

專輯論文

走向「猥雜」的彼岸：「健康娛樂」之電影的誕生與上海基督教青年會¹

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摘要

電影在十九世紀傳入上海之後，一開始在商業性的娛樂場所放映，但此類場所風紀不良，電影在社會上的功效也不可避免地受到質疑。直在1910年代，上海基督教青年會開展了一系列非商業性的電影上映活動，這些活動以「有益而健康的娛樂」為宗旨，逐步改善了市民的觀影態度，同時也開發了電影的社會教育功能。本文探討青年會的這一「有益而健康」的電影放映活動如何促進傳統的公共觀賞和娛樂形式的現代轉型。

關鍵詞：上海基督教青年會、電影上映、健康娛樂、產業電影、幻燈片

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Special Issue Article

Toward the Opposite Side of Vulgarly: The Birth of Cinema as a “Healthful Entertainment” and the Shanghai Y.M.C.A.

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Abstract

This article explores the new movie milieu created by the Shanghai Y. M.C.A. in the early twentieth century in Shanghai that was associated with the modernization of moviegoing. After cinema came to Shanghai at the end of the nineteenth century, it was mainly exhibited at commercial amusement sites, most of which were notorious for the lack of public morals. The movie milieu which emerged as a part of the commercial amusement culture in Shanghai succeeded that of traditional theatergoing. Watching a movie was not the exclusive and ultimate purpose for moviegoers during that era; they usually enjoyed eating, drinking, and chatting with friends while a movie was exhibited. Moreover, immorality and vulgarity were always associated with movie exhibition venues in Shanghai. However, during the 1910s, Shanghai Y.M.C.A.’s non-commercial movie exhibitions contributed to the improvement of the cinema’s social standing as well as the discovery of movies’ educational values. The Y.M.C.A. exhibited movies as “wholesome and healthful entertainment,” which means that the movie screenings at the Y.M.C.A. were

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completely devoid of the vulgarity of Shanghai's other commercial movie exhibitions. These movie exhibitions at the Y.M.C.A. can be roughly categorized into the following two types: (1) as entertainment during recreation events and (2) as visual aids for lectures. In the former instance, movies were projected at various meetings for the sake of civilized and modern leisure. Although the genres of the films screened at these events ranged from documentary to detective series, based on their policy for movie selection, it was obvious that the association considered movies a modern, healthful form of entertainment that cultivated young people. The purpose of utilizing movies in the latter instance emphasized the educational value of movies. The association had an explicit policy both for improving public health and popularizing scientific knowledge and industrial techniques through the lectures held in various occasions. In order to attract wider audiences, the primary concern for the Y.M.C.A. to develop their lecture events was the effective use of lantern slides and then movies. In order to achieve this purpose, the association established the new section that specialized in publishing visual aids for the lectures. The director of the section, W.W. Peter, later contributed to the Commercial Press, a representative publisher that produced a number of movies in the early era, by producing one of their first documentary films. Both of these types of movie exhibitions helped to prove that cinema had great usefulness, especially for social education in China. Such exhibitions also allowed many young new elites in China, who considered the Y.M.C.A. as a place to develop their social skills and create human networks, to be absorbed in cinema. The movie exhibitions sponsored by the Y.M.C.A. can thus be said to have led to the awakening of China's new movie exhibition culture, which flourished during the next decade.

Keywords: Shanghai Y.M.C.A., movie exhibition, healthful entertainment, industrial movie, Lantern slide

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