

A Brief Analysis of the Heroism in the Film The Avengers

Yan Yu

Zhoukou Normal University, China

Abstract

Heroism is an essential and vital theme in the history of Chinese and foreign films. The heroic complex contained in "heroism" does not distinguish between the country and the nation. The Avengers has created a group of heroes with heroism from different places with the mission of saving the world under the background of social unrest. This paper takes heroism embodied in The Avengers as the research object. It tracts back the history of American heroism and analyzes the main embodiment of individual heroism and collective heroism in the film.

Keywords

The Avengers; heroism; American culture.

1. Introduction

People's longing and reverence for heroes is a constant theme, and the pursuit of the value of heroes has an immense impact on people. Heroes reflect the spiritual outlook of a nation, but the cultural spirit of superhero films shows the cultural heritage of a country. Therefore, different countries have different films and TV works to describe the value of their heroes. The Avengers is a series of films, and it has a total of four films. They all belong to Marvel Cinematic Universe.

Marvel Cinematic Universe is based on the comics adapt into a real life film and put on the big screen. This pattern provides the reference to the adaptation of Chinese comics-type films. The successful construction of Marvel Cinematic Universe provides some reference for China's films from creation to marketing.

2. Heroism in America

The Americans believe that everyone has the right to be a hero. They also pursue heroes, which also makes many legends stand out from life. Therefore, the unique heroism is created because one of the basic characteristics of Americans is respect the freedom of belief.

Heroism refers to a person who is full of broad-minded and world-wide ideals. To achieve the cause of the country and the nation, they overcome many obstacles, forge ahead to the goal and make great sacrifices and effort when the country and the masses need them. They have strong courage and dedication. And, they play an extremely important role. The film The Avengers shows the heroism of the United States, which is deeply rooted in the history and culture of the United States.

2.1. Individual Heroism

The spirit is called individual heroism when people have realized a wish of the whole society or completed a revolutionary task of great significance in America. Individual heroism is a historical product of the development of American culture. It highly summarizes the ideas and values of the United States. It is also emphasizes the respect and protection of individual. Individual heroism starts with individualism. The cultural tradition of individualism has a long history in the United States. It is very classical. It has been around for nearly 400 years since

the establishment of Plymouth, Massachusetts, the first colony of North America in 1620. The peasants, pagans, and craftsmen who suffered from political, religious persecution and class oppression in the continental Europe to the North American continent experienced all kinds of hardships and difficulties. The prime motivation for traveling thousands of miles is to reestablish a truly free home that really belonged to them in this new land. This is where the cultural tradition of individual heroism begins. After that, the cultural tradition of individual heroism has been further developed and carried forward along with the 300 years Westward Movement of these people in North America. From establishment to perfection, American culture focuses on freedom, equality, and the realization of individual values. In American traditional culture, heroes are often able to breakthrough from heavy pressure, overcome difficulties, and are not constrained by the collective or the country. In addition, American culture always keeps the longing for individual heroism.

2.2. Collective Heroism

Collective heroism has distinct national characteristics. It is a value gradually established in the process of human society's change from barbarism to civilization. This spirit has a intense sense of history, time, and personality shock. People insist that everything proceed from the perspective of the collective. Its scientific meaning is to insist that individuals obey the collective, and the collective is more important than the individual. Heroes put the collective first and let themselves rush to the front. Firstly, heroes with collective characteristics often represent ideals of the nation. These heroic images that symbolize the construction of state authority and national self-confidence. These heroes with inner personality are not only the expression of heroism complex, but also the entire nation's heroism complex and the desire for revival. They are the general ideal and faith of a specific era, society, and people. Secondly, heroes stand for national consciousness, which makes social people identify the country through the identification of heroes. If the image of hero is regarded as the metaphysical pursuit of embodying the national ideal, it becomes the cohesive force in indicating the national consciousness. The hero himself pursues is more spiritual satisfaction. The hero always has noble and tenacious character and true collective heroism. In fact, true collective heroism does not exclude the interests and freedom of individual heroism.

3. Heroism in the Film The Avengers

The Avengers is like a grand audio-visual feast. It is not easy to a combination among the strong superheroes, as Iron Man said in this film: "I am capricious, extremely ego, and very out of the group". Superheroes with a strong personality generally need to restrain themselves, show their own strengths, and win the final victory in The Avengers.

3.1. The Causes of Collective Heroism in the Film The Avengers

In general, the purpose of defeating the enemy and maintaining world peace can be achieved by relying on individual strength. The role of the government is greatly weakened, while the masses of people are placed in a protected position. All superheroes stand at the front of the battle and cope with social crisis from the beginning to the end. These films emphasize the importance of individual value to the audience through the way of shaping superheroes and telling stories of heroes. This way of setting is undoubtedly a great affirmation of the value of individualism. They subconsciously encourage the people to tap their own strength. These films set the existence value of its protagonist as maintaining social order and saving the human world. American culture gives individual heroes the right to use violence at any time. Superheroes can use power when they think it is necessary, and they can modify or establish new rules according to their own wishes. They do not have to obey the rules and regulations of social system and legal framework. The appearance of Iron Man is no exception in the film The

Avengers. It is a normal phenomenon that there are unique individual heroes in the United States. They stand for individual heroism, which is people's inner longing for self-liberation of human nature. In the eye of Iron Man, rules are used to break. On the one hand, this kind of character contributes to the success of Iron Man. On the other hand, it shows his defects in character. Iron Man is young, dynamic and passionate about freedom. He is always eager for breakthroughs. What he embodies is contemporary culture and individual heroism in the United States. This kind of value of individual heroism originated from western liberalism, so Americans are full of subjectivity in personality. They believe in liberalism and individualism. And, they regard the realization of the value in life as the goal of life. People pursue the life they want without any scruple, and do not need to care about the ideas and suggestions of others. This concept has reached a social consensus in the United States, which is the main reason why the "American Dream" attracts people all over the world. At this time, the legendary narrative can no longer touch the vulnerable hearts of the audience. In this era of crisis, individual heroism represented by a single superhero is not enough to comfort the hearts of the people, so the Marvel Cinematic Universe began to shift its goal to collective ability and power. They emphasize and reflect collective heroism. The film *The Avengers* came into being.

3.2. The Relationship between Individual Heroism and Collective Heroism in the Film *The Avengers*

Unlike previous superheroes who emphasized individual heroism, *The Avengers* more reflects a kind of individualism reconciliation, which makes the characters with the characteristics of personal heroism show more spirit of collective cooperation from the perspective of the alliance. In fact, this spirit of collective collaboration has been revealed in the process of the establishment of the federal state. The formation of a subordinate collective under the premise of maintaining individual diversity is essentially a federal point of view. It is also the concept embodied in the film *The Avengers*. Although these superheroes require cooperation in the actual background, the meaning of the alliance is not just limited to cooperation, but also reflects the continuous exertion of individual heroism among heroes in cooperation. This application is not a compromise, but a reconciliation of excessive self and indulgence. On the one hand, this reconciliation reflects the change of American cultural ideas in the new century, that is, through the tolerance and absorption of the excellent cultures of various nationalities, they play the advantages of collective cooperation in the common cooperation, so as to fight against various crises and changes in the human world. American films reveal very strong individual heroism, and individual heroism deeply reflects the American's personal values. The members of the Avengers are constantly changing, but it is close around the same theme: fighting exclusively with enemies that cannot be handled by a single superhero. Individuals do not need to wipe out individual differences in a collective composed of consistent goals and foundations, but produce stronger power in the collective because of trust and combination, which also makes themselves stronger, and thus reflects the spirit of collective heroism.

3.3. The Specific Expression of Heroism in the Film *The Avengers*

The Avengers tells the story of the earth being attacked by evil forces and wreaking havoc, and no superhero has the ability to defeat these forces alone. The SHIELD, an organization set up specifically to protect global security, and the people of The SHIELD are caught unprepared. Its commander Nick Frey notices that he had to form the "most powerful" alliance in history to summon superheroes from all around to save the world in shark attack and extreme misery, and try their best to resist the invasion of the dark forces on the earth. So *The Avengers* created by superheroes like Captain America, Iron Man, Thor, Hulk, Eagle eye, and Black Widow. When superheroes are destined to be endowed with powerful and unusual powers from ordinary people, they have to sacrifice themselves to save the earth, reflect the antagonism and fight between justice and evil, so as to drive superheroes to complete their mission. Superheroes

with special capacities are gathered to battle with black forces at all time. They express their indomitable spirit of struggle, their outstanding wisdom, their courage, and their desire for freedom and independence. Superheroes defeated the black forces with their wise minds and the decision to defend the justice and truth. They guaranteed the safety of the earth. No matter their friends around them, other people they do not know or the country are in danger, regardless of how serious the danger is, they do not choose to betray or give up. Instead, they rush forward bravely and bring hope of life to others with their own warm bodies, their wisdom, and their life. These heroes showed great heroism when the crisis appeared.

4. The Relationship between Heroism and American Culture in The Avengers

In addition to all kinds of objective factors, the reason why the films of heroism type represented by The Avengers is so concerned in the United States is that the superhero films reflect the overall subjective ideology of the American people, which is an important embodiment of American culture.

4.1. The Influence of Heroism in The Avengers in American Culture

The change from individual heroism to collective heroism in this film is a sign of the multicultural development of American society. In the 20th century, the image of superheroes on the screen reflected the affirmation of individuals, but it shows the belief that the American government controls and manages all ethnic classes. However, "The September 11th Attacks" directly impacted this belief, and more forces need to be gathered to carry out the rescue of alliance style. Superhero films began to focus on collective power and collective ability. It can be said that the birth of the film The Avengers is in response to the cultural needs of the United States. The idea of individual diversity discussed and studied in the United States is reflected in the process of forming a federal state. The diversity of individuals is not built on the basis of mutual consistency. Jefferson and Lincoln questioned the proposition of this view. The Federation is not made up of many different states, but it is the personality of these states that formed the Federation. For superhero type movies, the individuals unify all powers on the basis of having the same goal so that they have a more powerful force. This force strengthens not only itself, but also the entire team.

4.2. The Embodiment of Heroism in The Avengers in American Culture

In the Once and Future Myths, Phil Corsino said that "hero is also the concrete presentation of culture" (25). The heroism in American films indicates the ideology and cultural trend of the United States (Guo, Feng and Zhang 15). The reason why the film The Avengers is loved by people all over the world is that the cultural consciousness and values contained in the films show the deep structure of American political and social culture in addition to the powerful and magnificent grand scenes and wonderful story structure (Dan 123). People express this ideology in the way of art, and spread the American ideology to the world. The government spread mainstream consciousness through a set of practice systems. The United States regards freedom as its national consciousness. Different from other autocratic countries, the United States holds various practical systems to play the role of ideology. They spread in every corner, including politics, morality, schools, universal, education, religion, electronic media, and so on.

4.3. The Dissemination of Heroism in The Avengers in American Culture

Marvel Cinematic Universe has become a new and representative type of American film. It not only creates enormous commercial interests, but also greatly promotes the spread of American ideological values in the world. In the context of globalization, the boundaries of the cultural systems of countries are gradually blurred, so they establish an unprecedented close

relationship with each other, start to break away from the scope of the region, and become the components of the world's cultural system. Marvel Cinematic Universe firmly follows this development trend, and improve cultural acceptance and identity as the external communication strategy. The Avengers emphasizes the change from individual heroism to collective heroism. The role shaping and the story-telling both revolve around the values of heroism, such as justice, bravery, and responsibility, which can be generally accepted by audiences all over the world. It obtains the emotional recognition of audiences by describing the flash point of human nature. This cross-cultural communication strategy has greatly reduced the emotional barriers caused by cultural barriers. It makes audiences accept the cultural concepts conveyed by films more accessible no matter where they come from. The Avengers has achieved amazing cross-cultural communication results and realized its influence because Americans use the way of constructing a sense of cultural identity.

5. Conclusion

This paper explores heroism in the film *The Avengers*. As one of the representatives of American mainstream films, *The Avengers* has already gained popularity. *The Avengers* is a heroism film that fully mobilizes the imagination of the audience and makes the pure hero image deeply roots in the hearts of the public. The film takes the American national spiritual culture as the core, absorbs some elements of the foreign culture, reprograms it after fragments, and blends it into the cultural connotation of its own nation. Then, under the influence of film entertainment, it instilled American consciousness and multiculturalism into the world gradually. This also shows that the value of heroism advocated by the United States is being incorporated into the output of their ideology in an obscure form, which has subtly affected the ideology of people around the world. It can be said that this kind of emotional structure construction and internal cultural value are worthy of our learning and reference. At present, the discourse power of Chinese domestic science fiction films does still not compare to the mature and huge industrial system of American science fiction films. Faced with such strong cultural communication momentum and the output of ideology, China should be vigilant of cultural hegemony and remain sober from being eroded by capitalist values.

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