

Pro-American Values in Hollywood Movie Musicals

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Abstract

Movie musicals are especially capable in expressing complex emotions. On one hand, movies are strong in visually presenting symbols through settings, characters, their relationships, props and plot development; while on the other hand, lyrics and melody are powerful mediums in conveying characters' inner feelings and stirring up audiences' empathy. American patriotism is one of the intricate sentiments that find their ways of expression through Hollywood movie musicals, and hence giving rise to the frequent positive exaltation of Pro-American values in Hollywood movie musicals, which aim to stir-up such patriotism among American audiences. My article focuses on explaining how three dominant American values – Democracy, change and progress, and individuality, are being emphasized as good values in four Hollywood movie musicals – *The Sound of Music* (1959), *Annie* (1982), *Evita* (1996) and *Les Misérables* (2012).

My research mainly explores on how different movie musicals praise various advantages of democracy, change and progress and individuality through purposeful employment of strategic cinematography, music, plots, characters, motifs and symbols. Yet beyond elaborating on the positive depiction of pro-American values through direct praises and glorifications in movie musicals, the research also analyzes on how each pro-American value is respectively contrasted with a bad, anti-American value, in order to further highlight on the superiority and strength of the often victorious democracy, change and progress and individuality, when they are confronted with Nazism, Communism, Monarchy, Aristocracy and Militarism.

Reflection on the capstone project

The capstone project is by far the greatest challenge I have ever come across in my undergraduate studies, since it does not only requires combined knowledge on cross-boundary subjects like literature, film, politics and history, but also needs a meticulous critical mind and sophisticated writing skills in order to perfectly comprehend the logic train. However the challenge is also an enjoyable one, as I get to research on a topic that enthralls me the most – Hollywood movie musicals. I also treasure the opportunity of investigating deeply into how pro-American values are positively exalted in them, which is a scope that I had never laid thoughts on, until my supervisor inspired me to work on it. Therefore I would like to thank Professor Gleckman in guiding me through the process and constantly providing me with new insights. Throughout the capstone project, I have acquired ample fresh knowledge from reading scholarly papers and thoroughly analyzing movie scenes, which I believe will further cultivate my appreciation for movie musicals, literature and American culture in the future in more all-rounded perspectives.