

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The Hurt Locker is an American war movie about a three-man United States Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team during the Iraq War. The movie was directed by Kathryn Bigelow and the screenplay was written by Mark Boal. *The Hurt Locker* is starred by Jeremy Renner as Sergeant First Class William James, Anthony Mackie as Sergeant JT Sanborn, Brian Geraghty as Specialist Owen Eldridge, Christian Camargo as Colonel John Cambridge, Guy Pearce as Staff Sergeant Matt Thompson, Christopher Sayegh as Beckham, Ralph Fiennes as Contractor Team Leader, David Morse as Colonel Reed, and Evangeline Lilly as Connie James. *The Hurt Locker* movie was shot in Amman, Jordan. *The Hurt Locker* premiered at the Venice Film Festival on September 4, 2008 in Italy. After being shown at the Toronto International Film Festival, it was picked up for distribution in the United States by Summit Entertainment. This movie was released in the United States on June 26, 2009 but received a more widespread theatrical release on July 24, 2009 and was released on DVD and Blu-ray on January 12, 2010. *The Hurt Locker* has running time 131 minutes or 2 hours 11 minutes.

The director of *The Hurt Locker* is Kathryn Bigelow. She was born on November 27, 1951 in San Carlos, California, United States. She is an only child of a paint factory manager and librarian. Bigelow entered the graduate

film program at Columbia University, where she studied theory and criticism and earned her master's degree. She also taught at the California Institute of the Arts. Her best-known films are the cult horror film *Near Dark* (1987), the surfer/bank robbery action picture *Point Break* (1991), the historical/mystery film *The Weight of Water* (2000) and the war drama *The Hurt Locker* (2009). *The Hurt Locker* won the 2010 Academy Award for Best Picture, won the BAFTA Award for Best Film, and was nominated for the 2010 Golden Globe Award for Best Drama. From *The Hurt Locker*, Bigelow became the first woman to win the Academy Award for Best Director, the Directors Guild of America Award for Outstanding Directing, the BAFTA Award for Best Direction, and the Critics' Choice Award for Best Director.

The Hurt Locker tells much about experiences Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team Bravo Company in domesticating bomb from one place to another in Iraq during 2004. The story began when Sergeant Thompson died in his duty to defuse a bomb had been planted by the guerrillas in central of Baghdad. Then his position was replaced by a Sergeant First Class William James. According to Sergeant JT Sanborn and Specialist Owen Eldridge, he was a leader that is too unusual to take risks in performing their duties regardless of the safety of others, his men even himself. He always uses his bare hands in defuse the bomb without the use of a robot beforehand nor did he even wear a protective bomb was defused when the bomb. That was done during the first day in thirty-nine days before the rotation of Bravo Company,

James get a mission to defuse the bomb in a street in the city of Baghdad. He did not hesitate to immediately defuse the bomb with his own hands.

In his work the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team must defuse the bomb from one place to another. There are so many bombs that have been deployed by the guerrillas as street highway, government buildings, public places and some have grown in a human corpse and forcing someone to do suicide bombings. In every mission they must be vigilant, alert and ready to face the guerrillas who are always lurking in every place. Even the fierce battle occurred between the EOD team with Iraq sniper in a desert. Of all the events that have traveled the end they were depressed because of losing his friend, not ready to die, and feeling anxious to go home as soon as possible.

At the last of the story after team rotation Bravo Company ended and James returned home to be with his family. At home James was always told about their actions while defusing a bomb to his wife and son. Here he cannot adjust to life at home. He was bored in the absence of an adrenaline or challenge at home. At the end of the story James had returned to his unit in Iraq to return to defuse the bomb.

The Hurt Locker made more controversy in society. It invites positive and negative comment about this movie. Many people very interest with this movie because it was doing by professional director with the best picture and the best sound editing. Roger Ebert of *The Chicago Sun Times* rated that “the movie as the best of the year and one of the best of the decade”, and writing, “*The Hurt Locker* is a great movie, an intelligent movie, a movie shot clearly

so that we know exactly who everybody is and where they are and what they're doing and why". He applauded how the suspense was built, calling the film "spellbinding". Besides that, Kenneth Turan of the *Los Angeles Times* wrote that "the performances of Renner, Mackie, and Geraghty would raise their profiles considerably". And Guy Westwell of *Sight & Sound* wrote that "cinematographer Barry Ackroyd provided "sharp handheld coverage" and that Paul N.J. Ottosson's sound design "uses the barely perceptible ringing of tinnitus to ramp up the tension".

In other hand, this movie also invites negative comment. There are from Dan Hovseth, age 44 said that "this movie never tells why we are at war. It starts with a quote about "war being a drug" and ends with that same quote after the soldier leaves his new kid and wife because he only loves one thing now war". The movie also not suitable on view to children because this movie uses talk wildly in conversation and showed how to human death because war in every scene. (*The Hurt Locker*, 2010)

The Hurt Locker received near universal critical acclaim. Rotten Tomatoes reported that 97% of critics gave the film a positive review, based on a sample of 182, with a weighted mean score of 8.4 out of 10. And then Rotten Tomatoes also wrote of the critics' consensus, "A well-acted, intensely shot, action filled war epic, Kathryn Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker* is thus far the best reviewed of the recent dramatizations of the Iraq War." Besides that at Metacritic, which assigns a rating normalized to 100 to reviews from

mainstream critics, the film has received an average score of 94 based on 35 reviews. (*The Hurt Locker*, 2010)

In the market *The Hurt Locker* also shows the successful as the movie of the year. This movie released on 185 days or 26, 4 weeks and grossed worldwide \$48,612,915 in 535 theatres against its \$15 million production budget, with the domestic total of \$16,400,000 and the foreign total \$32,212,915. Over its first weekend the film grossed \$145,352, averaging \$36,338 per theater. The following weekend, the movie grossed \$131,202 at nine theaters, averaging \$14,578 per theater. It held the highest per-screen average of any film playing theatrically in the United States for the first two weeks of its release, gradually moving into the top 20 chart with much wider-released, bigger budget studio films. It held around number 13 or number 14 on box office charts for an additional four weeks. (*The Hurt Locker*, 2010)

During this movie released, this movie has earned many awards, honors and some nominations. Movie industries welcome and give positive response to this movie. It is won 6 Oscars such as in categories Best Picture, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay, Best Sound Editing, Best Sound Mixing, Best Film Editing then another 73 wins and 47 nominations. The nominations are nominated of *Academy Awards*, *Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror Films*, *American Society of Cinematographers*, *BAFTA Awards*, *Black Reel Awards*, *Bodil Awards*, *British Independent Film Awards*, *Broadcast Film Critics Association Awards*, *Camerimage*, *Chlotrudis Awards*, *Empire Awards*, *Golden Globes*, *Gotham Awards*, *Image Awards*, *Independent*

Spirit Awards, London Critics Circle Film Awards, Motion Picture Sound Editors, Online Film Critics Society Awards, Satellite Awards, Screen Actors Guild Awards, Golden Lion Awards, WAFCA Awards. Those nominations and awards show that this movie is great and as a box office movie.

The Hurt Locker is the success and great movie and also very interesting for many people. *The Hurt Locker* movie has three appeals which make the researcher is interested in this movie. The first is characters in this movie, especially James's character. He is an unusual leader that act according to standard rules of the military is an act of reckless and irresponsible. He always uses his bare hands in defuse the bomb without the use of a robot beforehand nor did he even just wear a protective bomb suit was defuse the bomb. In each battle field he always stays cool, taken easy and very satisfied when he can defuse the bomb. But actually he is very depression when he knew the truth condition in Iraq war.

The director is second appeals of this movie. The director of *The Hurt Locker* is Kathryn Bigelow. She has awards as the best director because perfectly creates every scene appropriate to the situation of the real condition in Iraq. In this movie not only explain to experiences of each character but also she wants to show how truth condition psychology of human in a war. And she uses multiple super 16 mm cameras to capture multiple perspectives so this movie can show experiences reality. From this, *The Hurt Locker* gets academy awards as the best picture.

The last appeal of this movie is theme. At the beginning of the movie show quote that war is a drug. This quote invite big question about war. Everyone knows that the war cause of destroy, death, violence, misery and enmity can called as a drug. This movie tells about a violent movie that contains several massive explosions as critical plot elements. And the quote explains to the main character in this movie that war is a drug.

Search for meaning of life become an issue chosen by the researcher in this movie. Someone can find the meaning of life when he thinks that he manages to actualize his idealism. By actualizing his idealism, man can find his identity. Man is a creature that has responsibility taste. It will be cause of anxiousness to take choice. Like someone that chooses to following battle for his country actually he thinks that his choice is the best. And expect that others people will be take his same choice. Although, in fact it very different with actually condition. And this is of the main character in this movie Sergeant First Class William James. Thus the researcher wants to study the meaning of life a man from the thought of existentialists.

According to those reasons, the researcher would like to explore analyze search for meaning of life in Kathryn Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker* movie based on the Existentialist Criticism, and the title is **SEARCH FOR MEANING OF LIFE IN KATHRYN BIGELOW'S *THE HURT LOCKER* MOVIE (2009): AN EXISTENTIALIST CRITICISM.**

B. Literature Review

As far as the researcher knows, the study of the movie *The Hurt Locker* has been conducted by The Associated Press Writer Matt Ford (2010) which entitled “Real Hurt Lockers in Iraq: Life is no movie” (<http://www.airforcetimes.com>). He tries to show actual condition in Iraq war. In this movie William James who’s either a swaggering, brilliant, bomb disposal expert, or an egomaniacal showoff. Matt Ford state that “But the soldiers still have to explain they are not all like the film’s arrogant, adrenaline-junkie hero.”

The second study is conducted by A. O. Scott (2009) which entitled “Soldiers on a Live Wire between Peril and Protocol” (<http://www.movie.nytimes.com>). He wants to describe how about soldiers meaning of life in order of protocol that must their handle in a war.

The literature studies above have the same research which they analyze characteristic and meaning of life in *The Hurt Locker* Movie (2009). In this opportunity the researcher decides to conduct on the major character’s Sergeant First Class William James in anxiousness to take choice and try to find a meaningful life. Here the researcher uses existentialist criticism.

C. Problem Statement

The problem of the study is how Sergeant First Class William James, the main character of Kathryn Bigelow’s *The Hurt Locker* movie searches for meaning of life.

D. Limitation of the Study

The researcher focuses this research in analyzing James's the meaning of life in Kathryn Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker* movie based on Sartre's theory of existentialism.

E. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are mentioned follows:

1. To analyze Kathryn Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker* movie based on the structural elements of the movie.
2. To describe the meaning of life in Kathryn Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker* movie based on an existentialist criticism.

F. Benefits of the Study

The benefits of the study are:

1. Theoretical Benefit

The study is expected to give a new contribution and information to the larger body of knowledge, particularly the literary studies on *The Hurt Locker* movie.

2. Practical Benefit

The study is expected to enrich knowledge and experience of the researcher and another student of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or another University who have interest with literary study on the movie from Existentialist Criticism.

G. Research Method

1. Type of the Study

The type of this research is descriptive qualitative. Descriptive qualitative is a type of research which result the descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from the observed object.

2. Type of the Data and the Data Source

a. Type of the Data

The data of this study are image and text in *The Hurt Locker* movie by Kathryn Bigelow. It can be image in each scene of movie and text of manuscript in *The Hurt Locker* movie.

b. The Data Source

- 1) The primary data source is the film and manuscript of *The Hurt Locker* movie directed by Kathryn Bigelow which is related to the study.
- 2) The secondary data sources are the books, journals, internet and other sources that support the analysis.

3. Object of the Study

The object of this study is *The Hurt Locker* movie directed by Kathryn Bigelow and publishing by Summit Entertainment in 2009. It is analyzed by using existentialist criticism.

4. Techniques of the Data Collection

The technique of data collection in this study is note-taking and image-capturing. The researcher views the primary data repeatedly to

reach more understanding of source. Next, the writer takes, compares, quotes, and studies others data into some categories and develops them into a good unity.

5. Techniques of the Data Analysis

The technique of data analysis in this study is descriptive. It is concerns with the structural elements of the movie, researcher uses existentialist criticism, and draws conclusion.

H. Research Paper Organization

The researcher systematizes this research into five chapters. Chapter I is Introduction, which consists of Background of the Study, Literature Review, Problem Statement, Limitation of the Study, Objective of the Study, Benefit of the Study, Research Method, and Research Paper Organization. Chapter II comprises of the underlying theory, which presents The notion of Existentialism, Sartre's Major Theory of Existentialism, Structural Elements of the Movie and Theoretical Application. Chapter III deals with the Structural Analysis of the Movie, which consists of Character and Characterization, Setting, Plot, Point of View, Theme, Casting, Mise-en-Scene, Cinematography, Sound, Editing and Discussion. Chapter IV presents the Existentialist Analysis, which consists of Being, Existence Precedes Essence, Consciousness (Cogito), Freedom to Choose, Anxiety, Transcendence of Ego, Nothingness and Discussion. Chapter V presents Conclusion and Suggestion.