

## Individualism Embodied in American Movies

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**Abstract:** Individualism is the core of the American culture and of American values. America is a typical representative of individualism, which is rooted in the early colonial period and carry forward the spirit of self-reliance in the frontier continues today, it has become an important part of American spirit. American individualism as a near perfect character, represents the spirit of independence and proud. As an important mass medium, films, based on real life, can directly reflect the social and cultural aspects in America. In this thesis I will show the analysis of specific performance on individualism through four American moves, and make the reader more vividly understand why American society advocate individualism.

### 1. Introduction

Individualism is the core of American culture. Since the founding of the USA, individualism is deeply rooted in the American history, it influences people's mode of thinking, life style and attitude to life. Some Americans even regard the individualism as America. The film as a special carrier of culture is an important means to reflect the society and culture. American films reflect the core of the connotation of American culture. This article wants to analyze the individualism phenomenon from American films.

*Encyclopedia Britannica* defines individualism as: Individualism is a kind of political and social philosophy, it attaches great importance to personal freedom, widely emphasized self control, without external constraint personal or self. As a kind of philosophy, individualism, includes a value system, a theory of human nature, a certain political, economic, social and religious behavior general attitude, the tendency and the faith. In the history of political philosophy, individualism advocated that countries should only as protection of freedom of the individual tools, to protect the individual can make anything he wants without violating the same free case. Individualism emphasize that person to enter the society in order to pursue his own interests - or at least have the right to consider for his own interests, without consideration of the interests of society.

The word "individualism" was first used by the French politician, thinker Tocqueville. In nineteenth Century 40 years, he inspected the America for more than 9 months, then he wrote the book *On Democracy in America*. Tocqueville first put forward the concept of "individualism" in this book, and gave a detailed interpretation of the system. He said " Americans not regard individualism as a weakness but a nearly perfect character, it represents a creative, pioneering, enterprising spirit and not yield to the authority. Therefore individualism usually makes a sense of pride, Americans believe that it is the most unique and attractive point of America civilization."

### 2. Embodiment of Individualism in American Films

Americans have a strong sense of personal struggle, they admire the self-made man. Americans rarely to be proud of their illustrious family background but also very few people are ashamed of their own poor background. Because they believe in equality of opportunities in American. Through their own unremitting efforts anyone can change their own destiny. That is American dream.

*A beautiful mind* is a film about a true genius. The prototype of the story is a mathematician Johann Forbes Nash. Handsome and very strange, Nash made a startling discovery in mathematics early, and began to enjoy international reputation. But his superior intuition plagued by schizophrenia, that changed his way to the highest level of science. In the face of this has destroyed

many challenges, Nash was helped by his wife who is deeply in love with him. He never gives up, he is a tenacious man. After decades of struggle, he finally defeated the schizophrenia, and got Nobel prize in economics in 1994.

When his career to be very influential, Nash had the paranoid schizophrenia. Originally, Nash's friend *Charles*, Charles's lovely niece, and William Patscher were non-existent. Nash's experience let his wife frightened. But Alicia found she still loves the man, which is the source of her support for the promise. By her loyal love and devotion touched, Nash finally decided to fight with this incurable disease.

Nash's goals are very simple, but it is difficult to achieve these goals. In the weight of illness, he was still driven by the exciting mathematical theory, he is determined to find his own way to restore normalcy. Through the force of will, he continued his work as in the past, and in 1994 he received a Nobel Award. At the same time, he was on a forward-looking achievement in game theory, in twentieth Century to become the most influential.

When Nash was suffering from disease, he didn't give up his research. Through his efforts, he finally succeeded. He saw the world in a way no one could imagined. In Nobel Awards ceremony, he said, "I've always believed in numbers, in the equations and logics that lead to reason."

The film is adapted from the famous American black investment expert Chris Gardner published the autobiography of the same name. This is a typical America type inspirational story. It's a story of a black father Chris became a successful stockbroker through an arduous journey. Life will not defeat him, he always stick to their dreams, And son together with their own efforts to pursue won success, In the film, Gardiner is a high school education only medical appliance salesman, but his outstanding and unique personality characteristics that make it impressive. He puts all his savings into bone density scanner but it's a failure of investment. His wife can't stand abjection of life and choose to leave, Because he can't pay his rent, he takes his son to the church door waiting to be accommodate. The difficulties and setbacks in life don't prevent him for the pursuit of dreams, On the contrary, he face the life of his challenges and tribulations bravely. There are many parent-child dialogue reflects Chris's own dream and the spirit of continuous efforts.

When the son told his father that he wanted to be the occupation player in the future, Chris appreciated and said to his son: "You got a dream, you got to protect it. Don't ever let somebody tell you you can't do something, not even me." "You want something. Go get it" Garner never give up any further opportunities from the dream. When Chris was in the same taxi with the securities company's human resources manager, he showed the acme of perfection of Rubik's cube technique and digital talent and finally moved the securities human resources manager to get a precious chance to securities company internship. In order to stand out from 20 interns, become a securities broker, Chris seize every minute and second, tirelessly busy at work, he made full use of every minute to work. Never put the phone call, so every day he can save 8 minutes, and he would spend the whole day without water, to save time on the lavatory. He must completed his work within six hours that others for nine hours, in order to get off work early and hurried to the shelter to queue for beds. After his son slept, he read a book all through the night to improve the professional knowledge level with walkway lights in shelter. In the work, he tried every means to get more customers. He made full use of the match time to contact with other people for their chance to sell his company and service. During this 6 month no-salary internship, they have no fixed home, have little food to eat. Not only efficiently complete the work but also take good care of the young son. In his forward hard every step of the way, they did not complain about natural conditions and other people, did not beg for help, not be discouraged. They relied on their own hard work and effort, strong and brave for their own well-being to fight. In such difficult living conditions, Garner was still optimistic, carried the dream. And through continuous efforts, hard work and persistence, he eventually became a successful stock broker. Chris always believes that, as long as forge ahead, they will succeed in the end. His talents in the number and the skills trained during he is a salesman interacting with people, coupled with his extraordinary efforts, Chris finally have got his wish to become an investment expert, and achieved great success.

The title is not a spelling mistake, but implies a special significance. At the beginning of the film,

Chris saw graffiti on the kindergarten wall and said: "There is no Y in 'happiness', it's an I. " Americans have difficulties in the pursuit of happiness will not complain "Why", but rely on themselves.

*The Shawshank Redemption* was adapted from *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption*. The story happened in 1947, banker Andy was accused of killing his wife. Andy was sentenced to life imprisonment, which means he will spend the rest at Shawshank. During the nearly 19 years of prison life, he suffered physical and mental suffering, but he never gave up the hope of freedom. Finally he climbed through the tunnel carefully that he had dug for 19 years, escaped from the prison. He is free.

The prison is a place bound free. Because at here, people are criminals, they hurt other people's interests, they will pay the price for their own behavior--the deprivation of liberty and human rights. But for Andy that no crime is false imprisonment, he should not be affected by this punishment. His heart also doesn't think he should be bound, rather like a free man live in dignity. So he never loses the desire for freedom, never loses confidence in life, never loses his faith.

Once, Andy and several other prisoners go out to work, he inadvertently heard the prison officer was talking about the tax. Andy said he had a way to make the prison officer legally removed from the amount of tax, as the exchange, he earned two bottles of Tiger beer for each more than a dozen inmates. Drinking beer, Reed said that over the years, he first felt the feeling of freedom. In order to get a small amount of money for the construction of the prison library, Andy wrote a letter of application to state parliament every week for six years. He later added to write two letters a week, until the state to respond.

One day, he said to Reed: "If one day, you will be eligible for parole, must go to a place for me to fulfill a wish. That is place my first date with my wife, put a box where a big oak tree, dug out when you'll see what it is." That night, it's raining and blowing hard. Andy successfully escaped. In the baptism of rain, Andy's upper body was naked, and opened his arms happily, breathe the free air fully and delightfully. Andy was out of the past, he was free.

Americans have a strong sense of personal independence in character. Most Americans grew up, choose the professional work and life by themselves. Americans believe that to obtain their achievement of labor is glorious, to rely on others is disgraceful. To obtain and enjoy individual freedom, people have to learn how to self-reliance and self-independence. This means that they don't rely on others, have independent thought and action. Intellectual independence refers to the individual's thinking independently, in accordance with the wishes of their own to choose the target, and methods of determining target. Parents and the society should respect the choice.

### **3. Seeing the Spirit of Self-help from Gone With the Wind**

The movie is based on the famous novel *Gone with the Wind* which was written by Margaret. Scarlett showed her independence in the teen. She was willing to make decision by herself, and she had a unique idea for how to live a life. After the outbreak of the Civil War, Scarlett's home was completely destroyed, garden wasted, warehouse burned, slaves escaped, her mother died, her father was mad, two sisters had become ill, Scarlett lost everything. No food, no income, weak Melanie's child was born just this time. In such a difficult situation, she needed to take care of her family. She never depended on anyone, any family, friends or the man. The pain did not make Scarlett fear or retreat, but stimulate her courage and stubborn strength. She vowed never to let her family go hungry, she lost the great lady's pride and dignity, worked like a slave labor every day. She led the family carrying a basket to dig the ruins to pick up something to eat. To rebuild their homes she feed cattle, cooked, picked cotton. When encountering a cavalry's threat, in order to protect the hard business, protect the mother's things and hard-earned food, this delicate young lady actually calmly hold the gun, and killed the robbers. Although she was shaking, and nervous, she was still strong and firm. All the trials and tribulations make the weak reserved proud girl into a strong, brave, undaunted warrior. She protected Tara and her family with her own power.

After the war, in order to pay the estate taxes to keep Tara, Scarlett married Frank. She took her husband's grocery store and runs. She borrowed a sum of money, bought two timber factory. In spite

of the bad security environment, she drove a carriage in the city for business between two timber factory every day. These behaviors made males and females critical. But Scarlett had a contemptuous disregard, continued to adhere to her own business, running for her career. Business let her off dependence on men and had successful independent life. She was a successful businesswoman, achieved economic independence. She is also the master of Tara, passed the difficult time with tenacious perseverance and courage. All of these show the personality of independent.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In American's opinion, individualism is a perfect quality. Individualism represents creative, pioneering, enterprising spirit and do not yield to the authority. As a person should have the independence, responsibility, self-esteem, Generally speaking, the main meaning of America individualism is: self-initiative, self-determination, rely through one's own efforts to achieve self-realization, positive competition, the pursuit of success and achieve self-value.

As a special carrier of American culture, the epitome of social life, American films show people all aspects of social culture America in the most intuitive vivid image. The characters and plots in the movie reflects the social reality from different angles, which contains the thought and content is the core value that gave birth to it USA society agree that the concept of individualism. America films let us learn a lot of materials about American social culture, show good values of America culture to us. We can through the analysis of America film appreciation further feel the essence of individualism value American cultural outlook, and its essence is to carry forward. Individualism is a key to help us better understand American cultures. With the globalization of economy, the connection between counties become more and more close, a correct understanding of the individualism is useful for us to understand American culture and society, help us communicate with Americans...

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