

Free essay on americanism in films: casablanca

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Introduction

As the US was involved in the war against the Germans during the 1940s, it was necessary to hire people for the army. Realizing the need to instigate the registration into the armed forces, the US used the media to promote nationalistic sentiments. Casablanca (Curtiz 19) is certainly one of the legendary films of Hollywood. The story's most famous scene is a romantic one, where Rick and his ex-girlfriend bid goodbye. This, however, obliterates one of the strongest war propaganda symbolism ever made in a commercial and successful movie. While the general tendency is to remember the movie as a love story, the interpretations of the movie and its symbolism have presented a different point of view. While there is no denying the fact that it is a love story, one cannot forget the fact that it is set in the backdrop of an ongoing war. In the times it was made, the war must have been on every individual's mind. The emotional appeal of the movie combined with the theme of the movie must have certainly influenced many to register with the armed forces. The movie, Casablanca is not simply a big Hollywood movie

that meant to entertain; it also intended to persuade Americans to serve their country.

Discussion

In Casablanca, the Germans are clearly portrayed as bullies. Rick's influence in Casablanca, that is an American with a strong influence in an area rife with people from various corners of the world, is symbolic of the power of the Americans in world politics. In the famous last scene in the film, wherein Rick says, " I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship," as he and Renault join hands in friendship after the entire episode. I think this symbolizes the American and French (Morocco was a French colony) relations or perhaps even the American and European relations once Nazism and communism are tackled. At the very beginning of the movie, we get a feel of commotion and confusion within Casablanca, that is, in the streets and in Rick's café. Rick's attitude in the movie, while common in Hollywood leading men, in Casablanca it is symbolic of the US's goodness of heart: Rick does not care about his café and making profits. He lets people win while gambling in order to give them the money they need to go back to their homes or to escape communism. He is not a business man, but a man who fights for a cause. This can be a cause that is in someone else's favor, but it is always one that is fair. Moreover, the fact that he sacrifices the girl he loves for a greater cause, marriage, is symbolic of America's sacrifice of its men for abolishing fascism. Contrastingly, the German's intention for world domination and their detestation for anything that is not German has been displayed in the arrogant manner of Major Strasser.

Conclusion

Casablanca is definitely a war film in the guise of a romantic one, and the war propaganda through movies as a medium is an unhealthy approach as the influenced volunteers are definitely unaware of the realities of the war. It is not simply a big Hollywood movie that meant to entertain; it also intended to persuade Americans to serve their country. The symbolism in the film shows how it intended to show the power of the Americans and the situation of the World War II. Such movies, with a romantic theme and promoting nationalistic sentiments during war resulted in the sacrifice of many lives.

Works Cited

Curtiz, M. (Director). (1942). Casablanca [Motion Picture].