

The hurt locker: the war inside essay

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The worth of a war film, for me, lies in how deep the movie looks into the lives and personalities of its protagonists. A war can get the best or the worst out of a human being and it is this aspect of the battle that good war and army films such as *Black Hawk Down* and *Crimson Tide* explore.

The Hurt Locker, set in Iraq amidst the lives of the American bomb squad members in the explosive ridden country, is not just about the thrills of detecting a bomb but about deeper human relations and emotions. The film talks about team work and team dynamics as it traces Sgt. James (played by Jeremy Renner) through his leadership and the problems he faces under stressful conditions.

One learns from the movie about how those entwined in battle for the country take time to adapt to normal lives back home. James Rocchi in his review of the movie explores this element of the film. (Rocchi, 2009) This aspect of army life, hardly explored in cinema, came to me as a fresh and interesting piece of scriptwriting. It is something I learnt from Kathryn Bigelow's well directed scenes towards the end where James struggles to find normalcy with his wife and infant child.

I found the film to be very realistic and without any of the cinematic baggage that the medium brings with it. Reviewers at generationfilm.com call it "an accurately depicted film". The scenes shot at Camp Victory and in the warehouse particularly come out particularly well in terms of the realistic intensity. The scenes leave the audience shaken. Apart from these, the detailing for every bomb is also commendable. One leaves the theatre with a lot of knowledge on bombs and bomb squads.

The movie seems to celebrate war in an unapologetic manner. In doing that,

the film comes out with the message that war, which is the result of a few minds disagreeing on a matter can go on to impact generations together. Through the mind of the bomb squad head inches away from stepping on his and his team's death, the film explores how meaningless lives become in the war setting. Hurt Locker questions the very psychology of war and comes out with a scathing commentary on national politics and armament. The central message of the Oscar winning movie is the emptiness and redundancy of war and it uses some of the most disturbingly shot war visuals to get this message through.

Hurt Locker also throws light on the paranoia that grips the United States of America as a nation post the 9/11 attacks. The movie highlights this paranoia that went on to take so many lives on both sides of the battle through some very gut wrenching scenes. In particular, An American soldier shooting away an Iraqi civilian speaking on phone, mistaking him to be operating a bomb brings out a particular state of mind so tough to do away with in the situation the nation finds itself in today.

With stellar performances from Renner, Anthony Mackie and Brian Geraghty and outstanding music and a fine balance of action and emotion, the movie comes across as one of the best and most relevant of its time. Hurt Locker is a war movie with great psychological subtext and is therefore, a must watch.

Works Cited:

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