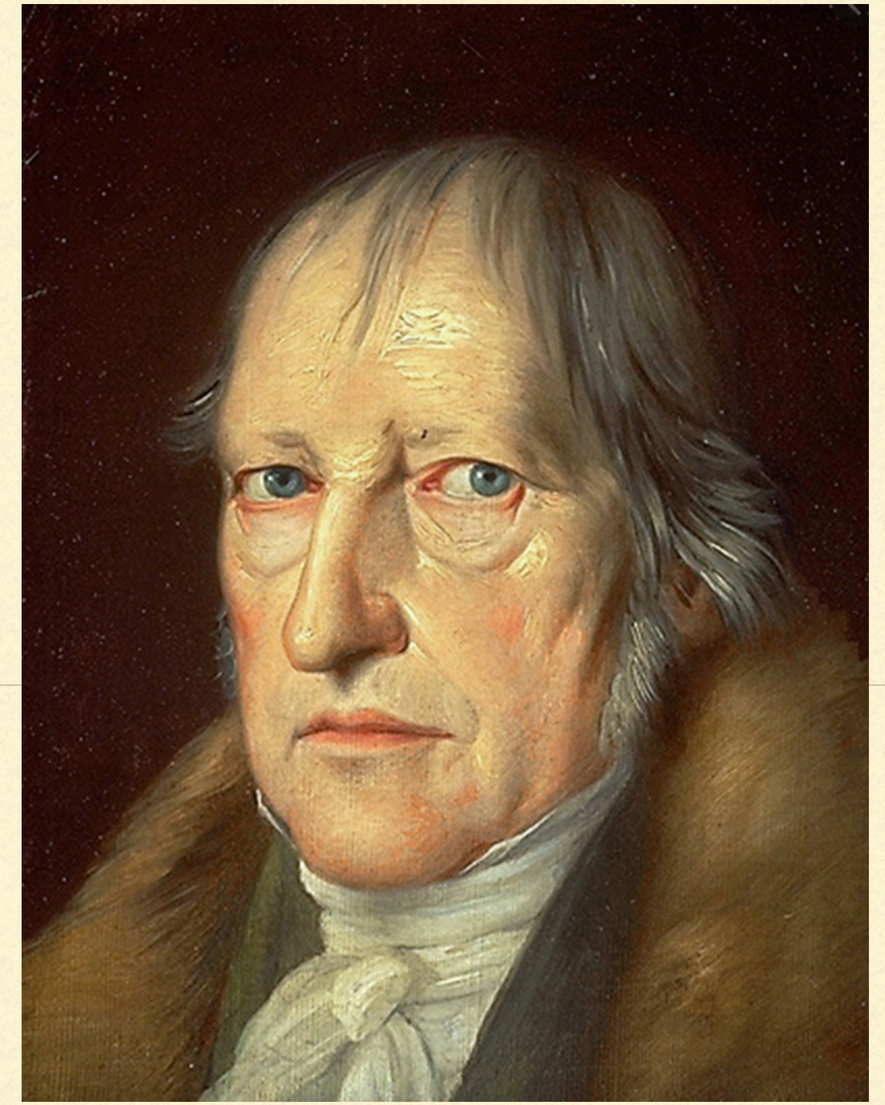
THE SPIRIT OF TIMES IN MOVIES

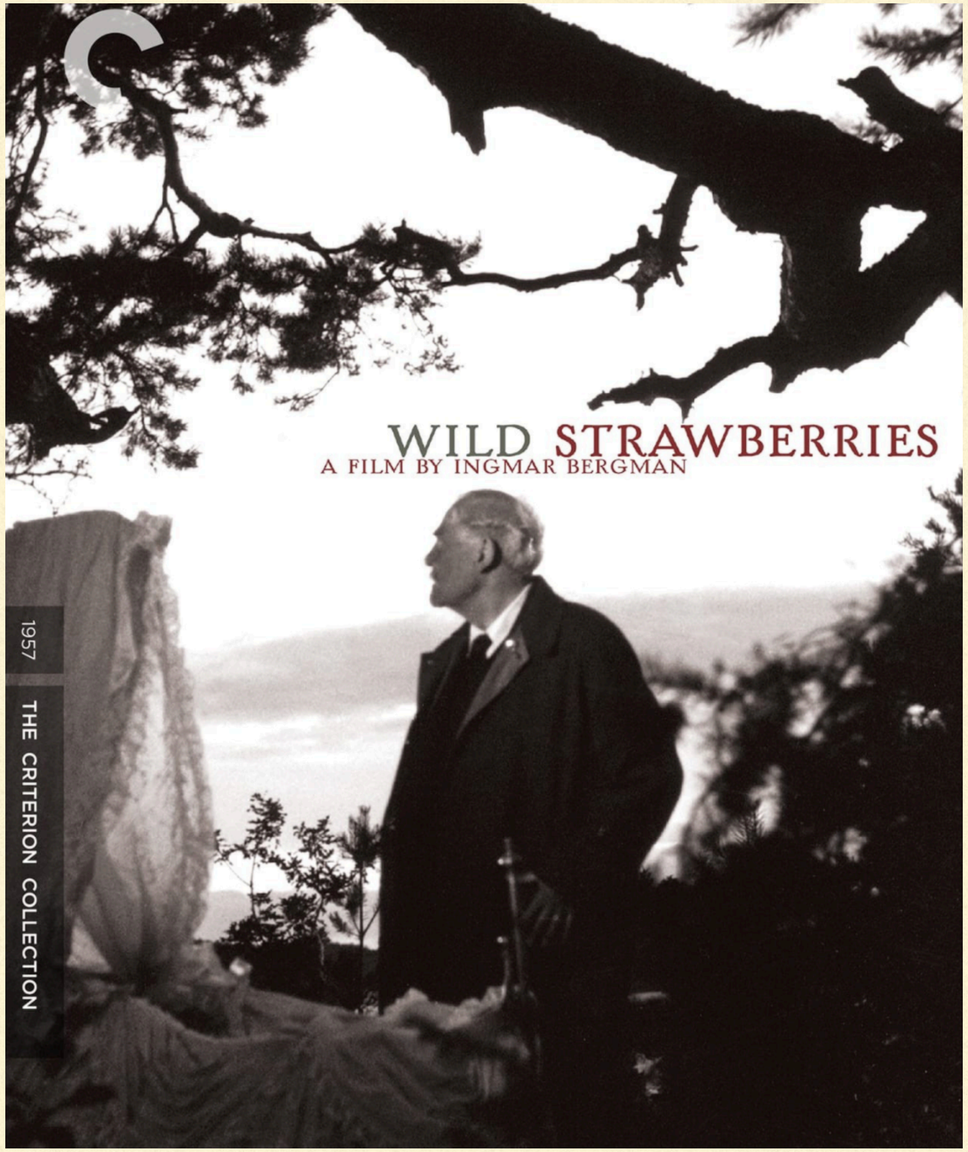
'Geist Der Zeiten'



'G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831) is a philosopher from the German Idealism period

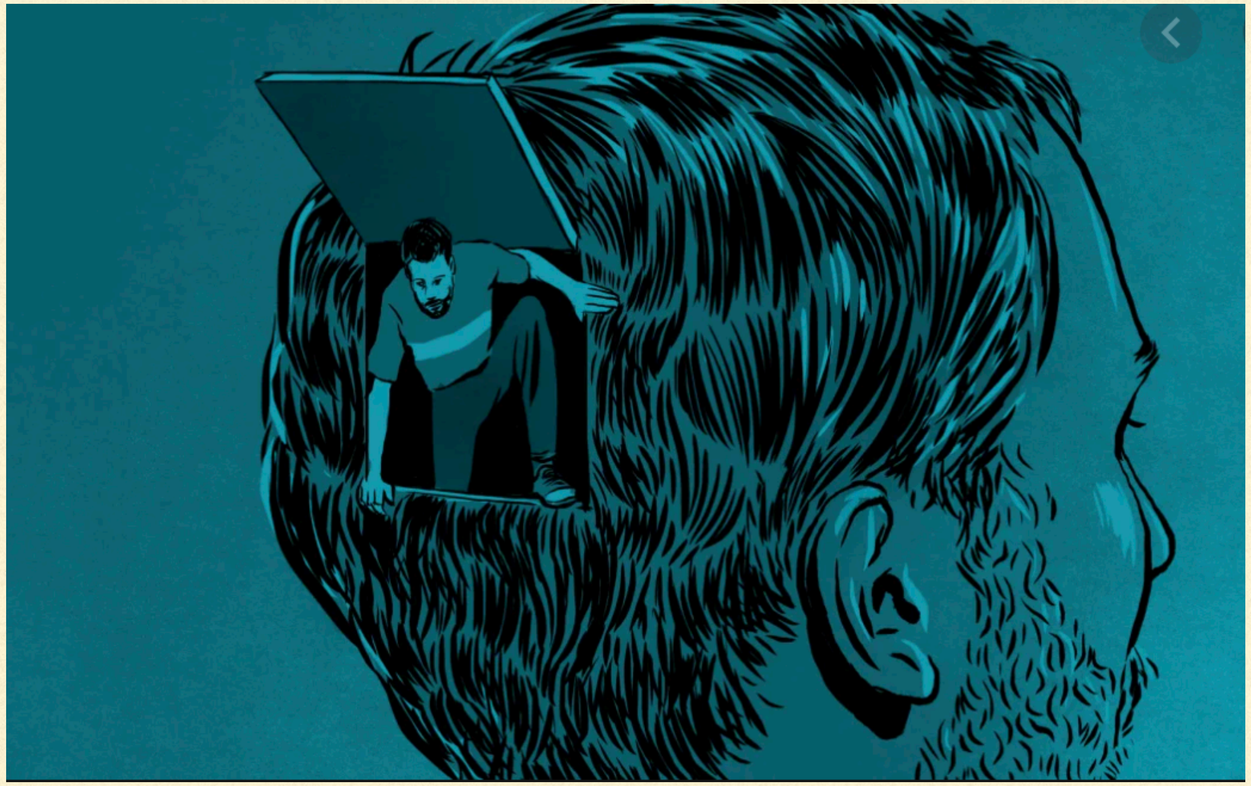
Hegel believed that art reflected the culture of the time in which it was created, the ***'Geist Der Zeiten'*** or the spirit of times as he called it.

The art work is the product of an artist, and the artist is the product of their culture, therefore the art work is the product of the spirit of that time.



Hypothesis:
Movies are a form of escapism.

Question #1
Would a certain historical event change our genre preferences?



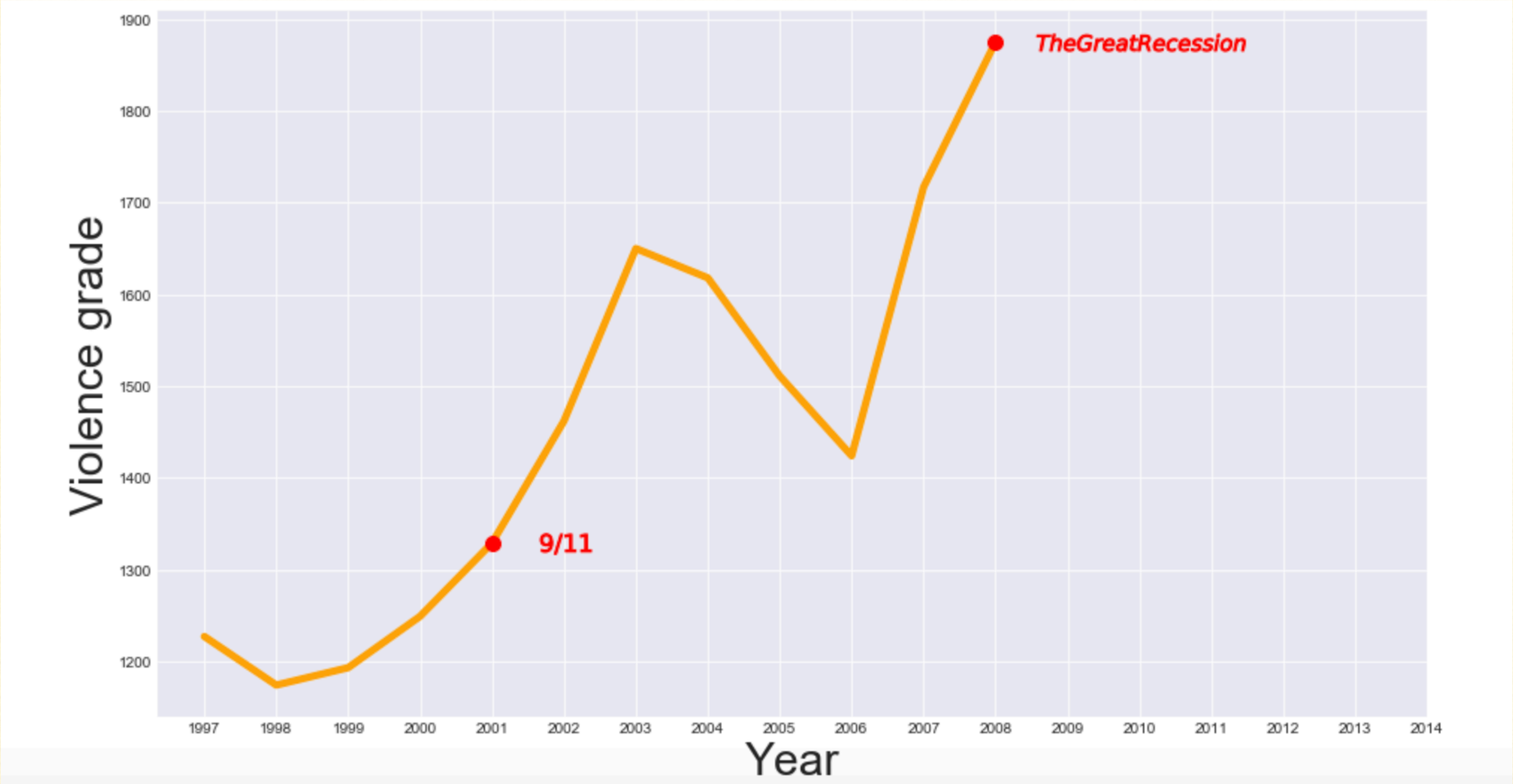
METHODOLOGY

- I wanted to test my assumptions on one traumatic event in our recent history and I picked 9/11. I wanted to see if a violet event changes in any way our genre preferences.

- I picked the first 250 most popular movies on IMDB for each year, from 1997 to 2008 and scraped genre information from 2750 movies grouped by year. I counted every time a genre appeared in these movies and I came up with a list with most familiar genre types and their corresponding genre count for a certain year. When a movie had more than one genre I added each genre to their genre count.

- Having violence as a criteria, I created a genre quantifying system. For example: my system grades romance with 3 and war genre with 10. Using my genre counts I multiplied each genre count with their grade and I summed them up for a year. Each year has a violence grade that takes into account: movie popularity, genres and my genre grade.

- If my assumption that we use movies to escape the reality is right then I should see a decrease in people's preference for violent movies after a violent event.



9/11 IN MOVIES - WHY CHANGE COMES AFTER 1YEAR?

I plugged all the year grades from 1997 to 2018 on a graph and very clearly you can see that there was a drop in violence in 2003. It takes more than one year to produce a movie from the begging to the end so movies produced after 9/11 will not hit the big screen earlier than 2003.

SPIRIT OF TIME IN ACTION 1950-2019

IS MY MODEL CONFIRMED BY THE GRAPH?

The answer is no.

The reason behind the failure of my model for a longer period of time is based on the fact that we express our preferences on IMDB website and internet was invented on 1990 and became widely available only after 2000.

ZEITGEIST

The term ‘**Geist Der Zeiten**’ turned in time into ‘**Zeitgeist**’ which has been used contemporary as **fashion**.

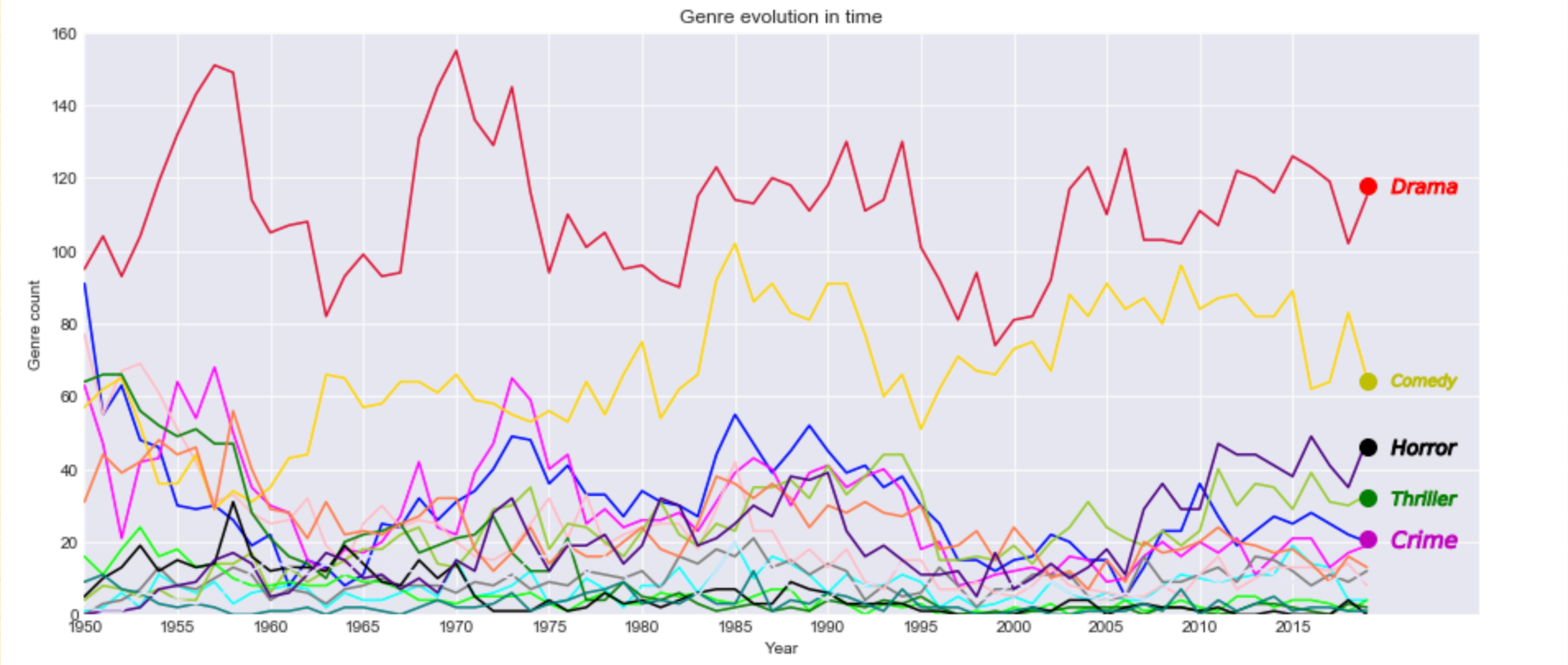
What is considered to be accepted as tasteful at a certain time.

Question #2

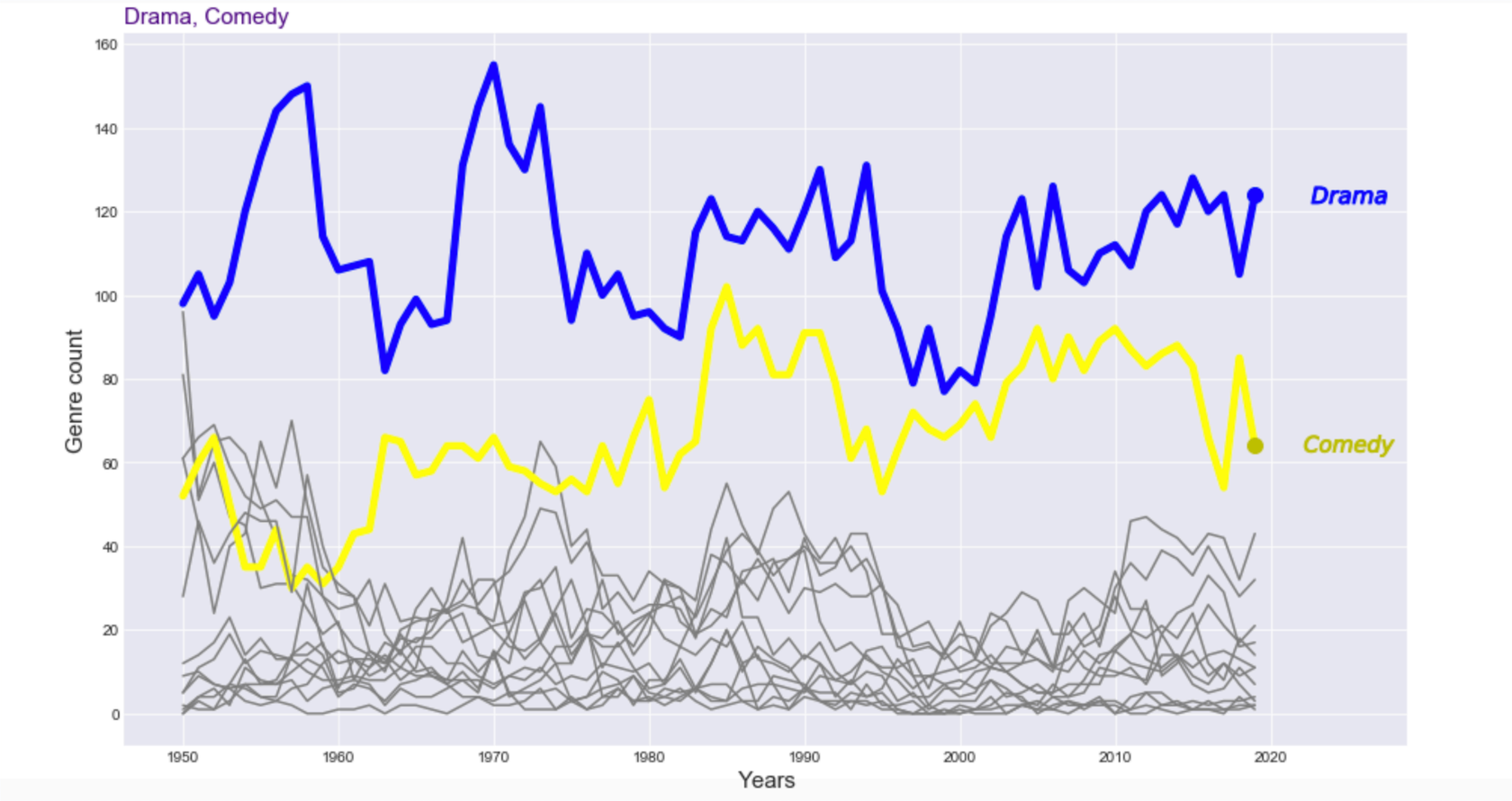
Are there any genres that are always popular?

METHODOLOGY

- I used the genre count scraped from the 17000 movies from 1950 to 2019 to see how popular was each of the genre types in a certain year.
- If I found 10 movies belonging to fantasy genre in a year then that year will have a fantasy popularity of 10. Doing the same for each year from 1950 to 2019 will give us the trajectory that fantasy genre had during this period of time.



The answer to our second question is also yes.



DRAMA AND COMEDY

Drama and comedy genres seem to be always fashionable.

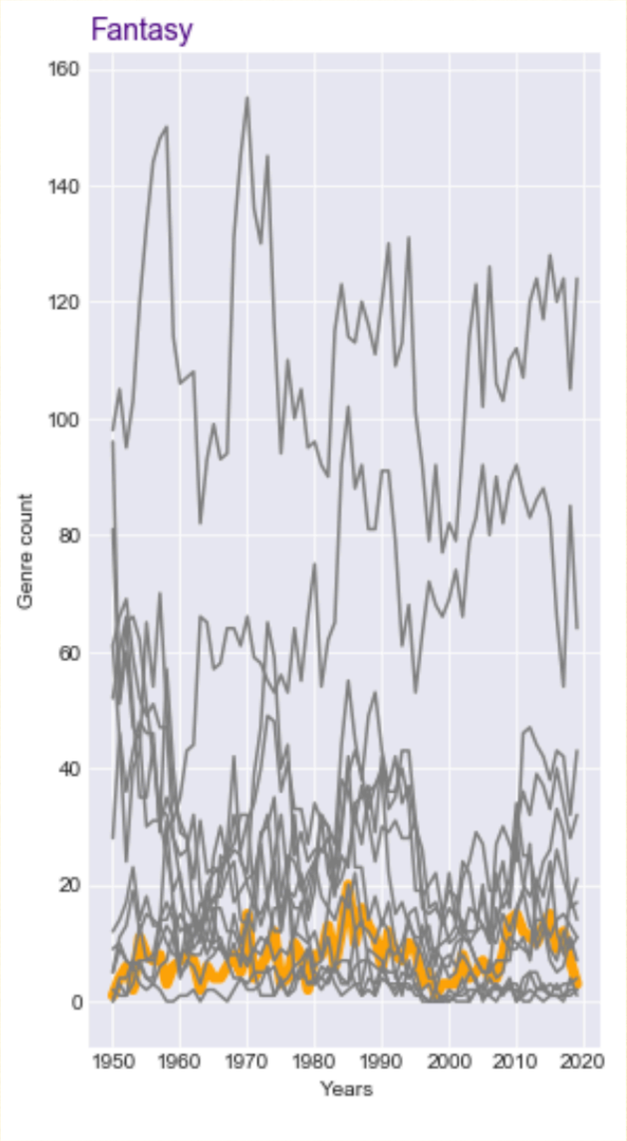
ZEITGEIST

Question #3
What the trajectory of the other genres can say about genre preferences?

FANTASY MOVIES

<u>Why fantasy movies are not that popular?</u>

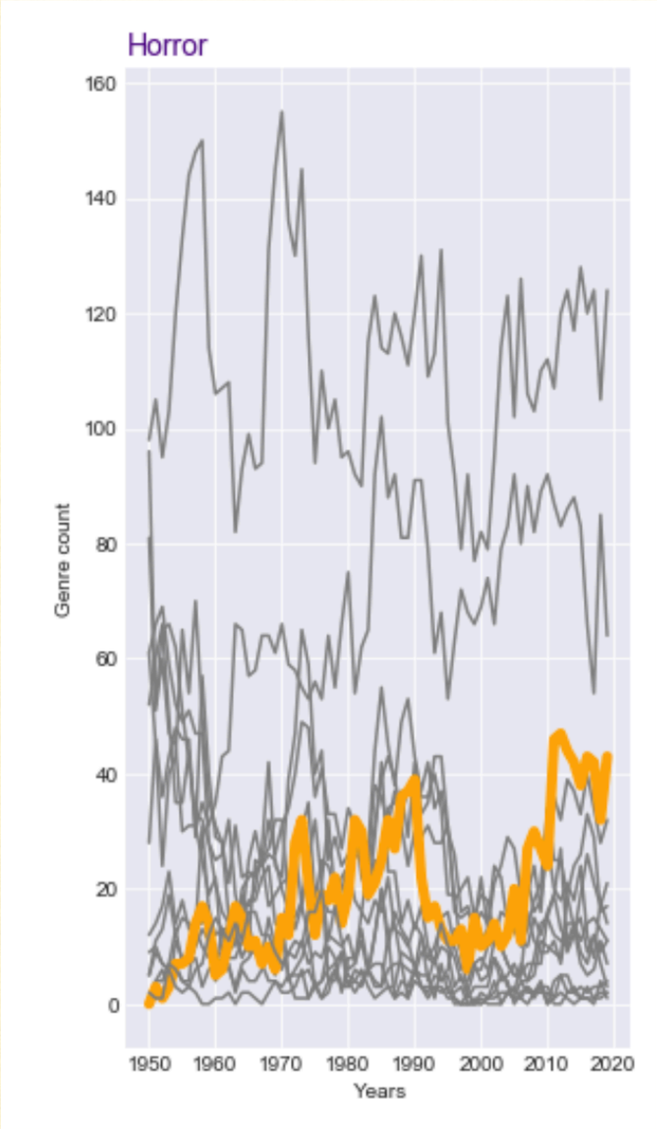
Our escapism is not extreme, we run from reality but not far enough that it doesn't feel familiar anymore. That's why we only watch movies about our age group.



HORROR MOVIES

<u>Why are horror movies so popular?</u>

The reason horror movies are so popular has something to do with how we process fear. We register fear that is of no threat to us as pleasure.

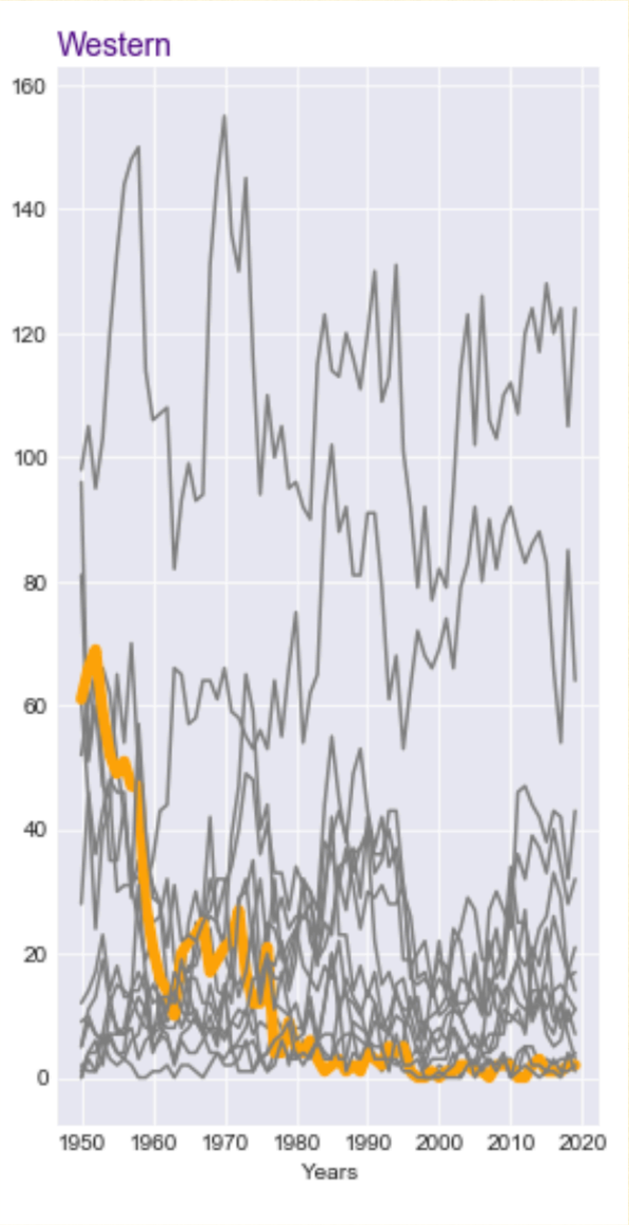


WESTERN MOVIES

Western genre is my control group, my placebo. It proves that my approach is correct. We all know how popular western movies were in the past and the graph is showing that very clearly.

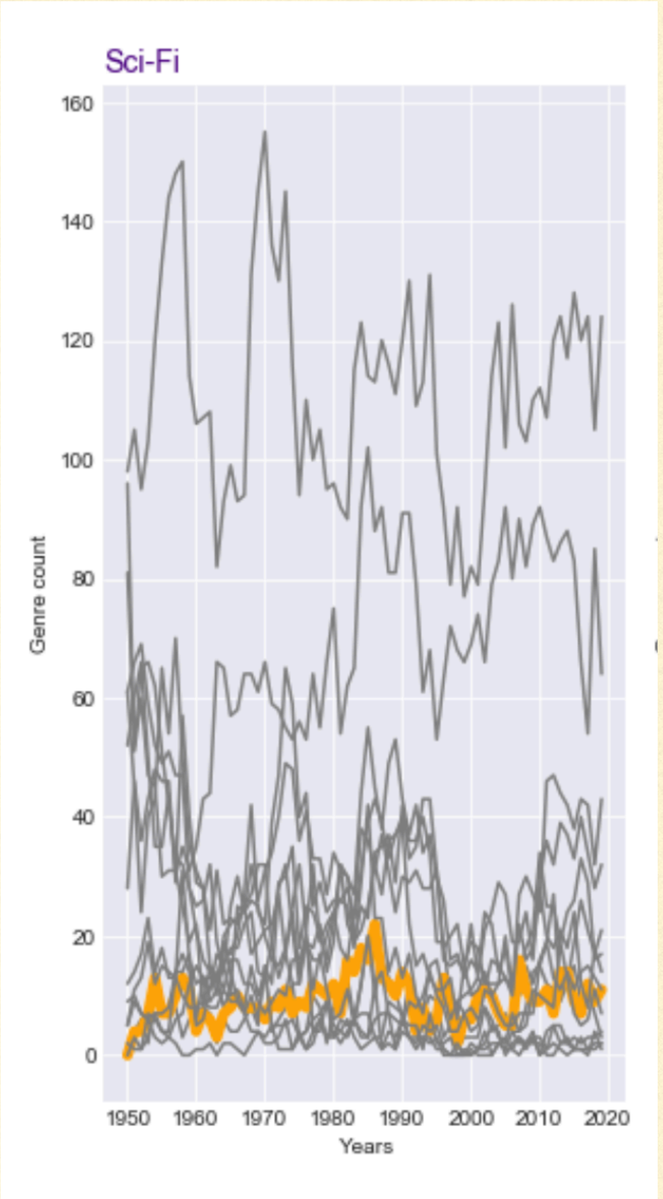
Why they are not popular anymore?

The reason for the decline is the change in the attitude towards America's past. In the 50-70 the image was rough but morally standing. Now there is no glory in it, there is only guilt.



SCIENCE FICTION MOVIES

Now I understand why there are not that many Sci-Fi movies. They are just not very popular.



Conclusions:

1. If you want to have a good repository of movies for general streaming, get a good variety with:

- a lot of dramas and comedies,
- some horror, thriller, and action movies
- just a splash of science fiction, musicals and sport movies.

2. After an event such as COVID-19 stir away from movies with hospital settings.