A. Dan

[Name of Instructor]

Cinematography

25 April 2019

12 Angry Men

# Introduction

Twelve angry men is a cinematic masterpiece directed by Sidney Lumet adapted by a play written by Reginald Rose in 1957. The storyline revolves the twelve jurymen who are deliberating on a case set in a single location throughout the film. The film revolves around the commotion that ‘life is in their hand and death is on their minds.” Suggesting that the ultimate outcomes of the decision of the Jurors are biased and prejudiced although they hold the power to serve justice. The case revolves around a young boy who is convicted of killing his father, while he claims his innocence, the boy is held convicted by most jurors on account of the two witnesses an old boy and women. Throughout the film, ‘Juror 8' is persistent to hold his views of not finding the boy guilty and tries to convince the other jurors to explore and develop their decisions beyond the facts that were presented before them. No names are used for the characters in the film. The film has depths in the ability to create change and not submitting to the will of others. The film is an ensemble of self-reflection, societal norms, the observations of personalities through reflections from the behaviors of the characters. Finally, with considerable arguments and dismay between the jury members, it is concluded that they may change their verdict. The film is known for its historical, cultural and aesthetic significance in the realm of cinematography (Velázquez-Quesada).

**Thesis Statement**

The essay tends to explore the cultural and historical significance of the film through a comprehensive analysis of the themes implored by the film and the cinematography of the film at the time.

# Discussion

Cultural Analysis

The film depicts a stronghold of cultural stereotypes in 1950 in the United States of America. The characters take influence from the adaption of morals and norms through these. A vivid demonstration of American culture is observed throughout the film from the way the characters dress and behave.The composition of characters shows that the jurors who are to serve justice are all white and the convict in question for killing his father isfrom a colored race most probably Italian. The Jurors show prejudice and unjust conviction of the boy who was poor and belonged to a colored race (BA Babcock). Theycontinuously imply that the film holds a strong cultural influence in its characters, The jurors are thought to be strongly under the influence of discrimination and stereotype. They state that by implying that, ‘they know what they're like' and ‘they'r all liar's'. Themes of prejudice and distinctions of class in American culture were also displayed amongst the interactions of the 4th Juror who was a stockbroker and the 5thJuror who lived in the slums all his life. The interactions revolve around the socio-economic statuses of both of them. The display of American culture was also demonstrated through the deliberations made by 8thJuror who’s views cite that poor upbringing was one of the reasons for his prior criminal record. The fact that eleven jurors were persistent to infer that theaccused of killing his father with fluid proof to prove it, shows that the majority in the jury had decided to convict on the basis of their prejudice against his background and ethnicity holding a firm belief in white supremacy at the time. Lastly, the composition of the jury is not a representative of the whole society as majority of the members are white, mirrors that the people of color were subject to crimes and blue-collar occupations while the white held reputable white collar jobs such as providing services for justice.

Historical analysis

The film is based in the 1950s and holds features which produce considerable evidence that the film was significant. The film is placed in a time in history when the United of America was going through the initial phases of the cold war and internal struggles of the Civil rights Movement for rights for those who belonged to race respect and equality. The glimpses of the class and racial discrimination are very evident in the film. Philosophical challenges to the economic status of individuals are also witnessed in the film. The film Twelve Angry Men is said to have been part of the era of cinematic awakening to the social consciousness and the realism through films on social issues in urban settings and awareness of morals that were declining (Studies). Sidney Lumet seems to have been inspired by the French cinematography of the time, by incorporating techniques like shot-reverse- shot and zoomed intakes of the actors. The film was shot in black and white and was hence initially a failure as it was released, due to the advent of colored scope in the industry.Moreover, the audience of the time were not receptive of reflective cinema they were more interested in action and romantic films. The aesthetics of the film continuously represent the feeling of tension through the unique style of cinematography simply changing the focus of thelenses and manipulating the frame into closeness.

# Conclusion

The film has captured the essence of American culture and legal system, through the deep understanding of culture and expanding justice to society in the 1950s. The film comprehends the sense of the complexity of emotions and the consensus of the jurors from their perspectives dominated by prejudice and stereotypes. It can hence be concluded that the entirety of the subject matter is fluent recognition of the art of cinematography through the precision of the detail in the use of techniques and depth of feeling in the movie.

# Works Cited

BA Babcock, TM Sassoubre - Chi.-Kent L. Rev. "Deliberation In 12 Angry Men." HeinOnline (2007).

Studies, Film. 12 Angry Men. 2019. <https://film-studies.net/publications/12-angry-men>.

Velázquez-Quesada, Davide GrossiFernando R. "Twelve Angry Men: A Study on the Fine-Grain of Announcements." International Workshop on Logic, Rationality and Interaction- Springer (2009): 147-160.