

Iron jawed angels



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Iron-Jawed Angels: Movie Analysis¹ After watching “ Iron Jawed Angels” I gained a strong sense of reality when witnessing what women had to do to achieve their independence and gain a place in a male dominated society. Up until the late 19th century, women were perceived as homemakers and were allowed only domestic duties in society but with the emerging industrial and political system women could now use their domestic skill to propel their voice in American government and society. “ Dress up prejudice and call it politics” is a profound quote in the movie Iron Jawed Angels, which depicts the struggle of women’s suffrage movement and its culmination in the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the constitution. The battle for suffrage was indeed a long and difficult process spearheaded by ingenious and talented women in a variety of ways, such as spreading pamphlets, public demonstration, public parade, petition to the president. All in all, women’s suffrage movement could not be encompassed by a single movie. However, the movie Iron Jawed Angles does not show us the marrow part of this movement. The strongest sense of reality that I gained after watching Iron Jawed Angles is the ability of women to make an impact on other women. It is this contagious feeling among women suffragists that hold them together through various difficulties. For example, Alice Paul’s public demonstration for women’s voting right eventually even gained the support in the passage of Nineteenth Amendment. When one of the suffragist fell down because of extreme fatigue, when public parade and demonstration is physically disturbed by males, when suffragists are being force-fed in the prison, none of the suffragists budged on their stands, instead, they are held together even stronger by this contagious feeling among them. The film is a documentary and drama which uses live action and music to deliver the

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sympathetic and distressful mood the film creates. An example of the distressful mood is when the suffragist refuse to eat when they go to prison. This shows how passionate and distressed the suffragists are to get the 19th amendment passed, which would give women the right to vote. The films message, which is the hardships and adversity women had to withstand to get the 19th amendment passed, is effectively portrayed because the struggle the suffragist faced is accurately and beautifully depicted. As a tool of communication, the strengths of the film Iron Jawed Angeles are its accurate portrayal of the 1920s women's suffrage movement and excellent depiction of the main suffragists, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns. There are no real weaknesses in the communication of the 1920s women's suffrage movement in the film except for the music used, which is too modern to possibly be from the 1920s era. Since the film Iron Jawed Angeles shows the grief and struggle of women suffragists endured, I believe the film maker wanted the audience to respond with sympathy and a greater understanding of the 1920s women's suffragist movement. The film appeals to the emotions of the viewer because throughout the movie, dark lighting and music create an atmosphere which is undeniably emotional. The emotional appeal of the film makes me feel pity towards the suffragists because America hated them and persecuted them. It also tells the viewer that the United States, mostly men, was strongly opposed to women's suffrage. The disturbing violence geared towards the women suffragists also shows the discontent of American men towards the movement and the people involved in it. The film did a great job portraying the true brutality that women went through in order to obtain the right to vote. Women and young children had their backs turned on them by police while marching in a parade. They police

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officers simply turned their heads when mobs of men started viciously attacking women. The women marching were stepping far from the norm and rebelling against families, husbands, and even other women. Some women were faced with the decision to either keep fighting for equal rights, or stay with their husbands and maintain a family. When women chose to continue to fight for their rights, and have a voice, they were actually punished by their government, and in some cases tortured after being arrested for committing no crime at all. Not only was I appalled at how women were treated in prison, but how the president did nothing but tell women to “ be patient”, and that their rights were not a priority for his campaign. Throughout this entire movie, it was as though the President was ignoring the issues of women’s rights because of his attitude towards the situation and women. This movie showed the women’s movements in a new light, where real women with husband’s, children, and families risked their entire lives for women to be able to simply vote. Their courage and determination was mistaken for insanity and they were attacked on both mental and physical levels because the government did not favor equal rights at the time. Industrialism allowed for change in society and even encouraged it. During the 19th century, change was abundant and people had to be forced to become accustomed to it for it was needed. Freedom and equality for all citizens was continuously being stressed in society and with these ideals came realization from all walks of life that everyone deserves to be heard and considered. This awareness of self-empowerment gave birth to all kinds of social and political revolutionary movements from all minority groups in America. The idea of being able to have your own ideas, preferences, values, morals, etc. excited these movements and encouraged

people to take action. Industry played a key role in propelling the women suffrage movement because the jobs that were now being created were of domestic relevance. All kinds of female-oriented jobs were emerging and with these jobs also came female empowerment. It was considered socially unacceptable for a man to partake in domestic duties and these jobs served as the backbone for progressivism in the American industry by essentially giving women a “foot in the door” to revolutionizing the American industrial system as well as the political barbarism that slowed progress in our society. Women used to be thought of as the stay at home mother by men. She was supposed to take care of the children and take care of the home. Seeing a woman in the workforce was desirable as long as she had an education. Women were seen working in factories or as teachers but they had no say in the government. Thank to a few women dedicated to making a difference, women have become more independent and now have a say in the government if they choose too. Soon after the emergence of women in the workplace came a female political voice in American government. However, a female political voice proved much more difficult to achieve in the general public for many people still felt that women were unfit to govern society. Politics were considered a very male oriented practice and women were considered radical in their ideals. It was women like Alice Paul and Lucy Burns that inspired female empowerment and propelled change from the barbaric and uncompromising principles of the way things have always been and when faced with these ingrained socially acceptable ideals, change is never brought on without a fight. “Give me liberty or give me death” this was how strongly these suffragists felt about their beliefs and to them, giving up was no an option. Alice Paul and Lucy Burns were the two leaders of the <https://assignbuster.com/iron-jawed-angels-movie-analysis-samples/>

NWP. The two women are an inspiration to others. They stood up for how they felt, and were not going to let anyone get in their way. They felt so strongly about women's rights that they got other women involved. These women went out in crowds and handed fliers to strangers, they held a parade the day of President Wilson's inauguration. They did not care whom they angered or how far they had to go to get what they wanted. An ideal example of how strongly these women felt about their independence is a woman named Inez Milholland, the "woman on the horse", who was an influential suffragist, labor lawyer, and public speaker for women's rights and was directly involved with Alice Paul and other suffragists during this period. During the revolution she became ill while on a cross country speaking tour, Paul encouraged her and was able to change her mind and she ultimately decided not to let her illness keep her from demonstrating how she felt about women's rights. During a speech in Los Angeles she collapsed and died. Her last public words were, " Mr. President, how long must women wait for liberty? " and was known as the martyr of the women suffragist movement. Alice Paul and the other NWP members were arrested and charged with " obstructing traffic" even though their picket line was on the sidewalk. Since the women refused to pay the fine, the women were sentenced to sixty days in prison. Paul and the other women that were imprisoned also risked their lives by going on a hunger strike. They were literally starving, and looked as if death was right in front of them. This is a true testament to how dedicated these women were to their beliefs and without them we would have never become a progressive society. It is because of this kind of thinking that we are considered the revolutionists of the world. Most countries are set in their own traditional ways where we have surpassed them without cutting

edge advances in social equity. It is strange to think that this battle of the sexes took place only less than a century ago. We are still in the midst of social unrest when it comes to liberty in America but I feel progress has been established especially with the first black president in office as well as several women in high power political stances. I believe we must continue to encourage equality but I feel the generation that opposed this kind of progressiveness has died along with their simple minded ideologies. I believe that the next step in our quest for a completely free and equal society is through the acceptance of homosexuality and realizing they too deserve equal opportunities in our society. I feel like this movement hasn't really even started but I won't be surprised when gay and lesbian groups start staging hungry strikes in front of the white house, especially since gay marriage has been abolished once again in most states. Many of us believe that Human equality is inevitable and is continuously becoming more of a socially acceptable attitude. Equal opportunity is inevitable especially in the melting pot of America. Think about it, with our already increasingly integrated society, skin color will be a thing of the past because all people will eventually be mixed and bigotry will be just another embarrassing blemish in our barbaric social past.