***Final Project: Hero vs. Antihero***

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Often times in movies, no matter the genre, there will be various themes throughout the film that may catch the audience’s attention. One that particularly stood out to me as we watched different films was the idea of Hero vs. Antihero. I believe it is important for one to know the difference between the two and how they can each cause different effects, not only on the outcome of a movie, but how the effect the viewers and their idea of how they think the situation should be handled. Heroes and Antiheroes may be easily confused for each other if one does not understand what to look for. So comparing the two and informing someone on the topic is very beneficial because it allows the observer to understand why problems are being dealt with so differently through various films. And of course, with many other themes, it can be determined by special effects, lighting, sound and even camera angles.

When we think of a hero, most times superheroes are the first things to come to mind, as they are most popular fitting to the term. However, there is a lot more to the meaning hero than just mere superpowers. There are many qualities that define what makes a hero a hero. These are the characters in a film that never hurt a downed opponent. They are most times humble, have great decision making skills, and typically have the physical and moral capabilities to fit the description. Heroes are pretty much always the good guy in a film fighting against a villain of some sort. In most cases, the hero will always prosper. In the rare cases he/she doesn’t prevail, there is usually a rematch later on in the film where the hero emerges victorious. However, one of the most important characteristics that set a hero aside from anyone else is the idea of how they are nearly impossible to corrupt.

In films where heroes are present, the scene tends to be very bright from all angles. The sound effects such as music seem to boost the mood of the audience in most instances. The camera angle gives the hero a kind of god figure appearance by usually having him/her glancing down over a crowd of people who are in awe of the sighting. A very famous hero to whom which this idea accompanies would be superman. The people are always happy to see him in the films. The music that plays when he makes an appearance excites the observers, and mood is typically set so the crowd feels comfortable. This is something that rarely ever happens for an antihero unfortunately.

So what exactly differentiates an antihero from a hero? Well if one has ever seen the film

*One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, they would see that McMurphy does so many things for mentally inept. He gives them opportunities that the institution wouldn’t allow by bending the rules. And that’s where the main difference between hero and antihero emerges. Antiheroes have more of a cynical approach to handle situations and seem to be ambiguous when it comes to morals. For example, in the film Mcmurphy takes the mentally unstable patients on a bus away from the hospital and shows them around town and even takes them fishing. One might argue that although that is being thoughtful for the patients, that he is putting the public in danger, as the capabilities of harm or something going wrong is pretty high. Antiheroes also have easily detectable flaws and show no physical or moral capabilities of being a hero. Nonetheless they very much so commit heroic acts. Whether or not they take the right approach in doing so may be up for discussion. And again, lighting, sound and camera angles all play an important role in depicting the character of an antihero as well.

As opposed to a hero, the lighting for an antihero can vary from scene to scene. I’ve noticed a lot of times that there will be quite a bit of side lighting because antiheroes tend to have mixed personalities or have a dark side to them in a sense. The side lighting helps to show the corruptness that they entail. The music and sound doesn’t appeal to the audience in most cases either. It is more of a darkened tone and may cause a sense of uneasiness. Finally, the camera angles give the character an average person trait. A strait forward angle or mid close-up might be used in these cases. But there is definitely no sense of a godly figure being shown for antiheroes.

Over the course of this semester, I have taken so much away from watching films and interpreting them. When I first came into the class, I had only watched movies for pure entertainment to pass time. This class has helped me to understand that there is a lot more to a film than just characters and music. But the thing that stuck out most to me was the themes people can take away from movies and the actions of characters. One theme that stood out to me in particular was the idea of Hero vs. Antihero and I think it’s important for an audience to know the difference. Obviously an antihero means well in most cases, however, the actions taken to solve the issue is can usually be dealt with a little more morally, as most would agree. But having antiheroes is important in films because they add to the suspense and emotional appeal of viewers.

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