate and analyze the utilization of makeup in prominent cinematic works spanning various historical epochs. Its central objective is to unravel the pivotal role of film makeup in shaping the evolution of societal paradigms. By scrutinizing the fluctuating trends, expressive methodologies, and sociocultural ideologies underpinning makeup application in distinct historical junctures, we aspire to attain an in-depth comprehension of the pivotal significance that film makeup holds within cinematic narratives and its profound impact in conveying cultural ethos and values. Functioning as a distinctive visual artistic language, film makeup serves as a canvas for directors, screenwriters, makeup artists, and

other creative visionaries to portray and sculpt the visage of characters (Wells, 2013). An exploration of cinematic makeup offers a profound insight into how movies, as cultural artifacts, mirror the ebb and flow of evolving societal concepts (Mulhern, Fieldman, Hussey, Leveque, & Pineau, 2003). Concurrently, the study of film makeup enriches audiences' appreciation by providing a deeper and multidimensional insight into the personas within cinematic creations (Guéguen & Jacob, 2011; Jacob, Guéguen, Boulbry, & Ardiccioni, 2010). Furthermore, owing to its global cultural and artistic influence, films also encapsulate aesthetic tenets specific to particular eras and cultural milieus through their makeup choices. Through an exploration of makeup application in seminal works across diverse historical epochs, we stand to enhance our comprehension of aesthetic inclinations rooted in various cultural contexts, thereby fostering cross-cultural dialogue and mutual understanding.

2. THE BACKGROUND OF CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CONCEPT EVOLUTION

2.1 The Role of Makeup in Culture and Society

Is makeup an art or a manifestation of technology? Makeup represents an artistic endeavor wherein individuals, through the aesthetic orchestration of cosmetic elements, utilize specific materials and technical methodologies to accentuate strengths, minimize flaws, and emphasize distinctive attributes. This transformative potential, especially in enhancing feminine allure, has propelled the cosmetics industry into one of the most prosperous global sectors (A. L. Jones, Russell, & Ward, 2015). Makeup has the power to influence perceptions of individual social traits, intimately connected with favorable evaluations of women (A. L. Jones, Porcheron, Sweda, Morizot, & Russell, 2016). Many women incorporate cosmetics into their daily routines to modulate external perceptions of their facial aesthetics (Etcoff, Stock, Haley, Vickery, & House, 2011). Motivations for cosmetic use range from concerns about personal appearance and conformity to societal norms to bolstering self-assurance in public settings and projecting greater social affability (B. C. Jones et al., 2001). Serving as a multifaceted tool, makeup sculpts a woman's appearance across numerous dimensions, shaping social perceptions. For example, makeup can accentuate skin luminosity, facial features, and even out skin texture (Samson, Fink, & Matts, 2010). Beyond aesthetics, makeup can influence the perception of health, with countenances exhibiting heightened

symmetry deemed healthier, leading women to manipulate facial symmetry through cosmetics, heightening allure, and projecting vitality (A. L. Jones et al., 2016). The transformative effects of makeup extend to imbuing a sense of vitality (Cash, Dawson, Davis, Bowen, & Galumbeck, 1989). Scholars note that manipulating the complexion significantly influences perceived age, health, and attractiveness assessments (Mulhern et al., 2003). Research on facial skin tone and health indicated that the luminosity surrounding the orbital area and rosy cheeks play a predictive role in assessing an individual's health status, corroborating the enhancing influence of luminosity and rosiness on health perception (Mileva, Jones, Russell, & Little, 2016). Simultaneously, makeup profoundly influences evaluations of attractiveness. Studies have revealed the beauty-enhancing impact of makeup, with participants reporting heightened confidence and augmented self-perceived attractiveness when donning makeup (Etcoff et al., 2011). The interaction between testosterone levels and makeup-induced attractiveness has also been substantiated by certain researchers (Cox & Glick, 1986), underscoring the undeniable role of makeup in heightening women's allure. Conclusively, makeup also shapes perceptions of women's societal status and competence, being intrinsically linked with workplace success. Individuals deemed more physically appealing are generally presumed to possess higher earning potential (Nash, Fieldman, Hussey, L  v  que, & Pineau, 2006). Female servers adorned with makeup tend to garner greater tips, as evidenced by empirical studies (Hamermesh & Biddle, 1993). Additionally, makeup has been associated with elevated social standing (Butler, 1991), with women sporting makeup more likely to be linked with high-status job roles (Schiller, 1989), despite some scholars suggesting a negligible impact on perceived professional competence in certain esteemed positions (Greenfield, 2016).

2.2 The Meaning and Communication Effect of Makeup in Movies

Film and television makeup, as an important element of "image composition," is a language of film and an artistic message (Fisher, Hahn, DeBruine, & Jones, 2015). It has special aesthetic and artistic value. It requires portraying the appearance of actors to represent the different characteristics of the task's class, ethnicity, era, personality, age, historical figures, regional characteristics, and other different environments. It plays a role in rendering emotions and enhancing anger. Bizarre legends, biographical shapes, etc., are essential features of film and television makeup. Moreover, in different types of films and styles of work, there are also specific requirements for the form of makeup. His special property is

the high fidelity of reflecting the objective Universal Time on the screen. According to different forms, movies can be classified into animated films, documentaries, biographies, music films, etc. According to different emotions, it can be divided into action films, drama films, science fiction films, comedy films, horror films, romance films, etc. Referring to the authoritative IMDB website in the United States, the author has classified 13 types of films: (1) animated films, (2) Biographical films, (3) Western films, (4) Dramatic films, (5) Action movies, (6) Adventure film, (7) Music film, (8) Science fiction films, (9) Comedy films, (10) Horror films, (11) Love movies, (12) Crime films, (13) Documentary. And the deeper classification is also more refined due to different defining standards, with Table 1 dividing 20 types according to different standards

Table 1: Movie Classification and Distinction Criteria

| Type | Defining Standard | Distinguishing Standard |
|---------------|-------------------|---|
| Westerns | | Western America |
| Robber Movie | | American cities in the 1920s |
| Epic | Historical Theme | Bible or ancient history |
| War Movies | | Particular historical conflict |
| Film Noir | | Post-war America |
| Horror Film | | Frightening |
| Thriller | Expected Result | Scary |
| Comedy | | Produce laughter |
| Musical | | Cabaret show |
| Action Movie | Formal Elements | Action clips appear |
| Porn | | Sexual activity |
| Sci-Fi Movie | | Future technology / future world |
| Fantasy Film | | Impossible worlds/fantasy characters |
| Disaster Film | | Natural or man-made disaster |
| Crime Film | Theme | Crime and investigations |
| Melodrama | | Family drama and straight romance |
| Road Film | | Travel or road trip, usually across the United States |
| Film Noir | | Crime and institutional corruption |
| Blockbuster | | Spectacle event |
| Film Noir | Style | Chiaroscuro lighting and noir mise-en-scène |

The film is a new art product that integrates many other arts. The former is arranged according to the plot and the characteristics of the characters in the play, sometimes ugly and sometimes beautiful according to the needs of the plot. Also, characters' appearances tend to change significantly as the plot progresses. To meet the plot standards, the makeup artist will take a short break from the actor's appearance to convey the appearance of the

characters in the play, such as injury, disease, aging, etc., to give a more realistic interpretation of the plot. After applying makeup techniques, the actor's temperament and image are more in line with the characteristics of the characters in the play, bringing the audience closer to the characters in the play. The use of makeup in character design can change the actor's performance image and better render the plot. There is a big difference between film and television makeup and daily life makeup. The former is arranged according to the plot and based on the characteristics of the characters in the play, which can be sometimes ugly or sometimes beautiful according to the needs of the plot. Moreover, due to the development of the plot, there are often significant changes in the appearance of the characters. To meet the plot standard, the Make-up artist will take some rest on the appearance of the actors to convey the appearance of the characters in the play, such as injury, disease, aging, and so on, to have a more realistic interpretation of the plot. In the past film and television works, because the Make-up artist deviated from the understanding of the works, the characters in the play took an obvious ideological treatment when making up. In previous film and television works, good and bad people can be clearly distinguished at a glance. This type of makeup has traces of stage makeup performance. With the continuous progress of film and television art, makeup techniques are also constantly updated with modern consciousness. The character images in film and television works, after being designed with makeup and styling, are closer to the prototype of life and more realistic, playing a key role in showcasing the inner world of the characters and resonating with the audience rationally.

2.3 The Impact of Social Concept Evolution on Makeup

The evolution of social concepts across historical epochs has profoundly influenced the application and perception of makeup (Crawford, 2020). In the early 20th century, during the nascent stages of cinema, prevailing conservative social concepts confined women to traditional roles. Consequently, makeup emphasized attributes of dignity, elegance, and gentility. This ethos is exemplified in the Hollywood silent film era of the 1920s, where actresses showcased distinct cosmetic features reflecting prevailing feminine imagery ideals. An example is the character Sylvia in the film "Wings" (Figure 2), epitomizing romantic delicacy with pronounced eyebrows, refined lip pigmentation, and subtle blush tones. Sylvia's appearance, captured through Jack's camera, conveys an elegantly melancholic demeanor, reinforcing gender stereotypes embedded in societal culture and influencing personal social identities (Wang, 2024).



Figure 2: Wings: Jack and Sylvia

(<https://movie.douban.com/photos/photo/2557204092/>)

As societal paradigms evolved and women's status transformed, the cinematic makeup landscape underwent a profound shift. The mid-20th century, often hailed as the Golden Age of Hollywood, bore witness to a proliferation of female characters exuding distinct personas, donning makeup that exuded greater vogue and audacity. This transformation in makeup style mirrored the emerging image of confident and independent women. Notably, Marilyn Monroe's iconic work "The Seven Year Itch" from the 1950s exemplified this shift, with her signature crimson lips and tousled golden tresses becoming emblematic of the era's fashion trends. These cosmetic choices not only set the style standards but also encapsulated women's aspirations for self-expression and autonomy. Early cinematic ventures were firmly rooted in conservative social values, where makeup underscored qualities of gentleness, compassion, and familial roles. Such makeup choices mirrored entrenched notions of traditional family structures and women's role orientations. As the contours of social concepts evolved, film makeup embarked on a trajectory reflecting the ascent of women's status and the yearning for freedom and self-reliance. This transformative period in cinematic makeup reverberated with the shifting values, accentuating women's autonomy and individuality. The era of Postmodernism propelled makeup into a realm of breaking free from conventional aesthetic and gender confines, transmitting a message of reverence for sexual diversity and self-awareness. Cinematic makeup, in all its diverse styles, became a vessel for projecting stances on individuality and liberty while also challenging conventional norms. In summation, the

interplay between the evolution of social concepts and makeup constitutes a complex and multifaceted process. Spanning from the simplicity of early-stage makeup to the avant-garde diversification characteristic of the Postmodernist era, makeup encapsulates a plethora of societal concepts within the cinematic medium. Through meticulous exploration of makeup expressions within seminal works spanning diverse historical epochs, a nuanced understanding of the reciprocal relationship between cinema and societal concepts emerges, enriching our comprehension of cinematic makeup's profound implications.

3. THE ROLE SHAPING OF MAKEUP IN DIFFERENT HISTORICAL PERIODS

3.1 Early Century: Classic Era

In the 1920s, Hollywood witnessed the emergence of renowned "flapper girls" such as Colleen Moore, Clara Bow, and Louise Brooks, emblematic figures representing the spirit of the American Jazz Age, also known as the Roaring Twenties. These young women, characterized by cropped hairstyles and loose attire, epitomized the exuberant jazz rhythms of the era, marking a departure from the conservatism of previous generations. Unlike their mothers, the "Flapper Girls" embraced stylishness, consumerism, and a liberated lifestyle, symbolizing a significant shift in societal norms and values. Their progressive ethos, marked by open attitudes toward sexuality and active involvement in professional pursuits, reflected the transition of American women from the private sphere to the dynamic public arena. Colleen Moore, a pioneer in endorsing "flapper girls" in cinema, portrayed this iconic image in "Flaming Youth," sparking enthusiasm among the film fraternity and audiences. Even F. Scott Fitzgerald, known for crafting "flapper girls" in literature, recognized Colleen Moore as the torchbearer of this iconic image. Unlike Clara Bow's allure and Louise Brooks' charm, Moore often embodied the vivacious and endearing girl next door, employing exaggerated and comedic expressions to disarm the perceived threat "flapper girls" might pose to societal order. Consequently, she is considered the representative of a more conservative rendition of "flapper girls," and her portrayal transcended the silver screen, influencing her public image as a female celebrity. This conservative demeanor, however, can be interpreted as a strategic maneuver adopted by the early "flapper girl" celebrities to ingress into the public sphere. It ensured that Colleen Moore adeptly balanced the conservative societal

milieu with the exhibition of her inherent sexual allure. This calculated equilibrium gradually paved the way for the acceptance of "flapper girls" within the broader social discourse. Moreover, this groundwork laid the foundation for the audacious gender performances championed by Clara Bow and Louise Brooks in the subsequent years, thereby catalyzing a bolder exploration of gender roles within the cinematic realm.

3.2 Mid-20th Century: The Golden Age of Hollywood

The 1930s and 1940s were marked by profound upheaval and fluctuation in the United States, a period defined by the cataclysmic eruption of an unparalleled economic crisis at the close of 1929. The nationwide Great Depression spanning 1930 to 1945 ushered in industrial collapse, widespread joblessness, and a stock market crash of global ramifications. Amid this adversity, cinema emerged as a refuge for individuals seeking respite from the grim reality, prompting heightened frequent movie theaters as a means to momentarily alleviate and release inner pressures. Paradoxically, the Great Depression engendered a twofold yield in American cinema—flourishing in both creative output and box office success. This epoch is renowned as the "Golden Age of Hollywood." "The Best Years of Our Lives," a notable post-World War II American film, serves as an illustrative example of this evolving makeup aesthetic. The female characters in this movie sported finely arched eyebrows, delicate eye shadow, and expressive, tender eyes, as depicted in Figure 3(a). During this phase, the makeup took on a luminous and unblemished quality, functioning as a pristine canvas. While retaining elements from the silent film era that accentuated women's facial features, the heavy and smoky makeup characteristic of the earlier period was eschewed. Instead, an emphasis was placed on accentuating the characters' refined facial contours and fair complexions. This makeup style subsequently became synonymous with the portrayals of "playful" and "pure" female characters after World War II, as evident in Figures 3(b) and (c). For instance, Anne Frank, the vivacious and innocent protagonist in "The Diary of Anne Frank," exudes a vibrant charm, whereas the portrayal of the earnest and captivating student Savannah in "Dear John" epitomizes the allure of purity and grace. In summation, the 1930s and 1940s were marked by turbulence and transition in the United States, a period characterized by economic adversity and cinematic resurgence. Post-World War II, Hollywood cinema showcased a prevailing makeup style embodying "playful" and "pure" qualities, a departure from earlier norms, and reflective of evolving societal dynamics.



(a). The Best Years of Our Lives: Peggy (b). The Diary of Anne Frank: Anne (c).Dear John: Savannah

Figure 3: Makeup in American movies after World War II
(<https://movie.douban.com/photos/photo/2188885668/>)

Table 2: Comparison of Representative Film Themes and Female Characters in the 1940s and 1950s.

| Movie | Time | Theme | Female Role |
|-----------------------------|------|------------------------------------|--|
| The Great Dictator | 1940 | Romance, comedy, classic | Supporting role: Pauline Goddard as Hannah |
| Waterloo Bridge | 1940 | Love, drama, romance | Actress: Vivien Leigh as Mary |
| Prelude to War | 1942 | Documentary, Historical Wars | No female characters |
| To Be or Not to be | 1942 | Love, funny, comedy | Actress: Carlo Lambert as Maria Tula |
| Casablanca | 1942 | Classic, drama, love | Actress: Ingrid Bergman as Ilsa |
| the Best Years of our Lives | 1946 | Oscar, love, classic | Supporting role: Myrna Loy as wife Millie |
| Stalag 17 | 1953 | Comedy, suspense, drama | No female characters |
| The Enemy Below | 1957 | Action, drama, classic | No female characters |
| Paths of Glory | 1957 | Classic, Humanity | Supporting role: singer |
| The Diary of Anne Frank | 1959 | Biography, Touching, Inspirational | Actress: Millie Perkins as Anne Frank |

As shown in Table 2 above, comparing the theme of the movie and the performance of female characters, it can be seen that "love" is an important component in war movies. At this time, the film is not only passionate about portraying female characters, but also the most typical portrayal of women is the 'good wife'. The appearance of a "good wife" echoes the appeal of American society after World War II for women to

leave their jobs and return to their families. This strong and constant desire for a good wife can be specifically confirmed by the brilliant example of *Casablanca*. Before Warner Company officially started filming, the description of Ilsa in the script was just "a dissolute woman who put Rick's marriage and family in danger."

3.3 The End of the 20th Century: the Period of Postmodernism

Postmodernist cinema, spanning the late 20th century to the early 21st century, stands as a pivotal movement that boldly fractures conventional narrative structures and visual idioms in filmmaking. In this paradigm, makeup emerges as a potent visual emblem, gaining unprecedented attention and application. Postmodernist film makeup possesses a distinct style and technique, serving as a bastion of individuality and autonomy while challenging established aesthetic norms. Its seamless integration with the overarching film style positions it as a prominent conduit for expression in Postmodernist films. This article deeply explores the nuances and significance of Postmodernist film makeup performance, unveiling intricate connotations and artistic merits through meticulous analysis of exemplary cinematic works. Characteristic of Postmodernist film makeup is its tendency to transcend reality, often adopting Surrealism in design. This aesthetic inclination creates fantastical and dreamlike effects through exaggerated and distorted contours and hues, fostering a surreal ambiance.

The allure of Surrealism-infused makeup design lies in its emphasis on individuality and uniqueness, as well as its ability to captivate the spectator's imagination and evoke associative faculties, transporting the audience into an ethereal visual realm. To illustrate this paradigm, consider the case of "The Dark Knight," depicted in Figure 4. The makeup design for the cinematic antagonist, colloquially known as the "clown," distinctly exudes a Surrealist essence. The stark pallor of the countenance, the profound periorbital shadows, and the contorted grin coalesce to forge a striking image, encapsulating the deranged psyche of the "clown" while concurrently evoking dystopian overtones. In summary, Postmodernist cinema marks an epoch where the cinematic canvas is emblazoned with revolutionary ideals. Makeup, as a crucial visual medium, becomes a prism through which individuality is refracted and aesthetic boundaries are traversed. This exploration delves into the very essence of Postmodernist film makeup performance, uncovering its manifold dimensions and contextual importance, thereby unfurling the nuanced layers of artistic

ingenuity within this dynamic cinematic realm.

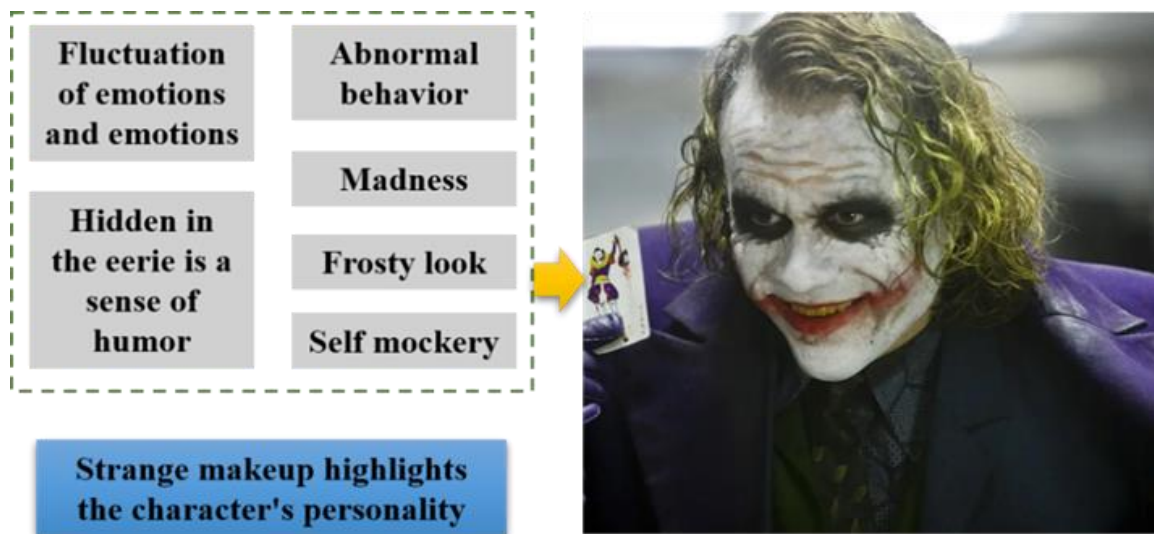


Figure 4: The Dark Knight: The Joker
(<https://movie.douban.com/photos/photo/491527455/>)

4. MAKEUP EXPRESSION AND SOCIAL CONCEPTS IN CONTEMPORARY MOVIES

Contemporary society is characterized by a rich tapestry of values, a phenomenon accentuated by the pervasive influence of information technology and the inexorable march of globalization. This confluence exposes individuals to an expansive spectrum of cultures and ideas, fostering a meeting ground where diverse values from disparate regions and cultural milieus converge and occasionally collide. The kaleidoscope of these variegated social values finds vivid expression in the realm of film makeup. In cinematic makeup, the diversity of social values expands the scope for character portrayal. Movie personas from varied cultural backgrounds, genders, and age groups now exhibit distinct makeup attributes, reflecting their individuality and self-identity. An example is the integration of traditional makeup from different regions, not only showcasing cultural allure but also fostering cross-cultural communication through innovative and harmonious makeup synthesis. In the contemporary era, film makeup becomes a tool for unbridled personality sculpting and uninhibited character expression. The makeup palette transcends conventional boundaries, allowing a variety of attributes to flourish. Simultaneously, cinematic makeup eloquently captures characters' emotional states, contributing to a nuanced understanding of their complexity and authenticity, aligning with the societal emphasis on mental

well-being and emotional candor. Film makeup explores gender identity diversity, with the emergence of gender-neutral makeup design gaining visibility in cinematic spheres. Characters in movies now defy rigid male or female archetypes, embracing a multifaceted tableau of gender expressions. This exploration challenges stereotypes, providing a broad canvas for the spectrum of gender identities. Moreover, contemporary society's growing focus on environmental conservation and sustainable development resonates in the realm of film. Increased awareness of ecological balance prompts a reevaluation of lifestyle choices and a shift toward sustainable practices, seamlessly woven into the fabric of cinematic makeup. In the domain of film production, a discernible trend emerges as filmmakers embrace eco-friendly makeup products and techniques. Makeup artists, in their character design endeavors, conscientiously opt for environmentally benign cosmetics and methods, thereby mitigating deleterious impacts on the ecosystem. Moreover, character makeup design is ingeniously harnessed to underscore the intrinsic beauty and fragility of the natural world. Through inventive techniques, cinematic makeup beseeches audiences to turn their gaze toward nature's splendor, advocating attention, and fostering an impassioned call for environmental conservation.

The Influence of Feminism on Makeup in Contemporary Movies In the 1950s and 1960s, a prevailing undercurrent in American society emphasized the paramount importance of matrimony and sexual liaisons for women, even the most steadfast or affluent. Hollywood films, including war-themed productions, prominently featured provocative allure and corporeal appeal. The emergence of an alternative breed of female imagery became evident, characterized by scarlet lip hues and ostentatious eyeshadows. These figures exuded a seductive aura tinged with beguiling fragility, often occupying roles of sultry sirens in film narratives, populating bars, dance halls, or adorning wall posters. Examples include the bar maiden in "The Deer Hunter" and the enigmatic femme fatale Marta and danseuse in "Mata Hari" (Figure 5). In summary, the portrayal of traditional female archetypes is inherently intertwined with patriarchal systems, shaped by both genders. While the term 'patriarchy' may be less explicitly relevant, its repercussions are evident in the visual portrayal of women within cinematic realms. This exploration, deviating from conventional archetypes, emphasizes essential traits of "vulnerability, beauty, passivity, and dependence on men." The evolving visual portrayal of women in American war films, particularly those predating World War II, reflects the multifaceted nature of this dynamic. As the socio-cultural milieu evolved through the mid-20th century, a distinct paradigm emerged in Hollywood war movies,

emphasizing the centrality of marital and sexual bonds, with a newfound focus on seductive allure intertwined with danger. These depictions, characterized by bold makeup choices and alluring personas, played a pivotal role in satisfying audience desires and casting female characters as emblematic figures of allurement and peril.



(a). Mata Hari: Mata

(b). The Deer Hunter: The bargirl

Figure 5: The seductive makeup of women in movies

(<https://movie.douban.com/photos/photo/2163613529/>)

(<https://movie.douban.com/photos/photo/1482631387/>)

The cinematic narrative of "American Traitor: The Trial of Axis Sally" is rooted in historical events, recounting the gripping chronicle of Mildred Elizabeth Gillars, an American woman who espoused Nazi propaganda through a German radio platform during the crucible of World War II. Post the conflict's denouement, Gillars found herself subject to the rigors of an American trial. Encompassing a runtime of 109 minutes, the film delves into Gillars' harrowing ordeal, characterized by more than 20 distinct ensembles, as delineated in Table 3. Her visage is adorned with cascading golden curls, accentuated by a striking interplay of ebony eyeshadow and alluring lipstick hues. Unveiled in the cinematic tapestry of 2021, "American Traitor: The Trial of Axis Sally" is not without its fair share of critique-worthy aspects. Yet, akin to the adage "a thousand readers have a thousand Hamlets," the film's intricacies yield varied interpretations and evaluations. Notably, the portrayal of male legal representatives within the narrative stands as a particularly contentious aspect, fraught with notable disparities.

Table 3: "Pivot Lisa" dress statistics

| Time | Apparel and Related Events |
|------------|--|
| Appearance | Long blond curly hair, heavy makeup with red lips, and wearing a black fur collar coat. |
| 10min | With loose golden curly hair, wearing a white beret, wearing a white coat, and a lazy voice. " |
| 11min | How does her voice sound in bed?" Berlin radio director Dr. Eyer looks at Lisa meaningfully—through screen males, Lisa becomes a sex object. |
| 13min | Dressed in a white shirt and black skirt, she casually puts on makeup in prison. |
| 19min | In a dance hall in Berlin, Germany, she wore a black sequined skirt and sang comfortably under the lights. |
| 21min | In the U.S. District Federal Court, he appeared in court with heavy makeup, and his blond hair was scattered on a black slim dress. |
| 45min | With long straight blond hair, heavy makeup, a light pink nurse cap, and a thigh-short nurse uniform, she interviewed prisoners of war with a friendly and magnetic voice. |
| 47min | In the US court, the soldier who was comforted by the POW camp sat on the testimony stand and said: "She leaned forward slightly, and I saw more than cleavage, she didn't even wear underwear." |
| 58min | In a bedroom in Berlin, Germany, Lisa was wearing white gauze pajamas and went to the mirror of the dressing table to put on makeup. |
| 1h | Invited to the ball held by the high-level executives of Radio Berlin, wearing a green evening dress and a dark green gauze cap. |
| 1.03h | Lisa took out a gun and put it on the man's head, but was brushed away by the man, "Do you think you are the first bitch who wants to do such a thing?" |
| 1.11h | The two outfits Lisa wears: are a dark blue suit for the broadcast and pink pajamas for at home. |
| 1.12h | In the court, a formal and dignified black suit jacket, the shirt button inside is completely buttoned to the neck, the makeup is clean. |
| 1.20h | In the U.S. District Federal Court, Lisa wore a white woolen tight skirt, expressing that she loved her German lover Max. |
| 1.27h | Wearing a dark beige suit and skirt, the black eye shadow was removed, and her face looked clean and delicate. |
| 1.36h | The lawyer defended in court, saying that Lisa was just an ordinary girl who had her passport confiscated in Germany, was helpless, and was threatened. |
| 1.40h | She and her mother suffered domestic violence from an alcoholic father, and then her mother took her to remarry, but she was raped by her stepfather. |

With the development of feminist thoughts, feminist criticism entered the film, and the construction of female images on the screen began to pay attention to the inner needs of women. Since the new century, a kind of

life-like female makeup has appeared in American war films. With simple tones, no heavy eye makeup, coquettish lipstick, and only slight modifications to the facial organs, the facial texture and graininess of female characters are more obvious, and most of the time female characters in movies are in a state of light makeup.



Figure 6: Rendition: Corrine Whitman and Isabelle Huppert
[\(https://movie.douban.com/photos/photo/456981995/\)](https://movie.douban.com/photos/photo/456981995/)
[\(https://movie.douban.com/photos/photo/456981819/\)](https://movie.douban.com/photos/photo/456981819/)

As shown in Figure 6, the CIA executive Corrine Whitman and the pregnant woman Isabel in *Rendition*, go abroad with everyday makeup and use the authenticity of makeup to weaken the performance of the story, thereby increasing the audience's sense of substitution for the characters and the sense of identity of the story. In addition, the film *Green Zone* tells the series of events that happened when the American soldier Roy Miller was ordered to search for lethal weapons in Iraq. In the film, the makeup of the female war reporter Larry is also based on daily and professional makeup. This makeup increases her matching with the background of the film and also highlights the professional characteristics of a war reporter, as shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7: *Green Zone*: Larry
[\(https://movie.douban.com/photos/photo/511454104/\)](https://movie.douban.com/photos/photo/511454104/)

5. CONCLUSION

This comprehensive exploration delves into the pivotal role of film makeup as a dynamic force in shaping cultural and societal paradigms. Serving as a prominent visual symbol, makeup not only bestows vivid hues upon cinematic characters but also communicates intricate aspects of their personalities, psyches, and the societal milieu. The analysis spans diverse historical epochs, revealing a palpable correlation between makeup expression and concurrent social norms. In the early 20th-century classic era, cinematic makeup served as a reflection of opulence and conspicuous markers, aligning with the prevailing aesthetic preferences and societal portrayal of femininity. The mid-20th-century Hollywood golden era witnessed a shift towards a more naturalistic and refined ethos in makeup artistry, mirroring the evolving values and aesthetic standards of the time. The conclusion of the 20th century, synonymous with the Postmodernist epoch, marked a crescendo of audacity and avant-garde fervor in makeup, characterized by bold hues and idiosyncratic contours, symbolizing a rebellion against entrenched conventions. Simultaneously, this exploration scrutinizes the symbiotic interplay between makeup expression and contemporary social constructs in modern films. The makeup choices in contemporary cinematic works vividly express the defining features of contemporary social norms, emphasizing diversity and inclusivity. The ascendancy of feminist ideologies has induced a paradigm shift in the cinematic portrayal of makeup, highlighting the autonomy and self-determination of female characters, thereby enriching the panorama of female identities. While this study sheds light on significant correlations between makeup and societal shifts, acknowledging certain limitations is crucial. The focus primarily rests on Western cinema, potentially limiting the generalizability of findings to a broader global context. Additionally, the analysis predominantly centers on the portrayal of femininity, warranting further research into the nuanced representations of masculinity and other gender identities. Looking ahead, future studies could delve into the reception and impact of these makeup choices on audiences, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between film makeup and societal perceptions. Expanding the scope to include a more diverse range of cinematic traditions and exploring the multifaceted representations of various gender identities would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the subject. While this research serves as a foundational exploration, it invites continued inquiry into the intricate relationship between film makeup and the ever-evolving cultural and social

paradigms that shape our cinematic narratives.

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