

Name:

Instructor:

Course:

Date:

### Critical Essay on *Inglourious Basterds* by Quentin Tarantino

When discussing one of the most impressive films by Quentin Tarantino, one may mention the directing style and cinematic features expressed in the spaghetti western *Inglourious Basterds*. This movie managed to deliver not only a thrilling plot, but also exceptional camera work and excellent editing techniques. Moreover, a significant part of the movie's success is considered to be the outstanding performance of the actors and the sophisticated soundtrack from Ennio Morricone and other composers. Notably, the film was adored by audiences and critics due to its uniqueness in terms of showing an alternative interpretation of war times. Considering the combination of appealing visuals in the film and its script with details in every dialogue, it is vital to admit that *Inglourious Basterds* is a significant example of how a war film can be both entertaining and meaningful.

The central issue of the plot is the conflict between the Nazi regime and Jewish people. Since the movie focuses on the topic of genocide, one may agree that it creates specific tensions in every scene. Especially, the most emotional sequences in the movie are the dialogues between Jewish people and Nazis. These scenes are intense and involve thrilling suspense. Nevertheless, the plot also presents a group of fierce and violent Jewish people who are known to be a threat to the Nazi regime. The organization of Jewish-American soldiers calls themselves 'The Basterds'

and their main goal is to destroy the Nazis (Tarantino). Therefore, one may admit that the presentation of Jewish people both as victims and attackers provides an ambiguous effect on the perception of the audience. Namely, it is unclear whether the viewer should feel compassion towards the Jewish people during World War II or the Nazi regime which faced a dangerous menace. This ambiguous perception concerning the roles of Nazis and the Jewish people during the World War II is a unique feature of Tarantino's script and development of the story. However, the main attractions of the movie are considered to be its exceptional visuals and the complicated directing techniques of Quentin Tarantino.

For the most notable directing techniques in the film, one may look to the tracking shots, the extraordinary movement of the camera, and camera positions. For instance, there are several crane shots which are filmed from above and follow the characters' movements. Also, speaking about tracking shots, it is important to mention that they create not only thrilling suspense, but also allow viewers to enjoy the brilliant performance of the actors (Dima). Another significant peculiarity of the film's cinematography is the montage techniques of Tarantino. There are several scenes with flashy shots and fast-paced action moments. These sequences are aimed to switch the pace of the movie from thrilling dialogues to exciting action. Even though flashy and action scenes are rare in the film, they appeal to the viewer with spectacular camera work. In particular, Tarantino managed to emphasize every bullet and every shot from guns using separate frames from different angles. Therefore, *Inglourious Basterds* delivers outstanding visuals with complicated camera work that emphasizes the tensions between the characters and enhances the action scenes. Nevertheless, the most substantial part of the movie's success is known to be the performance of the actors. The excellent cast of the movie involves not only Hollywood stars, but also relatively unknown and yet talented actors who perform supporting roles.

In this regard, one may mention the most impressive character in the film, Hans Landa, performed by the German-Austrian actor Christoph Waltz. Critics recognized his acting talent, and he managed to win the Oscar as Best Supporting Actor. His performance in the movie can be characterized by an exceptional ability to portray the emotions of a cold-blooded Nazi. Tarantino wanted viewers to perceive Hans Landa as an evil and yet charismatic Nazi who is devoted to the profession of finding and executing Jewish people (Lim). Another exceptional acting performance was delivered by Brad Pitt. Since his character Aldo Raine is considered to be one of the main protagonists of the film, there is a significant emphasis on his personality. Brad Pitt perfectly illustrates the hatred towards the Nazis and therefore, no regrets towards murdering or mutilating them. In addition, another actor who deserves recognition as a supporting actor is Michael Fassbender. His performance in the role of a British spy is related to the most thrilling scenes and dialogues in the movie. Although the performance of the main actors are outstanding in their ability to understand the peculiarities of their own characters, each actor from the supporting cast managed to add something unique to the central narrative of the movie.

Another important part of the directing style of Quentin Tarantino is his ability to use a soundtrack in order to enhance visuals. Tarantino utilized the compositions of Ennio Morricone to create suspense in scenes which involve anticipation. For instance, for the sequence after the interrogation of a Nazi, the score managed to provide a thrilling effect to imply the uncertainty of the future of this soldier. The walk of Donny Donowitz through the tunnel was accompanied by Morricone's epic composition, which enhanced the emotions of the Nazi before his own execution (Movieclips). Moreover, Tarantino also used the melodies from popular music. In particular, the song "Cat People" by David Bowie during the scene in which Shosanna Dreyfus was preparing for a grand premiere in her movie theater. The use of this song demonstrated the

development of Shosanna's character from a girl who was running from the Nazi soldiers to a woman who can destroy the leaders of Germany. Subsequently, one may agree that the talented utilization of music in the movie managed to enhance the visuals of every scene.

In conclusion, the movie *Inglourious Basterds* demonstrates features of outstanding camera work and a well-thought-out script which reveals the peculiarities of each character. Additionally, it is vital to admit that the movie presents the theme of genocide during World War II from an unusual perspective. Another important part of the movie is the direction of Tarantino with the use of complicated camera movements and editing techniques. Moreover, the effective utilization of music enhances the visuals and emotions of the characters. The movie also appeals to viewers with the outstanding performances of the actors. The cast conveys not only the feelings of each character, but also evokes particular emotions in the audience. Hence, one may say that *Inglourious Basterds* is a manifestation of both the artistic and technical mastery.

Works cited

Dima, Vlad. "Tarantino's Inglourious Basterds: Film Kills". *Bright Lights Film Journal*, 2009,

<http://brightlightsfilm.com/tarantinos-inglourious-basterds-film-kills/#.WyDtvkiFPIU>.

Accessed 13 June 2018.

Lim, Dennis. "'Inglourious' Actor Tastes the Glory". *The New York Times*, 2009,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/16/movies/16lim.html>. Accessed 13 June 2018.

Movieclips. "Inglourious Basterds (3/9) Movie CLIP - The Bear Jew (2009) HD." *YouTube*,

2014, <https://youtu.be/a3uqv0eP7Tg>. Accessed 13 June 2018

Tarantino, Quentin. *Inglourious Basterds*. Universal, 2009.