THE REPRESENTATION OF MASCULINITY THROUGH WILLIAM JAMES AS MAIN CHARACTER IN

*THE HURT LOCKER MOVIE*

A Thesis

Submitted to Letters and Humanities Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of requirements for The Degree of Strata one

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ABSTRACT


The study emphasizes on the analyzing representation of masculinity in the movie. The study focuses the analysis on the main character that represents masculinity. The object of the study is to determine the relationship between the character and masculinity in *The Hurt Locker* movie, specifically the aim of the study is to know how the character of William James in *The Hurt Locker* is described, and how the main character William James represents masculinity.

The writer uses qualitative method which is analyzing the data has been collected in the form of words and not in the form numbers. The writer analyzed the representation of masculinity by using representation theory by Stuart Hall.

The Hurt Locker is war film which is directly represents masculinity of man from his appearance and work but the research shows that the representation of masculinity through William James in the *The Hurt Locker* movie is James sensitiveness, and his emotion which is rarely appears in war film.
APPROVEMENT
THE REPRESENTATION OF MASCULINITY THROUGH WILLIAM JAMES AS THE MAIN CHARACTER IN “THE HURT LOCKER” MOVIE.

A Thesis
Submitted to Faculty of Letters and Humanities
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
The Degree of Letters Scholar

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The thesis has been defended before the Faculty of Letters and Humanities' Examination Committee on October 6th, 2011. It has been accepted as a partial fulfillment of the degree of Strata one.

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I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to my best knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

Jakarta, August 11, 2011

Any Andriany
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In the name of Allah, The most Gracious, The most Merciful

All praises be to Allah SWT, the lord of the Universe, Alhamdulillah, with His amazing guidance, the writer can accomplish the process of making this thesis. The blessing and salutation are delivered to the most honorable prophet and messenger Muhammad SAW, who has guided people to be a great follower in the way of Allah.

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The Writer
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Masculinity is a construction of gents towards male. Males are not born naturally with their masculine characteristic. Culture constructs masculinity and also determines the characteristic of male and female. Based on Encyclopedia Women and Gender, masculinity ideology is a core constructed in the body of research attitudes toward men and male roles. Masculinity can not be separated from patriarchy concept that considered man as superior and women as inferior. In general the most common and dominant masculinity in patriarchal society is the hegemonic masculinity, the characteristic of that masculinity is the role of the ruler to economic resources such as employment and strong male control of women, particularly in the domestic sector, which aims to established the identity of male.

The hegemony of masculine role as identified by Brannon, (1976) contains four themes: No Sissy Stuff, the Big Wheel, the Sturdy Oak, and Give 'Em Hell. Brannon notes, first, “No Sissy Stuff” means a real man must never resemble women. Physically, real men have deep voices, avoid the use of cosmetics, and give minimal attention to their clothes and hygiene.

1 Michael Kaufman, Theorizing Masculinities (London: Sage Publication, 1994), p. 120.
Emotionally, real men present themselves as invulnerable, and they repress expressions of affection toward other men. Behaviorally, real men devalue traditional female activities. Second, the Big Wheel, centers on the ability of real men to obtain wealth, fame, success, and status. Typically, the “Big Wheel” is determined by a man's occupation, but it can also be achieved through other routes, such as being a champion in a video game. The “Sturdy Oak” conveys manliness, confidence, and self-reliance. “The Give 'Em Hell” men emit an aura of aggression and violence and use it to obtain sex from women.

Masculinity exists in many cultural products, such as advertising, novels, video clips, and also films⁵. Many films show the male characters with their masculinity in their life, such as at home, in the office, in school, in public transportation, in hospital and also in war. In films, masculinity could be seen more clearly because we would visualize the masculine value from physical appearance and some effect elements of the movie, especially in war movie because wars are considered to be ritualistic acts that turn boys into men and the warrior image is presented as the national hero in many instances of life, most notably in Hollywood films, such as *Saving Private Ryan* (1993), *Buffalo Soldiers* (2004), *Jarhead* (2006).

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⁵ Film is a multimedia narrative form based on a physical record of sounds and moving picture. It is a performed genre in the sense that it is primarily designed in a public performance.
Hollywood* that produces war combat film have supported heterosexual male dominance by constructing film narratives that objectify women and assume a heterosexual male perspective, while at the same time they have also objectified manhood by presenting images of men performing masculine roles for popular consumption. Films or Hollywood represented the masculine since 1950s toward their trend of machismos such as cowboy movies that called rebel model*⁷. In the last 1970s, Hollywood introduced the new perspective in representation of masculinity that had more range such in term of patriarchy and it called breadwinner model*⁸.

Hollywood has culturally and economically empowered male actors, directors, producers, screenwriters, and technicians, allow them to exemplify a particular kind of successful modern manhood. The men who make films and the male viewer who consume them, have had their masculine identities and ideas about manhood shaped by Hollywood’s product and by products, making Hollywood a powerful cultural industry fundamental to formulations of twentieth century masculinity.

During the 1980s and 1990, Hollywood masculinity image is noticed by producing new physical and violent film versions of manhood who directed

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* Hollywood is a district in Los Angeles, California – situated west-northwest of Downtown Los Angeles. Due to its fame and cultural identity as the historical center of movie studios and movie stars, the word “Hollywood” is often used as a metonym of American cinema.

⁷ Rebel masculinity harkens back to the settling of the American West. These men were represented as uncivilized, anarchic, and fiercely independent men who survived through courage, physical skills, and cunning. They could not bear the inhibitions of civilization (the East) and so they lived on the cusp of wilderness.

⁸ In the breadwinner model, men work hard and are dependable collaborators in a corporate environment. They are willing to devote themselves to their careers, playing by the rules to climb within organizations and communities toward material success and higher status. They are reserved, dependable, and devoid of self-aggrandizing flamboyance.
by men. For nearly two decades, War film has been one of Hollywood's principal money-making genres. Largely geared toward a young male audience, action film places at its center the now-conventional "action hero." The hero, almost always male, displays a range of character traits associated with traditional Western definitions of masculinity. The cultural prescription for this hero includes physical size, strength, charisma, facial features, the ability to generate action, and facility with aggressive behavior. Such as *Saving Private Ryan* directed Steven Speilber, *Buffalo Soldier* directed Gregor Jordan, *Jarhead* directed by Sam Mendes.

One of the Hollywood films that represented the masculinity of men is *The Hurt Locker*. This film was released in 2008 and won six Oscar awards one of them is the best director. This film is not like most action movies because it is directed by women. The story of this film focuses on the story of the bomb squad in Iraq. The story began when Sergeant William James (Jeremy Renner) is assigned as the head of the bomb squad in Iraq replacing previous sergeant who was killed in a taming operation.

The main character of this film is William James, a man who worked as a bomb squad and a team leader that work outside the home tends to use his power. James has to be responsible for the safety of thousands people and must keep his group be solid, although he had to see the suffering of other people who are on the battlefield. James not only has to responsible in his job, but in his personal life also.

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We can see how the main character represents his masculinity. Based on the interesting story that show the military world which is a powerful symbol of masculinity and this film is also not like most war films because it was directed by women, the author want to analyze the representation of masculinity of main character William James, in the The Hurt Locker film, directed by Kathryn Bigelow.

B. Focus of the Study

The writer would like to focus the research in analyzing the characters, especially the main character that represents the construction of masculine identity of male in The Hurt Locker movie by Katherine Bigelow.

C. Research Question

The writer would like to analyze The Hurt Locker film that represents masculinity on the movie, so the research questions are:

1. How is the main character described in The Hurt Locker Movie?
2. How does The Hurt Locker Movie represent American masculinity?

D. The Objective and Significance of Study

The objectives of this research are:

1. To understand the character of William James as a bomb squad leader in The Hurt Locker movie.
2. To understand the representation of masculinity of William James in The Hurt Locker film.
E. Research Methodology

This research methodology includes important aspects, such as the method, data analysis, and research instrument and unit analysis.

1. The Methods of The Research

Related to the research question and also the objectives of the study, the writer is going to use qualitative method with descriptive analysis. The researcher tries to find the answer of the research question through the data analysis and relating it to the masculinity concept.

2. Technique of Data Analysis

The technique of analysis in this paper is capturing the frame of *The Hurt Locker* movie and analyzing the dialogue. Data will be analyzed based on the representation of masculinity.

3. Research Instrument

The instrument of research is the writer herself by watching the movie, capturing the picture as the analysis evidence and marking all information related to the research problems like marking the scene and dialogue of the movie.

4. Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis of the research is *The Hurt Locker* movie. *The Hurt Locker* is a 2008 American movie that was produced by Voltage Picture in United State, directed by Katherine Bigelow and written by Mark Boal.

5. Place and Time

The research is conducted in Jakarta in academic 2010/2011 at Islamic State University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In Chapter II the writer will discuss the character and used representation theory by Stuart Hall to see how masculinity in this film represented by character in film.

A. Representation Theory

Christ Barker tells that representation is a major study in cultural studies; representation itself is defined as how the world is socially constructed and presented to us and by us in certain meanings.\(^1\) Michael Ryan argues that the representation can also refer to the construction of all forms of media (especially mass media) on all aspects of reality or reality, like people, objects, and events.\(^2\) Giles and Tim Middleton also argues in his book *Studying Culture: A practical Introduction*,\(^3\) there are three definitions of the word 'to Represent':

1. To stand in for. This is exemplified in the case of a State flag, which if flown in a sporting event, the flag indicates the existence of the State concerned in the event.

2. To speak or act on behalf of. A case in point was the pope to be people who speak and act on behalf of Catholics.

3. To re-present. In this sense, for example writing or biography that can bring back the events of the past.

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In practice, all three meanings of these representations may overlap. Therefore, to gain further understanding about what the meaning of representation and how to operate in a cultural society, representation theory by Hall will be very helpful. According to Hall in his book, *Representation: Cultural representation and signifying practices*, "Representation connects meaning and language to culture .... Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of culture." Through the representation, a meaning is produced and determined among community members. So it means that in brief representation is one way to produce meaning.

Representations work through the system of representation. Representation system consists of two essential components, namely the concept in mind and language. Both of these components are related to each other. The concept is something that we have in our minds it makes us know the meaning. However, the meaning will not be communicated without language. For a simple example, we know the concept of 'glass' and know its meaning. We are not going to communicate meaning of 'glass' (ie, objects that people use to drink) if we can not communicate in the language that can be understood by others.

Therefore, the most important of representation system is that every member at the same society and background of knowledge can get the same

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understanding of meaning. In other words, the community can produce and exchange meaning well. It strengthens by Stuart Hall,

Member of the same culture must share concepts, images, and ideas which enable them to think and feel about the world in roughly similar ways. They must share, broadly speaking. The same ‘cultural code’ in this sense, thinking and feeling are themselves ‘system of representation’.  

Based on Stuart Hall, thinking and feeling is a system of representation. It means thinking and feeling also serves to mean something. Therefore, in order to mean something a community has to have the same understanding of the concepts, image and idea (cultural code).

In some communities, they have their own way to understand something. A group of community who have a different understanding of certain cultural codes can not understand or get the meaning which produced by different communities. So it shows that to mean something every culture and community who has different background will have different idea.

Meaning is a construction. Humans construct meaning clearly so that a meaning looks natural and unchangeable. Meaning is constructed through systems of representation and fixed through code. This code makes people who are in a similar cultural group to understand and use the same name, which has pass process by social convention process. For example, when somebody thinks of ‘rumah’ so he uses the word RUMAH to communicate what we want to express to others. This is because the word ‘rumah’ is the code that has been agreed by society to mean a concept of ‘home’ which is in

\[5\text{ Ibid.}\]
our mind (a shelter or gathering with family). Code, thereby, build a correlation between the conceptual systems that exist in our minds with language system that we use.

This kind of representation theory means constructionist approach. It argues that the meaning is constructed through language. According to Hall in his book "Things do not mean: We construct meaning, Using representational systems-concepts and Signs." Therefore, the concept (in mind) and the sign (language) is the important part used in the construction or production of meaning.

So it can be concluded that the representation is a process to produce the meaning of the concept that is our mind through language. The production process is made by the presence of meaning representation system. However, the meaning depends on the background of knowledge and understanding of a social group of a sign. A group must have the same experience to interpret something with almost the same way.

From the theories of representation above, the writer will use the constructional approach. It is an approach that does not represent the real world but construct the new world with the part necessity from the representation maker. The representation is a meaning; it explains who made the representation. Representation of masculinity sees as the subject and object where is the subject is movie and the object is Williams’s masculinity.

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6 *Ibid* p. 25.
B. Character and Characterization in Film

In a film, the characters are very important, especially the main character. Character is one of the intrinsic elements contained in the films. 'character' terminology is usually used in two contexts. The first context, the character refers to individuals who appear in the story. The second context, the character refers to the mixing of various interests, desires, emotions, and moral principles of the individual. In most stories can be found in one 'main character' that is the character associated with all events that take place in the story.\(^7\) Characters must have the characteristic that describes the state of physical, psychological and sociological of the character.

In a film, character is an important element that develops the story because character is person who carries out the events of film and then those events become a story. A character then is presumably an imagined person who inhabits a story-although that simple definition may admit to a few exceptions.\(^8\) A Character is any person, persona, identity, or entity that exists in a work of art. Along with plot, setting, theme, and style, character is considered one of the fundamental components of fiction. Character development is essential to a good story. Character should enter the story as dimensional, non-stereotypical character, and become more dimensional, as the story and other characters act upon them.\(^9\)

For analyzing film Characters utilizes three different types of pairings: stock character and stereotypes, static and dynamic character, flat and round character. Stock character and stereotypes are not essential or even desirable for every character in a film to have a unique or memorable personality. A stock character is a minor character whose actions are completely predictable or typical or their job or profession. They appear in the film simply because the situation demands their presence. They serve as a natural part of the setting, much as stage properties like a lamp or a chair might function in a play. A stereotyped character represents a category of people. The word stereotype comes from printing and refers to a metal mold used to mass produced duplicates of printing type. Stereotypes, however, are characters of somewhat greater importance to the film. They fit into preconceived patterns of behavior common to or representative of a large number of people, at least a large number of fictional people.

Static and dynamic characters are often useful to determine whether the most important characters in film are static or dynamic character. A dynamic character is deeply affected by the action of the plot and undergoes some important change in personality, attitude, or outlook on life as a result of the action of the story. The change they undergo is an important, permanent one, not just a whimsical shift in attitude that will change back again.

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tomorrow. The character will somehow never be the same person as they used to be when the film begins.\textsuperscript{12}

The change can be of any type but is significant to the total makeup of the individual undergoing the change. Developing characters become sadder or wiser, or happier and more self confident. They might gain some new awareness of life, become more nature or more responsible, or become more moral or less so. They may become simply more aware and knowing and less innocent or naïve.\textsuperscript{13}

Static characters remain essentially the same throughout the film. The action does not have an important effect on their lives, or they are insensitive to the meaning of the action and thus are not capable of growth of change. Static’s character, however, remain unchanged; their character is the same at the end of the story as at the beginning.\textsuperscript{14}

Another important distinction is made between flat characters and round characters. Flat characters are two dimensional, predictable characters that lack the complexity and unique qualities associated with psychological depth. They often tend to be representative character types rather than real flesh and blood human beings. Unique, individualistic character characters who have some degree of complexity and ambiguity and who cannot easily be categorized are called round characters.\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{12} Joseph M. Boggs and Dennis W. Petrie, (2000) \textit{op. cit.} 58.
\item\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid} p. 59.
\item\textsuperscript{14} Jane Bachman Gordon and Karen Kuehner (1999) \textit{loc. cit.}
\item\textsuperscript{15} Joseph M.Boggs and Dennis W.Petrie. (2000) \textit{op. cit.} p. 60.
\end{itemize}
Round character is a three dimensional character complex enough to be able to surprise the reader without losing credibility. Round characters are not inherently superior to static characters. The terms merely imply how different character functions within the framework of a story. Round character are characters that are complex and realistic, they represent a depth of personality which is imitative of live.

The characterization means how the writer tells the reader about physical and non physical characteristic of the person told in the story. It might be done by giving description in words or by being shown in actions or through the comments given by other character. Character creation is the art of the characterization what the author does to bring a character to life, to provide the reader with a sense of the character to life, to provide the reader with a sense of the character personality, to make that character unique. Characterization can involve developing a variety of aspect a character such as appearance, dialogues, external action, or reaction of other character.

1. Characterization through Appearance

Because most film actors project certain qualities of the character the minute they appear on the screen, characterization in film has a great deal to do with casting a major aspect of film characterization is revealed visually and instantaneously. The minute we see most actors on the screen, we make certain assumption about them because of their facial features, dress, physical build, and mannerisms and the way they move.

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Our first visual impression may be proven erroneous as the story progresses. But it is certainly an important means of establishing character.\textsuperscript{19}

2. Characterization through Dialogues

Characters in a fictional film naturally reveal a great deal about themselves by what they say. But a great deal is also revealed by how they say it. Their true thoughts, attitudes, and emotions can be revealed in subtle ways through word choice and through the stress, pitch, and pause patterns of their speech. Actor use of grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary, and particular dialects (if any) reveals a great deal about their character’s social and economic level, educational background, and mental processes.\textsuperscript{20} Therefore, we must develop a keen ear, attuned to the faintest and most subtle nuances of meaning revealed through the human voice, listening carefully not only to what is said but also to how it is said.

3. Characterization through External Action

Although appearance is an important measure of character’s personality, appearances are often misleading. Perhaps the best reflections of character are a person’s actions. Some actions are more important in revealing character than others.\textsuperscript{21} Even the most ordinary choice can be revealing, for some kind of choice is involved in almost everything we do. Sometimes the most effective characterization is achieved not by the large actions in the film but by the small, seemingly insignificant ones. For

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Joseph M. Boggs and Dennis W. Petrie. (2000) \textit{op. cit} p.52.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
example, a fireman may demonstrate his courage by saving a child from a burning building, yet such an act may be only a performance of duty rather than a reflection of a choice.

4. Characterization through Internal Action

Internal action is character’s minds and emotions which consist of secrets, unspoken thoughts, daydreams, aspirations, memories, fear, and fantasies. People hopes, dreams, and aspirations can be as important to an understanding of their character as any real achievement, and their fears and insecurities can be more terrible to them than any real catastrophic failure.

5. Characterization through Reaction of Other Character

The way other characters view a person often serves as an excellent means of characterization. Sometimes a great deal of information about a character is already providing through such means before the character first appears on the screen.  

C. Hollywood Masculinities

In Hard Bodies. Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era (1994), Susan Jeffords believes that the male body is central to popular culture and, accordingly, it is called hard men. “hard men” include images of powerful men, not only those with hard or muscled bodies but also strong, violent and controlling men that have somehow helped to perpetuate traditional

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22 Ibid. P.53.
assumptions about masculinity. Some genres are more prone than others to represent powerful heroes. In addition, some characters like popular superheroes have been traditionally linked to certain aspects of masculinity that associate with power and dominance.

“Hard men”, in this sense, share a number of traits: Heroism. These characters are delineated as heroes; they hold Self-sacrifice, endurance and are willing to become the real protagonists. They are generally omnipresent and powerful within the narrative. Strong bodies, they usually have muscular white bodies that become their basic instrument of power and control over others. They are able to use violence effectively and become successful because of it. Violence is conceived as a form of endurance. And tough appearance, they constantly show their tough nature by means of their behaviors and costume. Moreover, they are also encouraged to reiterate their leading position within the narrative. Thus, clothes, weapons, bruises and many other aspects of the miseen-scène help delineate this tough appearance. And traditional images of dominant masculinity, embodied by characters like Eastwood, Stallone, Schwarzenegger and Willis.

War films explore violence and was presented by hard men that as happened with westerns, have opened up different ways of interpreting masculinity in this genre. Ralph R. Donald’s in his article “Masculinity and Machismo in Hollywood’s War Film” stands as a key work in the exploration of masculinity in war films. Donald acknowledges the similarities between war films and westerns, also noted by other authors. Both genres, Donald
affirms, “are essentially melodramatic portrayals of men performing virile, courageous deeds designed to protect helpless civilians from some sort of aggressor”\(^{23}\). The basic formula of good men fighting evil forces is, after all, repeated in both types of films.

Donald stresses some characteristics of war films pertaining the depiction of male images. First, the role of rites of passages from the sexless existence of a child into the adult community of their sex becomes in war films a test for the hero’s manhood. This transition implies the candidate’s separation from their families and from the world of women, the change of their former clothes and hairstyles and the instruction in the behaviors of adult warriors. Second, war films consider women as inferior beings, consequently they seem undervalued. In this world governed by men, homosexuality is intensely rejected and denied. Third, Donald establishes the characteristics of the American male warrior in war films: he must be a man of few words, tough, brave and following ideals. It is crucial for his success to deny any kind of feeling or emotional expression. Lastly, Donald stresses the male fixation with winning, something that can be dangerous in our changing world. Thus Donald finishes his article by affirming:

if half-century-old governments and political philosophies can give way, if all the world is changing and adapting, perhaps the macho, uncommunicative, unemotional, pseudo-athletic misogynists America seems intent on turning out should also consider some fundamental alterations.\(^{24}\)


Through this, Donald may be urging, then, for a change in the stereotype of the macho man in war films, those changes, on the other hand, is evident in other genres and seems to be more persistent in this one, probably due to the fixed misogynist connotations related to war heroes.
A. Data Description

*The Hurt Locker* is Hollywood film about Iraq war that just attempts to portray what young US American men have been doing and how Iraqi people have been responding for the past six years. This film focuses on a three-man US army team of Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians whose job are to find and dispose of IEDs\(^\text{25}\) in Iraq, especially their leader William James.

William James, a battle-tested veteran, arrives as a new team leader in Bravo company of a U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) unit during the early stages of the post-invasion period in Iraq in 2004, replacing Staff Sergeant Thompson, who is killed by a radio-controlled 155mm improvised explosive device (IED) in Baghdad. The rest of his team consists of Sergeant J.T. Sanborn and Specialist Owen Eldridge, who guard him as he works in his bomb suit disarming IEDs. Wiliam James is a veteran of the Afghan wars with a case of post-traumatic stress disorder and a tendency to not follow any rules or procedure, causing just as much stress with his two squad mates. He has to manage to survive the last two months in Iraq with antisocial adventurer. How he desperately tries in some way to relate to

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\(^{25}\) IED is essentially a homemade bomb composed of conventional military-grade explosives that uses a variety of consumer electronic components and methods of detonation. IEDs deliver devastating blasts that can sometimes wipe out a whole city block or more and have been deployed extensively by insurgents fighting the coalition forces in Iraq.
other people and maintain some degree of human relationships, although all attempts are eventually frustrated.

William James’s character is an updated but quintessential portrait of the American Hero. William James represents the new masculinity and from that movie there are some corpuses to be analyzed.

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<td>• Colonel reed : you the guy in the bomb suit?</td>
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<td>Eldridge : no, sir, that's sergeant James. He is right here.</td>
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<td>Colonel Reed : Good one, spoken like a wild man. That’s good.</td>
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<td>Eldridge : Good, breaks are squeaky.</td>
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soldier?  
Eldridge: No I mean, he is going to get me killed. I almost died yesterday. But at least I’ll die in the line of duty, ‘proud and strong’

Cambridge: you know, this does not have to be a bad time in your life, going to war is once in a little time experience. It can be found.

Eldridge: and you know this from your extensive work in the field?
Cambridge: I have done my field duty/

- Picture 5 01.02.58
- Picture 5.1
- Picture 6 02.03.56
- Picture 6.1 02.20.06  

6  
Sensitive

- James: Do you speak English?  
  Karim: English, French, Arabic.
  James: Good. open your vest, tell me what do you know about Beckham?
  Karim: For whom?
  James: Beckham. The 12 years old boy, the body bomb.
  Karim: I don’t know, but please sit down. I am professor Kalim, this is my home, you are the guest, please sit down.
  James: I am a guest. I’m just looking for the people responsible.

- Picture 7 02.60.45
- Picture 7.1 03.01.23  

7  
Attentive

- James: We don’t have enough time. Sanborn. We don’t have enough Time. I have to get these bolts off.
  Sanborn: We at a minute and half, we got to get out of here.
  James: I’ll handle this. Go.
  Sanborn: Look, will, come on.
  James: Go.
  James: Sanborn you have forty five second. You have forty five second. Just leave!
  Sanborn: He is a dead man, will.
  James: Go.

- Picture 7.2
B. Data Analysis.

1. Character of William James

A major aspect film characterization is revealed visually and instantaneously. The minute somebody sees most actors on the screen, we make certain assumptions about them because of their facial features, dress, physical build, and mannerism. The first visual impression may be proven erroneous as the story progresses, but it is certainly an important means of establishing character. And we can see William James characterization from his appearance, we can see from picture 1 and 1.1

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From the picture above we can see that James has fit body shown in his shoulder and arm. James appears as a blonde and a thirty age man, who has a good looking face and strong body. In picture 1.1 James stand confidently after he punches Sanborn in the stomach, He opens his hands hopes Sanborn gives punches back to him. And we can look that the way he stands shows a bravery of man.

In picture 1.2 he wears alternate black helmet version and a bomb suit or Blast Suit that is a forty kilogram suit of personal armor designed to withstand the force released from a bomb. A bomb suit must protect all parts of the body equally. Being a suit designed to withstand explosive

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force, it is very heavy, bulky and difficult to maneuver in. All that he gets dressed makes an early impression the viewer that belies him strong.

When moment of decision, James shows his strength by pulling the wire of IED that standard of weight 11 pounds or (5 kilograms). James removes rubble and trash to expose wires and the artillery shells. He kneels down into the rubble pile he removes the blasting cap from the bomb, making sure that it does not make contact with the metal edges of the artillery shell. He cuts on wire leading to the blasting cap, he flips the artillery round over and cutes the other wire. James traces this wire, pulling it out of the ground, inch by inch, like extracting a buried root. The more he pulls, the more wire get revealed. It does not seem to end. James strongly pulling the wire comes to a length that ends in a bundle of wires that spider out in several different directions. He pulls on this bundle and unearths a second IED. Then he finds a third IED. Then realizes he is surrounded by ring of IEDs and pull it strongly. See picture 1.3.

*Picture 1.3*

James Williams a battle-tested veteran is a new team leader in Bravo company of a U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) unit during the
early stages of the post-invasion period in Iraq in 2004. James has a bad habit, all that he done was not in role or always done something by his own way, it makes Sanborn and Eldridge fall apart emotionally under different circumstance, James barely seems enjoy after even the most harrowing situation. It’s as if he is wired differently or completely at ease with the fact that he walks a constant tightrope between life and death.

Characters in film reveal a great deal about themselves by what they say, and how they say it. Their true thoughts, attitudes, and emotions can be revealed in subtle ways through word choice and through the stress. James as a team leader often communicates with his team Sanborn and Owen. And from their conversation we can see the characterization of James which is a risk taker.

Risk taker is someone to do something that dangerous it may seem offensive or stupid. James with his team in Baghdad in poor area, where people live closely and apart from other people, With more mud dwellings that look as beaten down as the people.

James walks on down the street confidently. Sanborn and Eldridge exchange a glance and suddenly realize that situation was not safe because in the background, Iraqi civilians were still monitoring. James commands to coming back to Humvee, and breaking out the suit meanwhile Sanborn is already unloading the robot.

Sanborn : What’s going on?
James : Break out the suit.
Sanborn : What about the bot?
James : I’ll take care of it.
Sanborn: What? Don’t you want to get the bot down there to see what it looks like?
James: I’ll handle it.

From the dialogue above we can see that James will handle the bomb without robot to see how the bombs looks like, James walk down confidently that shown he is brave but he is a risk taker. It is strengthen by Eldridge and Sanborn world:

Eldridge: He’s a rowdy boy
Sanborn: He’s reckless

Without warning, James tosses around metal canister until a smoke grenade into the middle of the street to creating a diversion but it disturbs Sanborn and Eldridge visibility. And it is shown in the conversation below that James indicated someone who works with unrolled or unmissions because he is a risk taker.

James: That wasn’t too bad, for our first time working together. What do you think?
Sanborn: I think working together is I talk to you and you talk to me.
James: Are we going on a date, Sanborn?
Sanborn stands face to face with James
Sanborn: No, we’re going on a mission. And it’s my job to keep you safe, so we can keep going on missions.
James: Hey. This is combat.
Eldridge: It’s just thirty nine days.
Sanborn: thirty eight. Assuming we survive today.

From those dialogues above we can see how a risk taker James. James is first out, lighting another cigarette, Sanborn comes up behind him, Eldrige climbs out of the turret.

They are now completely cut in the open, feet on Iraqi ground, where anything can happen. James heads downrange, a jaunty bounce to his step. In
stark contrast to Thomson cautious, lumbering gait, he seems eager, almost happy, to approach the bomb.

And without warning he tosses around metal canister until smoke grenades into the middle of the street to creating a diversion but it disturbs Sanborn and Eldridge visibility that can be threaten his safety.

The other actions that present him as a risk taker happen in the second battlefield in Baghdad when he has to disarming bomb in the car that burned before. James tries to use a crow bar to pry open the trunk but that fails. So he kicks the trunk with the bar, smashing it, until finally it squeaks open. A trunk full of South African 155 rounds, linked with det cord. James is so taken aback that he drops the crowbar. Then he pulls the bomb suit’s quick release tab. The bomb then he take off his helmet, and remove his headset. See picture 2.1

![Image of James removing his helmet and headset](image)

Sanborn : what is going on with James, He is not answering me.
Eldridge : I think he removed his headset

From that picture above we can see clearly that he take off his helmet and remove his headset that has to wear for bomb squad. He removes all the safety suit that he has to wear, meanwhile Sanborn and Eldridge get panic
because James leave go of all his safety, and just acts like someone who enjoy the game without worrying anything.

The other character of James that we can see through dialogue is Courageous. Courageous means showing his ability to control his fear in a dangerous or difficult situation. It can looks from James when go down to the area to disarming bomb, but suddenly a TAXY swerves past the soldier then brakes in front of James. Sanborn who is monitoring him ask James to come back because the EOD has the situation under control.

Sanborn : James come back now.
James : I got it.
Sanborn : Negative, negative. You are too close, the blast will come up the street. Stand down. Stay behind the corner. EOD has the situation under control

In that situation James says he gets it, it means he can handle that unpredictable situation. He controls his fears with keep staying and pulls a pistol from his holster points to the car. It means that James can control the uncontrolled situation even thought Sanborn have remind him that the location that he stand is negative and may blast come up to him. See picture 3.

William James is a veteran of the Afghan wars with a case of post-traumatic stress disorder and a tendency not to follow any rules or procedure,
causing just as much stress with his two squad mates. And because of that James is presented as a wild man. **Wild man means James in uncontrolled, or extreme.** From this dialogue above we see clearly that James is a wild man.

*Colonel reed*: you the guy in the bomb suit?

*Eldridge*: no, sir, that’s sergeant James. He is right here.

*James*: Hello, sir.

*Colonel reed*: you the guy in the flaming car? Sergeant James?

*James*: Yes, sir.

*Colonel reed*: well, that’s just hot shit. You are a wild man, you know that?

*James*: Thank you, sir.

*Colonel Reed*: How many bombs have you disarmed, sergeant?

*James*: I’m not quite sure.

*Colonel Reed*: Sergeant, I asked you a question.

*James*: One hundred and seventy three? That must be a record. So tell me, what’s the best way to go about disarming one of these things?

*James*: the way you don’t lie.

*Colonel Reed*: Good one, spoken like a wild man. That’s good.

Colonel Reed said that James is a wild man, because of his act when disarming bomb, he appears replace team leader of bomb squad Thompson with his own role, he always disobey the role even though it threaten his safety of himself and he is also take a risk in every moment of disarming bomb. Because of that he called wild man by Colonel Reed.

James as team leader has a risk taker, courageous, wild but he is a good team leader even though Sanborn feels deviate for him. A Good team leader means that he is able to lead, inspiring and careful to his team. James ability to lead shown in dialogue below :

*Eldridge*: I got top cover!

*James*: That’s a negative, specialaist. Eldridge stay with me. Sanborn, you take top cover.

That conversation takes place in street near building that second located of EOD. After James dressed in the bomb suit, he manages his group
to in battle field, he chooses Eldridge to be with him, and Sanborn go on top to control and make him safe. Because he know that up position is for new member or is the junior man’s job.

James as a good team leader is inspiring and also cares with his team. The dialogue happens when Elbridge is repairing something under carriage of the humvee and Cambridge, and his psychiatrist approaches.

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Cambridge : How it’s going?
Eldridge : Good, breaks are squeky.
Cambridge : how you doing?
Eldridge : Good, sleep is good, eating well. Feeling pretty squared away.
Cambridge : Glad to hear it. You getting along with the men in your unit?
Eldridge : yeah, my team is great. My team leader is inspiring.
Cambridge : you being sarcastic, soldier?
Eldridge : No I mean, he is going to get me killed. I almost died yesterday. But at least I’ll die in the line of duty, ‘proud and strong’
Cambridge : you know, this does not have to be a bad time in your life, going to war is once in a little time experience. It can be found.
Eldridge : and you know this from your extensive work in the field?
Cambridge : I have done my field duty/

Because of his job, James is inspiring Eldridge. It means he is able to lead and can control all member of group, James can control all member of his team, and also he can handle the situation under control too, because of that he is inspiring for Eldridge.

Care means protecting someone or something, in this case he is a leader who protects his team. James parches after a long, extremely tense stakeout in the sun, a group of snipers have had him and his team trapped in a single location for hours then he asks Eldridge to locate some juice, if he can. When James, dazed and stressed out, gets the juice pack in hand, he fumbles to unwrap the little straw, even as he’s risking his life to do men's work, he's suffering the momentary clumsiness of a little kid. And when he finally
manages to get a pack of juice ready to drink, he hands it, without touching it himself, to Sanborn, who hasn't said a word about being thirsty but who's clearly just as dehydrated as James is. It's a way of getting at the essence of leadership without using anything so mundane as language. See picture 5 and 5.1.

*The Hurt Locker* not only explore about James who is explosives expert, but also the other side of humanity. *The Hurt Locker* also illuminates the responsibilities of adulthood, which shown James as sensitive and attentive person.

Sensitive means he react more than other by the thing which made him show his emotion. James shows sensitivity toward both Sanborn and Eldridge at critical moments in the field, displays affection for an Iraqi boy who sells bootleg DVDs, see picture 6 and picture 6.1.
The boy’s face, half in shadow, is so disfigured by bruises that it’s hard to identify. But it might be someone familiar to James.

*James: I know this kid. His name is Beckham. He sells DVDs*

In one fluid motion James removes the charges and takes off his helmet, he closes the boy’s eyes and slams his fists on the table. James carefully checks the boy’s body for trip wires, then precedes the snip the wires which were sown into the boy’s stomach. In this scene James seems so sensitive, he keep stay to help that child, without Sanborn and Eldridge, he tears up see a child who he know be a victim of bomb body. We can see that James tries to control his emotional but he can not, he tears up and still to continue his work. He cuts them. He inserts his hands into the boy’s abdomen and removes the artillery shell bomb that had been diabolically placed there. He wipes his tears, smearing blood, and then covers the body in a white cloth. He still continues his work to help the child although Eldridge and Sanborn give up and decide to go back to the humve.

Attentive means he is very helpful who is eager or willing to help other people. After he knows about Beckham death, he not just only shows his empathy or sensitivity. He tries to resolve that problem which is not his duty. James tries to find what cause is Beckham death, and try to find who is having to responsible about Beckham death. First he stalks up the older man who sells DVD’s at Beckham’s usual table, James follows the man into that truck, and threatens with his pistol until he arrives in Beckham house and enter the house
and meets Karim who is assumed by James somebody who has to responsible about James death. And it is strengthens by their dialogues.

James: Do you speak English?
Karim: English, French, Arabic.
James: Good.. open your vest, tell me what do you know about Beckham?
Karim: For whom?
James: Beckham. The 12 years old boy, the body bomb.
Karim: I don’t know, but please sit down. I am professor Kalim, this is my home, you are the guess, please sit down.
James: I am a guess...I’m just looking for the people responsible.

From the dialogue above we can clearly see that James show the eagerness to help other people. Because of his sensitiveness he becomes an attentive person. He has a side of humanity that rarely visible in military world, he is very eager or willing to help other people. He tries to find somebody responsible of the Beckham’s death. This moment happen when all army take a rest after do their duty, even thought he is shaken because he has to run and run in a negatives position that so many busy Iraqi neighborhoods at night, sunning down streets teeming with shoppers who stare at him ominously, see picture 7.
The other attentiveness of James has shown when he makes a desperate attempt to save the life of an Iraqi man with four children who is forced to wear a suicide bomb vest. See picture 7.1

From that Picture we can see that James still tries to go behind man, and rips open the back of his shirt, revealing the back of the bomb. James works it with the cutter, even thought he has no enough time to handle it and Sanborn remind him to let it go.

James: We don’t have enough time, Sanborn. We don’t have enough Time. I have to get these bolts off.
Sanborn: We at a minute and half, we got to get out of here.
James: I’ll handle this. Go.
Sanborn: Look, will, come on..
James: Go.
Sanborn: Fuck him, come on, man. James..
James: Sanborn you have forty five second. You have forty five second. Just leave!
Sanborn: He is a dead man, will..
James: Go.

From the dialogue above James said that he can handle it and said to Sanborn to leave him, that moment really show the other side of humanity which James has as bomb squad really try to be best to help each other even though finally he can not. He convinces him by said sorry and kneels down in
front of the man, shakes his head and turns his back to man and runs for cover but chunks of molten metal hit James, knocking him to the ground alone, without afraid what will be happened with him. See picture 7.2.

One of the most fascinating sequences in the film, James is shown as a powerful and wild bomb squad, and also as a good father for his child too. it can be seeing when James back home after his tour of duty. At one point, he’s standing in a large supermarket and is more disoriented than he is ever been in Iraq. When his wife asks him to pick up some cereal, he stands in the breakfast aisle for a long time looking at an endless selection of cereal boxes, See picture 8.
From that picture we can said that James tries to be a good father for his child. He tries to take some cereals. James stares at the rows of cereal boxes, a medley of different brands all containing the same sugar and coloring starch. He looks this way and that like someone who really confuse. He can not decide which brand is his. He reaches for a box, then pulls back, still unsure of himself. Giving up, he picks a box at random and tosses it into the cart. James becomes awkward and looks very confused to take a decision. James tries hard as struggled as in a Baghdad.

Then there is a scene where James is cleaning out the gutter, working under an overcast sky when rain water falling leaves. See picture 8.1.

![Picture 8.1](image1) ![Picture 8.2](image2)

After that when his ex-wife peels a pile of carrots. James washes mushroom in the sink. He tries to clean them individually but they crumble in his hand. See picture 8.2.

From that pictures above we can said that James tries hard to be a good father and responsible husband too, he help his wife in the kitchen. Later that night in bed time, James is playing with his son happily. See picture 8.3
The boy giggles and reaches up. On the bed is a toy, which James picks up and winds. That is a moment for a wild man of Baghdad playing the awkward dad to his adoring child, James looks into his son unconditionally loves eyes.

James tries to be a good father who is responsible and also lovely husband, even though, the status of his married was divorced. James still keep his photo of his baby boy in a box that is only in the barren room beside army issue furniture, lights, and whiskey they have been drinking In Baghdad. And Curiously, Sanborn retrieves the box out and sets it on a makeshift coffee table to get a better look.

Sanborn pulls out a weathered snapshot of a baby boy.
Sanborn : what is that?
James : that’s my son. He is a real tough little bastard nothing like me.
Sanborn : you are married?
James : Well, I had a girlfriend. She got pregnant and we got married and Then we divorced. She is still in the house and she says we are still together. So I don’t know. What does that make her?
Sanborn : dumb 76

2. American Masculinity Represented in *The Hurt Locker* movie

Hollywood mainstream cinema in the last century, offered portraits of masculinity and manhood which have helped Western culture to construct certain notions of masculine identity. In *Hard Body, Hollywood*

The Hurt Locker as a Hollywood war film represented masculinity through main character William James. James who is a bomb squad in Iraq war act of heroism. He holds sacrifice it is show in his job directly, because work as a bomb squad is a risk job that sacrifice him. James also has strong body with muscular white bodies that their basic instrument of control over other, he also shows his tough appearance by his behavior and costume. See picture, 1.1

In Hard Bodies. Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era (1994), Susan Jeffords believes that the male body is central to popular culture and, accordingly, it is called hard men. “hard men” include images of powerful men with muscled bodies, James has a muscled fit bodies, but bodies as a central representation of power of men not always shown in this film, The Hurt locker does not show bodies as one focus, it can be seen that bodies of James only appears in one scene, It was just portrayed when play time with Sanborn.
Ralph. R Donald in his article “masculinity and Machismo in Hollywood’s war Films” establishes the characteristics of the American male must be a man of few words, tough, brave and successful denying in kind of feeling or emotional expression. Being a bomb squad technician is a tough job. In war movie commonly men appears as mature men with his hair and costume, tough appearance James shown by his costume he usually wears bomb suit with safety protection for his job. Tough also means he is not easy to be broken or made weaker or defeated. James as a leader team is a brave man show directly by his job and also his track record that has conquered the 873 bomb because he is an expert one who disarming bomb.

Colonel Reed : How many bombs have you disarmed, sergeant?
James : I’m not quite sure.
Colonel Reed : Sergeant, I asked you a question.
James : One hundred and seventy three? That must be a record. So tell me, what’s the best way to go about disarming one of these things?
James : the way you don’t lie.
Colonel Reed : Good one, spoken like a wild man. That’s good.

James as a strong, tough, and brave has that elements to be masculine, but Donald noted also that man has to success fully denying kind of feeling or emotional expression, and it does not appear in James. James in The Hurt Locker movie show so much emotion and sensitive feeling. Emotion and sensitive feeling means he is easily upset and affected by comment and action. We can see that James appears as sensitive and attentive man by his action, dialogue, and scene
James as sensitive man shows by his action, he cares for others, looking out for them, and helping them to solve their problems. It is shown when James and his team in the battlefield with extremely tense stakeout the sun weather, and he feels so dehydrated but he gave a juice to Sanborn.

See picture 5

Anger will retreat to an appropriate level, James is never angry to his team although Sanborn ever want to make James death in battlefield. We can see that in that scene James give that juice pack to Sanborn meanwhile he feels dehydrates too because of the setting in the hot Westland.

Historically males have been classed as superior to females, But *The Hurt Locker* show a few scene where James came back home, and doing women’s job. James has a better balance in his live between work and love. It can be seen when James go back home and meet his ex wife and son, in a few moment James has to do works of women or domesticity. See picture, 8.1
The other scene that show James is really care to other and also helping to solve Beckham’s problems who is being a victim of bomb body. James tries to find out how could the boy who he knows become victims of the bomb body. See picture 7.

We can see that James really attentive, He tries to find who has to be responsible of Beckham dead and why Beckham became a victim of the bomb body. He is good at solving problems and in being assertive. But he has no longer been strangers to emotions. James appears as ex veteran of bomb squad, he is an expert one who disarming a bomb because he has conquered the 873 bomb. But in other side James appears in a very emotional and sensitive person.

The scene that show James appears as a sensitive man is when he cries when he sees a child of bombing victim body who he has known
before. James shows his upset and also cries which taboo done by real men. See picture 6.1

in camp victory shower stalls after they disarming bomb in one building in Baghdad, James approaches edge of blast radius Sanborn and Eldridge walk up behind him, but Eldridge walking slowly not sure he likes being alone, James runs confidently, sees a few kids in a doorways and cells them the scoot. And suddenly the staccato of gunfire slaps off the concrete and Eldridge body lies on the ground. One bullet has gone astray into Eldridge’s leg and he is bleeding profusely.

James trudges into an empty bathroom and looks at himself in the mirror. Sees the faraway expression of a man lost to the war. And he cries again, his shirt is crimson with Eldridge’s blood. He steps inside a shower stall, still dressed in full battle rattle and turn on the hot faucet. The water streams over him. And let’s go, punching the wall, trashing his arms, then sinking down sobbing, broken, as his uniform soaks through and reddish pink water swirls down the drain.

In one scene James called his ex-wife because he really miss his family especially his son after he meets Beckham who sell DVD’s in
Baghdad but James not say anything to them. He has a greater appreciation of his emotional but difficult to express his emotions in words.

Woman: hello? (Beat) will? Hello?

As the sun sets behind him, James leans against a power pole and dials a satellite phone, he hangs up, dials again. In a modest mid western kitchen, the phone rings. A young woman holding a baby rushes to get it. Silence on the other end of the line. Then James hangs up and shoves the phone back in his pocket.

That was evident that there has been a change in the way men are represented in the media especially in war movie. Traditional masculinity ideologies are still apparent in many films, however, new ideals are evolving and alternative representations are being constructed. In the alternate portrayal of men, dominant masculine values are often challenged this can be clearly seen in *The Hurt Locker* movie. The film challenges traditional masculinity through normalizing James’s character. From that evident that representations of men are not always about power, but *The Hurt Locker* represent masculinity through James Character as an emotional and sensitive person.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

Masculinity are circulated in books, newspapers, TV programs, news, and music, including fiction, and films. Hollywood mainstream cinema has, for much of the last century, offered portraits of masculinity and manhood which have helped Western culture to construct certain notions of masculine identity. Nowadays Hollywood images masculinity by producing new physical and violent film versions of manhood.

*The Hurt Locker* is one the Hollywood war movie that portrait the other side of masculinity. William James is a main character, he is a great leader, even though he is reckless, but he is responsible in his job. *The Hurt Locker* is not like other war film because it is show sensitive and emotion feeling of man which is devalue done by real man. The Hurt Locker focuses on an Explosive Ordnance Disposal team, the guys whose more or less daily job is to disarm the homemade bombs that have accounted for most U.S. casualties in Iraq.

This film looks very fit that showing emotion, that is displaying the other side of masculine. Military world which is a strong symbol of masculinity has another side that should be revealed. That is depth explored in this film by James. We can see how James who is a bomb squad very frail when he sees an Iraqi boy who become victims of the bomb, and when he call
his family without saying anything, *The Hurt Locker* give out and explain the other side of masculinity that placed men on the battlefield. So it can be said that *The Hurt Locker* presented a new masculinity of William James. Commonly war movie present man as a hero who is strong, brave and deny any kind of feeling and sensitiveness. But James in this film looks very sensitive, when he has to see Beckham who become victim a bomb body, he tears up and becomes as emotional man, James appears to be attentive person also which eagerly helpful to each other, like when he has to disarm bomb body of an Iraq man which has child and try to find somebody responsible of Beckham death. James also appears as a good father, he cares to his son, and loving his family.

*The Hurt Locker* is war movie that show the other representation of man. It is because *The Hurt Locker* involves so much emotion of the bomb squad in Iraq. Through the emotional and spiritual warfare that is displayed by James, it felt how miserable a soldier is mentally when on duty in the battlefield.

**B. Suggestion**

Movie is a story with moving object. The strength of the movie than the other literary works is visualization of the story. It become more attractive thing to watch, because it empowered by the sound and blocking with the real gesture of the character, so, the spectators can understand the story well.

In analyzing some character of some movie, we ought to pay more attention to the intrinsic and extrinsic elements because both of them have a
synchronization relationship. And also should to know the characteristic and characterization of some character. The step mentioned above will ease the researcher to do comprehensive analysis.

In analyzing the representation of masculinity, the writer suggest to other researches to develop their knowledge or concepts of masculinity that will help them to do better analysis of study.

Through this study, the writer hopes that this paper can be useful to all students who want to study in depth about masculinity, finally the writer hopes that this study will be useful the future improvement of studying masculinity, especially for the students of English Letters Department who want to do the similar research.
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A. Cover of The Movie
B. Synopsis of The Movie

Baghdad, in 2004, three soldiers of an Army bomb-disposal unit are investigating a report of an improvised explosive device (IED). They use a sophisticated robot drone to examine the device, which consists of several undetonated artillery shells wired together and hidden under plastic/fabric sheets. The unit, led by Sgt. Thompson, decides that they can detonate the IED using plastic explosives that they'll activate from a safe distance. Thompson also says that the explosion won't cause very much property damage and should result in no loss of life.

A small cart is affixed to the back of the robot, which is then sent back into the blast zone. Before it can reach the IED, the trailer loses a wheel. Thompson dresses in a bulky bomb suit and walks down to the trailer. He picks it up and carries it to the IED, rigging it properly. As he walks back, his partners, Sgt. Sanborn and Specialist Eldridge, scan the immediate area for anyone they consider suspicious or who may be in the blast zone. When Thompson is about 25 meters from the bomb, but still in the kill zone, Eldridge notices a man running a butcher shop who is using a cellular phone. Eldridge yells to Sanborn and the specialist begins to run toward the man, ordering him to drop his phone. Sanborn tells Eldridge to shoot the man, who presses a sequence of numbers on the phone. The bomb detonates with Thompson still in the kill zone. The overpressure from the bomb kills Thompson despite the bomb suit; a large splash of blood hits the inside of the clear visor on his helmet.
Thompson's body is packed into a coffin for shipment home, Sanborn supervises the procedure. He looks over Thompson's possessions for a few moments before the coffin is sealed. Back at the base, Eldridge is sitting in the rec room when the base psychologist, Lt. Col. Cambridge walks in and asks Eldridge how he's feeling (in the wake of Thompson's death). Eldridge is still clearly upset over the incident; he dry fires his rifle several times, suggesting that if he'd shot the man with the cell phone, Thompson might still be alive.

A new leader for the team, Sgt. William James, arrives at the base. Sanborn meets him at his housing unit, where James is taking the plywood covers off his windows. When Sanborn suggests that James keep them on because of mortar shrapnel, James tells him that they won't be any good anyway if a mortar shell crashes in through the unit's roof.

The next day the team responds to a report of another IED on a narrow street in the city. After the initial investigation, where they link up with the Army platoon that reported the bomb, James is dressed up in a suit similar to the one Thompson wore previously. As James approaches the bomb site, he tosses a smoke grenade, which agitates Sanborn, who can't see James to instruct him further. James also is uncommunicative with his team members, another factor that Sanborn does not appreciate. James finds an artillery shell buried under a small pile of trash. He disarms it easily, and then notices a secondary wire leading away from it. He unburies the cable and finds it connects to a junction of six more cables. When James pulls on the junction connector, six more shells are uncovered. Another cable leads to a nearby
building. James disarms the six new shells; as he does, he notices a man quickly leaving the building, presumably the bomber. James flashes one of the small detonators from one of the shells and smiles at the man, who vanishes from sight. Back at their Humvee, Sanborn tells James that he needs to communicate more during operations and not treat his duty as if it's a solo act. James brushes his teammate off. James does the same later when he and Sanborn talk while grooming themselves for another day's work in the latrine.

The team is again called out for another bomb threat. This time, the bomb is in a car parked in front of a United Nations building. When the building is evacuated, James dons the bomb suit and walks toward the car, which suddenly becomes engulfed in flames. James uses a fire extinguisher to put out the fire and begins to examine the car while Eldridge and Sanborn take up their positions as lookouts. James opens the trunk and finds several of the same type of shells he'd seen the day before. After a few moments, he takes his bomb suit off completely, knowing it won't protect him; there is enough explosive in the car to kill everyone nearby, including his teammates, even if they take cover. James disarms the shells and begins to search the car for the triggering device, a process that takes several minutes. At one point, when Sanborn tries to talk to him through a headset, James pulls it off and throws it aside. A few more very tense minutes pass as James searches the car. Sanborn and Eldridge notice several groups of Iraqis watching them from rooftops and from a minaret. They also see a man filming the incident with a video camera. At the car, James finally finds the triggering device and detaches it. When he
returns to the Hummer, he lights a cigarette and is promptly hit in the face by Sanborn, who is again angry that James refused to acknowledge him or any questions he had. James appears strangely unoffended, nor is he angry at Sanborn. A colonel on the scene approaches James and is clearly impressed with James steady nerves and ability to handle such a crisis. When he asks James how many bombs he's disposed of, James gives him an exact number. The colonel is further impressed.

Back at the base perimeter, Sgt. James confronts an Iraqi kid who sells DVDs to the soldiers. The boy, who kicks a soccer ball around and calls himself Beckham, had sold James a movie a few days before; James wants his $5 back because the DVD was poor in quality. When Beckham tries to hustle him further, James is amused and tells him he can keep the money if he's able to block a shot at the makeshift goal area Beckham has set up. Beckham blocks the shot and James agrees to buy another movie from him, mildly threatening him if it's defective.

The team goes out to the desert to detonate some of the explosives they've collected on missions. As they prepare to explode another bomb, James stops Sanborn to briefly drive down to the blast zone to get the gloves he left there. While he's gone, Sanborn tells Eldridge that, with the dangerous nature of the explosives they detonate in the desert, it would be easy to "frag" him by exploding the bomb while James is down there and claiming it was accidental. Sanborn seems pretty intent on doing so but Eldridge convinces him not to.
While heading back to the city, the team sees two SUVs parked on their route. They approach them and the occupants standing around as if they were any other threat. The men standing near the vehicles quickly obey Sanborn and his team, dropping their weapons. One of the men reveals himself to be a British commando and the bomb unit relaxes. The British man says they have a flat tire but have broken their jack handle. James offers them equipment from their Hummer. While one of the British men handles the flat tire, the Brit shows the bomb unit members the men he has captured (presumably high level Iraqi officials) to turn in for a reward. Suddenly, the man fixing the tire is hit by sniper fire and falls before the shot is actually heard. Everyone runs for cover; the British commando mercilessly shoots both of his prisoners as they run away; the reward for capture dead or alive is the same.

The bomb unit and the Brits find themselves pinned down. One of the Brits is killed while manning the Hummer's .50 caliber machine gun. The British team leader takes up a sniper's position on a small, rocky hill and begins to return fire with a Barrett rifle, shooting at a distant stone building where the enemy sniper and a small group are hiding. While adjusting the Barrett's bipod, the man is hit in the chest by the enemy sniper and killed. Sanborn takes up the man's rifle and James spots for him using a powerful scope. They fire several shots back at their enemy and run out of ammunition for the rifle. James has Eldridge search the dead man's pouches and he finds a full magazine. However, the man's blood has leaked onto the rounds and they
must be cleaned off to cycle through the Barrett rifle. James helps a queasy Eldridge clean off the rounds. Sanborn is able to continue targeting the building and its occupants and, with James spotting, they're able to kill all the enemy troops. Eldridge notices someone who may be another sniper lurking at a position behind James and Sanborn and he opens fire. Eldridge is unsure of how well he did, but the other man is hit and killed.

The incident seems to create a strong bond between James and his teammates. Having found that they can actually work well together as a team, they celebrate at James' housing unit, taking turns pounding each other in the chest and drinking. After discussing why James seems to be such a maverick teammate and how he got into their line of work, James shows them a box of pieces that he's collected from nearly every bomb he's disarmed. He says he keeps them as reminders of how dangerous his work is. Eldridge and Sanborn are a bit puzzled but now know, after the desert incident, that James is actually a team player.

On their next mission, Colonel Cambridge accompanies the team when they patrol a building where bomb making material has been seen. Cambridge stays outside while the team searches the building. Inside, they find the bomb making supplies and evidence that the bomb makers had just left. James finds the body of a young boy whom appears to be Beckham. He orders Sanborn and Eldridge out of the building spots a large incision in the boy's chest. He opens it and finds several pounds of plastic explosive in the body's abdominal cavity. He carries the boy outside to the Humvee. Outside, Cambridge is
trying to clear the locals from the street when another IED goes off, killing him. In the immediate aftermath, Eldridge cannot accept Cambridge's death and wanders the area looking for him. He also finds Cambridge's helmet lying in the blast area.

Back at the base, James talks to a man who sells DVDs at the perimeter. James asks the man if he knows Beckham, however the man's English isn't very good and he tells him nothing. James asks the nearby sergeant if the man checks out & the sergeant tells him the man is cleared. Later, when the man packs up his merchandise and leaves, James jumps in his truck and forces him to take him to Beckham's house. James enters the house and finds another man in the kitchen who is scared but surprisingly hospitable. James demands to know where Beckham is at gunpoint, but the man doesn't know. James realizes he's mistakenly entered the wrong home and turns to leave when the man's wife appears and begins to yell and throw things at him. James makes his way back through the city to the base, passing hundreds of angry-looking locals. At the main gate, he announces he's a US soldier and is forcibly arrested. When the duty sergeant demands an explanation for his being off the base at night, James says he was at a whorehouse. The sergeant slyly asks him where it is.

The team responds to a call at night to check out a bomb blast zone. When the get there, they find that a bomb, possibly from a suicide bomber, went off near an oil tanker truck, causing a huge blast radius. James scouts the perimeter of the blast area and theorizes that the bomber didn't commit suicide
but stood outside the perimeter and triggered the blast from there. James is furious and vows to find the bomber by ordering Sanborn and Eldridge to search the nearby streets. The three split up; shots are heard and Sanborn and James reconnect, however, they spot Eldridge being dragged off by two unidentified men. The two open fire, killing Eldridge's kidnappers but James hits Eldridge in the leg. James becomes severely upset at wounding his comrade and nearly breaks down in the shower, fully clothed.

The next day, James and Sanborn go to meet Eldridge at the helicopter that will evacuate him. As he approaches their Humvee, Beckham, unexpectedly alive, appears and tries to talk to him, but James ignores him. At the helicopter, Eldridge is bitter with James for shooting him, saying his femur has been shattered and recovery will take months. He also berates James for taking them into a danger zone to satisfy his adrenaline rush. Eldridge is flown off.

Sanborn and James respond to another bomb report and find a man standing alone in the middle of a large plaza. James has the translator order the man to his knees and he suits up and walks to him. When the man opens his coat, James sees he's wearing several pounds of C-4 attached to several steel bars which are locked together with large padlocks. The man pleads for his life, saying he has a family. With only two minutes left on the bomb's timer, James frantically tries to cut the locks, however there are too many and James must leave the man behind. Seconds later, the bomb goes off, killing the man and throwing James in his bomb suit out of the blast area. Sanborn rushes to
him, thinking he's been killed like Thompson was. James is only stunned and wakes up. As they head back to the base, Sanborn, still shaken by the incident, tells James that he fears he will die in Iraq, having never had a wife or children. James tries to comfort him and convince his friend he'll make it back home and start a family.

The team's rotation ends and James goes back to his home and family. While shopping in a store, he is overwhelmed by the cereal aisle, which has too many products for him to comprehend. He also is unable to adjust to home life and his relationship with his wife and daughter becomes increasingly strained. James decides to return to Iraq and he does. The final scene of the movie shows him beginning a new rotation and approaching another bomb site in his suit.

During the early months of the post-invasion period in Iraq, Sergeant First Class William James becomes the new team leader of an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) unit with the U.S. Army's Bravo Company, replacing Staff Sergeant Thompson, who was killed by a remote-detonted improvised explosive device (IED) in Baghdad. He joins Sergeant J.T. Sanborn and Specialist Owen Eldridge, whose jobs are to communicate with their team leader via radio inside his bombsuit, and provide him with rifle cover while he examines an IED. James's insistence on approaching a suspected IED without first sending in a bomb disposal robot during their first mission together lead Sanborn and Eldridge to consider him "reckless". Back at Camp Victory, James befriends Beckham, a young Iraqi boy who works for
a local merchant operating at the base, selling pirated DVD movies to the soldiers. The team is next called out to the United Nations building in Baghdad, where a parked car has a large bomb in the trunk. While James intensively studies the intricate bomb, Sanborn and Eldridge provide him with cover. Sanborn becomes increasingly concerned about three men watching them from a minaret and another filming them from a nearby rooftop. With the building evacuated, he suggests to James that they pull out and let a team of engineers come disarm the bomb. James ignores and angers Sanborn by removing his radio headset and his bomb suit, and remains with the car until he disarms the device.

While returning from detonating bombs in the desert, the EOD team encounter a British private military company. They soon come under enemy attack, and three of the British mercenaries are killed in the ensuing firefight, which ends after Sanborn and James shoot the last of the insurgent snipers. For their next mission, the team heads to a warehouse to retrieve unexploded ordnance. While securing the warehouse, James discovers the dead body of a young boy who has been surgically implanted with an unexploded bomb. James is sure that it is Beckham, while Sanborn and Eldridge are not entirely certain. That night, James forces the merchant for whom Beckham worked to drive him to Beckham's house. Upon entering the house to which he is brought, James encounters an Iraqi professor and demands to know who was responsible for turning Beckham into a "body bomb". The professor thinks James is a CIA agent and calmly invites him to sit down as a guest of his
household. A confused James is then forced out of the house by the man’s wife, and sneaks back into Camp Victory with the help of a sympathetic guard. That same night, Eldridge is accidentally shot in the leg during a mission in which the EOD team successfully tracks down and kills two bomb makers. The next morning, James is approached by Beckham, who is alive and well. Much to Beckham's confusion, he is completely ignored by James. Eldridge blames James for his injury, claiming James unnecessarily put his life at risk just so that he could have an "adrenaline fix", referring to Sanborn's suggestion that the mission, which James had ordered, would be better suited for an infantry platoon.

With only two days left on their current tour, James and Sanborn are called in to assist in a situation where a man was forced to wander into a military checkpoint with a time-bomb strapped to his chest. James cannot remove the bomb nor disarm it in time, and is forced to flee before the bomb goes off. On the ride back to the base, Sanborn becomes emotional and confesses to James that he can no longer cope with the pressure of being in EOD, and relishes the prospect of finally leaving Iraq and starting a family. James is next seen back at home with his wife and child, visibly bored with civilian life. One night he has an internal monologue in the form of speaking aloud to his infant son, where he says that there is only "one thing" that he knows he loves. He is next seen back in Iraq, ready to serve another year as part of an EOD team with Delta Company.