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Intro to Film

Shea

*The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 2* Review

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On Friday, November 20th, I saw the conclusion of *The Hunger Games* franchise. It ended in good form I thought. I personally hated the first one. I was not invested in the mythos of the story. I could not get into the purpose of the games or how they were executed. The second entry, *Catching Fire*, I thought was pretty good. Looking back, I think the first one set up the post traumatic stress disorder theme really well to be explored in the following films. Looking back, I have a slight appreciation for the first one now. The first part of *Mockingjay* I thought was the best one. It set up the conclusion of the second part really well and brought in more of the PTSD themes and introduced propaganda and media manipulation themes. Unfortunately, I do not feel the second part lived up to the first.

One of the strongest parts of the story I felt was Peeta's tragic and torn character. Having undergone torture at the hands of Snow in the previous installment, Katniss now acts as a catalyst that Peeta will lash out in an attempt to kill her. Seeing his character torn in deciding what memories are real and what was implanted by Snow and what he wants to believe was sometimes difficult to watch. It continued the PTSD theme very strongly. The PTSD wrapped up nicely in what Katniss communicated with her baby daughter in her hands. Katniss had come to grips with what happened and to counteract her survivor's guilt and trauma, she developed a "game" counting every good thing someone has done and while it seems tedious and annoying, she says there are "much worse games to play."

Jennifer Lawrence delivered a strong performance as Katniss. Watching as her character at times was unsatisfied by what she was doing. She did not want to be a symbol on the sidelines or a leader of a new society. She wanted to act. Evidently seen in her character's constant defiance. Lawrence's candid attitude was often times endearing. She often won the support and respect of other characters when others saw it as a threat. One other note on performances I would like to make is Philip Seymour Hoffman's. In what is sadly his last on-screen performance, he was not in the film much but brought a lot to his character in *Catching Fire* and *Mockingjay, Part 1* that his limited performance in the final installment is noteworthy that he continued to add to the character.

During intense action scenes, the cinematography was really well done. The fast pace of the action matched the fast cuts and changes on screen. It gave a real feeling of the intensity of the situation as they were past enemy lines, surrounded by a barrage of traps, and swarms of soldiers would be notified of their location as traps went off. It put viewers in the middle of the rebellion and the all or nothing context of the situation.

Overall, I thought the film was not the strongest of the series but gave a satisfying enough conclusion to the franchise. I saw it with some friends, some of whom read the books. They compared it with the books afterwards and filled me in on the differences from the film. I had never read them. *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 2* brought a solid performance from Jennifer Lawrence, continued the strong themes of PTSD to the end, and brought intense cinematography to immerse the audience into the action and dire situation.