

BLACK SUPREMACY AND AFROFUTURISM IN BLACK PANTHER

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Abstract: The project focuses on the movie Black Panther as a revolutionary step in media industry. The movie Black Panther is in many ways a love letter to black culture and breaks all the conventions from the Hollywood movies. Movie address the problems of colonization, racial discrimination, globalization and discovers the problems associated with the stability of strength among the west and rest. Emphasize the importance of gender and race in the film industry. Mostly in western culture, muscles are generally used to show masculinity, primarily white masculinity. Whereas black males are stereotyped as a negative, antagonistic symbol of masculinity often portrayed as beasts, gangsters and other one-dimensional figures without any deeper meaning in their characters. Black Panther was a movie that changed how African country was shown in foreign films by showing the viewer's the fictional nation of Wakanda. In conventional movie culture, African countries are often portrayed with the flavours of slavery, dullness and a society uncivilized. While Black Panther portrays Wakanda, a African country as a wholly advanced civilization, technologically and culturally. Black Panther's vision of Wakanda as a bustling metropolis of vibranium-powered futuristic skyscrapers, racing trains and soaring spaceship feels so refreshing.

Key words: Black panther, Racial discrimination, Wakanda, Colonization, futuristic elements.

INTRODUCTION

The superhero Black Panther aka T' Challa (Chadwick Boseman) is the first African Superhero in the mainstream American Comics created by Marvel Comics founders Stan Lee and Jack Kirby in 1966. It was adapted as a movie in 2018 by the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Of all the 23 movies in the marvel series Black Panther is the one with a predominant black cast with a black director, thus making it the most political movie among the list. Hollywood cinema has normalized whiteness of superheroes in films classic examples include Batman, Spiderman and Superman. Black Panther is a milestone in critiquing power positions in the movie industry as the Hollywood always had strong racial undertones and negative representation of the black people. Mythical kingdom of Wakanda functions as a character itself in the movie. It poses as one of the world's poorest countries and keeps the world away from it. Resisting trade with other nations, it restricts any sort of intrusion into the land. Wakanda is home to the world's most technologically advanced city following monarchy ruled by a King with special powers. Wakanda is a nation that has never experienced colonization or white supremacy. The movie suggests that Wakanda's success as a nation is related to its never having been colonized by a Western country, as the rest of the Africa has. The Wakandan people had concealed their existence from the rest of the world. It represents the African intelligence and the technological superiority. Black people ruled by a black leader. Wakanda is a utopian land for all the blacks, a society far superior to the west. Black pride is very evident in each character. They are unapologetic in their blackness.

ANALYSIS OF THE MOVIE BLACK PANTHER

Black Panther is a 2018 Hollywood film of the superhero genre from the Marvel Cinematic Universe directed by Ryan Coogler. Black panther was one of the biggest hits of 2018 commercially and received many positive criticisms. It is a significant moment in the history of white male dominated superhero genre as this was the first in the Marvel series highly acclaimed for its majority black cast and positive representation of the African continent. A big part of what makes Black Panther important is its incorporation of Black People's history and culture in a science fiction film.

Black Panther is classified as a 'Science Fiction' among the 'Fantasy Movie' genre that uses speculative, fictional science-based depictions of phenomena that are not fully accepted by mainstream science, such as extra-terrestrial life forms, alien worlds, extrasensory perception and time travel, etc.

Black Panther challenges the traditional depiction of African nations in film by showcasing fictional African country of Wakanda as a global technological leader, and by having Wakanda deliver social aid to US, reversing the typical global flow of assistance. Wakanda is depicted as a Blacktopia, where societies thrive beyond the reach of white supremacy as Wakanda has never been subjected to colonization.

The movie Black Panther begins by narrating the story of Wakanda. A meteorite made of Vibranium, the strongest substance in the universe hits Africa millions of years ago. Five tribes settled there and called it Wakanda. Tribes lived in constant war with each other until a warrior Shaman received a vision from the Panther Goddess 'Bast' who led him to the Heart-Shaped Herb, a plant that granted him superhuman strength, speed and instincts. The warrior became King and the first Black Panther, the protector of Wakanda. Four tribes agreed to live under the Kings rule but the Jabari tribe isolated themselves in the mountains. The Wakandans vowed to hide in the plain sight, keeping the truth of their power from the outside world.

N'Jobu is narrating the story of Wakanda to his son Killmonger. The movie then shifts back to Oakland, T'Chaka, the then Black Panther visits N'Jobu for betraying Wakanda by helping Klaw, the villain, to steal Vibranium and escape from Wakanda. Then it shifts back to the present day. T'Challa is killed as per the news reports. T'Challa goes to confront militants to get back Nakia, his ex-girlfriend who works as a spy. There, Nakia and Okoye, the general can be seen fight fiercely along with T'Challa. The scene shifts to Wakanda. Two things to be noted are: They use spaceships for travelling, where spaceships are just a myth for the outside world. Wakanda is hidden from plain sight, they enter Wakanda like entering into a parallel Universe.

Movie shifts to museum in London where Killmonger and Klaw steals Vibranium from the museum. The day of crowning T'Challa has come; there we could see the five tribes assembling around, wearing their traditional dresses. There we could see traditional and technology co-existing as T'Challa arrives on the spaceship. The people of Wakanda had technologically advanced without damaging their tradition unlike the mountain tribe who had stick to their traditional ways and shutdown their door form technological advancement.

This combat proves that Wakandan society is meritocracy, where anyone can challenge the Panther to combat and if victories, take the mantle. Everyone was taken back when the mountain tribe head M'Baku challenged T'Challa for Wakanda, later yielding before him. Black Panther is then given the Heart-shaped Herb that empowers him and takes him to the Ancestral Plane. We could see his past and how his father was killed. The colour purple can be seen everywhere in the movie, particularly in the Ancestral Plane T'Challa converses with his father, T'Chaka.

Black Panther and Okoye, the general and Nakia sets to bring down Klaw as they learned that he is about to sell the stolen Vibranium in South Korea In South Korea, they all get into a fight trying to bring down Klaw. There we are introduced to yet another technology, the remote dawning system, Klaw is detained but is rescued by Killmonger. Agent Ross takes bullet for Nakia. Thus, Agent Ross is brought to Wakanda to get him treated. Soon after Killmonger killed Klaw after he was no longer needed in his plans to get Wakanda.

T'Challa then learns about his father, T'Chaka had killed N'Jobu and that Killmonger is his son. Killmonger comes to Wakanda carrying Klaw's corpse with him. Killmonger is brought before the King. He claims the throne, reveals his identity and challenges T'Challa is beaten badly. Killmonger takes over the throne.

T'Challa and Killmonger have a fight. The mountain tribes joint T'Challa Agent Ross successfully completes the mission. W'Kabi goes on to kill M'Baku with his Rhino but is stopped by O'Koye. W'Kabi and the border tribes yield before the women warriors. Killmonger is totally wounded. Killmonger rejects T'Challa's offer to heal him. He chooses death over bondage. T'Challa is crowned again. He chooses to share what Wakanda has with the world. They establish the first Wakandan Outreach center at the very same where N'Jobu was killed.

In the end Killmonger is not seen as the real villain. The fight between T'Challa and Killmonger can be viewed more than a hero fighting the villain to the fight between two ideals, one being the revolution using any means necessary even if it ends in violence and other more of a pacifist way wanting change but only through peaceful means T'Challa does not view his cousin Killmonger as a enemy even though he tried to kill him, we can see that when T'Challa talking to his father T'Chaka after taking some psychotropic heart shaped herb he talk to his father about the decision to leave Killmonger in the US and tells him it was wrong to leave him there.

In this movie the director takes the viewers through many different futuristic elements. Like the metal vibranium, spaceship and existence of parallel universe. One such futuristic element that viewers see a lot in the movie is the fictional metal vibranium. In the whole marvel universe vibranium is said to be the strongest metal and has the ability to absorb, store and release large amount of kinetic energy. Vibranium Is used for a variety of purposes such as making advanced weaponry, modern vehicles and is even used in the suit of black panther, the shield of captain America and the prosthetic arm of winter soldier. On the day T' Challa takes the throne of Wakanda where he arrives for the ceremony on a spaceship and that are just a myth for the outside world.

The one thing that catches the eyes of the viewers is how the director shows Wakanda as a country that never been seen by foreigners and how much a country could develop using its resources that it has and utilizing it in every aspect of their lives to be most developed country in, the marvel universe without giving up their culture and traditions.

At first look black panther just looks as another entry to a countless superhero movie, but it's something a whole lot bigger. Hollywood movie industry has never seen a movie that's this magnificently black. Every role behind and Infront of the camera are played mostly by black. In a country whose enterprise makes use of black characters as villains or for other in considerable roles, the black panther film seems like resistance. Its narrative consists of prismatic views on black lifestyles and tradition. The movie tries to retort against the 'superior' White through the introduction of the character Agent Ross. It is made clear that Agent Ross is not needed in Wakanda; "Great, another broken white boy for us to fix" (58:26 min) Shuri, T' Challa's sister, and the top scientist says. Even while a shield agent, who fight in opposition to bad guys is likewise dealt with as a villain by the people. Agent Ross was merely considered as a liability in that country.

CONCLUSION

Black panther is a commercially successful movie in the marvel franchise at first look is much more than what meets the eye. It's a movie that broke most of the stereotypes of Hollywood by having all-black lead and black director. It's a movie that talked about black lives, their culture and about their future. The movie showcased an African country that's technologically more advanced than any other countries but still holding great values to their culture. The impact the movie had on everyone can be seen by the way Chadwick Boseman was respected and was being called the king everywhere he went. Films can be powerful tool to talk about oppressions, suffering and discrimination around us. It can bring a change in the mind and heart of the viewers by talking about black lives and can be considered as a modern classic which talked about and remembered as long as black people are fighting for their freedom. Though the land of Wakanda and characters are fictional, the politics portrayed is real.

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