

# **“Super Heroes” / “Action Figures” and American Global Hegemony: A Critical Analysis of New Trends in Hollywood Cinema**

**T. I. Wickramaarachchi**

**English Language Teaching Unit, Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka**  
*sthilina123@yahoo.com*

The paper attempts a reading of a representative sample of recent “super heroes” / “action figures” in Hollywood to interpret implicit as well as explicit ideological and political currents to establish American global hegemony. This will be a reworking of Edward Said’s notion of “orientalism” in relation to the cultural hegemony of the west.

There are two main objectives of the present study. At one level it investigates how Hollywood cinema, as one of the most popular modes of entertainment with increasing free accessibility for audiences across the globe, operates with ideological and political motives. In this manner, Hollywood plays a role in enhancing American image and the promoting of its hegemony throughout the world and to a larger audience at various regional and societal strata.

As its second objective, the study focuses on the present global socio-political landscape where America plays the role of an active agent, for example through interventions such as “global war on terror,” and the study examines how these socio-political interests of America surface in Hollywood.

The primary methodology used in the study is discourse analysis of three major action figures/superheroes that recently appeared in Hollywood cinema.

The major finding of the study, that is, how Hollywood is not an “innocent form of entertainment” but an ideological institute, is expected to contribute to an increased awareness of the functioning of popular entertainment modes as ideological agents of particular socio-cultural settings.

***Key words:*** *Hollywood, hegemony, American, Super heroes / action-figures*