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**"PEOPLE DON'T DIE LIKE IN *RAMBO*":
REPRESENTATIONS OF VIOLENCE IN *BAND OF BROTHERS***

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ABSTRACT

"PEOPLE DON'T DIE LIKE IN *RAMBO*":
REPRESENTATIONS OF VIOLENCE IN *BAND OF BROTHERS*

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UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA
2015

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The subject of the present study consists of an analysis of the implications of graphic violence in the HBO miniseries *Band of Brothers* (Spielberg and Hanks prods. 2001), more specifically whether violence can be regarded as adding layers of meaning to the narrative or as only emphasizing the technological innovations in re-creating the rough battlefield environment. In ten episodes, *Band of Brothers* depicts the hardships of Easy Company, a group of paratroopers during the Second World War, as they struggle to survive until the end of the war. The theme of brotherhood permeates the miniseries and becomes a significant feature in the violent sequences. The scene analysis will focus on instances of extreme body damage and mutilation in the episodes as notions of cinematography and mise-en-scene from David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson are applied. The reverberation of the violent act will be analyzed in relation to the episodic narrative and the miniseries as a whole, by taking into consideration Seymour Chatman's notion of kernel and satellite scenes. The intertwined relationship of violent images and narrative flow of *Band of Brothers* will demonstrate that by focusing on the physical and emotional reverberations caused by violence, instead of highlighting shock value, the miniseries offers the opportunity of reflection upon human behavior and fragility during ruthless times.

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RESUMO

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Orientadora: Anelise Reich Corseuil, PhD

O tema do presente estudo consiste na análise das implicações da violência gráfica na minissérie da HBO *Band of Brothers* (Spielberg e Hanks prods. 2001), mais especificamente se a violência pode adicionar camadas de significado a narrativa ou se apenas enfatiza as inovações tecnológicas na re-criação do ambiente hostil do campo de batalha. Em dez episódios, *Band of Brothers* retrata as dificuldades da Easy Company, um grupo de paraquedistas durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial, enquanto eles lutam pela sobrevivência até o término da guerra. O tema de companheirismo permeia a minissérie e torna-se uma característica significativa durante as sequências violentas. A análise de cena irá concentrar-se nos momentos de extremo dano e mutilação corporal dos soldados, aplicando as noções de cinematografia e mise-en-scene de David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson. A reverberação do ato violento será analisado em relação a estrutura da narrativa do episódio e da minissérie em geral, levando em consideração os conceitos de Seymour Chatman sobre cenas kernel e satellite. A relação intrínseca das imagens violentas e a narrativa de *Band of Brothers* demonstrará que ao focar nas consequências físicas e emocionais causadas pela violência, ao invés de salientar o efeito de choque, a minissérie oferece uma oportunidade de reflexão sobre o comportamento humano e a fragilidade da vida durante momentos cruéis.

33.317 palavras
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------|
| Acknowledgements..... | v |
| Abstract..... | vii |
| Resumo..... | viii |
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| i. Narrative..... | 6 |
| ii. <i>Band of Brothers</i> as a Television Miniseries Production..... | 9 |
| iii. Representation of World War II Movies and Miniseries..... | 17 |
| Chapter 1 - Maimed Bodies and Spurting Arteries: Graphic Violence in <i>Band of Brothers</i> | 25 |
| Chapter 2 - "Incoming!": Analysis of Combat Sequences in <i>Band of Brothers</i> | 53 |
| Conclusion..... | 85 |
| References..... | 91 |
| Appendices..... | 99 |

INTRODUCTION

"There is many a boy here today who looks on war as all glory, but, boys, it is all hell."

(General William T. Sherman)¹

When looking at statistics of casualties of the Second World War, it is possible to find numbers around sixty million deaths (Overy 6). When compared to the previous major worldwide conflict, the First World War with approximately 16 million deaths (Tucker 23), it is possible to realize the massive dimension of destruction. WWII was a much more technological war, with radio communications, code messages, vast use of tanks and bombings along with airplanes and aerial attacks. It was a conflict that lasted for six years and involved countries from virtually every continent, whether by being invaded, attacked or by sending troops to fight. Hidden behind those sixty million casualties, there are cases of civilian and military slaughter, people who have lost their homes and lives to conquering troops, or citizens who were called up to fight for their countries and have never returned to enjoy the comforts of peace back at their homes. Each person, each soldier plays a small part in a war that perhaps goes beyond understanding in human standards due to its savagery and ruthlessness.

Charles Simic once said in his essay "Poetry and History" that "a figure like 100,000 conveys horror on an abstract level. [...] A number like 100,001, on the other hand, would be far more alarming. That lone, additional individual would restore the reality to the thousands of casualties" (38-9). The concentration on that one individual would focus people's minds back to the fact that behind those gigantic numbers, there are real flesh and blood citizens who were being exterminated. The horrors of a war that now fades from collective memory as its participants slowly pass away cannot be truly understood but they can be remembered and discussed.

The miniseries *Band of Brothers* (Spielberg and Hanks prods. 2001) is an attempt to represent the atrocities suffered by soldiers in the battlefield by portraying violence in its utmost graphic way. The miniseries exposes not only the wounds, lack of overall medical help, and mutilations of the soldiers, but also the psychological effects of a warfare that took people to mental and emotional exhaustion. In order to

¹ This quotation was taken from John Limon's book *Writing After War: American War Fiction from Realism to Postmodernism* (32).

depict the turbulent combat situations, *Band of Brothers* makes use of special effects and visual techniques that re-create the chaotic war experience, and most importantly for this research, the violence. The usage of prosthetic limbs to explicitly show the maimed body members, and the consistent employment of makeup to vividly portray the exposed wounds are constant reminders of the dangerous environment of war. The way the violent sequences are visually placed in the narrative flow of the miniseries enhances the fact that the graphic violence is not being portrayed as a spectacle. These sequences are inserted in the context of combat and add meaning to the understanding of the complex inner workings and particularities of armed conflicts.

An original HBO miniseries, *Band of Brothers* continues the raw and explicit tendency ignited by *Saving Private Ryan* (Spielberg 1998), in which one of the purposes was to give a sense of experience of war combat with its brutalities and deaths. The miniseries is based on the 1992 homonymous book by Stephen E. Ambrose, who interviewed the veterans and collected their memories, and follows the story of the paratroopers of 101st Airborne, Easy Company, their comradeship and violent battlefield experiences since their assembly in the training camps in Georgia until the end of the war. The editing of documentary footage from interviews of WWII veterans and dramatizations of war events enables *Band of Brothers* to offer a recollection of memories from a time in which violence and destruction constituted the prevailing circumstances. The juxtaposition of the war soldiers' real footage with an advanced age and their fictionalized younger versions points to the ways in which *Band of Brothers* attempts to reconstruct the complex idea of war combat, and as a consequence, offers a reflection on the diversity of formats that can be used to represent history. Damian Sutton (2004) points out that the veterans' interviews in *Band* demand an effort "to show an ethical responsibility as well as creating something that is dramatic and engaging" (383). Also, it is possible to make a connection between the idea of combining documentary footage with fictionalized drama and Tom Hoffer and Richard Nelson's general notion of a docudrama. As Hoffer and Nelson (1999) remark, a docudrama relies on the fact that the "events portrayed are created and restructured (i.e. they are events that have occurred solely for the purposes of mediated communication)" (64) in which fidelity and scope can vary extensively.

Band of Brothers is a ten-episode miniseries, with a running time of eleven hours, totaling the participation of eight directors. I had the opportunity to conduct interviews through email (see Appendices)

with one of the directors, Mikael Salomon, both cinematographers, Remi Adefarasin and Joel J. Ransom, one of the screenwriters, Erik Bork, and actors Bart Ruspoli and Shane Taylor. Their input has been extremely valuable since some opinions and information about specific issues and scenes are not accessible in the media. As a highly awarded television show, *Band* was the winner of the 2002 Golden Globe for Best Miniseries, 2002 Emmy Awards for Outstanding Miniseries, Outstanding Casting, and Outstanding Directing for a Miniseries.

This study is concerned in discussing the implications of graphic violence in *Band of Brothers*, more specifically, if technological emphasis on representations of violence can be associated with or dissociated from the construction of the narrative. In other words, this study should examine whether violence can be regarded as adding layers of meaning to the narrative or as only emphasizing the technological innovations in re-creating the brutal environment of war as a form of spectacle offered for the sake of voyeuristic gaze.

With the rise of technological means to portray explosions, damages, deaths, wounds and many other circumstances that could cause violent injury to the characters and objects in films, the exploitation of these images in order to attract viewers is a palpable and debated reality in cinema. Marsha Kinder (2001) points out that especially since 1990s, violent spectacle is "increasingly noisy and explosive, more blatantly stylized and parodic, more wildly humorous and energetic" (76) than ever before. The serious attention paid to visual effects leads Kinder to believe that the use of violence in films has been "dependent on expensive special effects, whose pyrotechnics rely on high-powered technology both in front of and behind the camera" (76). Major film companies have access to these more advanced technological tools and are given the possibility of using them in violent portrayals. However, the use of technology to create shocking and impacting images does not necessarily follow the path of bringing potential meaning to the story being told.

J. David Slocum (2001) claims that "individual images, scenes, or acts that are compelling and often viscerally engaging in themselves—spectacles—appear in varying and complex relationships to the narratives" (4). The spectacle itself and the relationship it has with the development and continuity flow of the narrative are crucial elements in order to understand the underlying messages and ideology being put forth by the film or miniseries. An affectively strong scene, in the case of this research a violent circumstance on the battlefield, should

reverberate an idea in the filmic narrative as a whole by presenting consequences that go beyond the violent scene itself. In this point, Leo Charney (2001) observes that:

while the representation of violence would seem to be on the side of spectacle, it also depends on the narratives that enclose and defamiliarize it, that allow violence to retain its kinetic impact and prevent it from becoming a string of meaningless sensation. (48)

The ability to move the viewer in more significant ways by using sequences that rely on visual spectacles will probably fade since the violent scene is detached from the context of the narrative, as it implies nothing but a moment of its own.

This research discusses whether the use of violence in *Band of Brothers* is merely a spectacle in which the technological innovations are used to showcase the economic power of the production companies through scenes of pure shock value or if the idea of visual spectacle goes beyond this usage. The intricacies of the narrative structure and the way the violent sequences are visually displayed to the audience may represent an enhancement of significant themes related to human bonding and suffering or even offer a criticism to glorifying war and to the terrible consequences when nations engage in armed conflicts.

Band is inserted in the context that concerns the distinct production of television miniseries narratives. It is important to emphasize that television narratives have their own specificities that must be taken into account when analyzing the development of a certain theme, which in this research is violence. According to Kristin Thompson (2003), the episodes of a miniseries rely on seriality, which is defined as the outcome of events in one episode affecting the following ones (58-9). In *Band*, the impact of violence is clearly shown as a reverberating incident throughout the segments. Also, due to the amount of episodes, television miniseries are able to provide a larger number of protagonists and even develop their story lines in more complex and sophisticated ways than films (57). Such developments are vital in the building of the relationships among the characters that will be eventually impacted by violent circumstances. Besides, due to the multiple episodes that constitute a miniseries, information introduced in one episode might have to be brought back later in creating redundant situations or dialogues; this is called "dispersed exposition" (65). This

device is significant in the reminder of important themes such as violent combat conditions and deglorification of war.

In this proposed investigation the aforementioned characteristics, which include seriality, a large number of protagonists, complex story lines, and dispersed exposition, will be taken into account and linked to the representation of violence in the television narrative. Gary R. Edgerton and Jeffrey P. Jones (2008) point out that the increase of graphic violence on television has been reformulating the boundaries of television genre by pushing the limits of what can be explicitly displayed on the screen (325). They specifically discuss the case of the cable television network HBO which tends to have greater flexibility to show polemic contents, such as graphic violence and profanity, than network channels.

As Stephen Prince (2000) comments, "graphic violence is an inescapable and ubiquitous characteristic of contemporary cinema" (1). His idea of ultraviolence relies on the fact that visual techniques are employed to show injuries in the most explicit and detailed way. Prince comments on the acceptance and popularity of such shockingly graphic images in the contemporary film industry, despite its controversial effects on the viewers, by highlighting the connection of the aesthetic styles used to portray violence and the attempts to reflect social and political contexts through explicit portrayals. In his view, ultraviolence is highly associated with the blood-soaked images of the early years after the censorship dissolution of the Production Code in the late 1960s (9), and at the same time, it is also related to the contemporary use of imagery of graphic bodily mutilation (14).

Band of Brothers is a miniseries that relies on the visual apparatus of graphic mutilation. In a number of sequences, soldiers are shown with their wounds exposed or missing limbs in close-ups that last for a substantial amount of seconds, thus, enabling the audience to be in contact with those strongly detailed images. The camera hardly looks away from violence; on the contrary, it pans and travels in the direction of the injured soldier while also capturing the reactions of those around him. Carol Clover (1992) points out that special effects have had an importance in the representation of the "maiming and dismemberment in extraordinarily credible detail" (41). Ultraviolence and graphic mutilation have been dramatically present in contemporary war films through the use of prosthetic limbs, such as the maimed or wounded legs, arms, and heads, and Computer Generated Imagery

(CGI) reconstructions of parts of the body. In Chapter 1, I discuss the implications of graphic violence in films and television programs.

Since the topic of violence is very pertinent worldwide, this study should contribute to the analysis of violence in the visual arts as a means of understanding an issue that is deeply inherent to society and to its use in the media. It should also bring a reflection on the changes in film style and technology that allow filmmakers to express themselves more freely and thoroughly. Moreover, this research is a contribution to my personal interests as a student and film admirer of powerful images of human conflicts. In particular, images that are connected to the experiences and traumas generated by war, a burden people have been forced to cope with since the beginning of times until the present days.

Within this context, the focus of this study is to discuss the depiction of violence in the narrative of the miniseries *Band of Brothers* and its theoretical implications, more specifically the technological emphasis on representations of violence in the miniseries in order to verify whether they potentialize meaning in the narrative.

The following pages of this introductory Chapter will deal with some theoretical basis for the study, and are divided in three main sections: (i) narrative, in which key notions will be discussed in connection to the theme of violence, (ii) *Band of Brothers* as a television miniseries production, with remarks on production and television narrative specificities that are relevant to the research, and (iii) representation of World War II films and miniseries, which will bring a debate around the characteristics of representing war combat and the use of technology to portray violence in the medium.

i. Narrative

As a starting point to better understand the structure and meaning of movies and miniseries, it is important to grasp the concept of narrative. *Band of Brothers* brings a certain narrative linearity in the development of the episodes, connecting each segment with major territorial advances of Easy Company. Most of the episodes start with subtitles that offer a geographical localization and time frame in order to guide the viewer to better understand the developments of the events in the narrative. As stated by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson (2008), narrative is a "chain of events in cause-effect relationship occurring in time and space" (90). These three characteristics, causality, time, and space, are important in the linking of ideas to construct two

very important elements in the narrative: story and plot (91). The concept of story is related to all the events in the narrative whether they are directly displayed or inferred by the viewer. Plot is what is visually presented in the movie, that is, the story events that appear in the film.

In some situations, *Band of Brothers* brings a fragmented view of the experience of war through the use of memories of the soldiers. The difficulty in overcoming violent situations is enhanced by the use of constant recollections that painstakingly return to the soldier's mind. This fragmentation shows another format apart from the linearity of events that can enable war to be represented in its utmost essence: an experience that might cause the soldiers themselves to feel displaced and fragmented. Robert Burgoyne (2010) comments on Hayden White's belief on the use fragmentation as he states that:

fragmentation, the exploding of the conventions of the traditional tale, and the dissociation or splitting of the narrative functions, may be the most appropriate technique for representing the historical reality of the contemporary period (89)

Since the catastrophic reality and the worldwide traumatic events cannot be easily contained and portrayed in a linear way. This fragmentation is present in *Band* in episode five called "Crossroads" which is based on a series of flashbacks of Captain Richard Winters (Damian Lewis) as he tries to cope with the act of killing a young German soldier. In this sense, *Band of Brothers* mixes both linear and non-linear techniques in order to portray war in an understandable way so the audience can follow through ten episodes, but at the same time conveying the feeling of shattered lives and emotions that can be associated with the disruptive experience of violent warfare and its troublesome psychological effects.

It is also important to notice the arrangement of the violent sequences in the general scheme of the narrative in *Band of Brothers*. Each violent instance is preceded and succeeded by other scenes that help emphasize the sense of loss and disruption caused by violence. In *Story and Discourse*, Seymour Chatman explains the notion of connective logic of events in his approach of narrative hierarchy. He introduces the concept of kernels as major events in the narrative that advance "the plot by raising and satisfying questions" (53) and "give rise to cruxes in the direction taken by events" (53). As a contrast, the minor plot events in the narrative are called satellites that "can be deleted without disturbing the logic of the plot" (54). The function of a satellite

event is to complete the kernel by filling in the narrative gaps around the main events. The existence of narrative elements pointed out by Chatman, such as kernels and satellites, aids in the understanding of the way narrative films and miniseries are organized, that is their structure, and the meanings they convey with such organization.

The sequences that take place before or after a violent circumstance are of major importance in *Band of Brothers*. These satellite events can be related to the building of friendships and characters that bond in seemingly unimportant ways, but that will later on enhance the feeling of loss and destruction caused by the violent circumstance. The same thing happens to the sequences that take place after the violent event. The mourning and the pain shown in satellite scenes are the proof of the damage caused by brutal experiences shown in major kernel scenes. M. J. Porter, D. L. Larson, Allison Harthcock, and K. B. Nellis (2002) complement on Chatman's notions by signaling six functions to a kernel scene: "disturbance, obstacle, complication, confrontation, crisis, and resolution" (5). In relation to the satellite scenes, the functions multiply and the authors present twelve of them: "exposition, dramatic question, introduction of new character, action, plan revealed, relationship affirmation, clarification, conflict continues, relief, theme, foreshadowing, and ambiance" (5). It is by looking closely at the small parts of the narrative and understanding their functions that an analysis of the entire scope of the story can be accomplished.

Another interesting point in relation to the narrative of *Band of Brothers* is the set of expectations that the audience already brings to the war film genre. The heroism that is generally associated to the Second World War, or "the Good War", raises an expectation of victory and happy ending that differs from the actual feelings of the surviving veterans. *Band of Brothers* clearly brings the perspective that the idealized glory of war and heroism do not pay off and do not even have a place in combat. The most dear and cherished characters that have been developed through several episodes and have had the bonding straightened out with the other soldiers, lose their lives in the most horrific ways, for example by being obliterated in a foxhole by an incoming shell, or in the most incidental way, for instance by getting shot with a gun that goes off in the holster by accident.

As the miniseries subverts some of the expectations from the audience, especially in relation to heroism, it is significant to focus on the processes of narrative understanding proposed by David Bordwell (1985). Bordwell relies on the notion of schemata to explain the

narrative structure and the processes in which film comprehension is constructed. Schemata can be defined as clusters of knowledge that guide the audience during the movie and help classify, intelligibly construct, and organize information in the understanding of the narrative (31). It aids in the hypothesis making process used to comprehend the story. There are three types of schemata: prototype, template, and procedural. Prototype relates to the ability to recognize things into categories, and to identify agents, actions, goals, and locales (34). Template is connected to the canonical story structure, that is, introduction, explanation of affairs, complicating issues, outcome, and ending (35). Procedural has to do with the search for motivations in cause-effect, time, and space relations, an adjustment to better understand and justify what is being displayed in the movie (36). The definitions of these processes engendered by the audience when watching a film are relevant to the understanding of the influence of narrative structure in the portrayal of possible meanings conveyed by the movie.

In relation to the specific genre that *Band of Brothers* is inserted, the war film genre, it is possible to make connections in relation to the concepts of schemata brought forth by Bordwell and the idea of general notions about the war film. The idea that the viewers will be constructing their own understanding of the narrative as they watch the film, or miniseries, means that the previous knowledge of fictional war films, real life stories from television, or any former reference to combat, whether from fiction or real footage, will be influencing the way people comprehend, accept or disregard certain features of the war narrative. Steve Neale (2003) comments that genres consist "of specific systems of expectation and hypothesis that spectators bring with them to the cinema and that interact with films themselves during the course of the viewing process" (160). For this reason, it is important to have a notion of previous works in the genre of war films in order to realize the influences, repetitions, and novelties. A brief overview of relevant World War II movies and television miniseries will be done later on in this chapter.

ii. *Band of Brothers* as a Television Miniseries Production

Although *Band of Brothers* is a television production and did not have a theatrical release, its visual power to impact remains one of its main features through the compelling characterization of the soldiers,

the violent hardships they endured, and the visually detailed representation of the historical time. As a television production, it has its contextual characteristics and specificities that by any means downplay on its capacity to convey a story of human bonding during extreme situations while attempting to represent history in its details. As Helena Sheehan (1987) points out, "television has brought a whole new scale and intensity to the experience of drama that is without precedent in the history of human culture" (13). She expands her idea by commenting that the sensory nature of television has had an access to people's everyday life in a much more intense and intimate way than any other media. Sheehan also comments that television has always borrowed from other media in the path of its development "both in direct appropriation of material and methods, and in indirect adaptation of genres, themes, and techniques" (15).

Band of Brothers is inserted in the context of an original cable network HBO series; consequently, it does not suffer the interruption of commercial breaks, strict censorship or exact running time issues. Some episodes have fifty-five minutes whereas others have one hour and ten minutes. Therefore, the narrative can be developed in flexible terms. Salomon, director of episodes three and ten of *Band of Brothers*, mentions that there were "very few restrictions. Not even running time was a restriction as long as we ended up around the sixty minute mark" (Appendix 3).

Tony Kelso (2008) brings a discussion about the peculiarities concerning HBO. He mentions that due to the fact that HBO does not rely on advertisers but on subscribers for its revenue, it can risk more in relation to format and content without fear of causing problems with controlling sponsors (49). Also, "it can produce plots that develop slowly instead of building toward mini-climaxes before commercial interruptions" (49). Bork, screenwriter of episodes eight and ten of *Band*, highlights that in this format it is not necessary to "'write to the act breaks' - meaning big cliff hangers or 'uh oh' moments that will entice viewers to come back after the commercial" (Appendix 5). Differently from network series, HBO does not follow the pattern of twenty-two episodes per season (Anderson 83), for instance *The Sopranos* (1999- 2007) had an average of thirteen episodes each season. More time is allotted to the creation, production and post-production of the television programs. These characteristics are very significant points since they are going to influence the way the narrative structure is conceived and developed through episodes.

Another characteristic raised by Kelso concerns the acceptable thematic array that receives little constraint: "nudity, utterly profane language, and especially violent representations are fair game for HBO" (49). Adefarasin, one of the directors of photography of *Band of Brothers*, comments that "in many ways, HBO is freer than network TV. You can show nudity, language and violence to a higher level if the story demands it" (Appendix 1). *Band of Brothers* takes this discourse of creative freedom and makes use of it by portraying soldiers massively cursing and combat wounds in a very graphic manner. Adefarasin continues by explaining that in his view HBO "wants a worthwhile product that is well crafted and respectable" (Appendix 1). This might seem like an absolutely artistic choice but it is what distinguishes HBO from other cable networks, and most importantly, what keeps it alive and broadcasting. Without its aura of "It's not TV, it's HBO" and risk taking, HBO would not be recognized as a high quality network, hence it would not harvest as many subscribers in order to maintain itself in the market. Kelso highlights the fact that HBO is engaged in "intense promotional and branding efforts designed to buttress the perception that it is somehow unique" (50). The analysis suggests that by self-promoting its quality, HBO creates an image of significant status that is supported by the high budgets injected into the productions.

As a scenario opposed to the relatively freedom that can be perceived in the HBO production of *Band of Brothers*, broadcast television has many constraints that affect the creative process. Christopher Anderson (2005) highlights three defining characteristics of broadcast television: "the network schedule, the television season, and the open-ended structure of series narrative" (78). By considering the first characteristic, the advertising revenue system has the command of the schedule. Therefore, networks must be able to predict what kind of consumers are going to be targeted at a specific time slot of programming, insert a television show that suits their needs in order to make room for proper advertisers. This is a stark contrast to the HBO cable network in which commercials are not part of the programming, although it relies on the numbers of subscribers in general. The regular television season length is of twenty-two episodes which tends to be a "high volume production" (81) for the creators and could possibly affect the level of quality of the series. Creativity is in jeopardy when the demand is so high but the networks must provide original programming for thirty-five weeks while the remaining seventeen weeks are dedicated to reruns (81). Since the networks are bent on cultivating viewers all

year long, the open-ended structure seems like the perfect solution. The characteristic that a "network drama must begin with an interminable narrative" (83) is popularly seen in crime series such as *Law & Order* (1990-2010) and *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (2000-present) in which individual episodes come to an end but not the overall structure of the narrative.

The aforementioned characteristics are opposed to the more flexible environment created by HBO. Without the restraints of commercial breaks, running time and excessive censorship, *Band of Brothers* is able to show images of violence and destruction, and talk about themes that would otherwise be constrained by broadcast television. By keeping in mind that the level of content of the miniseries or film is one of the prime objectives in developing a project, the lack of constraints that a cable network, such as HBO, brings to the artists is an essential characteristic that will be naturally perceived in the final product.

Moreover, *Band of Brothers* necessarily requires more running time, that is, a large quantity of episodes in order to deal with the life stories of its numerous characters in a way that does not become superficial or fleeting. Past actions that were accumulated throughout the episodes can reveal future decisions of the characters, and the more information the audience has about a certain character or theme, the easier it is to comprehend the significant turns and decisions presented in the narrative. Horace Newcomb (2005) attributes some aesthetic features to television such as intimacy and seriality (30). Intimacy relies on the fact that television has continually and exponentially portrayed individual's lives from the most intimate and personal ways. In his view, seriality is one of the major factors in television storytelling and "allows genres to be deeply mined for content, for exploration of character, for inflection of issues" (32). The author explains that by putting the concepts of intimacy and seriality together and concentrating them, "television's rich possibilities are exhibited" (32).

In *Band of Brothers*, not only the historical progression of war is followed from episode to episode through the movements of Easy Company around Europe, but also the soldiers' relationships and bonding processes are closely accompanied across the segments. In this long process lies the important characteristic of seriality to develop the necessary links so that when the audience sees a soldier perishing in a violent way, it is not just one more sanguinary casualty but a character that has weight and meaning in the narrative. Sarah Kozloff (1992)

defines the miniseries as part of a serial in which "the story and discourse do not come to a conclusion during an episode, and the threads are picked up again after a given hiatus" (70). Similarly to John Ellis (1992), she complements by saying that this type of serials will eventually have an end. For Ellis, serial implies "a certain narrative progression and a conclusion" (123). In relation to this, Thompson adds that the concept of seriality in television is based on the fact that the outcome of one episode has an effect on the following ones (58-9). She argues that it provides a significant "potential complexity" (59) in which this continuous thread has more time to be further developed and enriches the plot by giving space for more complex relationships and actions. In the same line of thought, Porter et al. argue that with the story arc in miniseries "there is a continuation of a particular storyline that spans a number of episodes" (2). The more a story arc is developed, the more intricate the narrative structure becomes.

The length of *Band of Brothers* creates the possibility of introducing a great number of characters and it is possible to create bonds and deeper relationships among them that can influence the impact of death in the environment of war. The average number of speaking roles in *Band* is of five hundred characters (McCarthy 47), although the core of Easy Company is of fifty soldiers. All characters have names, military rankings, and distinct participations in varied episodes. As Todd McCarthy (2001) observes, "many are killed [...], some recede, while others come to the fore" (47). Due to the fact that the original number of soldiers presented in Stephen Ambrose's book was too much for the audience to follow, *Band's* screenwriter, Bork, explains that they had "to condense and composite characters, to some extent" (Appendix 5). Thompson points out that because of the long length of the television production there is the possibility of introducing multiple characters and developing their stories in a rather complex way (59). In some instances of *Band*, the death of a soldier reverberates an emotional reaction in the fellow members of the company due to the intense bonding among them.

Concerning the figure of the characters in television, Porter et al. point out that television narrative presents "a heavy emphasis on character development" (1). Salomon comments that one of the characteristics of the episodic feature of *Band of Brothers* was that "the audience [can] have a deeper connection with the characters they have followed for several episodes" (Appendix 3) which elevates the stakes in relation to their loss, in most of the times, under horrible conditions. He

also highlights that the production of *Band* "didn't have to start from scratch getting the audience emotionally involved with the characters" (Appendix 3) since they had already been introduced and developed in previous segments. The basic specificity of a miniseries, its multiple episodes, aids in the portrait of growth and change that takes place over the episodes until the end of the miniseries. Thompson claims that each character or group of characters may represent one of the multiple stories, a "technique of interweaving several important storylines" (55). The effect of multiple storylines is visible in terms of "density and lifelikeness" (57) when switching from one story to the next or by interconnecting them.

In a miniseries that offers a great amount of characters and details about the experience of war combat, *Band of Brothers* also makes use of one narrative characteristic that is very specific to television: dispersed exposition (Thompson 65). Even some characters that seldom appear in the episodes or relevant and important themes are remembered through this device. Dispersed exposition is a term used to define time gaps between episodes. Ellis suggests "carefully placed references to events in the conversations of characters" (123) in order to fill in the viewers who missed any information. In *Band of Brothers*, it is possible to see the dispersed exposition gap being filled out when in many instances, soldiers talk about themes that are crucial to the understanding of war as a hostile and undesirable situation to be placed. Once more the subject of heroism that is so associated with WWII is no longer present since soldiers are constantly deglorifying war by having conversations about their longing for home and fear for their own lives. Nevertheless, Thompson argues that recapping in a scene "must be used in a normal, believable, and dramatically justifiable manner" (68) otherwise it becomes too intentional and obvious.

Violent scenes in *Band of Brothers* heavily rely on the visual way they are being presented to the audience. The choice of settings, lighting, makeup, and selection of camera distances and movements are of vital importance in the creation of a tragic atmosphere of destruction. The stylistic choices have the power to involve the viewer in the scene and help advancing the narrative by selecting what is to be shown and what is not, and exactly how it is going to appear on screen.

Band of Brothers is inserted in the medium of television but some of its traits are considerably connected to a filmic stylistic approach of which HBO is very well-known for. Series from HBO like *The Sopranos* and *Boardwalk Empire* (2010-present), and miniseries

such as *John Adams* (2008), *Band of Brothers*, and *The Pacific* (2010) have "pushed production for television toward motion picture artistry and its visual and performance aesthetic" (O'Donnell 62). Thomas Schatz (2002) comments that "it is impossible to classify [*Band of Brothers*] as either film or television" (76) since so much of its visual template was inspired by *Saving Private Ryan*. Adefarasin says that in *Band* "the shots were just as carefully thought out as in a film" (Appendix 1). Therefore, some of the stylistic elements of film will be also applied to the visual discussion of violence in *Band of Brothers* along with some of television's relevant specificities.

The mise-en-scene in *Band of Brothers* plays an important role in the portrayal of scenes of graphic violence. One of the most significant elements is the makeup and the technological advances that go with it which are used to create the representations of the wounds on the soldiers' bodies or maiming of their limbs. The impact of seeing the injuries is a key element in the miniseries and technology has been crucial in the development of techniques that aid in the reconstruction of body parts. Bordwell and Thompson comment that "rubber and plasticine compounds create bumps, bulges, extra organs, and layers of artificial skin" that elevate the craft of makeup to a status of "creating characters traits or motivating plot action" (124).

Mise-en-scene in *Band* also relies on the use of different settings to aid in the creation of an ambience that highlights the harsh environment of war and enhances the violent act by showing what is around the soldier's body as a hostile element as well. Setting adds to the dramatic tone of the scene by presenting the surroundings as obstacles for the rescue of the wounded soldiers. *Band of Brothers* depicts injured soldiers trying to fight for their lives in terrible conditions in snowy forests, or being helplessly attended by the doctor in a cramped and humid basement. As Bordwell and Thompson point out, setting does not need to "be only a container for human events but can dynamically enter the narrative action" (115).

Another element of mise-en-scene that has a significance in the violent atmosphere of the scenes is lighting. In *Band of Brothers*, lighting accentuates the damage caused by an explosion or a gun shot. Apart from the flashing of the incoming shells that attack Easy Company, most violent sequences are considerably bright which allows the audience to see into the specific details of the graphic wounds. There is no use of shadow to hide the injuries which are perfectly exposed and central on the screen. Lighting can "guide our attention to certain objects

and actions" (Bordwell and Thompson 124), and in the case of *Band* it focuses the gaze to the inevitable sight of violence under combat.

The impact of violence contained in the scenes of *Band* is also shaped by the use of different camera distances. The use of a closer camera distance, especially close-ups, emphasizes the emotions of the soldiers that are exposed to difficult and violent situations during the miniseries. As Jeremy G. Butler (2007) observes, television relies heavily on close-ups which favor the face as a major point in understanding and interpretation (37). According to the critic, owing to the smaller size of the television screen, there is less use of deep focus cinematography because of the risk that the figures in the background might be difficult to recognize, thus hindering the meaning of the scene (122). Additionally, in *Band of Brothers*, the use of multiple cameras during the shooting of violent battle scenes allows the production to record different angles of the same event more efficiently. Ransom, one of the cinematographers of *Band*, illustrates that "every scene would have had at least two cameras" and "on the big battles and stunt scenes [...] we would have had anywhere from three to five cameras rolling" (Appendix 2).

Besides the close-up, *Band of Brothers* also makes use of reaction shots to capture the response of the soldiers, either the ones who suffered the violence or those around them. The impact of the graphic image of violence on the soldiers' bodies can be enhanced by linking that violent circumstance with the facial reaction of physical and emotional pain of the person who suffered the injury, or in some cases, the facial response of the soldiers in the surroundings. Hermann Kappelhoff (2001) discusses the idea of the "shell shocked face" (3) of the soldier when facing an explosion or a devastating situation that can either be understood as an image of sacrifice that points to "the terror, the agony of the soldier" (3) while it can also signify the portrayal of the "naked, physical suffering, the sheer annihilation of human life" (4). According to Victoria O'Donnell (2007), television is a more intimate medium and reaction shots help "convey realization, discovery, and a character's coming to terms with troubling or devastating feelings or events" (54) which makes the viewer much more engaged with the story.

In addition, the hand-held camera movement adds a frenetic and spontaneous atmosphere to the images of violence in *Band of Brothers*. It is used in many situations throughout the series to give a documentary look and perception of battlefield movement. As an example, one of the

mottos emphasized by the production was: like "dropping a documentary unit into the past" (Oppenheimer 33). This is a way of reconstructing the intricate idea of combat during war times that delves into the complexity of the event, by relying on aesthetic elements to convey the notion that there are formats that highlight the chaotic environment of war. In order to make sense of this motto, it is necessary to pay close attention to the way *Band* is shot. In the violent sequences, the use of hand-held camera lends to the scene a feeling of chaotic environment and an uneasiness that complements the shock of the graphic image, such as emulating the vibrations of explosions around the soldiers. The hand-held camera shot "intensifies a sense of abrupt movement" (Bordwell and Thompson 196) that is hardly accomplished through a steadier camera movement. Salomon explains that the Image Shaker, a device connected to the camera that makes the image vibrate, was used in some occasions but generally they relied "on the more 'organic' shake of a camera operator being jostled about" (Appendix 3). *Band* also makes use of a classical documentary camera position of standing in a low posture closer to the ground or taking cover in a self-preservation response (Haggith 340). However, *Band's* camerawork crosses the border of safety by placing the camera in no man's land, or right in the line of fire, a very dangerous and unusual position for a documentary in order to better show the violent action unfolding in distant places.

iii. Representation of World War II Movies and Miniseries

The Second World War stands until today as one of the most sanguinary and ruthless conflicts that humankind has ever witnessed. Richard Overy (2009) has classified World War II as "the largest and costliest war in human history. The deaths directly or indirectly caused by the war may have reached 60 million" (6). Overy explains that the WWII fought between 1939 and 1945 involved all the continents with more than fifty million people serving in military service and two-thirds of the economical power of the main countries was concentrated in warfare expenses (6). According to H. P. Willmott, Robin Cross, and Charles Messenger in *World War II*, during the war there were massive exterminations like "The Nanking Massacre" in which more than 300,000 Chinese were murdered by the Japanese troops (25), the Holocaust which led to the extermination of approximately 5.7 million Jews (156), and the atomic bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that

caused the devastation of these cities and the instant death of more than 113,000 people (292). Such an inhumane moment in history is bound to leave scars and become the topic of uncountable written and visual works of art.

The unimaginable hazardous conditions that soldiers went through during combat in WWII are well documented and described in several autobiographical and analytical works. Andrew J. Huebner (2008) claims that:

those landing on enemy-held shoreline confronted mines, machine-gun fire, and the threat of drowning under the weight of their own gear. Soldiers told to storm a beach routinely vomited, soiled themselves, or broke down emotionally. (17)

He also describes the environment of mutilation and the poor conditions that soldiers had to endure, such as sleep and food deprivation. Paul Fussell (1989) highlights the fact that people normally focus on the physical and material destructions caused by war but "less obvious is the damage it did to intellect, discrimination, honesty, individuality, complexity, ambiguity, and irony" (ix). The way war is represented in any media will always be a subjective product of the preferences and importance given by its creators in a determined social context.

Due to the relevance that issues associated with representation and realism have when analyzing a fictional work that was based on a real-life experience, especially the war genre that takes enormous consideration to aspects of authenticity, critics like Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (2001) comment that "an obsession with 'realism' casts the question as simply one of 'errors' and 'distortions' as if the 'truth' of a community were unproblematic, transparent, and easily accessible" (178). In this sense, there is a complexity attached to the issue of discovering what is the real truth behind a historical event, which might be unattainable since there are several intricacies and different points of view. The representation of a historical moment will be done through a specific voice that will not always attend to all the diversities and perspectives that can be found in a real community. By understanding that "'reality' is not self-evidently given and 'truth' is not immediately 'seizable' by the camera" (180), one can begin to understand that the images and values shown in a film are the product of the social and ideological lenses of its makers. Therefore, it is impossible to convey reality, for instance in the battlefield, as an absolute and immutable

truth. According to the critics, "while on one level film is mimesis, representation, it is also utterance, an act of contextualized interlocation between socially situated producers and receivers" (180). It is necessary to question who is making the movie and to what audience this movie is intended to in order to understand the inner values that are being communicated.

In the case of *Band of Brothers*, the miniseries stands as a representation of the WWII through the lenses of an American and British production. The huge research carried out to bring specific facts to the surface was based on American sources and soldiers. The point of view of this production is restricted to the way those people in that American context relate to the experiences and historical facts associated with the war. As an example, the crew of *Band* was given the direction of limiting to the minimum the instances of German viewpoints, in terms of narrative and camera work, so that the story would be told from the subjective perspective of the American soldier (Oppenheimer 33). The images and details in the miniseries, thus, cannot be seen as the reality of the facts since they are only representations of what happened, filtered by the lenses and context of the filmmakers.

The violence in *Band of Brothers* is usually associated with the suffering and humanizing process of the American soldiers. The other nations involved in the conflict are generally not the focus of the miniseries. In the majority of instances, the German soldiers are shown getting shot or already killed normally at a long distance in which it is not possible to perceive the physical consequences of a shot or an explosion. The most graphically violent scenes belong to the American characters who are given close-ups and screen time enough to make them relevant to the audience, thus, humanizing them in a more consistent way.

The debate around the place and relevance of genre must be regarded with importance, especially in relation to the characteristics of war film genre. According to Andrew Tudor (1995), "the crucial factors that distinguish a genre are not only characteristics inherent in the films themselves; they also depend on the particular culture within which we are operating" (6-7). The notion of genre can be seen as a set of conventions that must be culturally contextualized in order to make sense. Depending on the culture, different economical, social, and political factors will influence the building of certain characteristics as valid and acceptable to that specific ethnic group. In the case of

American World War II films, Jeanine Basinger (2003) explains a series of basic traits accumulated since the beginning of the war film genre. She comments that one of these characteristics is the presence of a group of soldiers from several different ethnic backgrounds, such as soldiers with Southern, Latin, and African-American heritage. In an environment that discriminated minorities and praised the traditional values of American society, the so-called "melting pot" of soldiers in WWII can be seen to be fabricating the idea that the nation as a whole was equally fighting for the country. The stereotypes represent several parts and ethnicities of the United States, and give the impression of equality although "a horrible death becomes traditional for minority figures" (52) while the mainstream hero is the last one to die honorably. In addition, there are fixed objectives, for instance, capturing a certain enemy or ally, securing or exploding a bridge, and taking over or protecting a city. Other traits are related to the heroes who distance themselves from the other squad soldiers due to their leadership duties, leisure activities of talking and sleeping, the nostalgia of the memory of home, recurrent props such as letters and maps, and the theme of death (56-7). These specific details can be found in war productions and play a significant role in explaining the experience of battle and its consequences through a contextualized viewpoint.

Previous to the production of *Band of Brothers*, *Saving Private Ryan* was released in 1998 and, as pointed out by Burgoyne (2008), became a major landmark in the film productions of the war genre (50). Its use of the traditional elements of war films with the addition of new issues brings a contemporary view to war movies regarding the WWII. War films were affected by the post-Vietnam ideology of bitterness and disbelief and *Ryan* memorably rescues the themes of sacrifice and courage of "the greatest generation" (50) that fought for a legitimate and worthy goal. *Ryan* innovates by integrating the memory and view of the Holocaust into the narrative of battlefield, making it an important and contemporary aspect of the World War II conflict. As Burgoyne points out, the struggle between the Jewish character Private Mellish (Adam Goldberg) and the German SS officer brings to the surface the theme of oppression and the concentration camps, since the SS (Schutzstaffel corps) was responsible for putting in practice the Final Solution of Jewish extermination (69).

Similarly to *Band of Brothers*, *Ryan* highlights the "psychology of cowardice" in the battlefield (Burgoyne *The Hollywood Historical Film* 50), a theme already present in previous war films. Soldiers that

were supposed to accomplish certain tasks are unable to do so, due to fear for their lives. As a consequence of the brutal environment, there are some instances of "soldiers who cannot enact the violence and aggression that is demanded of them" (52). In episode three of *Band of Brothers*, "Carentan", Private Albert Blithe (Marc Warren) is an example when he hides in a foxhole during a violent attack while his company requires his assistance in offensive moves. A character with a similar trait can also be found in *Ryan*. Corporal Upham (Jeremy Davies) freezes in the moment that he is supposed to rescue his friend Private Mellish (Adam Goldberg) who is eventually killed by a German officer. Both productions focus on the fact that through fear-based attitudes, soldiers endanger and expose their friends to violence and possibly death.

Band of Brothers and *Ryan* make the connection between the bonding of war companions and the hardships of losing fellow soldiers under disastrous conditions. Both offer the display of sentiments in combat, and as a consequence, show the emerging of the "male melodrama" in which the feelings of men at war are explicitly shown and discussed (Burgoyne, *The Hollywood Historical Film* 61). The contrast of "male emotion, desire, friendship, and vulnerability versus duty, honor, and heroism" (61) creates situations of dialogue and opportunities to exchange emotional stories. The theme of sacrifice that permeates the productions brings together the sense of heroism and soldier vulnerability. In episode four of *Band*, "Replacements", after a devastating retreat of the town of Nuenen, Holland, the soldiers are visually shocked by the level of danger and exposure, and consequently some of them burst out in tears while others try to comfort the person next to them. In *Ryan*, for example, after a very tense and sad sequence in which the unit's doctor is shot and dies, Captain Miller (Tom Hanks) distances himself for a moment and cries for the unnecessary death and suffering of those under his command.

Additionally, Burgoyne (2008) points out that *Ryan* has brought technological advances into the war perspective following the long tradition of previous war films and their camera style and special effects enhancements (51). For instance, movies such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Milestone 1930) and *The Longest Day* (Zanuck prod. 1962) have established new standards for camera and image techniques in their specific decades (51). *Ryan* makes use of special and visual effects, especially prosthetic limbs, CGI (computer generated imagery), slow-motion, and fast-paced editing, viscerally portraying combat by

being violently explicit in the Normandy landing and combat scenes. It "provides an extraordinary catalog of gruesome and fatal wounds" (51) along with "the use of destabilizing visual and acoustic techniques" (51) that help convey the sense of tumultuous environment of war. According to Toby Haggith (2002), cinematographer Janusz Kaminski used less saturated film stock to create a 1940s look to the image besides using hand-held camera and switching the degree of the camera shutter from 180 degrees to 45 degrees which made the image less blurry and more staccato (335). Stacey Peebles (2004) points out that *Ryan* "uses the 45-degree shutter not only to reflect the chaos of war, but to reflect the chaos of war as specifically rendered in documentary films and images of World War II" (48). Spielberg had as template inspiration for *Ryan* the eleven photographs that Robert Capa took when disembarking with the American troops in Normandy.

As a moviemaker and producer of several films related to the WWII, Steven Spielberg has demonstrated a remarkable potential to be controversial among film critics and scholars. During the early 1990s Spielberg was "belittled by his seniors in the industry itself and often mocked, and his films were controversial on various levels" (Cohen 41). The impact of the theme of the Second World War was intense in the choice of some of his movie contexts since he "looked at World War II as a watershed conflict that deeply influenced him as he was growing up in the 1950s" (Pollard 337). One of his earlier films, *Schindler's List* (1993), is seen by some critics as a transformation of "the image of the Holocaust into a Hollywood narrative product" while others consider it "a touchstone for national remembrance, for historical reconsideration, and for a generation connecting to the past" (Burgoyne, *The Hollywood Historical Film* 101). *Ryan* also received mixed reviews by some critics who disliked it for its faults of "romanticizing" and "glorifying" war (58), whereas others comment that it "contains just enough darkness lurking in the fog of war to stave off accusations it supports blind patriotism" (Schneider 874). In relation to *Band of Brothers*, the media reception branches into praises for its "exceptionally detailed and sharply focused look at the conflict" (McCarthy 46) to criticism in relation to "the lack of reference to the British war effort" (Smith) and its "combat fatigue" (Franklin) as it seems to endlessly portray battle after battle. Even though opinions might be opposed in relation to Spielberg's filmography, by touching on important and debatable subjects, he brings to the forefront questions of deep rooted value that can raise discussions toward the understanding of human nature.

Many of the World War II films that were produced prior to *Saving Private Ryan*, and especially those made during the Production Code, seldom offered a portrayal of graphic violence. By not showing the physical consequences of a soldier being shot or the aftereffect of an explosion on a soldier's body, WWII movies were considered as sanitized depictions of war combat. For instance, *The Longest Day* shows the landing of the American army in the Normandy beach and prioritizes a quest for authenticity by using vehicles and real life soldiers (Toplin 26). However, the movie's tendency to show combat as painless and bloodless, and the avoidance of any graphic image of violence rendered it harsh criticism in relation to the lack of authenticity that "war is hell and men suffer terribly from it" (Toplin 26).

Nine years after *Band of Brothers*, *The Pacific* (Spielberg, Hanks, Goetzman prods. 2010) was produced with a similar explicit approach to graphic violence. The gritty portrayals of atrocities, torture, and mutilation include the soldiers and the civilians as well. The use of prosthetics and visual effects to represent the wounds and maiming is also present in this miniseries, which can be seen as an attempt to remove the idea of glorification and heroism from WWII. In the *In Camera Kodak Webzine* (2010), cinematographer Adefarasin comments that the series makes a "strong statement about how bad war can be - both physically and mentally from every point of view" (1). One of the differences from *Band of Brothers* is that the focus of the narrative of ten episodes is not on an entire battalion but on the portrayal of three intertwined real-life stories of American Marines during the battle with the Japanese: Robert Leckie, Eugene B. Sledge, and John Basilone. According to Douglas A. Cunningham (2010), it brings the audience much closer to the marines which allows the individual and personal battles to be much more developed (897).

Another difference from *Band* is that *The Pacific* portrays the uneasy return of the soldiers after V-J Day (Victory over Japan Day), and the consequences of violence. The atrocities to civilians or enemies that soldiers had to witness or sometimes perform haunt their memories even after the war is over. The issue of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is highlighted when the soldiers find it difficult to return to their normal lives after the war, and the tragic understanding that war has changed them. The psychological effect of battlefield violence in this narrative has continued after the return home. This very contemporary issue brings a relevant perspective and reflection to the World War II miniseries productions.

All things considered, in the following chapters the issues concerning narrative, production, and war films and miniseries will be embedded in the discussion. In the first Chapter, entitled "Maimed Bodies and Spurting Arteries: The Power of Graphic Violence", a debate of the issues regarding representation of violence will be addressed. The relationship between the body of the soldier in war films and miniseries and the violent acts portrayed on screen will be brought to discussion along with the significance of violence in the development of specifically relevant themes, such as brotherhood, death, and fear in battle. Also, a debate on the portrayal of pain and its impact on the perception of violence will be taken into consideration.

Chapter 2, called "Incoming!": Analysis of combat sequences in *Band of Brothers*" will deal with the selection of four specific sequences from different episodes that feature graphically violent images. The analysis will be done in terms of importance of the violent event in relation to the episodic narrative and the miniseries as a whole, by taking into consideration Chatman's kernel and satellite scenes. Significant shots will be used to illustrate the instances of violence and aid in the understanding of its relevance to the narrative. The notions of cinematography and mise-en-scene from Bordwell and Thompson will be extremely important in the development of this analysis.

The concluding Chapter will be an attempt to draw final remarks connected to the relationship of violent images and the narrative flow of *Band of Brothers*, and also present possible implications for future investigation in the vast area of representations of violence and war films and miniseries.

CHAPTER 1

Maimed Bodies and Spurting Arteries: Graphic Violence in *Band of Brothers*

"In the heat of battle you expect casualties, you expect somebody to be killed and you are not surprised when a friend is machine-gunned in the face. You have to keep going. It's not like civilian life, where sudden death is so unexpected."

(Private David K. Webster)²

In this chapter, I shall discuss specific topics related to the subject of violence in *Band of Brothers*. The characteristics related to the somatic portrayal of battlefield experiences that highlight the immersion of the senses will be addressed, and also the issue of the relationship between violence and the body of the soldier in war films and miniseries. Since violence can be seen as a constitutive part of the plot in war narratives, violent acts provide chances for character and theme developments, such as death, brotherhood, fear, and self-preservation. The graphic portrayal of pain and suffering, with the combination of imagery and sound, allows the violent representations to focus on the gravity of the physical and emotional consequences to the soldiers. The discussion of visual elements, such as the impact of the bullet in the human flesh, head shots, and mutilations, will also aid in the understanding of the meaning and visual construction of violence in *Band of Brothers*. Scenes from specific episodes of the miniseries were selected since they illustrate moments in which the theme of violence is foregrounded and becomes a vital element in the narrative.

The relationship between violence and the war film genre can be seen as an intertwined process since violent acts have become part of the rules of how a world at war operates. In a war film, elements such as the plot, character construction, and theme development are intrinsically connected to the violent acts represented throughout the narrative. As Prince (2003) comments, violence has been an "inextricable part" (84) of war film stories as depictions of combat brutality are inherent elements that cannot have its consequences dissociated from the development of themes and narrative flow. Bruce Kawin (2013) states

² This quotation was taken from Stephen Ambrose's book *Band of Brothers* (110-111).

that "the war film and the soldier use violence to survive, to win, and to defend a position" (27). The physical and emotional challenges and the choices that the characters have to experience will somehow be shaped by the environment of violence that surrounds the war narrative. When commenting about the graphic violence in *Saving Private Ryan*, Burgoyne (2008) highlights that "the maimed bodies, disfigured faces, detached limbs, and the sights and sounds of bullets and knives penetrating the flesh are presented as the inescapable reality of combat" (51). The violent circumstances in which the characters find themselves stand as a solid basis for the unfolding of the action.

One of the characteristics of the representation of violent acts in war films is the vivid focus on the tangibility and priority of the senses. Lúcia Nagib (2012) observes that the visual acts of intense emotional value in film representations tend to become tangible to the viewer through a process of identification ignited by the focus on the audience's perception and senses (176). She quotes Murray Smith as he says that "emotion is integrated with perception, attention and cognition, not implacably opposed to any of them" (173). There is an emphasis on film as a medium of the senses that is capable of creating a simulated effect of immersion and presence, especially through the advance of technology, that intensely affects viewers beyond any rational layer. In relation to war films, Burgoyne (2012) points out that "the body of the soldier conveys in visceral form a vision of history produced from intensive sensual impressions" (8). Filmic representations of war that concentrate on a somatic experience of the battlefield in which cinematic and technological tools are used, such as slow-motion, point-of-view shots, shell shocked face shots, hand-held camera, image shaker, and 45 degree shutter shots, tend to focus on the development of the senses as one of the main elements that enables the film to register effects on the viewer.

Depending on the way the body of the soldier in war films is portrayed, it has the possibility of channeling in the flesh the violent experiences of pain, sorrow, endurance, survival, among others. Burgoyne (2012) emphasizes the fact that the war film is one the most direct examples of what can be called a "body genre" in which "the body in the war film expresses in a singular way our immersion in history, framing the past in a way that foregrounds corporeal existence" (8). Linda Williams (1995) points out that one of the features of a body genre film is "the spectacle of a body caught in the grips of intense sensation or emotion" (142). The war film deals with the notion of

including representations of the soldiers' bodies under the most acute and distressing situations. When discussing the initial scene of the landing on the Normandy beach of *Saving Private Ryan*, Kappelhoff sensibly highlights the moment in which the movie uses Captain Miller's perceptual vision and audio to depict the carnage. Among some techniques, the muffled sound and slow motion cinematography create a sense of immersion in which the focus is on "the spatial simulation of the chaotic perceptual consciousness of a body dazzled and numbed by horror and pain" (10). The soldier's body becomes the vehicle through which the experience of war can be initially represented with the focus on the sense impressions.

The representation of violent acts and the focus on the body as the vehicle of visceral emotions have also been major elements in television productions. Anna Maria Balogh (2001) highlights that television series have reached a point in which their violent portrayals are characterized by the high level of voracity and intense brutal content (196). In the online article for *The New York Times*, Caryn James (2001) observes that in terms of network series, there is a focus on "bloodier killings on crime shows, with longer close-ups on corpses" in shows such as *Law & Order* (1990-2010) and *N.Y.P.D. Blue* (1993-2005). As already mentioned in the Introductory Chapter, cable networks, such as HBO, have lesser constraints to the themes and portrayals in their productions, and therefore, open space for an even more graphic and extensive use of violence than network shows. The HBO series *The Sopranos* (1999-2007), as commented by James, "has raised the level of violence" towards its last season with graphic scenes of murder that involve the bashing of characters' heads, throat slitting, shooting, and beating to death.

In terms of graphic portrayal of violence, *Band of Brothers* is recognized by its shocking and straightforward representation of the battlefield. Nicholas J. Cull (2002) comments that in the miniseries "the full consequences of violence are shown: death, mutilation, and mental strain" (992). The emphasis on the corporeal effects of violent acts echoes throughout the episodes, and remains as a constant presence whether in moments of peace or danger. According to the cinematographer Adefarasin, *Band of Brothers* does "not just have men falling neatly out of frame", but depicts images of a more gruesome and detailed nature in order to reach closer to "the horror [that] has to be shown" (Appendix 1). The cinematographer believes that by portraying the chaotic conditions and visceral wounds, the miniseries tends to avoid

the notion of a television program that is simply designed to be a light and passing entertainment.

Violent scenes in *Band of Brothers* are frequent and inherently connected to the development of plot lines and characters. As Asbjørn Grønstad (2008) explains, "the act of violence in the cinema is an event that [...] pierces the viewer [and] it also seems to pierce the process of narration itself, marking it off as a special instance of signification" (13). Therefore, besides normally being the source of uncomfortable and shocking feelings for the audience, the graphic expositions of maimed limbs and advantageous amounts of blood on screen can also be seen as events that open up possibilities for narrative flow since violence remains a constitutive part of the plot and allows the development of various themes. For example, in episode ten, "Points", there are two instances of violence that function as moments associated with the development of the theme of unnecessary killing. Since this is the last episode, in the historical timeline of the WWII, the war is about to end and most soldiers are accumulating points from earned medals to return to their homes. The first instance of violence happens when a drunk replacement soldier (Jason Done) shoots Sergeant Charles Grant (Nolan Hemmings) in the head after imprudently killing other German soldiers. Grant approaches him carefully as the hand-held camera pans to show the German dead bodies. In this night scene, the main source of light comes from the headlights of the parked jeeps and it is possible to hear the engines still running. After just a few seconds of conversation, the replacement soldier walks away towards the jeep and as he turns back, in a reckless movement, his arm is raised and the gun fires. In this shot, Grant is in the foreground and out of focus. The graphic quality of this scene comes from the knowledge of how deadly a head wound can be, the viscous sound of the head being hit, and the pieces of human body that fly away when the bullet penetrates the skull (see fig. 1). This moment touches on the issue of idleness and reckless behavior during battle hiatus. Without much purpose and carrying a firearm, the American soldier irresponsibly shoots other soldiers, enemy and allied, representing the dangerous mental state that a soldier can reach when surrounded by an innately violent environment.



Fig. 1. Drunk replacement shoots Grant

In sequence, it is possible to see the consequences of the aforementioned first act of useless violence and the deeper portrayal of the character of the legendary Captain Ronald Speirs (Matthew Settle). Speirs is a soldier frequently portrayed as a cold and senseless person who shoots first and asks questions later, and is famous for some unconfirmed tales, for instance, when he supposedly shot twenty German POWs (prisoners of war). Speirs seeks out Grant's shooter in order to punish him and the camera follows Speirs' footsteps as he decidedly enters the room with his gun in hand to find the replacement already strapped to a chair. A close-up shot reveals that the man's face has been beaten up by other soldiers, and he is surrounded by several men from Easy Company. The silence in the room is only broken by Speirs' voice and the soldier's uneasy breathing. Sgt. Grant was very beloved by his comrades and the sense of revenge is strong. The sound of the gun cocking off screen is followed by a low-angle shot that focuses on Speirs' reaction, as he points his gun to the soldier's face and the rest of the men give a step back (see fig. 2). His reputation precedes him for being ruthless in the moment of killing, but a close-up that encompasses only his face and shaky hand holding the blurred gun in the foreground denounces another side of Speirs as he gives up on killing the soldier. That would have been another needless death, like so many during the war and Sgt. Grant's wound. This violent sequence shows that Speirs, with all his reputation, steps back from killing, possibly because he is not as cold-blooded as the tales described him or simply because war had caused too many deaths already.



Fig. 2. Grant's shooter being punished

Violence is an interaction that requires two sides with very specific purposes and functions that are mutually engaged in order to form the conflict. Sarah Cole in *At the Violet Hour* explains that violence is connected to two basic features: "an agent of attack, precipitating the injury or violation; and a person or object on the receiving end of the attack, whose bodily surface is in some way overcome, hurt, trespassed, ruptured" (20). In the aforementioned example involving the replacement soldier, these two positions are sometimes intertwined. Episode ten makes the perpetrator the same one who, in another occasion, suffers the violent act himself. The soldier at first enacted the violence without much knowledge about his own actions, and his final appearance involves violence being committed to his body instead. The body of the soldier then works as a vehicle for the portrayal of graphic violence in war films, through which the infliction of pain and suffering is evinced. Such violence becomes central in the logic of war film narratives. If one analyzes the general scenario of war, this exchange of position, that is, the fact that in one moment the soldier enacts the violence but in another he suffers the violence is common in the battlefield. Soldiers attack and are attacked in a constant tug of war that surely bears damaging consequences, and reveals that people at war are not absolute saviors or villains, but display substantial gray areas of behavior.

The type of violence that is mostly enacted in *Band of Brothers* brings the idea of explicitness and gruesomeness to the soldier's body that calls attention to its graphic nature. Graphic violence for James Kendrick in *Hollywood Bloodshed* "refers to unmistakable on-screen representations of the damage to the human body that result from violent acts" (6). He explains that in this kind of approach to violence, the artists creating either the film or television show attempt to draw the audience's attention to the details of bodily damage thus following the process of body violation to its possibly utmost particularities. Prince in *Screening*

Violence proposes the term ultraviolence as images that can be graphic and bloody in its portrayals of beheading and dismemberment (2). Prince (2003) also observes that this type of violence is "an essential component of cinema: part of its deep formal structure, something that many filmmakers have been inherently drawn toward and something that cinema does supremely well" (3). Ransom highlights that the cinematographic portrayal of violence in *Band of Brothers* was structured around the idea that "it's important not to sugar coat what happened" especially if the violent event does not have "a pleasant outcome" (Appendix 2). The violent image stands as an important and impacting element of film and television that can be viscerally connected to the narrative logic of the war film in order to craft a meaning beyond the purely graphic content of the violent image.

Regarding the discussion of excess of violence in films, critics comment that there is a tendency to quantify violent depictions without much concern for their social or narrative consequences. Prince (2000) emphasizes the fact that "in the culture of ultraviolence that now engulfs the medium, moviemakers [treat] violence as an image and not as a social process" (33). The critic points to the contemporary characteristic of violence in films being staged through the use of special effects and distancing itself from any parameters of real life, that is, without any social effect of suffering or pain. He complements by saying that violence "has become an object for consumption, a familiar part of the social landscape as defined by movies and television" (33). In relation to the depiction of violent scenes, Vivian Sobchack (2000) discusses the existence of "senseless violence" in which "the camera no longer caresses it or transforms it into something with more significance than its given instance" (120). For the critic, the increase of the technological apparel that depicts violence on screen has been used in order to quantify the "treatment of violence and bodily damage that is as much about 'more' as it is about violence" (120). The increase of the violent acts in the movies seems to be inconsequential to either plot or character development and seriously lack "moral agenda or critique" (122) as it carelessly fills up the screen with senseless brutality. In Williams' viewpoint, though, the excess of violence in films is deeply connected to the understanding of behavior and cultural issues and should not be completely dismissed as "bad excess" (156), since it offers the opportunity to address the nature of specific subjects such as explicit violence and the outburst of emotions.

Although the theme of violence has always been present in cinema and television, in the early years it was seldom portrayed with the level of explicitness as in *Band of Brothers*. From the 1930s until late 1960s violence was kept to its minimum due to the Hollywood Production Code. Prince (2000) claims that:

Hollywood's Production Code regulated all aspects of screen content, with an elaborate list of rules outlining what was permissible to show and what was not. These regulations placed great constraints on filmmakers. (2)

During the Code "screen violence remained relatively discreet, and the camera turned away from its uglier manifestations" (4). The list of rules did not have a specific section regulating violence but in the particular application regarding "Crimes against the law" it stated that "brutal killings are not to be presented in detail" and "the use of firearms should be restricted to the essentials" (294).

Within these restrictions, World War II films made during the Code had their depictions of battlefield violence mostly reduced to the "clutch-and-fall" technique, an element that hardly finds space in a miniseries such as *Band of Brothers*. According to Prince (2003), the focus of this particular depiction of a body injury is on the victim's reaction in which "rather than responding with pain or distress, [...] the clutch-and-fall victim falls into a trance, or seems to fall asleep, and then sinks gracefully and slowly out of the frame" (153). One example of a WWII film that relies on this type of depiction is *The Longest Day* in which the soldiers' seemingly painless and sanitized injuries are portrayed in the scenes. Nowadays, this technique has especially been associated with violence depicted in action and adventure films that refrain from showing the representation of physical injuries and pain on the bodies of their characters, thus avoiding emotional connection with the violent act. Prince emphasizes that "the application of this mode in the combat films helped to make many into action-adventure spectacle" (155). This situation is a stark contrast to visual representations of violence in works such as *Band of Brothers* and *Saving Private Ryan* in which the carnage is not withheld from the viewer's attention and can be seen as a "conscious attempt to negate the action-adventure terms of many Hollywood's World War II movies" (155).

In order to arrive at the level of violent explicitness that can be found in *Band of Brothers*, the dissolution of the Code in the late 1960s

was a key element that allowed more liberty and the production of more controversial movies. Films such as *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) directed by Arthur Penn, and *The Wild Bunch* (1969) directed by Sam Peckinpah can exemplify a more direct approach to how violence to the body was portrayed. Both movies deal with carnages, substantial amounts of shooting, and the effect of the bullet on the human body. David A. Cook comments that:

both directors insisted for the first time in American cinema that the human body is made of real flesh and blood; that arterial blood spurts rather than drips demurely; that bullet wounds leave not trim little pinpricks but big, gaping holds; and, in general, that violence has painful, unpretty, humanly destructive consequences. (qtd. in Mitchell 188)

In stylistics terms, *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Wild Bunch* gave an important visual contribution to the graphic portrayal of violence to the body, especially in relation to the moment of impact of bullets that are so frequent in the war genre, particularly in *Band of Brothers*. David A. Cook (1999) explains that:

Both films [...] se[t] a new standard for ballistic violence on screen with the use of blood-filled squibs (explosive devices concealed beneath an actor's clothing and triggered electronically to represent bullet strikes) to depict the impact of bullets on the human body. (131)

The use of squibs added a new level of visceral portrayal to the wounds that had been previously sanitized or minimized. Also, the concept of graphically showing the entrance and exit wound gaps would later on become a standard in several genres, including the war film. Prince (2000) comments that "the savage impact of gunfire on human flesh became an enduring feature of screen killing" (11). The instances of death or injury by gunfire in *Band of Brothers* (see fig. 3) highlight the aggressive and ruthless environment of war, and the explicit impact and bloodshed contribute to the feeling of fragility of the human body.



Fig. 3. Impact of bullets on the body

In *Band of Brothers*, the portrayal of the moments in which the soldiers are hit constitute important depictions of bodily reactions to violence that, in some situations, cause almost immediate loss of motion. In the case of *Bonnie and Clyde*, the final scene shows the two protagonists being killed by several bullets in which the moment is extended through the multicamera and slow motion montage. Prince (2000) points out that the movie's iconic image (see fig. 4) "provide[s] a horrifying visualization of the outlaws' bodies being punctured by scores of bullets" (11) and captures the "character's loss of physical volition" (185) caught between the moment of living and dying. *Band of Brothers'* different approach to the portrayal of a falling body tends to emphasize the feeling of someone quickly losing his senses when being the recipient of the act of violence. The soldiers' bodies fall lifeless, almost as corpses. In episode four, while Easy Company retreats from Nuenen, a group of soldiers takes cover behind a wall and watches another soldier rushing by in the background completely exposed. In a matter of seconds, he is hit and falls to the ground in a lifeless form, with his head, legs, and arms in frightening unnatural positions (see fig. 5). The hand-held camera rapidly moves away from the inert body and returns to the surviving soldiers behind the wall who are attempting to retreat. In this case, the miniseries is not trying to beautify the act or extend the moment, but to depict the increasing number of casualties and to enhance the notion of how easy and quick it is to lose one's life in the battlefield. In relation to *The Wild Bunch*, the movie avoids the emotionless portrayal of violence, especially the clutch-and fall technique, by focusing on the striking slaughter scenes on "the body's loss of control over its actions and movements" (Grønstad 153) and the bountiful presence of blood on screen as the people are continuously getting shot (see fig. 6). Peckinpah's montage editing works to intensify the pain and harmful consequences of the violent acts by making it longer. Although *Band of Brothers* does not prolong the moment of

death through slow motion or montage, it still explores the loss of control over one's body that causes the event of death or injury to be "communicated as a nearly physical sensation in full anatomical detail" (Cook 143).



Fig. 4. *Bonnie and Clyde*



Fig. 5. Soldier getting hit and falling lifeless



Fig. 6. *The Wild Bunch*

The theme of death is present throughout the episodes of *Band of Brothers* and constitutes an important topic in the development of

violence in the war narrative and the bonding relationships among the soldiers. In the veterans' interviews in the beginning of episode seven, "The Breaking Point", Private Joseph Lesniewski comments on the soldier's experience with death on the battlefield: "Everywhere you'd look, you'd see dead people. A dead soldier here, there, ours, theirs. Then, civilians besides. Dead animals. So death was all over." Grønstad observes that "nothing appears as formless, as monstrously amorphous, as the notion of death" (84). As a moment that escapes explanation and can sometimes be sudden and violent, death is one of the main features in war narratives that constantly brings the feeling of loss and heartbreak to an already harsh environment. Death in the common sense of the word, explains Hannah Arendt (1970), implies final moments in which solitude and helplessness are the prevailing sensations (68). Nevertheless, when soldiers are in the battlefield, Arendt comments that:

[Death is] faced collectively and in action, [and] changes its countenance; now nothing seems more likely to intensify our vitality than its proximity [since] our own death is accompanied by the potential immortality of the group we belong to [...]. (Arendt 68)

The feeling of belonging to a group and sacrificing one's life for it or aiding in the accomplishment of the task for the greater good of the cause seems to soothe the lonely and harsh prospect of death at war.

As *Band of Brothers* deals with the interconnections of violent events in a specific representation of a group of WWII soldiers, it is relevant to take into consideration the relationship between violent environments during conflicts and the formation of brotherhood bonds among the participants. The sense of brotherhood functions as a way to endure violence, that is, a collective experience that lessens the destructive effects of a menacing environment. In Ambrose's *Band of Brothers*, Major Richard Winters comments about the bonding experience of going through the Battle of the Bulge, which was one of the most deadly and difficult moments of Easy Company during the European campaign. He says: "I'm not sure that anybody who lived through that one hasn't carried with him, in some hidden ways, the scars. Perhaps that is the factor that helps keep Easy men bonded so unusually close together" (221). Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* brings the idea that "the practice of violence binds [people] together as a whole, since each individual forms a violent link in the great chain, a part of the great organism of violence" (93). In discussing this point raised by

Fanon, Arendt emphasizes the relevance of his statement to the situation of battlefield brotherhood. She highlights that the regular standards of society and values change in the war zone "where the noblest, most selfless deeds are often daily occurrences" (67). The bond created in this type of situation goes beyond any civil type of relationship, as Arendt explains, that forges tight and profound connections since the individual identity is relinquished to the back and the group identity is intensified (67).

The sense of collectivity and comradeship can be seen in *Band of Brothers* as the death of a soldier usually includes several other members gathered together in order to support or help the wounded soldier. One example can be observed in episode seven in which Corporal Donald Hoobler (Peter McCabe) accidentally shoots himself in the leg with a Luger, a German pistol. The soldiers closely kneel around him in a shot with a very tight composition that increases the level of intimacy of the scene. The hand-held camera switches from the reaction of one soldier to the next, causing a nervous atmosphere combined with the sound of Hoobler's continuous moaning and heavy breathing, and the agitated voices of the other soldiers. The setting of this episode, a forest covered in snow during winter, highlights the difficulties of cold weather in relation to medical conditions, and the fact that Hoobler has to be assisted by the doctor as he lies down in the snow. The soldiers try to spot the wound and perhaps give him some basic help while the doctor arrives. The greatest assistance they can give Hoobler is to calm him down and remind him of the worthy job he has done in war, as a mechanism to keep his spirits up. First Lieutenant Buck Compton (Neal McDonough) reaffirms his skills by saying: "You jump out of planes, man. You're tough." These comments do not reflect a concern about the perfection of Hoobler's abilities, but an attempt to give him strength and maintain him awake. The scene suddenly becomes quieter as Hoobler's heavy breathing ceases and his eyes close. Hoobler's wound is beyond help since he ruptured the main artery in the leg, and he perishes in the snow, surrounded by his Company friends who affectionately hold his head (see fig. 7).



Fig. 7. Hoobler is surrounded by the other soldiers but perishes

The constant hovering presence of death in the battlefield can cause a general feeling of fear among soldiers that attempt to deal with the overwhelming task of performing military duties, and at the same time act with caution in order to preserve their lives. Fussell discusses in *Wartime* the stages of perception that a soldier goes through in the front lines: first, "it *can't* happen to me" followed by "it *can* happen to me, and I'd better be more careful", and lastly "it *is going to* happen to me, and only my not being there is going to prevent it" (282). In *Band of Brothers*, the character of Private Blithe struggles with his battlefield perception and attitude as he tries to cope with the numbing fear of risking his life in combat. At one point in episode three, Blithe suffers from "hysterical blindness" after engaging in a chaotic battle in which Easy Company was potentially exposed to danger. Later on Blithe shares some ideas about death with Lt. Speirs who tells him how he deals with fear during battle. Speirs says: "The only hope you have is to accept the fact that you're already dead. The sooner you accept that, the sooner you'll be able to function as a soldier is supposed to function." Speirs' belief about death rejects the hope of staying alive and relies on the notion that a soldier must be detached from a future beyond the battlefield in order to act more rationally in the war zone. Fear seems to originate from the expectation of survival combined with a strong feeling of self-preservation that prevents the soldier from putting himself through life threatening situations. Unlike Blithe, Speirs' hopeless belief for the future functions as a ruthless mechanism to endure the extreme and violent situations in the battlefield.

A violent death can portray the feeling of void, as it is seen in episode seven through the depiction of two characters being obliterated in a foxhole. In this segment, Easy Company is located in the Ardennes forest in Belgium, under poor weather, with unsuitable winter clothing, and inadequate weaponry conditions. The German army is heavily bombing their location in the forest and the soldiers are trying to protect

themselves by hiding in foxholes. During one of the attacks, Technician George Luz (Rick Gomez) is caught in the open and tries to run for cover. The general situation is of utter chaos: explosions everywhere, trees are hit by the mortars and fall from all directions, debris cascade from the sky accompanied by the deafening sound of the blasts which are so frequent that become a constant and deep noise. The hand-held camera jolts at every vibration of the explosions, causing a general feeling of turmoil in which it becomes difficult to rationalize one's action. The instinct is that of protection and survival. In an inviting two-shot, his friends, Sergeant Warren Muck (Richard Speight Jr.) and Private Alex Penkala (Tim Matthews) shout at him to come to their foxhole to protect himself. Lowered to the ground, the camera captures Luz's desperate struggle as he crawls in the direction of the foxhole and visually connects with his friends through an eyeline match. Seconds before he reaches the foxhole, a bomb hits the hole and instantly vaporizes Muck and Penkala. In one moment they are shouting and signaling to Luz to hurry up and protect himself, and in another, the initially inviting and safe two-shot transforms itself into the depiction of nothingness surrounded only by flakes, snow, and dirt floating in the air. Their death is not bloody, but cruel and sudden, as if they instantly disappeared from the viewer's eyes. Differently from death in the "clutch-and-fall" technique in which "the passage is an easy one, to be made with grace and calm, with death merely the onset of sleep" (Prince *Classical* 155), the abrupt death in the foxhole is brutal. It is a violent event that gives almost no time for reaction, and that leaves a void translated by Luz's expression of incredulity in a close-up shot (see fig. 8).



Fig. 8. Muck and Penkala are hit in their foxhole as Luz watches

While *Band of Brothers* depicts some images of violent death as impacting but bloodless, the majority of instances highlight the physicality of the soldiers through graphic representations of violence to the body that result in death. In episode six, "Bastogne", amidst the chaos of an improvised aid station in the town of Bastogne, Belgium, one of Easy Company's doctor, Doc Roe (Shane Taylor) helps treating a soldier with a serious abdominal wound. In a very graphic close-up, he inserts his hand in the man's abdomen in order to find the artery and stop the bleeding. The makeup and prosthetic used in this scene for the depiction of such a severe wound remains as an extremely detailed attempt to represent the physicality and damage done to the body. Blood profusely pours out of the wounded soldier's mouth (Joel Edgerton) as Doc Roe and Nurse Renee (Lucie Jeanne) do the procedures, indicating the gravity of the situation and already hinting at the negative outcome. This time the wounded soldier is silent and the room is filled by Roe's grunting due to the physical strength he must do in order to find the artery in the man's body. For the frustration of the medical crew, the internal bleeding is too severe and the soldier dies. In a medium shot that gradually turns from a low angle to an eye-level shot, Renee realizes the man's death and turns her face toward Roe who is still making efforts to find the artery. By noticing her melancholic gaze, Roe stops the procedure and perceives the reality. Only then he looks at the immobile soldier and both feel helpless as they confront the death they tried so hard to prevent but with so little resources (see fig. 9). The

audience follows all the procedures done to the soldier's body in detail until his death. Sobchack explains that the violent style enables "the moment of death [to] be prolonged cinematically [...] so that we are made to see form and order where none seems to exist in real life" (118). Although this scene of graphically violent death conveys a chaotic message, the effort of the medical crew, the close-ups of the bloody wound, and the convulsing reaction of the dying soldier are part of what Sobchack calls "the form of death" (118), that is, when all the elements are an attempt to provide order to death. As the critic explains, through cinematic techniques, such as "editing, slow motion, extreme close-ups" (118) the moment of death can be lengthened and a sense of order is established, differently from real life. The use of the graphic portrayal of violence works as an "overcompensation for the unrepresentable, unknowable, and invisible event of death" (Russell 18) that stands as a difficult and complex event to be grasped.



Fig. 9. Roe and Renee attend to an emergency

One of the features of screen violence that makes it more compelling and believable is the inclusion of the portrayal of pain and suffering from the wounded character. If violence inflicts no pain and is easily forgotten, then, it does not have the same impact and misses the chance of carrying meaning beyond the physical image. Prince (2003) argues that:

[There is] an overwhelming trend in contemporary film and television of showing pain-free violence, in which there is no depiction of a suffering victim and therefore, in this regard, no suggestion that violence has bodily and emotional consequences. (27)

If consequences to the acts of violence are not shown, they become customary and even run the risk of turning into an acceptable entertainment since they have no repercussion whatsoever. This is especially relevant in the context of war films in which soldiers are regularly exchanging shots and exposing themselves to wounds. Prince (1998) also points out that contemporary ultraviolent movies that opt for a pain-free approach, such as *Cobra* (Cosmatos 1986) and *Rambo III* (MacDonald 1988), take the depiction of violence to the extreme and their "insulation from psychological and emotional consequence helps promote a sense of security and invulnerability in [their] spectators" (242), hence fostering a numbness in the response to violence. To whitewash violence, that is, to suppress the characters' expressions of pain, suffering, and bodily damage is to move toward a "screen violence that provide[s] pleasant entertainment rather than an honest depiction of the consequences of fights and shootings" (Prince *Classical* 27). The subject of pain-free violence is discussed by Sobchack when she claims that "the bodies now subjected to violence are just 'dummies': multiple surfaces devoid of subjectivity and gravity" (124). Killing in the battlefield without depicting physical or emotional consequences can be seen as a denial of the extraordinary power that movies and television have to "remind us that bodily damage hurts, that violently wasting lives has grave consequences" (124).

The approach to pain in *Band of Brothers* has two elements closely connected: imagery and sound. Some elaborate graphic images can speak for themselves in the particularities of the wound. The audience's perception of the pain and seriousness of the wound can be determined by the perusal of the image, as the camera lingers on the body, that highlights the damage made to the human flesh. The amount of blood that exits the wound is also another component that ensures the gravity of the injury and enhances the perception of the level of pain (see fig. 10). The second element is related to the sound as a way to amplify the feeling of pain. Prince (2003) explains that "the addition of audio information augments a viewer's impression of the overall level of violence on-screen" and makes pain more "vivid and disturbing at a new and evocative sensory level" (67). The events of violence in *Band of*

Brothers are usually accompanied by the sounds of screams and moans of pain. In episode three, Winters is hurt in the leg by a ricochet and in a close-up shot, it is possible to follow Doc Roe removing the fragment little by little from his ankle. The slow and unpleasant procedure takes place accompanied by Winters grunting off-screen which somehow matches and enhances the perception of how painful that wound might be (see fig. 11). In the same episode, while Easy Company is trying to hold the line of defense in Carentan, one of the soldiers is shot in his right hand. The medium close-up centers his wounded hand with two of his fingers severed as he loudly screams with an intonation that mixes pain and horror at the sight of the abhorrent mutilation (see fig. 12). The link of a powerful image of suffering along with the corresponding audio of the soldier's agony shapes and intensifies the effect of pain, granting a more personal and human connection to the violent act.



Fig. 10. The graphic nature of the violent images



Fig. 11. Roe removes fragment from Winters's ankle Fig. 12. Soldier with severed fingers

In *Band of Brothers*, there is the presence of one of the most gruesome types of shot that a soldier can be the recipient of: a head shot. The effect of shooting someone in the head can be more impactful than in the rest of the body. According to Prince (2003), "a head shot can be said to represent a more personal and powerful affront to the integrity and dignity of a victim's being than a body shot" (156). He complements

by pointing out that "violence done to the head or face, therefore, entails a serious violation of the victim's dignity and integrity of self, especially when that violence carries the stigmata of visible wounding" (157). This kind of wound can be understood as one of the worst scenarios of what Cole defines as "violation", that is, "a reminder that to have the body penetrated is to have the personal integrity also breached and defiled" (20).

Band portrays several incidents in which the soldiers' heads are somehow harmed, but the most visually striking ones are those that have lethal results and cause sorrow to soldiers around them. One example of a head shot is in episode two, "Day of Days", in which Winters encounters Private John Hall (Andrew Scott) after he is hit by an explosion. The camera moves from Winters looking down to Hall who is on the ground. As Winters affectionately approaches him, the camera also gets closer to Hall, and it is possible to see in a close-up the devastating damage that has been done to his face while his lifeless eyes stare into the void. In an attempt to do something for Hall's dignity, Winters tries to remove the flies around his face that can be heard off screen, but little can be done to help him (see fig. 13). Another example is linked to the young age of the replacement soldier and the speed in which soldiers came to replace others and got themselves killed. In episode four, Sergeant Bull Randleman (Michael Cudlitz) finds one of the inexperienced replacements lying in a ditch after a risky retreat from Nuenen, Holland. As an experienced soldier, Bull watches over the younger ones by providing instructions and making his presence a sign of security. Private James Miller (James McAvoy) receives a deadly head wound which leaves him with a bloody forehead, and his eyes and mouth slightly open while his hands still hold on to the rifle (see fig. 14). As Bull approaches him, a sentimental song plays and indicates the emotional attachment that soon is demonstrated by a close-up of Bull with his eyes filled with pity for the lost life as he shakes his head in disapproval. The young age and lack of experience of this character had been highlighted in earlier moments and links to the feeling of loss upon Miller's death. The wound in the head causes a definite impression of lethal result because "the head contains the brain—the seat of reason and the locus of personality—and the face is the gateway to one's being and the public token of its uniqueness" (Prince *Classical* 157). When the head is hit and death occurs, as in the two previous examples, the face loses its vitality and a lifeless expression sets in, amplifying the attention to the physical violence on the body, as well as the loss of

unity between body and soul. This type of scene focuses on highlighting the fragility of the life and also the vulnerability of identity since the uniqueness of character seems to vanish as one contemplates the awkward position of the head and the lack of response of the eyes.



Fig. 13. Private Hall's close-up



Fig. 14. Private Miller's close-up

The daily battle routine in *Band of Brothers* features the element of the explosive as one of the sources of mutilations and deadly wounds. In Cole's view, the explosive's potential to devastate is unique and consistent in relation to its bursting nature: "It shattered, exploded, ripped, and tore; it created its own palpable and recognizable form of wreckage" (84). In *Band*, an expression that is commonly heard throughout the episodes is the warning "Incoming!", generally said at the top of the soldier's lungs in order to alert the other soldiers about an approaching bomb so they can take shelter. In the book *Band of Brothers*, Private Webster describes the soldiers' behavior during an intense shelling and the agonizing feelings that the explosions caused them: "Every time we heard a shell come over, we closed our eyes and put our heads between our legs. [...] No wonder men got combat exhaustion. [...] Artillery takes the joy out of life" (132).

Whether there has been a warning or not, the damage that the explosive causes can be seen in some moments of the miniseries. Explosions have the improbability factor of causing extensive destruction or minor damage as "a shell is as likely to blow [a soldier's] whole face off as to lodge a fragment in some mentionable and unvital tissue" (Fussell 285). For instance, in episode three, a soldier has his leg blasted by an explosive in a very graphic representation of maiming as it is possible to observe in the close-up the representation of the flesh and bones of the leg disconnecting itself from the foot causing the instantaneous amputation of the leg (see fig. 15). Also, most of the soldiers carried grenades on their vests and constantly made use of them. Cole observes that the explosive "seemed tiny in proportion to its

capacity to do harm; it could fit easily into a small bag, or even a pocket" (85). The menacing threat of such a compact explosive can be seen in episode seven, when Sergeant Carwood Lipton (Donnie Wahlberg) and Luz hide in a foxhole in the Ardennes forest during an intense bombing in which the "shell bursts in the trees sent splinters, limbs, trunks, and metal showering down on the foxholes" (Ambrose 186). Lipton and Luz are in the background of the shot when a soldier shouts "Stay down! Incoming!" off screen from an unknown direction and an explosive falls right next to them. The menacing explosive sits immobile and slightly out of focus in the foreground (see fig. 16). The medium shot makes use of the proximity between the foreground and the characters in the background to highlight how inevitable their death would be in case of explosion. However, the explosive turns out to be a dud, which means it does not explode. The breathless and agonizing soldiers watch as smoke comes out of the explosive but nothing else happens. Since the device is on the center and foreground of the shot, the proximity leads to the consideration of the power of such a small object that "can leave behind total fragmentation" (125). In this case, the expectation and the fear of the explosion can be more daunting than the blast itself.



Fig. 15. Soldier has his leg blasted by an explosive



Fig. 16. Lipton and Luz in a foxhole with the dud explosive

The violence enacted by the American soldiers in *Band of Brothers* differs in impact depending on the distance from which the violence is perpetrated and the weapon that is used in the act. Kendrick in *Film Violence* points out there is the tendency to separate the character "from the death he inflicts by making guns the primary means of violence" (95). The most sanitized and detached way that an act of violence is portrayed in *Band* is when soldiers shoot their targets from a far away distance, diminishing the graphic level of depiction. William Rothman (2001) claims that in the case of shooting at a certain distance, "a human being pulls the trigger, but a machine causes the violence, making it possible for the gunman, with no blood on his hands, to view, at a remove, effects that are, and are not, his doing" (44).

In episode five, Easy Company comes across two SS German companies that are caught by surprise in Holland. Since the Americans are on the top of a dike, they have a better strategic position to attack whereas the Germans are in an open field, hence have to run for cover. A series of impersonal long shots and medium long shots of the German soldiers being slaughtered and falling one after the other (see fig. 17) is rapidly alternated with medium shots of the American soldiers shooting without any mercy and at a comfortable distance. These are accompanied by shouts of encouragement: "Come on, pour it on!", "Let them have it!", and "Shoot your targets." Ambrose observes that the veterans commented that "it was a duck shoot" (148) just as later on in the episode, Lieutenant Thomas Peacock (David Nicolle) reverberates the same remark with the sentence "it was like a turkey shoot". However, the effects of the act of mass killing do not stop after the German companies are defeated. Through Winters' gloomy point of view, a long shot shows the once chaotic field that now is morbidly crowded with the bodies of the German soldiers mixed with the natural contours of the terrain. The supposed victory over two SS companies does not encourage any feeling of glory or achievement to those who participated in the act. The next scene shows Colonel Robert Sink (Dale Dye) telling Winters that while his company was facing this operation, the German 363rd Volksgrenadier devastated the American 2nd and 3rd Battalion. This information entails that casualties from both sides were happening simultaneously.



Fig. 17. German soldiers are slaughtered at a distance

The second distance from which violence is enacted in *Band of Brothers* can be understood as a few meters between the shooter and the recipient. From this distance, it is possible to see more details and it suggests a more cruel effect than the aforementioned situation. Still, as Rothman observes, it is "making violence happen at a distance, without getting blood on our hands" (44). In episode five, right before Easy Company faces the two SS companies, Winters arrives all by himself at the top of the dike and encounters a young German soldier. In the beginning of the episode, he ruthlessly shoots the boy with his rifle at a medium length. Throughout the episode, Winters' cold attitude haunts him and the memory of taking such a young life at point-blank returns over and over. By the end of the episode, Winters is given a free pass to Paris, and on a subway ride, he recollects the act of killing through a flashback. First, he seems to see the young soldier's face when he looks at another young boy on the subway in two shots linked through a graphic match that allows the comparison between the two boys to be more transparent, and might represent how the German soldier haunts Winters' conscience (see fig. 18). In the beginning of the episode, Winters only fires his weapon once, but by the end of the segment, his memory plays the shooting over and over for four times. Editing and camera distance play an important role in this sequence since each time Winters shoots is seen from a different distance (see fig. 19) that is quickly cut one after the other, like a machine gun that fires away and thinks "of anything but survival in a life-threatening situation" (Ambrose 155). The first shot is a close-up of the German soldier's face, then a medium shot of the boy's back with Winters in the background, followed by a medium shot of the boy's frontal side. The last shot is the one closest to Winters' point of view which shows part of his body and rifle in the foreground, and the boy getting hit in the background. This was highlighted in the episode as a traumatic event for Winters to overcome, a violent act that touched him very deeply and had emotional

consequences. Lewis, the actor who plays Winters in the miniseries, comments in the online Black Sky radio interview in March 2011 about the conversations he had with the veteran Richard Winters:

I know that a moment that was shocking to him is the moment on the dike in Holland when [...] he arrives up on the dike only to find that very very young German soldier [...]. The shocking, shocking nature of having to kill a sixteen year old boy simply because he might kill you.



Fig. 18. Winters sees the young German soldier as he looks at a boy on the subway



Fig. 19. Winters remembers the traumatizing shooting

A third and more intimate distance of violence enactment is the up close and physical interaction of soldiers in battle. The close proximity of the opposing soldiers generates a personal kind of violence that is achieved through the use of more direct weapons, such as knives or even bare hands. In the two previous examples of distance, the

violent acts were executed mostly with machine guns and rifles. Louis Giannetti (2002) discusses Edward T. Hall's "proxemic patterns" by conceptualizing them as the "relationships of organisms within a given space" (77) in which the first major pattern is called "intimate". In this particular situation, the distances "range from skin contact to about eighteen inches away" (77). The intimate pattern is regarded as a distance used for physical involvement, and in the case of regular social relationships would be applied to the display of affections amongst individuals. In the war context and in the scenario of two opposing soldiers, this intimate distance implies a struggle for survival, since the soldiers would be engaged in combat.

In episode four, Bull finds himself left behind in Nuenen, Holland, while Easy Company had to retreat from the city earlier that day. He hides in a dark barn along with a local couple as the German army surrounds the perimeter. Bull patiently waits for a moment to escape when a German soldier enters the barn in order to inspect the place. Tension builds up when they engage in close combat accompanied by the sound of German airplanes flying over the place that functions as an acoustic cover for the grunts and screams of the fight. The hand-held camera's bouncing movements emulate the soldiers' motions and enhances the frenetic pace of tentative survival. Bull fights with the bayonet of his rifle which gives a more savage tone to the struggle between the two soldiers. In a medium long shot through the point of view of the local girl, he ruthlessly strikes one blow to the German soldier's abdomen and a final one to his head accompanied by the viscous sound of the flesh being penetrated. Although not a thoroughly graphic scene in terms of its details, the animalistic expression of the American soldier with a blood stained face as he kills his opponent (see fig. 20) demonstrates the absurdity and despicable brutality that was enacted by the soldiers in order to survive in the environment of war, possibly reaching primitive levels of behavior.

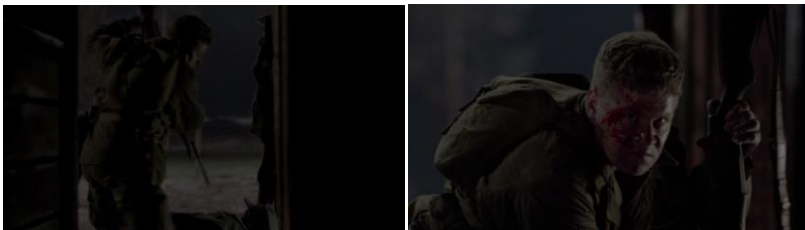


Fig. 20. Bull brutally kills the German soldier

The body of the soldiers in *Band of Brothers* suffer a massive violent impact in the depictions of the miniseries that can be encompassed in what Cole calls "disenchanted violence" (39). In her view, "disenchantment calls upon the hurt body, with its signal fluid to remind us of its reality and frightfulness. Flesh, wounds, penetration: these provide the core figures for disenchantment" (44). In the case of *Band of Brothers*, the fragility of the soldiers' bodies and the swiftness in which people lose their lives or are seriously wounded on the battlefield point to the direction of "total degeneration and waste" (39) that war can bring upon a group of people, from whichever side of the conflict. As it was possible to perceive from the examples in this chapter, several moments of body maiming and lacerations throughout the miniseries are instances of the focus on the less beautified side of war that avoids the honor of victory by paralleling it with the immensity of deaths, and as a consequence allows the violent scenes to become "the emblem of grotesque loss" (39).

On the other hand, some of the violent situations that the soldiers go through in *Band of Brothers* can be linked to Cole's polarizing idea of "enchanted violence". According to her, enchantment refers "to the tendency to see in violence some kind of transformative power" (42) in which "violent death is transformed into something positive, communal" (44). These instances would have the function of facilitating themes of brotherhood and sacrifice in which violence has a more complex and symbolic meaning than the anatomic display of destruction caused by war. Moments that highlight the comradeship feeling of soldiers when facing violence are abundant in the miniseries that focuses on the collaborative power and the fragility of human emotions.

Whether a film or television series makes relevant use of its violent depictions to go further into the matters of the value of human life, it is of utmost necessity to dive into the particulars of violent scenes and also the sequences that surround them with the purpose of analyzing the intentions. In order to achieve this objective, Chapter 2 will focus on four specific sequences selected from *Band of Brothers* based on their high level of graphic display of violence, and mainly on their capacity of violent reverberation in the narrative. A detailed filmic analysis will be applied on what Chatman calls kernel and satellite scenes (see Introductory Chapter), that is, the major violent scenes, and the sequences that take place before and after the violent act. The topics presented in Chapter 1, such as the relationship between violence and

the body of the soldier through mutilations, the impact of bullets and head wounds, along with the themes of brotherhood, death and fear, and the portrayal of pain and suffering will be taken into consideration in the cinematic analysis of the sequences in Chapter 2. The understanding of the portrayal of violence in the narrative will be addressed by a more contextualized view of the narrative, that is, by analyzing the characters and situations that lead to the violent act and its reverberation on the remaining characters and events.

CHAPTER 2

"Incoming!": Analysis of Combat Sequences in *Band of Brothers*

"In the far distance, the sound of mortars belched, *waump, waump, waump*. This nerve-racking sound confirmed that four mortar bombs were heading in our direction. The suspense of waiting is eerie. Indescribable. Miserable. Then 'boom', the first one exploded not more than seven feet."
(Sergeant Pat Christenson)³

Amongst the overflowing combat sequences represented in *Band of Brothers*, a large portion of these depictions portrays violence in its utmost graphical nature by exposing the inner components of the human body and its fragility in the war environment. As Cole comments, war is "the most extravagant and devastating expression of violence that most cultures undergo" (65), and in *Band of Brothers*, the damage done to the soldiers' bodies is depicted as one of the consequences of the injury which also includes the psychological and emotional devastation suffered during turbulent moments. In this chapter, I shall closely analyze four sequences from the miniseries which will demonstrate that violence presents consequences to the development of the narrative, themes, and the relationship among the characters instead of being a fleeting moment of graphic exposure. Chatman's concepts of kernel and satellite scenes (see Introductory Chapter) will be used in order to analyze the reverberation of violence in the sequences around the major violent act. The subject of comradeship constantly accompanies these sequences as a mechanism to endure the hardships of physical and emotional wounds.

Since the first episode, "Currahee", *Band of Brothers* carefully weaves in the narrative the theme of comradeship among soldiers as a pivotal motivation for the war effort. By portraying the harsh training period of Easy Company in three different preparation facilities, the first in Georgia called Camp Toccoa in 1942, and the other two locations in England called Aldbourne in 1943, and Upottery in 1944, the episode solidifies the bonding atmosphere and slowly introduces the characters and their personalities. While preparing themselves for the crucial moment of the D-day jump, the paratroopers from E-company face extreme physical situations, for instance, running up and down the

³ This quotation was taken from Stephen Ambrose's book *Band of Brothers* (104).

mountain under the command of a rather tyrannical Captain Herbert Sobel (David Schwimmer). The hardships of the body are generally overcome by the sense of togetherness in the warm interactions and gatherings of the soldiers, and especially in the embarking sequence in which the paratroopers are entering the C-47 airplanes headed for Normandy. In this sequence, all the soldiers are sitting on the ground, dressed in their uniforms, with painted faces, and wearing their jumping gear. Since the soldiers' packs are too heavy, Lt. Winters helps them to get up, one by one, so they can embark the airplane. The emphasis here is in the use of medium close-ups that show the confident visual contact Winters makes with each soldier that works as a sign of encouragement in order to face the possibility of a disastrous situation. The rising of one soldier after the other is edited reasonably fast, in which Winters' face never shows signs of weariness but a vigorous amount of attention for each unique soldier. The close-ups of Winters' handshakes that give the strength and enable every single soldier to get up from the ground epitomizes the theme of comradeship (see fig. 21). These gestures of help and union provide a sense of togetherness that will be present throughout the miniseries, especially in the violent sequences.

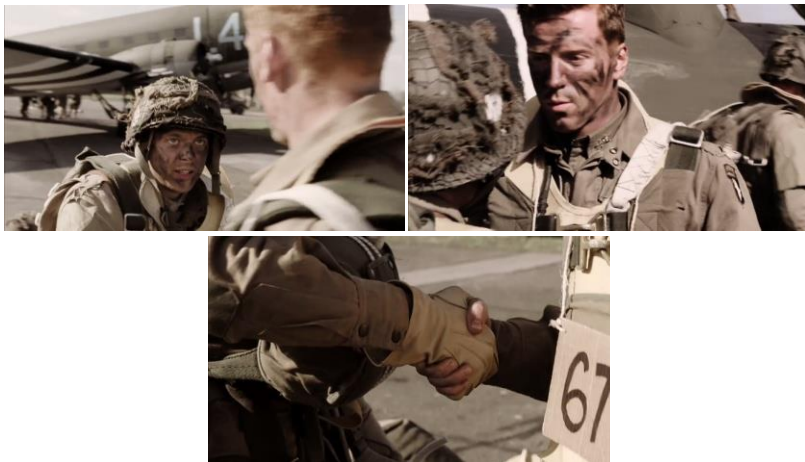


Fig. 21. Winters helps each soldier up with a steady handshake

The first violent sequence to be analyzed in this chapter is from episode three, "Carentan", and the two main characters featured in this specific sequence are Corporal Joseph Liebgott (Ross McCall) and Private Edward Tipper (Bart Ruspoli). I argue that this sequence

consolidates the importance of comradeship through the depth given to a moment of violence. The wounds portrayed in this sequence have a significance to the surrounding soldiers, and demonstrate the fragility of the human body and its susceptibility to pain. Concerning the two main characters in this sequence, they had already been introduced in some satellite scenes in the first episode evincing their personality traits. Liebgott is portrayed as a soldier with a temper that makes sarcastic comments such as "the army wouldn't make a mistake" and he gets into a fight after he is offended because of a derogatory comment about his Jewish heritage. Tipper, in a considerably smaller role, is featured as the type of soldier who joins in the general group and blends perfectly well. For instance, still in episode one, in a hoax to Cpt. Sobel, one of the soldiers imitates the voice of a major from the company and immediately Tipper certifies Sobel that the voice they are hearing is definitely of the major. He does that while knowing it is an imitation and joins in the joke trying hard to conceal his laughter, highlighting his easy going and likable personality.

The chosen sequence for analysis, from episode three, is part of the endeavor to take the town of Carentan. As they enter the town, selected groups of soldiers are assigned to clear any possibly existing enemy threat in the buildings. Liebgott and Tipper are given the task to examine a specific building. From a safe position stationed with the soldiers, the camera shows through an archway the figure of Tipper, with a bazooka in his back, walking towards the building written "Pharmacie". He is placed in the background and in the middle of the shot while he looks through the glass windows and signals to Liebgott that it is clear to enter. The next shot takes place inside the building, causing a radical change since the camera is now immersed in the action as opposed to watching from the distance, and the image shows the doors swinging open while the two soldiers enter the building. The hand-held camera follows them, shaking with the walking movements as it finally chooses Tipper to accompany. It walks behind him, in a tense fruitless search for any signs of the enemy since there is no movement, not even in the backyard (see fig. 22). As Tipper returns from the back of the house, there is not much time to assess the situation before the camera distance rapidly changes from an indoors medium shot to an outdoors medium long shot that soon shows the flashing and explosion of the building (see fig. 23). Debris, dirt, and glass fall everywhere and the sound of glass breaking fills the space. The massive size of the explosion and the position in which Tipper finds himself

inside the building are already hints to the gravity of his physical situation.



Fig. 22. Liebgott and Tipper clear one of the buildings



Fig. 23. The building in which Tipper is inside explodes

The initial focus of this sequence is based on the character's damaged perception and senses. Through a thick layer of smoke, it is possible to see the foggy and unstable figure of Tipper as the camera walks behind him (see fig. 24). The muffled sound becomes the most prominent aspect of the sequence, as it is possible to hear as if through Tipper's perception. Liebgott calls out to him, and all that can be heard is the muffled words spoken off screen "Tipper, answer me, Tip". Kappelhoff comments that cinematic tools should be used "in order to allow the unbearable act of violence to become graspable by the senses" (10-11). Instead of showing Tipper's visual condition right away, the choice of conveying his physical damage through his auditory loss creates a sense of suspense that will be complemented as his fellow

soldiers find him. The smoke settles down gradually and it is possible to see and hear more clearly.



Fig. 24. Tipper stumbles his way through the smoke

The first shot that depicts the other soldiers finding Tipper focuses on their reaction to his physical state. The camera is still behind Tipper thus it is not possible to contemplate the damage done to his body. Liebgott's facial reaction is joined by the other two soldiers who arrive and stare at Tipper (see fig. 25). According to Mikael Salomon, by withholding Tipper's condition and showing the other soldiers' reactions prior to his injury, "you are making the audience brace themselves for a shock [and] it makes the moment more tense" (Appendix 3). Until this point, the graphic nature of Tipper's wound has not yet been disclosed, and, as Slocum (2001) points out, "the threat of violence posed by a narrative can often be more powerful than any graphic single image" (4). The reaction shot of the other soldiers, their worried and astonished faces can be connected to the notion of shell shocked face commented by Kappelhoff, which relates to the facial reaction of the soldier when witnessing a horrific image. Their response has to do with the contemplation of the mutilated body and the suffering of a fellow soldier. Apart from Liebgott, the two remaining soldiers are only able to watch Tipper in their frozen attitude, incapable of even looking out for their own position as they stand exposed in open space.



Fig. 25. The soldiers react to Tipper's physical condition

The imagery of Tipper's wounds highlights the state of pain and suffering of the soldier. Liebgott's attitude is that of immediately lending a hand to Tipper as the camera fully captures the physical damage of the latter. In a very graphic medium close-up shot, Tipper is sitting on the ground with the left side of his face badly wounded, including his eye, and blood profusely spurting from his mouth. Liebgott stays close to Tipper during all the sequence, making physical contact with him and putting his arm around Tipper's shoulders (see fig. 26). The camera follows their eyeline as both look down at Tipper's body. The camera tilts down and discloses a greater damage done to his entire body, especially his legs and feet. A very graphic injury is prominent in this close-up of his right thigh, in which fractured bones and burned muscles are represented through the work of makeup done with prosthetic limbs by Daniel Parker, the head of makeup and prosthetics department in *Band of Brothers*. Still in a close-up, smoke can be seen coming out of Tipper's right boot through a considerably large hole that gives room to imagine the possible injuries that happened to his foot (see fig. 27).



Fig. 26. Liebgott helps Tipper who is badly injured



Fig. 27. Tipper's graphic injuries

In relation to how this extremely delicate sequence was staged on set, it is relevant to take into consideration the experience of the members of the cast and crew of *Band of Brothers*. I had the chance to interact through Twitter with the actor who plays Tipper in *Band of*

Brothers, Bart Ruspoli, and he commented that in order to prepare himself for this sequence, he relied on the memories of the veteran Edward Tipper and specifically "what he remembered of the incident" (Appendix 4). This follows Ambrose's remarks that many of the actors partly based their acting choices on the conversations they had with the surviving veterans of Easy Company and their families (13). Regarding the use of visual effects, Salomon observes that:

for the aftermath of the explosion [...] we dug a hole in the sidewalk. It looks as if the actor is sitting on the sidewalk, when in reality he is standing up in the hole and a pair of animated, prosthetic legs are in front of him creating the illusion that he is sitting down with his injured legs in front of him. (Appendix 3)

Liebrott's brotherly reaction can be understood as driven by the natural desire to aid a fellow soldier who is part of the group, and denotes his effort to tap into a compassionate mode of behavior. The sequence continues by portraying a very intimate medium close-up from their right side of Liebrott leaning Tipper's head against his body while the wounded soldier gasps (see fig. 28). During the entire sequence, Liebrott, although early depicted as a tough and irritable character, has a warm and comforting attitude in the moment of dire need. Since the beginning, his words of encouragement to Tipper are a way of helping his friend overcome that disastrous situation, although they might not be completely accurate: "Looking good, Tip, looking real good", "You hang in there, buddy", and "Okay, we're gonna get you fixed up".



Fig. 28. Liebrott holds Tipper in order to comfort him

The following shot exposes Tipper's facial wound to the utmost level in a setting that emphasizes the vulnerability of his damaged body. The camera switches sides and captures his face in a close-up from his left side, where Liebrott is sitting. Tipper's left eye is closed and blood

covers the left side of his face, dripping from his chin (see fig. 29). Tipper's remaining open eye looks for Liebgott as the latter touches the wounded face and tries to comfort him anyway possible. Liebgott's early reaction in this sequence is not to apply morphine or call for a medic, as the usual procedure depicted in the miniseries, but to hold on to Tipper and try to ease his initial fear. After a few seconds, Liebgott finally addresses the two remaining soldiers that were paralyzed and tries to get Tipper up: "Guys, you wanna give me a hand here?". The setting of this sequence, that is, the bombarded and destroyed ruins of the town, more specifically a grainy and stony sidewalk, offer an inhospitable and difficult environment for medical treatment of any kind. The lack of a safe and comfortable, or even clean place to tend to Tipper's needs adds to the general feeling of a tense and desperate situation.



Fig. 29. Tipper's injured face is explicitly exposed in this close-up shot

This sequence stands as one of the first major sequences, or as Chatman calls, kernel scenes, that combines extremely graphic violence and comradeship among soldiers in the miniseries. It consolidates the theme of brotherhood during harsh battle moments in an episode that heavily deals with offensive moves and explosions in which the soldiers remain constantly exposed. This sequence exposes the fragility of the human body when facing fire power, but also the fragility of human emotions. Liebgott's first action is to comfort his fellow soldier who is in physical pain but also under psychological shock. By the end of this sequence, the miniseries establishes this brotherly behavior of soldiers caringly assisting each other as a standard attitude for violent situations. Consequently, it distances itself from the idea that if the miniseries graphically depicts a wounded soldier, it is for the sole purpose of superficially glancing over the fact that war damages bodies. It goes further by delving into how significant that moment is for the soldiers involved, inviting a reflection upon their pain, whether physical or emotional.

The next violent sequence to be analyzed in this chapter takes place in episode six, "Bastogne", and further distances itself from a senseless depiction of violence by focusing on the portrayal of wasting lives during war, especially concerning young soldiers, and the effort made by the remaining characters to help a wounded soldier combined with the feeling of guilt after his death. This episode has as one of the main focal points the character of Doc Roe and the medical hardships in the line of battle under horrible weather conditions and low provisions during the Battle of the Bulge, which is portrayed in episodes six and seven, and stands as one of the most violent and relentless attacks that Easy Company had to go through during World War II. The two main characters featured in the pivotal graphic sequence are Private Edward "Babe" Heffron (Robin Laing) and Private John Julian (Marc Jordan). Since Julian is a replacement, his appearance in the miniseries only takes place in episode six, as opposed to Babe, who has been with Easy Company since the first episode.

A few satellite scenes build the relationship between Babe and Julian, complemented by the interaction with Roe who will have a role in the reverberation of Julian's death. In the beginning of the episode, Babe and Julian are depicted sharing a foxhole under attack in which Julian's inexperience is highlighted by his startled attitude. Later on, in a conversation between Babe and Doc Ralph Spina (Tony Devlin), the former confesses: "You know, he told me he was a goddamn virgin. The replacement in my foxhole, Julian. Goddamn virgin. Just a kid." This piece of information calls attention to Julian's young age and relates to the lack of worldly knowledge and maturity of his character. Also, it places Julian's body as an untouched and immaculate artifact that should not be exposed to such damaging conditions. This fact is something that stays with Babe and weighs on his conscience after Julian's death. In addition, Roe and Babe's interaction in this episode is based on the struggle with the theme of intimacy since Babe repeatedly mentions that Roe does not call anyone by their nicknames. At one point, Babe angrily confronts Roe and complains that the doctor keeps calling him by his last name, Heffron, when everybody else calls him Babe.

The kernel scene starts as a reconnaissance patrol is set and some men are picked to go, among them Babe and Julian, while Roe stays behind. The setting of this sequence takes place deep in the forest and a long shot demonstrates that a thick fog and snow create difficulties in relation to visibility. Only the silhouettes of the soldiers are discernible among the trees (see fig. 30). The men move forward

while Sergeant John Martin (Dexter Fletcher) and Julian take cover behind a pile of logs, trying to spot the enemy ahead. The white forest is silent, and there is no sign of enemy artillery. The only sound that can be heard is the crunching of the soldiers' boots in the snow as they hurriedly move from one position to another.



Fig. 30. The thick fog envelops the forest in Bastogne

The sequence goes on as Julian leaves his cover behind the pile of logs and walks into an exposed area. Suddenly, enemy fire comes from a distance and Julian, who is standing up as a perfect target, gets hit in the neck. As he falls with his hands in his neck, his rifle drops to the side and his helmet rolls away leaving him exposed to enemy fire (see fig. 31). As soon as Babe arrives, he insists to be the one to rescue Julian and bring him to safety. In one of the most explicitly graphic shots of the miniseries, a close-up of Julian's face and neck displays the grave damage done to his body and stands as a direct reminder of the high level of pain and subsequent despair that this character will go through. Blood pours out of his mouth and also abundantly from the hole in his neck caused by the enemy shot. The seriousness of the open cavity puts Julian in a deadly condition. His expression of suffering is by no means suppressed or glanced over, but highlighted in this sequence in order to focus on how the process of getting shot in a vital body part brings disturbing consequences to the victim and those around him. The attention to details of this specific prosthetic work can be seen when the accumulation of blood becomes so intense that it has a darker, almost black coloration. Julian's damaged body hints at the physical fragility during wartimes as the snow close to his head gets soaked in blood and he agonizes on the ground (see fig. 32). The use of prosthetic apparel to portray the wound, and the focus on the soldier's painful and helpless situation enhances the seriousness of the bodily damage in this sequence.



Fig. 31. Julian falls when he is hit in the neck



Fig. 32. Julian's graphic injury in the neck

As the situation gets more critical, the theme of brotherhood is enhanced through Babe's despairing but ineffective attitude of reaching out and helping Julian. Although Babe tries to crawl towards Julian, the enemy fire is too heavy to approach him. While he desperately starts talking to Julian, the enemy fire increases, the bullets hit the ground and cause snow and dirt to float everywhere, as it can be perceived in the long shot that encompasses from a distance the safe and exposed positions of the American soldiers (see fig. 33). A series of shot-reverse shots, close-ups and medium close-ups of Babe intensively yelling and close-ups of Julian agonizing on the ground build up the tension to his rescue accompanied by the hectic movement of the hand-held camera (see fig. 34). The impossibility of reaching out for him becomes clear but Babe, driven by a brotherly feeling, does not give up on Julian's well-being by saying: "Stop moving! They'll keep firing! Stop moving!", "Stay with us, stay with us, hold on, Julian, look at me!", and "We're coming back! We'll get you out of here, just hold on!". Due to the heavy enemy fire, the soldiers have to retreat and make the decision of leaving Julian behind.



Fig. 33. A long shot discloses the safe and exposed areas



Fig. 34. The desperate interaction between Babe and Julian

Concerning the moment of filming this particularly impacting sequence, it is significant to take into account the personal experience of cast members of *Band of Brothers*. In the miniseries, the need to rescue Julian, although his wounds seemed life threatening, becomes a haunting thought in Babe's conscience and the saddening situation is perceived by the soldiers around him. In an online interview for the Black Sky Radio in February 2011, the actor who plays Babe in the miniseries, Robin Laing, discusses the moment of filming the sequence and the influence of the life experience of the veteran Babe Heffron:

It was actually really really tough because I know that situation still lives with Babe. He doesn't feel responsible but I know John Julian is something that lives with Babe. And so I was aware of the gravity of those scenes and the intensity of filming that, especially when he's shot, the intensity of filming that was just so high.

The comradeship that is connected to the responsibility of soldiers protecting each other is a recurring feeling for Babe, whose concern in returning for Julian is present in several following satellite scenes along the episode. The reverberation of Julian's death on Babe is clear as the surviving soldier displays signs of sorrow that can be easily perceived. As the general mood of the soldiers decreases after the unsuccessful patrol and the situation of Julian's unrecovered body, Roe specifically observes Babe's saddened countenance. Due to the low

temperatures and the lack of winter clothing, the soldiers remain almost static while sitting around. In this satellite scene, Roe is immobile with both hands in his pockets as he looks at Babe who only slightly turns his head in order to reciprocate the look (see fig. 35). The next shot encompasses both characters as the camera tilts down to show Roe reaching into his bag to get a chocolate bar given to him by Nurse Renee. When the camera tilts back to eye-level, the chocolate bar is in the foreground, directly in front of Babe who sits in a slightly blurred background (see fig. 36). This bar will have a relevant function in the following sequence as a friendly connector between Roe and Babe.



Fig. 35. Roe and Babe exchange looks after Julian's death



Fig. 36. Roe holds on to the chocolate bar

Julian's death affects Babe in a deep emotional level, and, through Roe's artifice of brotherly care, Babe is able to share his feelings. At night, Roe goes from foxhole to foxhole looking for Babe until he opens one of the tarps and finds Doc Spina and Babe. This shot has a very intimate composition, a medium close-up with the three soldiers sitting extremely close to each other, as a way of warming up in such a cold weather. Their faces are whitened and their lips parched by the harsh living conditions, but it is the figure of Babe in the center of the shot that calls the attention. Babe is unresponsive, with his eyes lowered as if he had somehow given up after Julian's death (see fig. 37). Roe proceeds to offer him the chocolate bar but Babe does not even look

at it which causes Roe to break a piece of the bar to make it more appealing. As Babe accepts the chocolate, the shot closes up on him (see fig. 38), when he finally feels comfortable enough to share his feelings about Julian: "I promised him, if he got hit, I'd get his stuff and bring it to his ma, you know? Now the fucking krauts will strip him. [...] I should've got to him." His voice breaks with anguish at the thought of not even being able to retrieve Julian's body, let alone save his life. Although Roe does not hug or constantly remind Babe that things will be okay, the chocolate bar functions in this sequence as a way of reaching out, an opening through which it is possible to comfort him. The reverberation of Julian's death in Babe's emotional state is soothed by the chocolate bar, which works as a gesture of friendship in stark contrast with the ruthless environment of war. This intimate experience also has a consequence later on in the episode when Roe instinctively calls Babe not by Heffron but by his nickname. The slow and natural process of intimacy and brotherhood through daily interactions, especially in the foxholes where soldiers would have varied conversations, is subtly depicted in this sequence and highlights the bonds that were made during the most unusual and inhospitable conditions. These bonds were responsible for getting the soldiers through intense and agonizing situations that otherwise would possibly be unbearable.



Fig. 37. Roe, Babe, and Spina in the foxhole



Fig. 38. Babe eats a piece of chocolate

The next sequence to be analyzed takes place in episode seven, "The Breaking Point", and features three main characters that are introduced in the first episode: Lieutenant Buck Compton, Sergeant Joe Toye (Kirk Acevedo), and Sergeant Joseph Guarnere (Frank John Hughes). This sequence focuses on the consequences of carnage to the soldiers who suffer mutilations and, equally relevant, to those who accompany them, apparently unscathed but emotionally wounded

anyway. Concerning the particular case of Buck, Toye, and Guarnere, their relationships and personalities have been carefully crafted throughout the episodes and the soldiers' affective connections interfere in their decision making abilities during distressing times. In this episode, Easy Company still remains stationed in the Ardennes Forest, as in the previous segment, under terrible conditions and suffering heavy enemy fire. In order to protect themselves from the massive artillery attacks in the forest, the soldiers continue digging and fortifying their foxholes.

The character of Buck has its first appearance in episode one, and the theme of comradeship surrounds him throughout the segments. He is portrayed as a confident leader who enjoys bonding with the men, and "spending time to get to know my soldiers", as he comments. In episode two, Buck is seen in the back of a truck, together with sergeants and privates, including Toye and Guarnere, cooking food and relaxing with them (see fig. 39). The atmosphere is of laughter and Buck blends right in with the men. In episode four, Buck plays darts with the men and vibrantly interacts with them as if rank were not to be considered (see fig. 40). These satellite scenes have the function of relationship affirmation (see Introductory Chapter) since episode after episode their intimacy grows and turns into a friendship that will determine their attitude in the battle zone.



Fig. 39. Buck cheerfully interacting with the men, among them Toye and Guarnere



Fig. 40. Buck plays darts with the men

At this point it is relevant to mention that in *Band of Brothers*, early episodes generally introduce characters and their psychological behavior. This is a common trait in television narrative, as Butler explains, in which the exposition of the characters takes place early on in the segments, building a personal history as the episodes evolve (23-24). The only exceptions in *Band* are the replacement soldiers, for instance Julian, who are normally introduced in later episodes.

In episode four, an injury becomes a turning point in Buck's trajectory in the battlefield and stands as a first step towards his future downward emotional spiral. While Easy Company is retrieving from Nuenen in Holland, Buck is shot in the buttocks and falls down in a trench. Surrounded by the sound of machine guns and explosions, Buck lies on the ground and reaches out for his wound. In a high angle medium close-up of his reaction, he looks at his shaky hand covered with blood and his attitude takes a different turn (see fig.41). The once brave and energetic combat leader says to the soldiers around him: "Leave me here for the Germans". His rash attitude of wanting the men to leave him behind denotes the beginning of a certain instability in his posture, that is, a touch of extremism in his decisions and way of thinking.



Fig. 41. Buck is hit and falls in a trench

The major change can be perceived as Buck is depicted in a numb and distant attitude in a satellite scene that marks the change in his usually lively behavior. Towards the end of episode five, the soldiers are watching a John Wayne movie in a theater and Buck is sitting with his eyes forward as Winters sits behind him. A close-up shot shows Buck in the foreground, slightly blurred, and Winters in the background (see fig. 42). Winters' eyes look up at the movie screen and by comparison, Buck's eyes are looking at a lower angle than Winters', that is, not exactly looking at the screen and paying attention to the movie. His expression is numb as Winters tries to interact with him: "How are you feeling? Did your wounds heal? All four of them? Have you seen this before?" All these questions are asked in a row as Buck remains unresponsive and so absorbed in his own thoughts that he does not even realize that Winters is right beside him, literally next to his left ear, asking him questions. This numb behavior seems to hint that Buck is suffering from a psychological difficulty that will have consequences later on in the battlefield. Winters' touch on Buck's shoulder causes him

to be startled and wake up as if from a dream. The following medium shot reveals Buck's entire body gesture of sitting with his legs to the side, back slightly arched, arms folded, insistently twisting his lips, and avoiding eye contact with Winters (see fig. 43). Buck is obviously not sitting there for the movie as his mind is elsewhere, and his disturbed facial reactions demonstrate the possible negative nature of his thoughts.



Fig. 42. Buck stares forward



Fig. 43. Buck's reaction denotes a change

The emotional whirlpool in which Buck finds himself is demonstrated in a satellite scene from episode six which depicts the decline in his mood. Guarnere and Buck are sharing a foxhole when the latter shows the picture of his girlfriend. The sequence starts with a high angle shot from outside the foxhole that shows the two sitting very close together and Buck holding his picture (see fig. 44). It is possible to see Buck's smiling face in the photo which contrasts with his present worn out countenance that is about to be seen. The following shot places the camera inside the foxhole and in a low angle position as the characters' reactions become the focal point (see fig. 45). After Guarnere's observation, "A good looking broad, Buck", Buck places the picture face down on Guarnere's coat and says: "She's finished with me." Buck's reaction shows a strange and unnatural laugh that could either become a real laughter or turn into a crying fit. This lack of control is noticed by Guarnere and consolidates Buck's psychological instability as he has a hard time trying to cope with the break up and the harsh battle situations happening simultaneously.



Fig. 44. A high angle shot reveals Buck's picture



Fig. 45. A low angle shot focuses on their reactions

It is in episode seven, "The Breaking Point", that Buck arrives at his own personal point of tension as his almost neurotic behavior is visible. Buck goes from foxhole to foxhole making the soldiers promise him that they will not do anything reckless that might get them hurt or killed. He tells Guarnere: "Wild Bill, I've invested too much goddamn time shaping you into something useful. Do something crazy, get yourself knocked out of this thing [...] Even if you're dead, I'll still kill you." Buck has a fatherly attitude at this point, but it displays a behavior that is on the edge and unbalanced. His fear for the lives of others takes a rather extreme turn since the probabilities of someone getting seriously hurt in the battlefield are very high. The soldiers around him notice his odd attitude and at one point in the episode, Babe compares Buck to a man called Crazy Joe McCloskey: "This guy used to hang around at the front of Delancey's and just, you know, stare at people. [...] Buck kind of reminds me of him now. [...] He's all wound up like a spring."

Two characters that continuously appear interacting with Buck throughout the episodes are Guarnere and Toye, which are portrayed in the miniseries as having very specific personality traits. In episode two, after hearing that his brother has been killed in action in Monte Cassino, Guarnere mercilessly and recklessly slaughters a group of German soldiers and horses, suggesting his tempestuous temperament and angry attitude towards the enemy. In episode seven, Toye is portrayed as the type of soldier who prefers to be among the men in the line of fire, even if not fully recovered from his wound, than to remain at the aid station. As soon as he arrives back in the line after sneaking out of the aid station, Toye is heartily welcomed by the soldiers and especially by Guarnere. Although surrounded by snow, the medium two-shot of Guarnere and Toye shaking hands and telling jokes has a warm effect (see fig. 46) representing a satellite scene that demonstrates the high

level of affection and care they have for each other. Furthermore, it supplies the idea of comradeship that will be relevant for the following violent sequence.



Fig. 46. Guarnere and Toye shake hands as a gesture of comradeship

The kernel scene starts amidst a heavy bombardment in the forest that takes the soldiers by surprise and focuses on the depiction of the soldiers' mutilated bodies. The setting depicts this destruction through burst and fallen trees surrounded by a mixture of snow and dirt on the ground. A crane shot gives a general view of the destroyed forest as the camera descends and finds Toye in a medium shot, lying on the ground with eyes closed, blood on his face, and his helmet beside him (see fig. 47). At this point, there is no possibility of visually assessing the level of damage done to his body. Toye slowly regains consciousness and awareness of his body and simultaneously the camera pulls back and gives access to the image of his wound. One of the explosions maimed his right leg right above the knee, and in an extremely graphic shot, the amputated leg appears in the foreground (see fig. 48). The prosthetic work in this shot is explicit and depicts the torn skin, muscles, bone, and flowing blood in full view highlighting the fragility of the human body. The following point-of-view shot of Toye looking at his own leg seems to enlarge the damage since now it is possible to see the remaining part of his leg detached from his own body in a very unnatural position, and the only thing connecting them is a trail of blood in the snow (see fig. 49).



Fig. 47. A crane shot descends to find Toye on the ground



Fig. 48. Toye's graphic wound is shown in the foreground

Fig. 49. A POV shot depicts the bodily destruction

At this moment, the subject of survival is the focus of the sequence as Toye struggles to take cover. In this case, violence puts the character in the position of using his strength to show endurance, even if a way out of the situation turns out to be unattainable. The violent act illustrates that the body, although injured, does not necessarily stop the soldier from hoping to survive, hence demonstrating that the uniqueness of identity is still present. In the sequence, the camera pans left over Toye's body at a ground level starting from his wounded leg up to his face (see fig. 50). The combination of the gravity of Toye's graphic wound and his crying tone of voice repeatedly saying "I gotta get up" as he makes the effort to raise himself, produces an effect of pain and desperation. Imagery and sound together allow this sequence to depict mutilation beyond its purely graphic sight by conveying the amount of physical suffering that the soldier goes through and the effort that is necessary for survival. The chaotic situation is reaffirmed by the following shot: a high angle crane shot that enhances the loss of his limb and impotence to take cover by giving an overview of his entire body and the almost impossibility of him properly moving without external help (see fig. 51).



Fig. 50. The camera pans left over Toye's body



Fig. 51. A high angle crane shot discloses Toye's entire body

The sequence shifts from Toye's solo survival attempt to Guarnere's exposition of his safety for the sake of friendship as the latter immediately leaves his foxhole to help Toye after hearing his voice. The sense of comradeship surpasses any logical behavior of taking cover and leads Guarnere to run out in the open and disregard the officers' orders to stay in the foxholes since the Germans would start firing again at any moment. When Guarnere reaches Toye, he attempts to drag his friend to safety but has a lot of difficulty which slows the process of reaching Buck's foxhole behind them (see fig. 52). The tension rises as Buck desperately urges them by screaming: "Hurry up, Guarno, you're gonna get bombed!". Right in front of Buck's eyes, in a long shot that makes the exploding surroundings prominent in the image, a bomb explodes next to Guarnere and Toye (see fig. 53) and the impact throws Buck down in his foxhole. The sound of the multiple explosions is merged with Buck's heartfelt wailing of the word "no" at the top of his lungs. This incident will prove to be the last drop for Buck in his struggle to endure the life in the battle zone.



Fig. 52. Guarnere struggles to take Toye to safety



Fig. 53. The two soldiers are caught in the middle of the explosions

The portrayal of Toye and Guarnere's bodies right after the explosion and, later on while they receive medical care, are instances which foreground the fragility and damaging consequences done to the soldiers' bodies. Similarly to how the camera's depiction of Toye's wound, in the next shot the camera descends in a crane, first showing the snowy forest bursting with explosions and slowly positioning itself in a high angle where Guarnere and Toye have fallen. The camera, that shakes with every explosion, discloses the frightful image of the soldiers' entangled motionless bodies (see fig. 54). The red marks on the ground denounce the blood that melts the snow under each leg wound of the soldiers, and their unnatural position, with their arms and legs thrown in seemingly random directions, enhances the gravity of the situation by showing their unconscious state. Later on, they are aided by Doc Roe in a series of extremely graphic wound representations done through the use of prosthetics. In one of the shots, Guarnere's mangled leg is placed in the foreground and it is possible to see its muscles spasming and exposed bone while Toye's maimed leg is shown in the background with bandage around it (see fig. 55). Unlike Babe and Julian in the previously analyzed sequence in which Babe hesitates to endanger himself to get to Julian's position, Guarnere risks his life to save Toye based on his natural reaction of comradeship. However, the seemingly heroic attitude of leaving no man behind transforms itself into a nightmarish display of the devastating physical consequences to the soldier's body when he is hit, turning away from the idea of glory and replacing it by the image of painful waste and destruction of human lives.



Fig. 54. Guarnere and Toye's bodies entangled on the ground



Fig. 55. Guarnere's leg is in the foreground while Toye receives medical assistance in the background

It is through Buck's reaction that the sequence consolidates its violent reverberation on the narrative. Right after Guarnere and Toye are hit, Buck strives to leave the foxhole, and without much control of what is happening around and to himself, he drools (see fig. 56). This denotes a far deeper emotional instability since he is unwilling, or even unable, to manage his own bodily functions. He stumbles his way in their direction, mumbling unrecognizable words, and in a medium close-up, he lets out a chilling shout for a medic that functions as a cry for help, and at the same time, a cry that represents the pain of looking at the frightful image of his friends' entangled bodies (see fig. 57). After that, in a medium long shot, Buck is standing in the middle of the frame with both soldiers piled up at his feet (see fig. 58). He stares at them, drops his rifle, and removes his helmet, exposing himself in every possible way. The next shot is a medium close-up that represents a shell-shocked face to its utmost degree (see fig. 59). Buck's facial reaction represents the pain of being impotent at the grotesque sight of the graphic maiming of his friends' limbs, without any means of aiding them. Buck's expression to the incident he is witnessing is similar to what he has displayed in other previously mentioned moments, such as the sequence in the movie theater. The major difference is that now he is physically present and witnesses the violent image. His eyes convey what seems to be a mixture of deep sorrow and numbness until he finally drops his helmet on the ground.



Fig. 56. Buck is not in control of his senses



Fig. 57. He lets out a shout for medic



Fig. 58. Buck is standing up with his friends by his feet



Fig. 59. Buck's reaction shot

The reverberation of this violent incident does not reach only the few moments after it happens, but it marks Buck's trajectory throughout the rest of the war through satellite scenes. Lipton's voice over in the episode summarizes the consequences:

Some say Buck changed after he was shot in Holland. I know something happened to him when he saw Toye and Guarnere on the ground. On the report it said Compton was being taken off the line because of a bad case of trench foot. Didn't say anything about him losing his friends. [...] He took everything the Krauts could throw at him time and again. I guess he just couldn't take seeing his friends Toye and Guarnere torn up like that. No one ever thought any less of him for it.

The images that accompany Lipton's voice over depict the poor emotional state that Buck finds himself after he is sent to the aid station. Unable to function well in the battlefield, he is removed from the line of fire, but receives a visit from one of his friends, Sergeant Donald Malarkey (Scott Grimes). In this shot, Buck is lying in one of the stretchers, looking at the ceiling with his mouth partially open (see fig.

60). Once again, his eyes stare into the void, his breathing becomes erratic, and it seems as if he were reliving moments of agony over and over. This shot represents that Buck's mental state has not improved and the shock of the sight of his wounded friends only worsened his condition. The next shot shows Malarkey reading a letter to Buck from his home as the camera initially encompasses the former, but it gradually and softly slides toward Buck until he remains the central figure of the shot. Malarkey starts reading some positive and cheerful sentences from the letter, such as "Gosh, how we all know what an exciting young man you are and how your heart and love..." until Buck puts his hand on the letter to refrain him from continuing (see fig. 61). Buck cannot cope with cheerful and encouraging words while he is immersed in such a deep state of shock. It seems to be difficult for him to keep a healthy mental state, that is, to cling himself to good memories in order to go through this ordeal. He has become one more casualty in a war that has the power to wound beyond the body.



Fig. 60. Buck stares at the ceiling in the aid station



Fig. 61. Buck stops Malarkey from reading the letter

The sequences involving Babe and Julian, and then the incident with Buck, Guarnere, and Toye are all part of the depiction of the Battle of the Bulge. Ambrose comments that "beyond the wounded and killed, every man at Bastogne suffered. Men unhit by shrapnel or bullets were nevertheless casualties. There were no unwounded men at Bastogne" (221). In the previously analyzed sequences, the sight of carnage and the weight of loss bear different and painful consequences to those who witness the suffering of someone else. Physical wounds are not the only type of injury that would cause a soldier to be removed from active duty, but also his psychological position to deal with the strains of combat. In Buck's case, the intensity of brotherly support that he displays toward his friends turns into a harmful emotional condition that stops him from developing his role in the battlefield. After certain

violent and traumatic moments, not even the comradeship environment is enough to restore Buck to his self.

The last violent sequence to be analyzed is part of episode eight, "The Last Patrol", and focuses on the needless waste of lives during war, and how much the loss of a soldier impacts not only the behavior of the characters around him, but also the subsequent events of the narrative. The main character in this sequence is Private Eugene Jackson (Andrew-Lee Potts), who is surrounded by several other soldiers from Easy Company, among them Sergeant Martin, Private David Webster (Eion Bailey), and Doc Roe. In this episode, while stationed in Hagenau, France, E-Company is given the task to secure German prisoners by crossing a river and retrieving them from one of the buildings.

Jackson has his first appearance in this episode and he is introduced through Webster's voice over as a soldier who is young, but has been through a fair amount of combat. His physical appearance is a clear sign of his young age, but at times his worn out attitude demonstrates that, along with the rest of the soldiers, war has taken its physical toll on him. In a satellite scene that shows the soldiers' preparation to go on the patrol, the camera pans left and discloses Jackson's face in a medium close-up. For a moment, his sincere concentration and half-open mouth accentuate his youth and fragility, and as in a foreshadowing, he probes a hand grenade, the same type of weapon that will later on take away his life (see fig. 62).



Fig. 62. Jackson prepares his hand grenade

The violent act involving Jackson has its beginning when the group of soldiers enters the building in order to retrieve German prisoners. Jackson's unfortunate incident happens as he throws a hand grenade into the door and rushes to get inside, without waiting for it to go off. Regardless of Martin's requests for him to wait, Jackson hurriedly enters and receives the blast. His haste and lack of caution

when stepping into the building display his inexperience that subsequently costs his life. Jackson's painful scream can be heard through a mist of smoke as he falls to the ground, and the camera shows only the right side of his face, which is initially unharmed, withholding the gravity of his injury (see fig. 63). It is only after a few seconds that Martin turns him over, and the shaky camera captures his bloodied face in a medium close-up, without lingering too much on the wound (see fig. 64). Amidst the chaos of the retrieving operation, Jackson's wound is one of the many hectic events happening simultaneously: the soldiers have to set the detonator, remove the German prisoners, including the wounded, and move out directly since they are under enemy fire. The delay of the graphic portrayal of Jackson's face increases the suspense of his physical condition, but also highlights the simultaneous amount of scenarios during the frantic operation in which the focal point cannot be solely on Jackson's state.

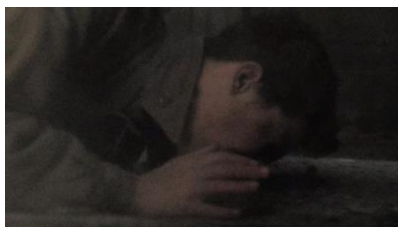


Fig. 63. The camera captures his right side as he falls



Fig. 64. Jackson's bloodied face is visible

The kernel scene starts when the focus on Jackson's head wound becomes central while the soldiers carry him to the basement. The mood of this sequence is extremely hectic as several American soldiers and a few German prisoners yell all at the same time inside the cramped basement. The first image of Jackson's wound is a high angle medium close-up that places Jackson almost upside down in the frame, giving it a dizzying impression (see fig. 65). The left side of his face is badly damaged, and his left eye completely closed while his skin has an unhealthy gray appearance. Jackson's agony can be perceived through the gagging sounds that he makes, as if trying to bring air into his lungs but being unsuccessful. The seriousness of the wound is created by the makeup, prosthetic work, and Jackson's desperately contorting gestures.



Fig. 65. Jackson's graphic wound on the left side is more visible

Imagery and sound are combined to convey the tension and gravity of the situation. The next shot of Jackson's wound is a medium close-up in which it is possible to better assess his facial reaction. A viscous layer covers the left part of his face, changing his countenance into someone almost unrecognizable. His right eye nervously looks from one soldier to the other (see fig. 66). The camera focuses on him as it is possible to hear the other soldiers' voices off screen. Private Allen Vest (Kieran O'Brien) insists in uttering his pessimistic comments that Jackson is going to die in a tone of voice that almost turns into crying. His participation only increases the level of tension, but the other soldiers around endeavor to say: "Jackson, don't listen to him. Everything's gonna be ok." The sound of Jackson crying, and eventually choking, focuses on the pain not only related to the physical suffering, but also to the fear of losing his life as he repeats "I don't wanna die" seven times in a row.



Fig. 66. The focus on the depiction of Jackson's head wound

The sequence's composition becomes even more intimate as Doc Roe arrives to give assistance to Jackson. When Roe starts examining him, the basement quiets down, and the only sounds that can be heard are Roe's voice and Jackson's heavy and troubled breathing. In a medium shot, approximately ten soldiers gather around to watch Jackson receive treatment as the camera stands very close to them (see

fig. 67). They anxiously expect something to be done but the poor conditions make this task too difficult to be accomplished. As in other situations throughout the episodes in *Band*, wounded soldiers are treated surrounded by many others who brotherly try to help in any way they can. In this particular case, their impotence is clear as nothing can be done to help Jackson. Not even Roe has the initiative to start any first medical procedure, and only makes a preliminary examination on Jackson under very poor lighting conditions.

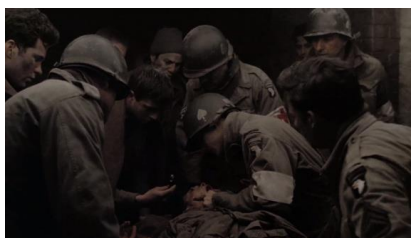


Fig. 67. A tight shot shows Roe tending to Jackson

The lethal nature of Jackson's head injury shows its intensity as Roe decides to remove him from the basement. In a graphic close-up of his facial wound, Jackson is shown desperately agonizing and asphyxiating until the moment that he passes away. Roe has his hand on Jackson's neck and tries to encourage him to endure, but little can be done to save his life. Although the basement is badly lit, and filled with dark corners, in this shot Jackson's deformed face becomes the focus as it is shown in relatively bright light, calling attention to the wound's particularities. The last time that the camera fully captures Jackson, his head is tilted to the back, eyes closed, and mouth partially open (see fig. 68). The vitality and reactions of his face slowly fade as a lifeless appearance takes over him. The focus on the portrayal of his head wound enhances the loss of his unique traits of identity and behavior as they vanish and are no longer recognizable.



Fig. 68. Jackson's head wound causes his death

The weight of Jackson's loss hits its peak as the camera captures the other soldiers' reaction shots combined with Webster's voice over. As soon as Jackson perishes, the soldiers look at each other trying to accept the idea that in one moment Jackson is alive and struggling for his life, and a few seconds later he is dead. In particular, Webster's reaction shot depicts a stare filled with pity, and completely immobile as he does not even blink for a few seconds (see fig. 69). In a medium long shot, it is possible to perceive the reaction of several soldiers as the crowded shot shows one of them weeping, some soldiers with grave faces, while others demonstrate sympathy in their expressions (see fig. 70). As they contemplate Jackson's young life being wasted because of a secondary patrol mission, their reactions exemplify that the miniseries opts for highlighting a violent act and showing its reverberation on others as opposed to easily forgetting it or quickly brushing over its depiction. Webster's voice over helps emphasize the critical position of wastefulness as he talks about Jackson: "His family, I'm sure, got a telegram from the War Department saying he died a hero on an important mission that would help win the war. In fact, Eugene lost his life on a stretcher in a dank basement in Haguenuau, crying out in agony while his friends looked on helplessly." The impotence that was clearly visible through the soldiers' frozen and immobile attitude is translated into words in Webster's voice over. The brotherhood theme here is approached not as a heroic display of saving someone's life, but as a burden of watching a friend lose his life without being able to give him proper assistance.



Fig. 69. Webster's reaction shot



Fig. 70. The soldiers react to Jackson's death

Concerning the shooting of this particularly high strung sequence, it is significant to take into consideration the role of the cast and crew of *Band of Brothers*. I was able to exchange a few ideas through Twitter with the actor who plays Doc Roe, Shane Taylor, and he comments about the complexity of shooting this specific sequence with Jackson: "I think everybody just tapped into the intensity of the moment. And that was helped by having a great atmosphere off camera" (Appendix 6). Since he plays a medical character who constantly interacts with violent situations, he also states that imagination and commitment as an actor are fundamental ways to prepare oneself to shoot such extreme sequences (Appendix 6). In relation to the cinematography, Adefarasin explains the use of the camera during this sequence: "Experiential was the word for the photography. [...] So, many good handheld shots" (Appendix 1). Since the moment they enter the basement, the hand-held camera movement fluidly captures the hectic pace of the sequence by standing very close to the actors, and abruptly going from one reaction to another.

The reverberation of Jackson's death can also be seen through a major change in the narrative that focuses on the importance of survival. After the apparent success of the first patrol in capturing enemy soldiers, Captain Winters is given the order to organize a second patrol. He is extremely dissatisfied with the unnecessary risk that his soldiers are being put through, but still he calls a meeting to brief the information. In this satellite scene, Winters disobeys direct orders by telling the men not to go on the patrol, and instead report to him on the following day by saying that they went on the mission but could not retrieve any prisoners. Winters is a character well known for his integrity and commitment with the army, but also for his attachment and concern with the men of Easy Company. Jackson's unnecessary death triggers a response in Winters, and he uses his authority to spare the men of a

needless risk in the war's final stages. The events in the narrative take a different turn due to the importance given to the loss of a soldier's life.

The analysis of these four sequences can be seen as instances of how *Band of Brothers* does not make use of the graphic display of violence for the purpose of spectacle. Although the representation of violence functions as a way to increase suspense through the editing pattern of the camera showing of diegetic and non-diegetic space, these sequences are interconnected and reverberate in several aspects that are vital in the miniseries, such as narrative flow, character development, establishment of relationships among soldiers, and exploration of themes related to human nature, for instance, brotherhood, fear in the battlefield, death, and wastefulness of lives during wartimes. The miniseries lingers on the images that depict wounded men in order to provide a moment of reflection in relation to the fragility of life, and as a reminder of the physical and emotional damage made by wars on those who are placed at the receiving end of the artillery. The final remarks on the analysis of the miniseries will be discussed in the following chapter along with possible implications of the study for future investigations.

CONCLUSION

"Henry the Fifth was talking to his men. He said: 'From this day to the ending of the world, we in it shall be remembered. We lucky few, we band of brothers. For he who today sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.'" (Lieutenant Carwood Lipton)⁴

The present study has concluded that the violent scenes represented in the miniseries *Band of Brothers* encompassed depth rather than solely focusing on the graphic quality of its imagery. By making violence a crucial and intertwined element of its narrative, *Band of Brothers* highlighted several themes related to the struggle of soldiers in the battlefield, namely discussions on the value and hardships of brotherhood, the complexities that precede and follow the moment of a soldier's death, and the amount of lives, especially young ones, that are blatantly exterminated during war times. All these issues accompanied the moments of explicit violence and marked these instances as more than only displays of prosthetic and makeup artistry, but opportunities to delve into the details of traumatizing moments.

In the Introductory Chapter, the overall characteristics of *Band of Brothers* were discussed, especially in relation to television narrative, production, and its position in the World War II film genre. This study analyzed the fact that *Band* relied on the narrative structure of miniseries to develop its story. Since it made use of the concept of seriality, the storylines were introduced in one episode and continued in the following ones, hence constructing a solid array of scenes that consolidated the characters' relationships. By analyzing the violent scenes based on what Chatman calls the kernel and satellite scenes, it was possible to notice the interconnections of the characters' experiences and development of their personalities that culminated in the violent images. Although there was a large number of protagonists, the ten episodes carefully set aside specific amounts of time to tell each personal story from a very individual point of view, as opposed to a fleeting and general overview of the whole company.

Some aspects of cinematography and mise-en-scene were significant to the analysis and understanding of the violent scenes in *Band of Brothers*. The extensive use of medium close-ups and close-ups to depict the wounds openly demonstrated the intricacies of the human

⁴ This quotation was taken from episode ten, "Points", of *Band of Brothers*.

body. The prosthetic and makeup work stood as a vital part of the portrayal of the maimed and wounded body parts. They were employed in *Band of Brothers* in order to demonstrate the seriousness of bodily damage, and the fragility of the human body when facing tempestuous war situations. The relevant use of violent, that is, the contextualization of its consequences, remained as one of the reasons for the choice of *Band* as a research work. Besides that, the reaction shots featuring instances of shell shocked face were reminders of the ripple effect of the violent act on the surrounding characters who witnessed and participated in the chaotic situations that led to either serious maiming or even death. How the soldiers reacted to a violent image aided in the construction of the atmosphere of relevance given to violence by distancing itself from a senseless approach, and making sure that the shock demonstrated in the soldiers' faces was a reminder that a violent act should not be seen as a casual instance.

Furthermore, the Introductory Chapter also dealt with the complex issue of representing the 'reality' of the war experience and the violent images which might be considered a notorious characteristic of the war film genre. *Band of Brothers* cannot be seen as a miniseries that portrays the war effort of Easy Company exactly as it happened during World War II. Such view would be incorrect, and to a certain extent, naive, since it is impossible to achieve this goal. The camera captured representative images that were already highly subjective according to the filmmaker's point of view, and in the case of *Band of Brothers*, images that were reenactments based on testimonies and veterans' interviews that were by no means perfect documents of reality, but the result of human memory and viewpoint. This does not imply that the experiences these soldiers went through are to be disregarded. On the contrary, their memories and ordeals must be remembered and appreciated through attempts of filmic representation. As Peter Buckley comments, the agonies and ruthless situations that the soldiers endured during the "brutalising, numbing experience" of war, are lessons "we cannot be told too often" (qtd. in Kendrick *Film Violence* 78) since their importance lies in the observation and attempt of comprehending human behavior.

Chapter 1 brought significant elements to be discussed in relation to the graphic portrayal of violence, such as the relationship between the body of the soldier and the violent act. The body of the soldier became the vehicle through which the adversities were channeled in the miniseries' violent representations, for instance, by

portraying the impact of bullets and explosives in the human flesh, mutilations, and head wounds. The inherent materiality of the human body was exposed to its utmost limit in order to highlight and open a space for reflection on the consequences of the violence engendered by war, as a violent machine. The constant and endless pain that the soldiers went through in the sequences was a reminder of the utter destruction inflicted on the human body by war and was followed by an emotional reverberation on the surrounding characters. As Ambrose remarks:

the experiences of men in combat produce emotions stronger than civilians can know, emotions of terror, panic, anger, sorrow, bewilderment, helplessness, uselessness, and each of these feelings drained energy and mental stability. (203)

Another issue discussed in Chapter 1 was the decontextualized and excessive portrayal of violence which could be seen as a point of contrast to *Band of Brothers'* approach to violent images. In relation to singular instances of violence in films, Charney observes that:

[There is a] seemingly escalating decontextualization of those moments, their apparently increasing tendency in contemporary action movies to stand on their own, as if for their own sake, no longer the handmaidens of an orthodox cause-and-effect story. (48)

This scenario could be contrasted with the examples of violence analyzed from *Band of Brothers*, in which the characters' relationships were built in a way that the reverberation of the violent acts affected the soldiers throughout the remaining episodes. Also, it is significant to mention that *Band's* approach to the portrayal of pain and suffering focused on the alliance between sound and imagery to convey the idea of consequence of the violent act.

The theme of brotherhood also became a vital point in the context of the violent sequences in *Band of Brothers*. The sense of comradeship was constantly associated with aiding a fellow soldier in acquiring the strength to endure hardships. The miniseries' own title, *Band of Brothers*, already hinted that the show would concentrate on an approach connected to the power of collaborative work. The first Chapter explored the implications of comradeship in relation to the theme of death in the battlefield, its reverberations in the characters, and

the fear of performing military tasks while at the same time attempting to preserve their own lives.

Chapter 2 focused on delving into the cinematic particularities of four specific violent sequences from *Band of Brothers*. The issues raised both in the Introduction, such as seriality, cinematography and mise-en-scene, and Chapter 1, namely the relationship of violence and the body, the themes of death and brotherhood, and the portrayal of pain were taken into consideration when analyzing such sequences. In particular, the concepts of kernel and satellite scenes from Chatman were used in order to map the building up of the relationships among the characters that culminated in the violent images, and caused various reverberations related to the characters and events in the narrative. The connection between the body of the soldier, the characters' emotions, and violence was also a relevant issue in the detailed scene analysis. Chapter 2 demonstrated the intense strain that characters went through after witnessing their fellow soldiers get killed or seriously wounded. Their emotional state was affected by these experiences and their behavior negatively changed in noticeable ways.

If taken out of the context of the flow of narrative, the violent sequences that were analyzed in *Band of Brothers* would not have the same impact and might even be interpreted as excessive displays of gore; however, every instance of violence was well merged with the narrative development and the psychological consequences on the characters' psyche. Slocum points out that there is a tendency in contemporary films to offer excessively violent images that "are increasingly intended for the spectator's consumption—regardless of 'content'" (21). By joining the plight of the soldiers in the battlefield, their intense relationship constructions, and pertinent themes of brotherhood, death, and wastefulness of lives developed in the episodes, *Band of Brothers* allowed the violent acts to be contextualized and interpreted as instances of supreme pain and suffering. These moments highlighted the concern for the agonizing bodies represented on screen since the soldiers who suffered the violence were not nameless and obscure, but well-known characters with specific traits and functions in the miniseries. Violence dissociated itself from anonymity and reached the level of personalized experiences.

Since the first violent scene analyzed in Chapter 2, the template for the brotherly behavior of the soldiers in the episodes was already established. Adversities were more easily overcome with the help of a fellow soldier, as in Liebgott and Tipper's scene or Babe and Julian's

scene. However, the same brotherhood feeling that aided also caused troubled feelings, such as the scene with Buck, Toye and Guarneri, and Jackson's sequence in the basement in which the act of witnessing their friends' carnage led to their emotional suffering. The last episode, "Points", epitomized the view of the show about the theme of comradeship by portraying a German General addressing his recently surrendered troops. As he makes his speech in German, Liebgott translates the message, and the editing alternates between the faces of German and American soldiers:

Men, it's been a long war, it's been a tough war. You have fought bravely, proudly for your country. You are a special group who have found in one another a bond that exists only in combat, among brothers of shared foxholes. Held each other in dire moments. Who've seen death and suffered together. I am proud to have served with each and every one of you. You deserve long and happy lives of peace.

This sequence demonstrates that the sense of comradeship among the German troops can be compared to Easy Company's atmosphere of brotherly care. Although from different sides, the General's speech can be applied to the American soldiers as well. The catastrophic situations in the battlefield that result in severe bodily damage and heartbreaking moments, can be possibly seen as universal experiences, that is, a common denominator related to human behavior during war struggles.

In many ways, *Band* reveals that violence, as a human fabrication, needs to be counterbalanced by the humanness. Violence and destruction can only make sense through the depiction of their other side: compassion. Aristotle in *Retórica das Paixões* defines compassion as a feeling of grief caused by an unfortunate incident of a destructive and painful nature that falls upon those who do not deserve it (53). He continues by remarking that people are able to feel compassion because they might also be exposed to such an unfortunate incident (53). The battlefield scenario in which soldiers find themselves during war films, that is, the constant exposition of their lives, cultivates the feeling of compassion when death or injury happens amongst them. In this sense, Spielberg's filmography is highly associated with the blending of compassion and violence in films like *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982) and *Schindler's List*. Both movies portray characters in situations that highlight their compassionate actions, and as a consequence, they are able to help or even save others, either from this planet or beyond.

Bearing this in mind, *Band* strives to counterbalance the depiction of destruction through constant displays of humanity.

Band of Brothers' focus on the personal stories of E-Company soldiers was an attempt to reconstruct the WWII experience of inner and outer destruction that was applied to a generation who witnessed its share of bloody episodes. The seemingly difficulty of representing traumatic and violent acts in their full spectrum, physically and emotionally, was a concern in the miniseries. The development of the graphically violent scenes connected with the emotional decline of the characters was an effort to cinematically convey the despair of a group of people trapped in a situation in which dying, killing, and maiming were commonplace episodes. In the last segment of the miniseries, Webster's final narration exemplifies this anxiety:

I wondered if people back home would ever know what it cost the soldiers to win this war. [...] How could anyone ever know the price paid by soldiers in terror, agony, and bloodshed, if they'd never been to places like Normandy, Bastogne or Haguenau?

It is through movies such as *Saving Private Ryan* and miniseries like *Band of Brothers* that the topic of inhuman conditions during wartimes is raised and discussed. No human being should ever be allowed to go through these bizarre and outrageous situations, let alone uninterrupted for years. By looking deeper into these graphic anti-war reenactments, it is possible to perceive that they portray the gory side of the conflict in order to advocate its absurdity. What can be seen as a spectacle of pyrotechnics, makeup artistry, and special effects, turn into a display of pain and loss of lives. The blood that flows from Tipper's mouth, Julian's neck, Toye and Guarnere's legs, and Jackson's head wound signifies their humanity as it is snatched away from them in moments of complete madness when human beings turn against each other. Hopefully, future academic investigations on violence and war films shall come into fruition through the study of the portrayal of graphic images not as simply meaningless moments of shock for the audience, but as significant instances of reflection upon human fragility.

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APPENDIX 1

Interview with the *Band of Brothers* cinematographer Remi Adefarasin in January 7, 2014 by email.

1) People comment on the creative freedom that HBO provides to the artists. How was your creative relationship with HBO while you were making *Band of Brothers*? Were there any restrictions?

Remi Adefarasin: As a cinematographer I didn't directly talk to HBO. We had a producer who was my contact. Tony To also produced *The Pacific*. In many ways, HBO is freer than network TV. You can show nudity, language & violence to a higher level if the story demands it.

2) Did you feel there was a difference in cinematography between shooting for television and for movies?

Adefarasin: No. It was 35mm film with a good camera & lens package. More resources than many UK feature films. Some massive lighting set ups. Other departments too had ample funding. Design /costume. The shots were just as carefully thought out as in a film. We shot wide frames without worrying about too many close ups.

3) What was the concept for the imagery of war in *Band of Brothers*?

Adefarasin: Researching original footage of the war. Programs like WW2 in colour and many documentaries were of great help. There are many iconic stills in books. Research & to me honest with the camera.

4) Some cinematic theories imply that television series tend to rely on close-up due to the size of the screen and avoid deep focus shots. Does the cinematography in *Band of Brothers* fall into this category?

Adefarasin: With modern TV's these are ancient ideas. We watch movies on TV don't we? CU's can be a way of covering scenes without seeing the background & thus save money. You can also cut your way out of mistakes that can happen with TV. Producers like cu's as they can manipulate the story in post.

5) What type of cameras and lenses were mostly used in *Band of Brothers*?

Adefarasin: Arri & Movicam. Arri have now bought Movicam & blended some of their ideas in to the latest Arri camera, the Arricam. A great camera I would always choose.

6) Were there sequences in which multiple cameras were used? Were they mostly battle sequences? Did it affect the lighting of the scene?

Adefarasin: We had 3 cameras all the time & sometimes more for massive scenes. It didn't really affect lighting as I'm quite clever at that. It did affect the operating. We wanted the lens to experience the war with the soldiers. With multiple cameras you would get the other cameras in shot so we were tempted to use long lenses. This just didn't look right so we sometimes used only one camera for colossal scenes. Perhaps hiding using the other cameras just to pick out an explosion or other big event.

7) What is your opinion about the explicit use of violence (exposed wounds, dismemberment) in WWII movies/miniseries?

Adefarasin: I hate violence but these were anti war films. You have to show the real horror and not just have men falling neatly out of frame. The horror has to be shown or it would just be entertainment.

8) In *Band of Brothers* the use of violence is extremely graphic. Do you think it adds meaning to the narrative of the miniseries or it is a purely superficial choice (just to call attention and get good ratings)?

Adefarasin: See above. HBO never worries about good ratings. Just wants a worthwhile product that is well crafted & respectable.

9) I'm working with some very specific passages concerning graphic violence. In episode 6 (Bastogne), there is a moment in which a soldier named Julian (around 27 minutes) is shot through his neck and his wounds are graphically shown. How was the experience of shot selection and preparation for this tense sequence?

Adefarasin: This episode was mostly shot on a stage. An unused airplane hangar. We follow the medic, Roe who is trying to collect medical supplies. Much tension but little actually happens at first. It was very disturbing to shoot many scenes. We knew it was fake as we were watching the SFX guys rigging the blood pumps. The whole series is based on real life events & during the shoot some of the veterans came and visited us. My operator, Martin Kenzie & I found tears running down our faces to see the men who had indeed survived the war. Shot selection is always to show the events in a realistic way.

10) There is another violent sequence in episode 8 (The Last Patrol) in which a soldier named Jackson is hit (around 40 minutes) and put on a table to receive emergency care in a very closed environment. Once again, how was the experience of filming such a tragic and nervous moment? Was there a particular concept in relation to camera movement and distance?

Adefarasin: The whole Jackson scene began earlier in the German house where the bomb exploded wounding him. The men had to carry him out, put him in a boat & get him to their side. We planned the climax with continuous action so the actors would be immersed in the scene. It was very strong. At this point we know the characters & how they react to things. Experiential was the word for the photography. To experience the events as closely as the soldiers did. So, Many good handheld shots. My team avoided using camera cranes & slow motion shooting. These tend to glorify the moment.

APPENDIX 2

Interview with the *Band of Brothers* cinematographer Joel J. Ransom in January 16, 2014 by email.

1) People comment on the creative freedom that HBO provides to the artists. How was your creative relationship with HBO while you were making *Band of Brothers*? Were there any restrictions?

Joel Ransom: No creative restrictions, to the best of my knowledge. But Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks had to take HBO producers out to dinner, to persuade them into letting us shoot in 1:78 aspect ratio.

2) Did you feel there was a difference in cinematography between shooting for television and for movies?

Ransom: I don't feel there is a difference in style for tv vs movie, anymore, in the 70's and 80's yes, but that was broken in the 90's. In my mind, it gets down to how much time and money you have. And everybody looks at things different. ie: Sense and Sensibility. Great production design makes everything look way better!

3) What was the concept for the imagery of war in *Band of Brothers*?

Ransom: I remember going to the war museum with the colorist, Luke Rainy, and we looked at a number of images for colour, but really, it was Steven's film "Private Ryan" that was the template.

4) Some cinematic theories imply that television series tend to rely on close-up due to the size of the screen and avoid deep focus shots. Does the cinematography in *Band of Brothers* fall into this category?

Ransom: Once again, everyone knew they had to answer to Steven, but they did hire very good directors, which is awesome, since it makes everyone's life so easy! You are right in the fact that tv does, in my mind, over use the close up, which is now the ECU, extreme close up, eyebrows to lips. It's ok some of the time, but not all the time. We also did some nice one'rs, scenes in one shot. Which at the end, it's the directors call.

I feel the show was shot more filmic.

5) What type of cameras and lenses were mostly used in *Band of Brothers*?

Ransom: Shot with arri's, 535's B, arri 3's, and I think the light weight movie cam since the show was mainly hand held. Lenses were zeiss super speeds and angenuiex zooms, if I recall correctly.

6) Were there sequences in which multiple cameras were used? Were they mostly battle sequences? Did it affect the lighting of the scene?

Ransom: I've always liked multiple cameras, every scene would have had at least 2 camera's, even the scenes that were shot in one, better to have the footage and never use it, vs wishing you had it. On the big battles and stunt scenes, I'm sure we would have had anywhere from 3 - 5 cameras rolling. Multiple cameras do make lighting more difficult, but you adapt. it's certainly not for every DP. But, you also sometimes get a better scene, by cross shooting,

7) What is your opinion about the explicit use of violence (exposed wounds, dismemberment) in WWII movies/miniseries?

Ransom: Extreme violence, I'm ok with it in the context of BoB, it's real, I think it's important not to sugar coat what happened. This is not a video game, but real life and these are the results. not a pleasant outcome. Also, I don't think we did violence just for shock value, but used it in a very real way, and sparingly, considering the content of the story.

8) In *Band of Brothers* the use of violence is extremely graphic. Do you think it adds meaning to the narrative of the miniseries or it is a purely superficial choice (just to call attention and get good ratings)?

Ransom: Kinda answered it, but I strongly feel we did not over do it for ratings, at some times I don't know if we went far enough. This is what these heroes actually went thru, and we can't do it justice what they went thru. Weaponry, climate, food, comfort, or lack of, think of the weapons now, vs then.

9) I'm working with some very specific passages concerning graphic violence. In episode 3 (Carentan), there is a moment in which a soldier named Tipper (around 19 minutes) enters a house and after an explosion he rejoins his fellow soldiers but is badly wounded. The injuries in his face, legs and feet are graphically shown. How was the experience of shot selection and preparation for this tense sequence?

Ransom: Mikael Salomon, was the director on ep.#3, he is wonderful! He wanted to arm the 50' techno in the window for the shot, then pull

back for the explosion, VFX put the glass in. It was and is, I think a very powerful shot, I learned a lot from him. It is tough to get the right shot for the right emotion at times. That's when it's great to have great communication with each other, hopefully we will get it right.

10) There is another violent sequence in episode 7 (The Breaking Point) in which the soldier Joe Toye loses part of his leg (around 32 minutes). Later on, in that same sequence, soldier Bill Guarnere comes to Toye's aid and is hit in the leg as well. Once again, how was the experience of filming such a tragic and nervous moment? Was there a particular concept in relation to camera movement and distance?

Ransom: Very powerful scene! Every show is different when it comes to death or dismemberment, sometimes we are laughing right up until action, other times it's just quite. We sometimes get lucky with the way certain scenes come together, the magic of it all. You start with an idea, ask for certain equipment, have it at your fingertips, and know how to use it all. I think David Frankle directed EP#7. Another very talented director! I can't really remember the exact details, but Dave would have had a blocking in mind, I just remember somewhere in that episode of seeing the explosions coming at them from the background, it reminded me of a shark swimming up on someone. Funny the things we think about on the day.

APPENDIX 3

Interview with one of the *Band of Brothers* directors Mikael Salomon in January 23, 2014 by email.

1) People comment on the creative freedom that HBO provides to the artists. How was your creative relationship with HBO while you were making *Band of Brothers*? Were there any restrictions?

Mikael Salomon: Very few restrictions. Not even running time was a restriction as long as we ended up around the 60 minute mark. We had 25 days to shoot a 1-hour episode, which is very generous.

2) Did you feel there was a visual difference in shooting for television and for movies? What about in terms of the narrative structure?

Salomon: Even though every episode has a beginning and an end - like most features - we had the advantage that several of the characters were already established in earlier episodes. We didn't have to start from scratch getting the audience emotionally involved with the characters.

3) Would you consider *Band of Brothers* a production that leans more toward film or television? In what ways?

Salomon: Obviously *Band* was made for television, but shooting it felt much more like shooting a feature. For several reasons: One, that the talent in front and behind the camera was top-notch, the budget resembled a feature, but more importantly the producers were there to help the director's vision and not – as on some TV productions – are there to execute a writer/showrunner's vision. We had a great deal of creative autonomy.

4) What is your opinion about the explicit use of violence (exposed wounds, dismemberment) in WWII movies/miniseries in general?

5) In *Band of Brothers* the use of violence is extremely graphic. Do you think it adds meaning to the narrative of the miniseries or it is a device for shock effect?

Salomon (4&5): The violence was always to attempt to show what war is like without being overly graphic. The intended audience in the US was an adult "Pay-cable" audience and there we're not ratings restrictions. Even so, we never showed gratuitous violence or for shock effect alone.

6) In your opinion, what's the importance of the veterans' interview in the beginning of each episode?

Salomon: The veteran's interview set up the mood for the audience showing them that the folks portrayed in the series were "real" and the stories were true.

7) In episode 3 (Carentan), there is a sequence in which Easy Company is attempting to take over Carentan. Was that sequence mostly shot on hand-held camera? How important was this choice for the general feeling of authenticity in the combat zone?

Salomon: Episode 3 was shot "traditional" when it comes to the more quiet scenes whereas the action scene were mostly shot handheld. We also used the "narrow shutter" at a 45 degree angle which created a stutter effect. We later reduced that to 90 degree as it could sometimes be difficult to identify the characters with the narrower shutter.

8) In *Saving Private Ryan* a device called Image Shaker was used to reach that aspect of vibration. Was that used in *Band of Brothers* as well?

Salomon: We used the Image Shaker on a few occasions, but mostly we depended on the more "organic" shake of a camera operator being jostled about.

9) I'm working with some very specific passages concerning graphic violence. Still in episode 3, there is a moment in which a soldier named Tipper (around 19 minutes) enters a drugstore and after an explosion he rejoins his fellow soldiers but is badly wounded. The injuries in his face, legs and feet are graphically shown. How was the experience of shooting and preparation for this tense sequence?

Salomon: For the aftermath of the explosion - where the soldier is comforted by a fellow soldier - we dug a hole in the sidewalk. It looks as if the actor is sitting on the sidewalk, when in reality his standing up in the hole and a pair of animated, prosthetic legs are in front of him creating the illusion that he is sitting down with his injured legs in front of him.

10) Concerning the same sequence from the previous question, right after the blast, the first reaction the audience sees is the shock of his fellow soldiers. Their facial expressions prepare us for what is coming

next. Do you think that by building this environment of shock it enhances the impact of the violent images of the character's wounds?

Salomon: There's no doubt that by cutting to the reactions prior to showing what happened you are making the audience brace themselves for a shock. In my opinion it makes the moment more tense.

11) By the end of episode 3, the weight of the death and injuries of several soldier fellows starts taking the toll. How important do you think it is to have more time to develop such connections and losses in the miniseries?

Salomon: No doubt will the audience have a deeper connection with characters they have followed for several episodes. Another advantage of the longer format is that you are able to introduce many more characters and give them enough time than you would have been able to do in a feature film.

APPENDIX 4

Interview with one of the *Band of Brothers* actors Bart Ruspoli in
January 16, 2014 by twitter.

1) What is your opinion about the explicit use of violence (exposed wounds, dismemberment) in WWII movies/miniseries?

Bart Ruspoli: Everything in Bob was authentic and research, right down to what injuries everyone suffered so none of the violence could be considered gratuitous. Although I do believe other ww2 films use it for shock effect.

2) In *Band of Brothers* the use of violence is extremely graphic. Do you think it adds meaning to the narrative of the miniseries or it is a purely superficial choice (just to call attention and get good ratings)?

Ruspoli: as I said above, none of it was gratuitous.

3) I'm working with some very specific passages concerning graphic violence. In episode 3 (Carentan), your character enters a drugstore and is wounded after an explosion. How did you prepare yourself emotionally for such a delicate scene?

Ruspoli: I spoke to Ed Tipper about it and what he remembered of the incident.

4) Right after the blast, the first reaction the audience sees is the shock of your fellow soldiers. Their facial expression prepares us for what is coming next. Do you think that by building this environment of shock, it enhances the impact of the violent images of your character's wounds?

Ruspoli: Yes, I do.

5) In relation to the same scene, your head, legs, and feet were very much affected. How was the prosthetic and makeup process of creating those wounds?

Ruspoli: I'm standing up in a hole. The legs are fake and are attached perpendicular to my waist.

APPENDIX 5

Interview with one of the *Band of Brothers* screenwriters Erik Bork in March 10, 2014 by email.

1) People comment on the creative freedom that HBO provides to the artists. How was your creative relationship with HBO while you were writing *Band of Brothers*? Were there any restrictions?

Erik Bork: I think HBO trusted Executive Producers Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg such that there was tremendous freedom.

2) Did you feel there was any difference in terms of narrative structure when writing an episode that does not contain commercial breaks?

Bork: Yes, in the sense that you don't have to "write to the act breaks" – meaning big cliff hangers or "uh oh" moments that will entice viewers to come back after the commercial.

3) How was the experience of writing for a miniseries that has such a great amount of characters (many of them with speaking roles) and multiple storylines?

Bork: Challenging! We had to condense and composite characters, to some extent, because there were so many in the actual history – too many for an audience to be able to follow them all (or to be cost-effective in terms of casting and production).

4) How was the process of researching in relation to the stories of the soldiers? Did you have any contact with the men themselves in order to write the episodes?

Bork: Yes, we had quite a bit of contact with the actual veterans (both the writers and the actors did), as well as access to Stephen Ambrose's book and research. This was tremendously helpful.

5) Once the script was done was there any involvement of the writers while the episode was being shot?

Bork: Yes, it depended on the episode. In some cases I was doing "production rewriting" during shooting.

6) Episode 8 (The Last Patrol) focuses on David Webster as a narrator. What was the criterion for that choice?

Bork: He had a helpful “outsiders” point-of-view on what the other vets had gone through at Bastogne, as well as being a writer (who had written a book about his experience), who we thought might be able to provide a thoughtful narrative voice as an observer of what was going on. It gave us a different perspective for that episode – a different character to see things through. (The original script used Lt. Jones for that purpose, but it was decided he was too much of an outsider to tell the story through his eyes.)

7) How important do you think it is to have a character as a narrator or as a focus during some of the episodes (for example Richard Winters in episode 5 or Carwood Lipton in episode 7)?

Bork: It was really helpful for us, so that episodes had a particular personal point-of-view, instead of just being miscellaneous events happening to a larger group, or random individuals. I think that tended to make things more compelling, relatable and emotional for the audience.

8) I'm working with some very specific passages concerning graphic violence. In episode 8, a soldier named Jackson is hit by an explosion and has some serious injuries to his face. How was the experience of writing such a tense and delicate scene?

Bork: It's hard for me to remember specifics, but I definitely felt the responsibility to get it right. It was a real event that triggered tension with the German prisoners they captured.

APPENDIX 6

Interview with one of the *Band of Brothers* actors Shane Taylor in April 20, 2014 by twitter.

1) What is your opinion on the use of graphic violence in several scenes in *Band of Brothers*?

Shane Taylor: You know that expression "War is Hell"? I think *Band's* violence was used with integrity, to support a much wider story.

2) In episode 7 there is a graphic scene in which soldiers lose their legs in battle. How was your preparation to shoot such a tense scene?

Taylor: Ask questions. Do the homework. Imagine. Commit.

3) In episode 8 a soldier has his face blasted by an explosive. Another dense scene, how was the overall feeling of shooting it?

Taylor: I think everybody just tapped into the intensity of the moment. And that was helped by having a great atmosphere off camera.