
1960s British: Cinema And Society

The first part of the report demonstrates social realism and its reflection in the contrasting films. The second subject taken into consideration is the significance of discrimination and racism problem in the 1960s British society. The third part of the report is the subject of homosexuality. The last part includes the interview with John Greenwood, who exemplifies briefly reflection on the 1960s British Cinema and social life.

My findings suggest that the social realism 1960s cinema became commercially successful. The people gathered in the cinemas to see films such as *Kathy Come Home* (1966) and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960). I discover that those films conveyed a contrasting outlook of British society in the 1960s. "*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*"(1960) film about young working-class Britons became a revelation for its realistic style, but also a controversial context such as abortion and visual portrayal of sex. Arthur, the main character, is a typical working-class man who disagreed with social conventions by living his life to the fullest. That suggested the social conversion and disappearance of moral restrictions. However, my findings indicate that realistic films exhibited the obstacles of the working class, unemployment, and homelessness. "*Kathy Come Home*" (1966) tackled various complications of the working class. The film alerted the public and the government of the housing crisis, which as a result influenced the establishment of the Charity Shelter to help people in need. According to Des Wilson (1976), founding director of the housing charity Shelter, said that the transmission of "*Kathy Come Home*" in 1966 was worth £500,000 to Shelter and directly helped numerous homeless families. Wilson elucidated the film's basic rhetorical address to the viewers efficacious as "above all a scream of pain". Noteworthy to mention is also films of the "*Swinging London*". "*A Hard Day's Night*"(1964) and "*Alfie*"(1966), allured youth culture with its "flower power", freedom of love, and rebellion against social norms. According to Murphy (1992), "*Swinging London*" was the essence of a 1960s culture that praised indulgence and the goal of "having a good time" was the core of everyday life.

Hill (1986) said that in the 1960s due to employment requirements the population of Afro-Americans increased significantly, as my findings support this statement. Layton-Henry (1992) states that in 1960 the number of immigrants from the New Commonwealth countries was 57.700 and climbed to 136.400 in 1961. "*The L-Shaped Room*" (1961) film showed the racism and situation of unmarried mothers. I find that the unmarried mothers encountered prejudice and as the consequence was advised to conceal their shame by impersonating to be married. Another film that highlighted racism was "*To Sir With Love*"(1967). Despite the fact that the story of Mark Thackeray was suffused with prejudice the film demonstrated a glimpse of hope for the students at a low level of education. According to my findings, the rise of immigration and increased discrimination generated in creation by the British Government's 1968 Race Relation Act.

The British society in the 1960s became a decade of the sexual revolution with the arrival of the contraceptive pill and the progression in acceptance of homosexuality. Despite the fact, homosexuality was taboo in the 1960s the cinema showed the first films embracing the context of that subject. The film "*The Haunting*"(1963), according to White (1992) was "One of the screen's most spine-tingling representations of the disruptive force of lesbian desire." I find that

with the evaluated social awareness of homosexuality through the cinema LGBT rights were rapidly enhanced. In 1963 The Minorities Research Group was the first British lesbian socio-political movement. Equally, LGBT-orientated films of the 1960s are "A Taste of Honey"(1961) and "The Leather Boys" (1964).

On the 26th of January 2019, I have conducted an interview with John Greenwood, who was a young man in the Sixties. Greenwood (2019) said that the most important social films of the sixties were 'Cathy Come Home(1966), the film tackled a very serious social problem that existed in Britain at the time, and "To Sir, with Love"(1967)which showed how community's attitude transformed towards a black immigrant teacher from Ghana. Greenwood said the film that embraced homosexuality and to a great extent, prejudice was the film 'A Taste of Honey(1961). I find that the film had an emotional impact on Greenwood as the mother's intolerance towards her daughter and her "gay" friend was distressing to watch. Greenwood(2019), said "As a young boy in the 60's I cannot really compare them to the '50s but I do remember that my older brother and sisters were always excited about some music event or a new film that was being released. For me the three films I have spoken about epitomized the 60'S, setting in my mind how narrow-minded people can be and how I didn't want to be when I grew up." The result of the interview supports my findings and contributes to the aim of this report.

In conclusion, the 1960s was a period of significant cultural, political, and social transformation, sexual freedom, liberalization of laws. The Sixties British cinema appears to support this statement, with a social realism drama and the "swinging sixties " The Beatles films. The 1960s were the revolutionary epoch in numerous aspects, creating the country of the adaptable population which embraced social and political modifications with curiosity and optimism. All things concluded I recommend considering The Sixties decade as compared to the contemporary times. As history recurrent periodically I can find a resemblance between those two decades, as being both uprisings.