

Conflict can have
tragic consequences
for everyone.

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Conflict can have tragic consequences for everyone as the women portrayed in Beresford's film, *Paradise Road*, react in a catastrophic manner in the events that lead on as the film progresses. The characters in the film are based on actual people: nurses or wives of major officials and civilians. These women are caught up in the global conflict of World War II and those who manage to survive are, despite any positive outcomes, are dreadfully damaged by their encounter with conflict both physically and emotionally.

These moments of great unrest are captured in the film that innocent people are too often becoming caught up in and suffer from the effects of great struggle that are not of their own making. The viewers are powerfully positioned to recognise with the three main protagonists, Adrienne, Margaret and Susan, as they come to a conditions with the cruel and frequently tragic circumstances of their situation. In the film's opening scene, we observe a sight of the protected and usual lives led by women who were fairly unimportant to the conflict of war.

Now, plunged into a terrifyingly brutal and unknown world, they come across the tragic consequences of the conflict. On the voyage to the camp, Beresford highlights the ordinary qualities of the women as they move violently to retain their meagre property or endeavour to help each other endure the long walk. Afraid, starving and exhausted, the women are herded like cattle. On their appearance in Sumatra they see the disengaged head of a following prisoner displayed on a pole in the public square.

The tragedies that occurred in the prisoners turn out to be a part of their daily lives, as many gave in to the belongings of untreated sickness. The scene with the two children creating simple wooden coffins for dead babies

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evidently highlights the tragedy of the conflict in the lives of normal people, and suggests that no reason can justify the dreadful consequences of violent conflict. Children are a figure of innocence in the film. The innocent suffers the most in situations of tremendous conflict.

The camp cemetery, with its rows upon rows of white crosses, is exposed as the camera pans across the penal complex compound throughout a performance of the vocal orchestra, enlightening the large numbers of prisoners who died all through the course of their imprisonment. The film also shows how intense conflict situations positions everyday people beneath a strange pressure, provoking and exacerbating conflicts on a private level, both between and within individuals.

Stressed, sorrowing and deprived, a number of the women in Paradise Road find themselves positioned in a ethically and politically compromised condition when confronted with the option as to whether to remain at the Japanese ' officers' club', providing sex in return for food and comfort, or to return to the camp. Those who choose to be recognise by the bribe of the officers who are not only prostituting themselves but are also consorting with the enemy.

Likewise, Adrienne was positioned in a compromising situation when she was asked if the orchestra will carry out a Japanese song for Colonel Hirota. She refuses, risking cruel punishment. At the same time, she makes a diverse option, to that of the women of the officers' club, Beresford emphasises that war, and the struggle for survival, places harshly and unusual stress on individuals, which is able to cause them to act in ways they would not

normally behave; as Sister Wilhelmina intelligently acknowledges, it is not fair to judge the events of others in a period of severe disagreement.

In conclusion, conflict has the potential to allow an individual the ability to face challenges in order to overcome them and finally to grow as a person. The range of conflicts that acts as a basis towards various responses ranging from the extreme life changing circumstances to those that are minor, but yet a significant ambition to change. Referring to the film ' Paradise Road' we have seen many faces that have been challenged through out their lives. However the women are able to follow their presence with the determination, courage and peace.