

Year 10 Film Knowledge Booklet

Term 2

Name:

Class:



GCSE Film Studies Course Overview

Component 1: Key Developments in US Film

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

35% of qualification

This component assesses knowledge and understanding of **three** US films chosen from a range of options.

Assessment consists of **four** questions on **one** pair of US mainstream films and **one** US independent film:

Section A: US film comparative study

- **one** stepped question on the **first** of the chosen pair of films (produced between 1930 and 1960)
- **one** stepped question on the **second** of the chosen pair of films (produced between 1961 and 1990)
- **one** question requiring a comparison of the chosen pair of films

Section B: Key developments in film and film technology

- **one** multi-part question on developments in film and film technology

Section C: US independent film

- **one** question on one US independent film.

Component 2: Global Film: Narrative, Representation and Film Style

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

35% of qualification

This component assesses knowledge and understanding of **three** global films produced outside the US chosen from a range of options.

Assessment consists of **three** questions in three sections:

- **Section A:** **one** stepped question on one global English language film
- **Section B:** **one** stepped question on one global non-English language film
- **Section C:** **one** stepped question on one contemporary UK film.

Component 3: Production

Non-exam assessment

30% of qualification

This component assesses the ability to apply knowledge and understanding of film to a production and its accompanying evaluative analysis. Learners produce:

- **one** genre-based film extract (**either** from a film **or** from a screenplay)
- **one** evaluative analysis of the production, where learners analyse and evaluate their production in relation to comparable, professionally-produced films or screenplays.

Big Question = How does Taika Waititi use the elements of film form to convey meaning to the audience in JoJo Rabbit?

Big Questions

BQ: What is the impact of social, historical and cultural context on the production of JoJo Rabbit?

BQ: What happens at the start of JoJo Rabbit? Viewing Lesson 1

BQ: How does the narrative develop in JoJo Rabbit? Viewing Lesson 2

BQ: How does JoJo Rabbit end? Viewing Lesson 3

BQ: How does JoJo Rabbit end? Viewing Lesson 4

BQ: What is narrative structure?

BQ: How are German people represented in the film?

BQ: How does Waititi use cinematography to convey meaning in JoJo Rabbit?

BQ: How is mise-en-scene used in JoJo Rabbit?

BQ: How is cinematography used in JoJo Rabbit? Extended Writing 1

BQ: How can narrative theory be applied to JoJo Rabbit?

BQ: How can Levi-Straus' theory of Binary Opposition be applied to JoJo Rabbit?

BQ: How can character theory be applied to JoJo Rabbit?

BQ: Why did JoJo Rabbit's sound and editing get so much recognition?

BQ: What genre is JoJo Rabbit?

BQ: What happens to the main characters throughout the narrative of JoJo Rabbit? Extended Writing 2

Key Vocabulary

Aesthetics = The specific 'look' of the film. The film's style.

Auteur = From the French 'author'. A director who has control over the style of the film.

Cinematography = Aspects of camera angles, distance and movement.

Context = When, where, how, and why the film is set. Time, place and circumstances.

Conventions = Methods, ingredients, things necessary for the style/category of film.

Diegetic Sound = Sound that is part of the film world (car horns beeping, birds singing)

Non-diegetic Sound = Sound added in post-production to create a certain atmosphere.

Genre = The style or category of the film.

Iconography = The images or symbols associated with a certain subject.

Indie/independent = Film that is independent of the constraints of mainstream Hollywood. These films are often characterised by low budgets, location settings (rather than studio), (often) inexperienced directors and fairly unknown casts.

Key lighting (high and low) = Lighting design to create different light/dark ratios. High-key lighting is bright and produces little shadow, whereas low-key lighting is used to specifically create shadow and contrast.

Mainstream = Popular, conventional, and/or part of a major film studio system.

Mise-en-scène = Literally, 'what is in the frame': setting, costume & props, colour, lighting, body language, positioning within the frame all come together to create meaning.

Motif = A dominant theme or recurring idea.

Plot = Different to story, plot is the narrative order that the story is told in.

Representation = The way that people, places and events are constructed.

Screenplay = Written by the screen writer, this document tells the story and will contain no camera direction.

Story = The ideas & events of the narrative whole.

Shooting script = Written by the director & cinematographer (not the screen writer), this script focuses on planning the camera shots & other practical elements that will bring the screenplay to life.

Spectator = An individual member of the audience.

Sound Terminology

Diegetic sound = Sound that is part of the film world.

Non-diegetic sound = Sound that is added into the film in post production.

Contrapuntal sound = Sounds and music that contrast with the images on the screen.

Pleonastic sound = Sound that is heightened or exaggerated for effect.

Sound bridge = Sound that carries from one scene to the next.

Ambient Sound = Background sound.

Voiceover = Characters or narrator speaking over other images on screen.

Dialogue = Speech by the characters.

Key Vocabulary

Camera Shots and Angles

Eye level shot - There are as many camera angles as there are shots, but in general they can be classified in three ways, eye level, high angle, and low angle.

Eye level shots put the viewer on an equal status with the subject.

High angle shot - The high angle shot looks down on the subject. As the words imply, it puts the viewer in a superior position to the subject, or conversely, it makes the subject appear weak or inferior.

Low angle shot - The low angle shot, in contrast, looks up at the subject. This gives the subject the appearance of strength or power.

Over the shoulder shot - The over the shoulder shot is used for longer conversations, and establishes near eye contact between the subject and the viewer, over the shoulder of another subject.

Extreme Close-up (ECU) - An Extreme Close-Up, sometimes called a "tight close-up," might perhaps frame only a part of a human face (an eye or the mouth), or perhaps a hand or foot. Extreme Close-Ups can in fact frame anything very small. This is a common shot found in video demonstrations of intricate procedures (e.g. dissections, drawings, etc.)

Close-up (CU) - This camera shot, sometimes called a head shot," usually frames an object about the size of a human head usually not including shoulders

Medium Close-up (MCU) - This camera shot indicates a space equivalent to a person's head and their shoulders

Medium Shot (MS) - This shot includes space which would frame a person's head and torso. This shot can also encompass two people standing next to each other filmed from the waist up. Two people sitting at a desk, such as can be seen in television newscasts, represents an example of a Medium Shot.

Medium Long Shot (MLS) - A Medium Long Shot can frame one or two people standing up, that is, their entire body

Long Shot (LS) - A Long Shot will be able to take in an entire room or large group of people. When the camera pulls back at the end of a newscast to allow you to see the entire set (cameras, desks, cables, lights, etc.) they are using a long shot

Extreme Long Shot (ELS) - An extremely long shot might encompass a picture of an entire house or, in fact, anything large. An extreme example can be found in the opening shot of "The Sound of Music." Here the camera actually frames several mountains, and then zooms in until we see Julie Andrews singing and smiling.

Editing Terminology

Straight Cuts = increase the pace of a scene. The most obvious example being an action sequence. It could also occur in a dialogue sequence when two people are yelling at each other so you cut back and forth between them faster, often overlapping dialogue, in order to increase the tension/emotions between them.

Fade Out = an image is made to disappear gradually or the sound volume is gradually decreased to zero.

Fade In = a gradual increase in a motion-picture or television image's visibility at the beginning of a sequence.

Dissolve = is a gradual transition from one image to another

Wipe = A **wipe** is a type of **film** transition where one shot replaces another by travelling from one side of the frame to another or with a special shape.

Jump cuts = are when the editor disrupts the continuity of an action. For example the action of someone throwing a baseball after picking it up off the ground.

The person bends over and picks up the ball. Instead of watching them come back up from the ground, it cuts from their hand on the ball on the ground immediately to them throwing the ball.

Cross cutting = is when a film is edited to show two lines of action occurring at the same time

JoJo Rabbit (Summary)

Jojo Betzler (Roman Griffin Davis) is a ten-year-old boy in Nazi Germany during the second world war. He is extremely patriotic and loves his country and loves the fuhrer - he talks to his imaginary friend Adolf Hitler (Taika Waititi), who, in his mind, he sees as his best friend and biggest cheerleader. He and his best friend Yorki (Archie Yates) go to a training camp for Hitler youth run by Captain Klezendorf (Sam Rockwell), his second-in-command Finkel (Alfie Allen), and Fraulein Rahm (Rebel Wilson). Jojo wants to be the best Nazi at camp, but one day some of the older boys decide to test him on his commitment by commanding him to kill a rabbit. Jojo can't do it, and so the boys start chanting "Jojo Rabbit", and Jojo runs away. Hitler tells him that rabbits have their good qualities, and to go back to them and prove them wrong. As Klezendorf shows the youth how to toss an explosive, Jojo triumphantly takes the explosive and throws in - into a tree. It bounces back and lands directly in front of Jojo, exploding.

Jojo is rushed to the hospital - when he awakes, he has scars on his face and a limp in one of his legs. His mother, Rosie (Scarlett Johansson), takes him home to recuperate. She takes him to Klezendorf's office, where he and the rest of his crew (including Finkel, who is his secret lover) have been demoted for the grenade incident. She knees him in the balls and tells him to make Jojo feel included like all the other boys - but technically, Jojo can't serve with the Hitler youth militia due to his injuries. When he goes home, he searches around his house and finds a secret compartment and discovers Elsa Korr (Thomasin McKenzie), a teenage Jewish girl hiding inside. Jojo screams and wants to tell someone or kill her, but she overpowers him. She tells him if he tells his mother she will kill him, and if he tells anyone else, the Gestapo will kill his mother for hiding her. In the town square, Jojo and his mother see the hanging bodies of victims of the Gestapo. Jojo asks what they did, and Rosie says, "What they could."

Rosie tends to Elsa in the hiding place - Elsa was a classmate and friend of Rosie's deceased daughter, and Rosie tries to keep Elsa's waning spirits up. Meanwhile, Jojo and Hitler brainstorm ideas on how to get rid of Elsa. Jojo believes the false anti-Jewish propaganda and thinks Elsa has demonic traits and evil intentions. He agrees not to tell anyone about her but insists on interviewing her for details on the Jews that he is going to write into a book to help the Nazis. Elsa makes up stories about what Jews are like to quell Jojo. Jojo is angry with his mother for hiding a Jew, but can't tell her because of his deal with Elsa, so he acts grumpy, accusing her of not loving her country. He tells her he wishes his missing-in-action father was here instead of her, so Rosie puts on a jacket and soot on her face and pretends to be his father, yelling at him for talking to his mother that way. She then tells Jojo to dance with her - Rosie believes that dancing is one of the few ways you can be free under this Nazi regime.

Jojo continues his interviews with Elsa, who tells him she has a boyfriend who she wants to reunite with when the war is over. Jojo pretends to get a letter from the boyfriend and reads it to her, breaking up with her. When Elsa seems upset, Jojo gets another "letter" that takes back what was said in the first one. Jojo and Hitler have more arguments, with Hitler insisting that Elsa is a monster and Jojo questioning that. Meanwhile, Jojo spots Rosie leaving "free Germany" postings around town.

Jojo is home one day when the Gestapo, led by Captain Deertz (Stephen Merchant), enter and begin tearing the house apart. Jojo panics, knowing Elsa is upstairs. Klezendorf and Finkel arrive on the scene. Elsa reveals herself and pretends to be Jojo's sister. The Gestapo demands her papers, which she produces - Klezendorf asks her to confirm her birthday, which she does, and they leave. Jojo is relieved, and Elsa tells him that she got the date wrong on the papers - Klezendorf let them go. But she is certain danger is closing in.

Jojo walks through the city one day and finds his mother has been hanged in the town square. Devastated, he returns home and stabs Elsa in the shoulder, then breaks down again. Elsa comforts him. In the city, Jojo runs into Yorki, now a full soldier, who tells him that the Allies are closing in and that Hitler killed himself. Jojo is shocked, and sees Rahm arming more children as the battle wages - she gives him a Nazi coat. Klezendorf and Finkel enter the fray, wearing homemade uniforms emblazoned with pink triangles. The Allies win the battle and Soviet troops round up all the Nazis to be executed, including Jojo. Klezendorf takes Jojo's coat off and tells him his mother was a good woman, then calls Jojo a Jew and spits on him. The soldiers remove Jojo, who screams as Klezendorf is executed.

Jojo reunited with Yorki, who wonders what they're going to do now. Jojo runs home, where Elsa asks who won. Jojo, who has fallen in love with her, lies and says Germany to keep her from leaving. Recognizing her devastation, he gets a new "letter" from her boyfriend that says he and Jojo have figured out a way to smuggle her out. Elsa confesses that her boyfriend died. Jojo tells her he loves her, and she tells him she loves him too - in a little brother way. Hitler confronts Jojo one last time, angry at him - and Jojo kicks him out of the window, rejecting him fully and finally. Jojo takes Elsa outside, now in free Germany. They're unsure of what to do now... and so they dance.

Wider Reading 1

Jojo Rabbit: 8 Real Historical Connections It Makes To World War II (& 2 Made Exclusively For The Movie)

Jojo Rabbit is a loose depiction of history, but it retains historical connections to World War II for a movie featuring imaginary Adolf Hitler.

[BY PAOLO ALFAR](#) PUBLISHED JAN 19, 2020

Taika Waititi's [Jojo Rabbit](#) is a dark comedy-drama, set on Nazi Germany, about a boy who is a big fanatic of Adolf Hitler yet feels his views change when he encounters a Jewish girl that his mother hid in their house. The movie divided critics because of the Nazi's comedic depiction and the light treatment of its subject matter.

Nevertheless, it reaped many awards for the season and gained 6 nominations for this year's [Oscars](#). Even though it is a loose depiction of history, it still retains historical connections to World War II for a movie featuring imaginary Adolf Hitler.

10 HISTORICAL: Collecting Scrap Metal

After his injuries from a hand grenade, Jojo was designated to small duties in the army, like spreading propaganda posters and collecting scrap metal for the war efforts. For the latter, he even has a designated costume that he parades throughout his hometown while pulls a cart.

While the papier-mâché costume is a comedic stretch to the bit, the effort in collecting scrap metal is accurate. Boys under the Hitlerjugend (HJ) are driven with the goal of victory in the war. Thus, their duties fall on door-to-door errands, like delivering draft notices, collecting scrap metals and other needed war materials.

9 HISTORICAL: The Hand Grenade Stielhandgranate

Stick hand grenades had been in use by the German Empire since the first World War, but it spiked in production by the Wehrmacht (the military) during World War II. This was the type of grenade that caused Jojo his facial scars and injuries, but more specifically, a Model 1943 was used.

In the movie's context, after encouragement by [imaginary Hitler](#) over his fear of killing a rabbit in front of his fellow trainees, a driven Jojo sprinted along the forest training grounds, caught a Stielhandgranate from Captain Klezendorf ([Sam Rockwell](#)) and threw it over. But it landed near him.

8 HISTORICAL: News About Axis Forces

There have been two prominent mentions of the Axis powers in the film.

One is about the Italian front that Jojo's father was presumably designated in. The Italian forces are led by the similar charismatic but notorious Benito Mussolini. At the stage of the film's period, Allied forces seized parts of Italy, and Mussolini was held under arrest and eventually killed.

Another is about the Japanese forces. After Allied forces stormed Jojo's hometown, Yorki told Jojo that the Japanese army are the only ones that the Germans trust on. At this point, the Japanese Imperial Army is on heavy losses.

7 FICTIONAL: "Free Germany" Signs

In historical context, there have been anti-Nazi resistance personnel that encompassed the history of Nazi Germany. And like Hitler's loyalists, they also spread their own propaganda.

In the film, Jojo's mother Rosie Betzler ([Scarlett Johansson](#)) had been spreading paper strip signs that translated to "Free Germany". She was placing them on strategic spots for citizens to encounter that Jojo in his papier-mâché scrap metal getup caught her without her noticing.

While the theme of "Free Germany" has been relevant for anti-Nazi groups (though popular cases mock the Nazis), this type of propaganda was only made on the film's basic context.

6 HISTORICAL: Hitler's Suicide

Back on the time that Jojo and Yorki reunited on the film's final act of the Allied forces storming the town, the latter brought up to his best friend that Adolf Hitler committed suicide. This leads to the assumption that the film's setting may have taken place on the 30th of April 1945 (or around that date), the day the Nazi Führer took his own life in his Führerbunker. This fate came as a result of the Allied forces advancing towards Berlin.

The news shook Jojo, who already had a shifting view on the once charismatic figure he once idolized.

5 HISTORICAL: Anti-Semitism Indoctrination

One of the effective tools that the Nazi party used for their propaganda is to demoralize Jews with outlandish allegations and paint them as demons. This resulted in anti-Jewish plots, the most disheartening of which is the Holocaust.

This is a recurring theme throughout the movie as Jojo, eager to learn from Jewish customs, tries to convince the hiding Jew girl Elsa to share "Jewish secrets" to him for his book. The 10-year-old was already shared with "facts" like Jews having horns, reading minds and corrupting innocent souls.

4 FICTIONAL: American And Soviet Forces Converge In One Battle

The film's final act consists of Allied forces, both American and Russian troops, storming Jojo's hometown and seizing the remaining Nazi forces. While there is a point in World War II that [American and Soviet forces converge](#) at the [Elbe River](#), there was no significant operation during the war that the two armies cooperated.

There have been historical reports that the two distinctive parties often clashed in friendly fire from aerial and land combat, in spite of what the Tehran Conference presented. Thus, in the film, the coordination of both American and Soviet forces is to depict Allied forces overall.

3 HISTORICAL: Public Hanging Of Anti-Nazi Resistance Members

Back again in anti-Nazi perpetrators, the Third Reich would subject them to public humiliation and eventually public hanging. The element about the German resistance in the film was partially inspired by figures like the Ehrenfeld Group (who were executed on the 10th of November 1944) and the Schwarz Kapelle (who were executed after the July 20 plot).

In the film, Rosie was part of an unnamed anti-Nazi resistance group who assisted the Jews. Her character is partially inspired by other figures like Jane Haining, Irena Sendler and Tina Strobos. Sadly, her character met her fate, along with fellow resistance fighters.

2 HISTORICAL: The Presence Of Gestapo

An element in the film is the depiction of the official secret police known as Gestapo. Interpreted as tall, brooding figures with bowler hats and dark suits, led by the comically frightening Deertz (Stephen Merchant) who raided the Betzler's in a tense scene, the Gestapo was assigned to inspect homes in Nazi-occupied Germany to search for Jews and accomplices.

The power given to the Gestapo was to investigate cases of treason, espionage, sabotage and criminal offenses against the Nazi party. This police force was also designated with the authority of "protective custody" or to imprison people .

1 HISTORICAL: Deutsches Jungvolk

The film's highlight is the depiction of the [Deutsches Jungvolk](#) or the "German Youngsters in the Hitler Youth". With an age range from 10 to 14, the Deutsches Jungvolk followed the same statutes of the Boy Scouts with activities centering on sports, camping, and hiking. But the true purpose of the organization is to introduce boys to the doctrines of the Nazi party and repeat their philosophies.

Director Taika Waititi took creative liberties to depict the Deutsches Jungvolk with war-ready trainings that were taken from the proper Hitler Youth or Hitlerjugend for ages 14 to 18. The knife requirement, a recurring gag in the film, was taken from the Hitlerjugend rulebook.

While there are certainly light quirks on the Hitler Youth Camp element, it was not far off from the actual Deutsches Jungvolk that the Third Reich had in history.

Wider Reading 2

The context of conflict: media representations of war

<https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/media-magazine/articles/16344>

John Fitzgerald explores the changing values of media interpretations of 'real-life' conflicts, from Vietnam to Iraq, and finds no easy answers.

For many media and film students, finding an area of study which is explicitly or implicitly linked to real social, cultural and political contexts can create many difficulties. This may be partly due to a lack of engagement with the news media outside of celebrity gossip and innuendo, so that your knowledge of major stories of the day may well be patchy. This is a great shame, because fictional media texts very often debate and reflect on current conflicts in extremely revealing ways, enlightening the audience with a range of scenarios rooted in an interpretation of real-life events. The recent military incursions in Iraq and Afghanistan by the United States and their allies, including Britain have, perhaps surprisingly, provided a wealth of both television and film interpretations of the conflicts extremely quickly.

Far from Vietnam

These films are quite unlike those representing the last major war that the Americans were involved in - Vietnam. The only major war film made during its long duration, John Wayne's *The Green Berets* (1968), was a flag-waving, overtly patriotic mission in damage limitation and was in direct contrast to the growing opposition to a deeply unpopular military campaign. It took some time for film-makers to confront the horrors and realities of that war in an upfront manner. Unlike World War Two where the Allied forces had saved the world from the possibility of a Fascist dictatorship, the war in South-East Asia had cast the US not as an all-conquering hero, but as a big bully meddling in the affairs of a poor and weak country. Of course, the films that followed World War Two were often simplistic, morally unambiguous combat movies, mainly centring on the mixed band of comrades confronting German or Japanese stereotypes. These films, for example, avoided addressing the horrors of the Holocaust or the atomic nightmares of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In comparison, the first wave of Vietnam films released from the late Seventies onwards took a variety of approaches to cataloguing the war. The first wave of films included *The Deer Hunter* (1978) which explored the impact of the war on a small mining community in Pennsylvania, although it is possibly best remembered for its Russian roulette sequence and for the many criticisms of how Vietnamese characters are represented. *Coming Home* (1980) looked at the problems surrounding veterans returning from the war, trying to readjust to a normal life. Francis Coppola's dreamlike epic *Apocalypse Now* (1980) transposed the Joseph Conrad novel *The Heart of Darkness* to the depths of the Vietnam jungle.

The second wave of films came over a decade after the end of the war, and saw the emergence of a Vietnam auteur who had served in the country and seen combat. Oliver Stone's trilogy of films *Platoon* (1987), *Born on the Fourth of July* (1990) and *Heaven and Earth* (1993) took a variety of angry perspectives on the war and its aftermath on both the men who served there, and the local population. Other noteworthy films were Stanley Kubrick's brilliantly realised minimalist *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) and Brian DePalma's more conventional, but nonetheless extremely powerful *Casualties of War* (1988). There were also variations on the genre with the very successful comedy-melodrama and Robin Williams' vehicle *Good Morning Vietnam* (1988) and later with the simple tale of a simple man *Forrest Gump* (1994) whose wartime exploits turn him into a national hero.

The problem for television and film producers concerning the more recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan hasn't been so much how to offer a broad perspective to the events, but how to garner the mood of a prospective audience. The alleged illegality of the war in Iraq and the mounting fatality and casualty rate amongst allied soldiers both had to be taken into account. There was also the initial, misguided link between the invasions and the defining moment of the decade, the 9/11 attacks, which to an extent still resonates deeply in the American psyche. The legal status of the invasion of Iraq and the widespread opposition to the war was also a key factor in determining audience response. Certainly any attempt to tackle these complex subjects would require a degree of levity.

Filming Iraq - the horror, the shame and the ramifications

It is interesting that two of the most critically acclaimed films about the war in Iraq actually concern the first Gulf War, fought in 1990 after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. *Three Kings* (2000) is a wonderfully-realised war caper movie where the moral boundaries are extremely blurred; and Sam Mendes' underrated *Jarhead* (2005) deals with the boredom associated with young men hanging around waiting to fight. Perhaps there is something to be said for a degree of perspective and the passage of time when looking at how well these films work. The current crop of mainstream Hollywood films related to the second Gulf War has been more variable. Two of the directors of the best Vietnam films have focused on Iraq in very different ways. Oliver Stone deals with the build-up to the invasion in an acerbic fashion in his film on President Bush, *W* (2008). Brian DePalma's *Redacted* (2007), on the other hand, is a brutal insight into out-of-control infantrymen who rape a young Iraqi woman and kill her and her family, high on their own sense of power. Meanwhile, in *The Valley Of Allah* (2007) concentrates on the aftermath of the war, and its dehumanising impact on a group of soldiers who murder a colleague after a drunken brawl. Robert Redford's *Lions for Lambs* (2007) was a film that took a largely political take on events around the War on Terror; but despite its high octane cast of Tom Cruise and Meryl Streep, it was disappointing and incoherent in its view of events. The only real spark in the narrative comes from a confrontation between Streep's liberal journalist and Cruise's Republican hawk.

The impact of news footage

One of the main visual benchmarks for any film, however, was the sheer amount of news footage to emerge from the invasion and the subsequent occupation of Iraq and to a lesser extent Afghanistan. The proliferation of 24-hour news channels, the continuing growth of the internet and the availability of digital cameras to soldiers and civilians, meant that there was a huge amount of footage documenting the wars from a variety of different perspectives. *Redacted* played off this use of *mise-en-scène* by having some of the events shown by hand-held cameras, giving the impression of a *vérité* style. This is particularly true of Nick Broomfield's *The Battle for Haditha* (2007) which also follows this template. It is a harrowing drama-documentary based on the real-life murder of 24 civilians in the town of Haditha in 2005, a retaliatory strike for a terrorist attack which resulted in the death of one US Marine. The film follows three sets of characters: firstly the Marines, a mixed bunch, some gung-ho types, others terrified young men. The second group are the ordinary people, trying to cope with the disruption of the war; and the final storyline focuses on the terrorists. Certainly a common bond between the insurgents and the occupiers is their easy manipulation by their leaders. The low-budget nature of *Haditha* certainly adds to the sense of authenticity demanded by Broomfield. What the film also serves to do is to show the different positions of the main protagonists of the war in an honest and revealing fashion.

The Hurt Locker

Perhaps the best film to emerge so far is Kathryn Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker* (2009) and in cinematic terms it seems to set the standard. The film, set in Baghdad, focuses on a three-man unit of the US Army's elite Explosive Ordnance Disposal Squad during the last few weeks of a year-long tour of duty. The film is filled with unbearable tension as the squad work their way through a number of terrifying bomb disposals and Bigelow uses all her experience of the action movie when we see the team pinned down by a group of local insurgents, seemingly destined to meet a pretty brutal end. While the film might be seen to be shackled by some of the main conventions of the war film - men under pressure, loyalty to comrades, maverick leaders, professionalism and the clash between life at home and on the battlefield - it also manages to add a complexity and depth to the characters' motivations which elevate it far above a great deal of mainstream Hollywood dross.

Small screen warfare: Generation Kill

In many respects the predecessor of *The Hurt Locker* was to be found on the small-screen. HBO's mini-series *Generation Kill* (2008) scripted by *The Wire*'s Ed Burns and David Simon and based on the book by Rolling Stone journalist Evan Wright. It was shown here on the FX channel and terrestrially broadcast on Channel 4 this autumn. It follows the build-up and first few weeks of the Iraq invasion focusing on the Bravo Company of the First Reconnaissance Battalion, and runs up to the liberation of Baghdad. The black humour that runs through the seven hours of the piece is well-observed, as is the underlying incompetence of the military command. Its resolutely non-star cast acts to enhance the realism of the piece; and although *Generation Kill* follows some conventional lines, the overall feeling is one of minimal plot development coupled with angry criticisms of a war which has been under-prepared in terms of resources. On many occasions weaponry malfunctions, bad decisions leave men in trouble; many of the actions of the commanding officers are more concerned with getting up the ladder than trying to do the best job they can.

Generation Kill manages to give the impression of a war which is out of control, where the boundaries are blurred and the directives handed down are constantly questioned. There is clear sympathy with the men on the front-line - but they are not por-

trayed as clean-cut heroes. On the contrary they are foul-mouthed, in many respects amoral characters whose motivations are driven more by loyalty to the Battalion than any ideological basis. The use of the camcorder as an official record of events is also cleverly employed, especially the final few minutes of the series when an edited synopsis of shots set to Johnny Cash's 'When The Man Comes Around' gives a chilling coda to the overall feel of the series. It is an involving and at times slow watch - but its power lies in the subtleties of interaction between those in command and those taking the orders rather than any major set-piece battle scenes.

While looking at these films can be an extremely worthwhile exercise in terms of assessing aspects of representation, applying audience theory and looking at wider political contexts, other media texts can also offer a variety of different viewpoints to the unholy mess that has occurred in those blighted countries. The British, of course, were a major part of the invasion of Iraq and continue to deploy a large force in Afghanistan. Their story is as much part of the overall picture as the American army and it has been documented on television incredibly effectively in *Occupation* (BBC1, 2009) and *The Mark of Cain* (Channel 4, 2007).

Brits in Basra - bringing the war back home

There was widespread British opposition to the war in Iraq, culminating in a huge march through London in February 2003 when reportedly a million people protested against invasion. The then Prime Minister Tony Blair had allied himself with George W. Bush on the war on terror. A month later a coalition force, largely consisting of American and British troops, started their offensive on the Iraqi borders, and their cities began to be heavily bombarded. The dominant voice about the conflict has so far emerged from America, but very many British servicemen have been killed, injured and damaged by their experiences. *Occupation*, broadcast at peak time in June 2009, is, to date, the most high-profile portrayal of the British experience of the war.

Written by Peter Bowker (*Desperate Romantics*) and deftly directed by Nick Murphy, the narrative is incredibly plot-laden but all the better for that, focusing on the experiences of three soldiers, Sergeant Mike Swift (James Nesbitt), Corporal Danny Peterson (Stephen Graham) and Lance Corporal Lee Hibbs (Warren Brown) over a five year period. The opening sequence sees the men in Basra in 2003 hunting down a sniper in an incendiary start which sets the tone for the entire series. Swift becomes a hero by saving the life of a young girl and meets an Iraqi doctor Aliya Nabil (Lubna Azabal) who becomes the love-interest in the story. What Bowker and Murphy brilliantly manage to convey over the three-hour narrative are the repercussions of events in Iraq and the effect on the men and their families. On returning to the north of England, all three central characters fail to settle. Haunted and in thrall to what they had seen in Basra, their lives are permanently fractured. Swift starts a chaste affair with Aliya and is unable to connect with his family. Hibbs picks up some casual work as a bouncer but is in conflict with his sister who believes that the war was wrong. Danny is perhaps the most complicated character. He comes across as a cocksure Scouser laughing and joking - but it soon emerges that his life in the UK is an empty shell of paid-for sex, a mother who no longer recognises him, drug use and a suicide attempt. He is 'saved' by an American colleague who encourages him to set up a security business linked to the reconstruction of Iraq. Danny drafts in Hibbs and sets out to re-invent himself in the new post-Saddam world.

Occupation may in parts feel melodramatic, but it manages to cover a number of key issues in a short space of time; because of the quality of the writing it gives a pretty comprehensive view of the changes in Iraq over the time period. The invasion and reconstruction has led to militant groups springing up, widespread corruption and no determinable rise in the quality of life for normal Iraqi citizens. What is interesting is how the 'liberation' of the country has conversely led to the gradual erosion of women's rights. This is encapsulated in Aliya's

character who at the start of the Episode One is a confident, wise-cracking medic but by Episode Three has become a frightened woman, wrapped in a head-scarf unable to talk to Swift without a chaperone, only able to do her job out of sight.

There is also a clear sense of the transformation of the characters. Mike loses everything - his marriage, his son (also a soldier) and Aliya - without really knowing why. Danny's greed drives him to exploit the uncertainty surrounding the new Iraq, diverting UN funds to his security firm - but ultimately he knows that he is morally compromised; he is as much a part of the problem as the fundamentalists and former Baathists tearing the country apart. Perhaps Hibbs' character is the most optimistic of the group; he makes friends with an Iraqi translator Yunis, who is subsequently killed by insurgents. He returns to Basra to compensate Yunis' family with his earnings, but is snatched by militia-men and narrowly escapes having his throat cut. Although he is clearly damaged by his experiences he ends up as a counsellor for veterans. The dénouement is extremely bleak offering little in the way of solutions. This is consistent with the overall feeling of the piece that the war and its aftermath in Iraq have many losers and few victors.

Tony Marchant's controversial, BAFTA award-winning *The Mark of Cain* was first broadcast in April 2007 and in a similar way examined the soldier's point of view. Rather than a wide-ranging approach to take in the whole of the conflict, *The Mark of Cain* instead concentrated on two teenage squaddies, Mark (Gerard Kearns) and Shane (Matthew McNulty) and their role in the torture of two detainees in their custody. The film examined the culture of bullying, peer-pressure and class inequality in the British Army, based around this horrific event. In many respects Marchant wrote the film as a harsh rites-of-passage for the boys, exploring the gap between moral courage - that is, loyalty to the group - and the incessant gnawing away of their own consciences. It is a powerful text, based on real-life accounts of beating hooded Iraqi prisoners and the taking of 'trophy photographs'. It is also an excellent film for looking at representations of teenagers. Both Mark and Shane are mere boys, expected to do a man's job. They are scared and clearly unaware of what they are doing. Like *Occupation*, *The Mark of Cain* pulls no punches in its climatic scenes. There is a clear avoidance of a rounded, easy resolution.

Other perspectives, other approaches

There are other moving media texts that also provide a great deal of scope for analysis. *Taxi To The Dark Side* (Gibney, 2007) and *Standard Operating Procedure* (Morris, 2008) are two stark, angry documentaries which like *The Mark of Cain* explore the torture and murder of prisoners. Gibney's film takes as its starting point the death of an Afghan taxi-driver Dilawar, inflicted at Bagram Air Base. Gibney broadens the issue by encompassing various allegations of human rights abuses at Abu Ghraib in Iraq and the detention centre at Guantanamo Bay. The film uses a variety of narrative methods including many interviews with soldiers, ex-government officials and the families of incarcerated men. There is also evidence of a leaked report which outlines a military investigation into two deaths at Bagram. Gibney's film is not just about the inhuman interrogation techniques favoured by American forces, but also about the web of silence that surrounds these highly illegal activities. But the essence of the *Taxi To The Dark Side* is to provoke a reaction, especially against the men in power, and in particular Vice-President Dick Cheney, who through their words and actions gave carte-blanche to what happened in the darkened cells of US military prisoners.

Standard Operating Procedure looks at the scandal surrounding the infamous digital photographs showing US soldiers posing for pictures while they dehumanised and tormented Iraqi prisoners. The images were soon spread around the world, and became the subject of almost universal revulsion. The still images are incredibly shocking and this is enhanced greatly in Morris' film. The soldier who stood out was a young female recruit, Lynndie England, who from her interview in the documentary seems pretty unashamed of her actions. The conspiracy of silence, of commanding officers issuing unofficial orders to largely uneducated subordinates to do what they want with prisoners is central to the film. Couple this with the Americans sinking to the awful depths of Saddam's regime of human rights abuses, and *Standard Operating Procedure* is a dispiriting and difficult watch. That said, the combination of talking-head interviews and dramatic reconstruction offers a rewarding exposé of what was an incredibly dark moment in the grim aftermath of the war.

Non-western voices?

The voice of the Iraqi and Afghani people has been quite lost in the growth of the films and television dramatisations from the US and the UK, but two standout films, very much in the neo-realist tradition give a sense of the war in both countries. *Turtles Can Fly* (Ghobadi, 2004) is as far away from Hollywood as is possible. It focuses on a group of orphaned Kurdish children living near the Turkish border during the lead-up to and first days of the American invasion. Their desolate life is at the core of the narrative, as they earn a pittance for finding landmines. In many respects the film avoids the more liberal, anti-war approach of many of the films discussed in this article, by actually giving some sense of the horror of Saddam Hussain's long reign. *Stray Dogs* (Meshkini, 2004) also has children at the forefront of the narrative as a brother and sister try to reunite with their mother who has been imprisoned by the Afghani authorities. It shows a country in total disarray, still under the fear of constant attack from all sides. But crucially much like *Turtles Can Fly*, it also highlights young children scarred by war with a hopeless future.

All these films share a desperately downbeat outlook, but one which is strangely refreshing in the light of many previous mainstream war texts. The clear, shared message of all these films/television series is that these appalling conflicts have no simplistic easy closure, as lines of hearses containing British servicemen continue to pass solemnly through quiet English towns.

Wider Reading List

WJEC Eduqas GCSE Film Studies (Text Book)

https://www.amazon.co.uk/WJEC-Eduqas-GCSE-Film-Studies/dp/1911208020/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1531228817&sr=8-1&keywords=eduqas+film+studies+textbook

- BBC Bitesize section on film

<https://www.bbc.com/education/guides/z9hrwx/revision/1>

- Link to the specification we use

<http://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/film-studies/gcse/>

Caging Skies: THE INSPIRATION FOR THE MAJOR MOTION PICTURE 'JOJO RABBIT'

Recommended Films

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas (PG)

During World War II, 8-year-old Bruno (Asa Butterfield) and his family leave Berlin to take up residence near the concentration camp where his father (David Thewlis) has just become commandant. Unhappy and lonely, he wanders out behind his house one day and finds Shmuel (Jack Scanlon), a Jewish boy of his age. Though the barbed-wire fence of the camp separates them, the boys begin a forbidden friendship, oblivious to the real nature of their surroundings.

Schindler's List (15)

Businessman Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson) arrives in Krakow in 1939, ready to make his fortune from World War II, which has just started. After joining the Nazi party primarily for political expediency, he staffs his factory with Jewish workers for similarly pragmatic reasons. When the SS begins exterminating Jews in the Krakow ghetto, Schindler arranges to have his workers protected to keep his factory in operation, but soon realizes that in so doing, he is also saving innocent lives.

Anne Frank Remembered (PG)

This moving documentary focuses on young Jewish girl Anne Frank, who became world-renowned after her diary was published. The film relates how Anne and her family tried to survive Nazi persecution in Amsterdam by hiding in her father's office building, aided by trusted friends. Featuring the voices of Glenn Close and Kenneth Branagh, the award-winning movie also includes interviews with people who knew the Franks, most notably Miep Gies, who risked death to help shelter the family.