

Gabriel Rivera

Dr. Deborah Poe

English 201

17 September 2014

“Film” Response

The film that made an immense impact on me was Oliver Stone's *Platoon*. It communicates a strong message about what happens mentally to men in war. Before viewing the film I never gave any thought to what a soldier goes through while at war. Although, I had an idea that it would be bad, the magnitude in which it was portrayed was something I never expected. The soldiers in the film were constantly nagged with the notion that they might die almost everyday but the fact that they still were able to joke around, drink, do recreational drugs, and have fun is something that unnerved me. In my mind I wondered how they could not be scared or even a little frightened at the prospect of dying a horrific death. I know if I was faced with the prospect of death I'd be terrified. I always perceived soldiers as level headed and having the ability to confront combat strategically. *Platoon* showed me the exact opposite thus changing my viewpoint of their stability. To see these soldiers at the same time be at each others' throats was confusing. I was under the impression that the military breed unity and togetherness. Watching the men splinter off into groups and then witness strong hatred amongst them was something I had not anticipated. The overall selfishness exhibited by some of the troops individually was alarming. Together each of these men faced the possibility of death at any moment. Some of the men ran away from combat or failed to take responsibility for their mistakes and even passed blame on to others thus leaving their fellow men to dry. It was a

disgusting display that I couldn't believe. It made me realize that self-preservation kicks into high gear when soldiers are in war. In war a soldier should not have to fear his/her fellow serviceman. In *Platoon* fear for other servicemen was rampant. If a handful did not fall in line in carrying out terrible actions they would be threatened with murder. In turn these men would be forced into watching from the sidelines out of fear that they would be killed. Its horrifying to watch men fear murder from the same people they are supposed to rely on. I would have never imagined this scenario before watching the film. What struck me most was how these soldiers could lash out against the innocent for atrocities the enemy had committed toward them. To watch these troops kill innocent civilians and then burn down their village out of anger and frustration created a pit in my stomach which made me sick soon followed by great anger. Those soldiers were sent to protect these civilians from the enemy and yet they are killing them all the same. There is no reason to take the life of the innocent regardless of what transpires in war. Even though the film presents the extreme worst case scenario it revealed to me that I should be against unnecessary war. The film made me understand that war can bring in out the evil people.