THESIS

THE PRESENTATION OF THE WARRIOR HERO AND THE SYMBOLISM OF DEATH

IN *APOCALYPSE NOW, BLACK HAWK DOWN*, AND *STOP-LOSS:*

A STUDY OF SCRIPT AND FILM TEXTS

Submitted by

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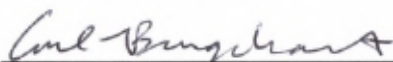Colorado State University

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY FERN ANITA KELLY ENTITLED THE PRESENTATION OF THE WARRIOR HERO AND THE SYMBOLISM OF DEATH IN *APOCALYPSE NOW, BLACK HAWK DOWN*, AND *STOP-LOSS:* A STUDY OF SCRIPT AND FILM TEXTS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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IN *APOCALYPSE NOW, BLACK HAWK DOWN* AND *STOP-LOSS*:

A STUDY OF SCRIPT AND FILM TEXTS

This thesis discusses the presentation of archetypal characters and the depiction of death in both the scripts and films for *Apocalypse Now, Black Hawk Down* and *Stop-Loss*. The project's main focus is on how ideals are presented differently at different time periods and because of shifting public opinions of a conflict. It emphasizes the difference between the post-Vietnam War film and the post-9/11 War film in their presentation of American ideals through their main character and depiction of death. This thesis also suggests a curriculum using the War film genre in a composition classroom to encourage student's analysis of script and film texts and aid in the production of multimodal texts.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Little scholarly work has been done that includes both the script and film's texts for analysis. Although a few authors have discussed the film script along with the film this relatively small sub section of film studies seems to be growing (Kipen, Boon, Lipari and Worland). Screenwriting or script writing lends itself to analysis because it has clear and well-established norms, very similar to playwriting. Inherent in each of these scripts is some sort of ideology that the films then expand or amplify when it is put on-screen.

The rhetorical analysis of script is important to me because it is what I would describe as the "primary document." What you see on film is based on the script. While certain things are changed, cut out or re-imagined, the story itself, the characters and ideologies present in the script, are also present in the film. The examination of script allows for a more in-depth look at the film as a whole. In a script one can examine the text on the page, see the action (description of what is on screen), the word choice, the dialog, and how characters are built in the text. Then on screen we see the remediation that occurs; how things have changed into a visual medium amplifying what we see in the script. The types of shots, the lighting, the delivery of lines, and the selection of actors all play a role in how we as an audience perceive the film because of how the film builds on the script text. How the

screenwriter originally perceives the content of the script might be different than the way that the director and cinematographer end up shooting it.

For this thesis I focus on the genre of War films because it is a well-known genre with established norms. War films, regardless of classification (anti-war, thriller etc), are unique in presenting a highly controversial topic. Even if a film is intended to be anti-war, depicting lead characters as heroic soldiers, presenting graphic violence and purposeful death glorifies war and goes against the anti-war stance. The violence we see on-screen desensitizes the audience and may draw them away from the message of the film. This dual issue of the ideological message and the visual content adding to or taking away from the message of the film as a whole is something that I examine throughout the project.

I use the script text and the visual text for two post-9/11 War films and compare them to one post-Vietnam film to show the difference between the time periods and the ideology. The shifting public sentiment towards war and the American soldier affects the presentation of the soldier in these films. *Apocalypse Now* (1979) provides a starting point to show the changes in the presentation of war and the warrior hero from the WWII War film to the Vietnam War film. I then use *Black Hawk Down* (2001) and *Stop-Loss* (2007) to examine the ideology of post-9/11 films, noting the shift in their presentation of the warrior hero and their presentation of death that appear closer to WWII narratives than Vietnam ones.

Methodology

My project will use both rhetorical and film analysis to examine scenes from *Apocalypse Now, Black Hawk Down,* and *Stop-Loss.* I examine the scripts for the

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presentation of character archetypes and how these types inevitably shape the character we see on screen and what ideals they portray on screen as a result. I present a close reading and viewing of script and film to examine how the main characters and the presentation of death suggest a certain ideology surrounding war and the warrior hero. Along with a close reading of the script I explain how these descriptions play out on screen, expanding visually upon the written script.

I examine the protagonists of each of the films, keeping in mind classical archetypes and those that I have picked out as common character types within the War film. The three character types—the war-ravaged veteran, the idealist, and the new guy—fit into my discussion of the protagonists in addition to the archetypes of hero, antihero and fallen hero. I explore the individual character's and their presentation both in script and on screen, how they overlap with character norms, how they are shown on screen versus how they are described in the script, and, finally and most importantly how all these elements tie together to form the rhetorical and ideological message presented by the film as a whole. The examination of the presentation of death within the films expands on how certain ideals are perpetuated within these films. With this in mind, I set the following questions as guidelines for the thesis.

Research Questions

-What is the main ideological message presented in film and script? How does this message affect the other elements in the script and film?

-How are masculinity, bravery, duty to country, and American patriotism/idealism shown in the films, both in the script and the film as a whole through the individual

characters and in the depiction of death?

-How does this type of analysis tie into a rhetoric and composition classroom? What can it do for our students?

Literature Review

Given the focus of the thesis, this literature review will give a brief overview of relevant detail regarding film and script analysis, why I chose to focus on war films (specifically the three I chose) and how rhetoric and composition ties into this type of script and film study. The film and script analysis types provide a brief framework for the analysis I do in later chapters. I provide the background regarding War films in the following chapter.

Chapter two, the American War film and its connection the Western, provides background specific to the War film genre. This chapter will help readers understand how each of these films fits into the American War film continuum and explains any details necessary to understand my analysis and discussion throughout the thesis. Chapter 3, heroic archetypal characters and their presentation in *Apocalypse Now*, *Black Hawk Down*, and *Stop-Loss*, provides an analysis of the characters and their character types in the three films. Chapter 4, the presentation of and the ideological implication placed on death, focuses on the presentation in the films and the ideological implications of those deaths. Finally chapter 5, Rhetoric and Composition Pedagogy: The use of the film script in the classroom, applies the analysis of script and film to the field of Rhetoric and Composition.

Film and Script Analysis

Film studies has a wide variety of lenses to pick from, however, I focus on two

main types of analyses, mise-en-scène analysis and a rhetorical analysis of what is presented on script and on screen. Mise-en-scène analysis, as presented by John Gibbs, and the script analysis, suggested by Kevin Alexander Boon, provide the framework for my analysis of script and film.

Mise-en-scène analysis is the main type of visual film analysis I use to examine the films.[1] Mise-en-scène, according to John Gibbs, is the study of the "contents of the frame and they way that they are organised"(5). Mise-en-scène analysis, he also notes, is one of the most accessible for non-film scholars because there is less focus on terminology. The focus is instead placed on the analysis of what is in the frame and the relationship between the style and the meaning (98). Mise-en-scène analysis includes, but is not limited to: lighting, costume, decor, actors, framing, camera movement and position, audience's view, color, choice of lens, props, use of space, distance from the action, movement and focus, cinematography and the interaction of all these elements (Gibbs, Dix). However, for this thesis I focus on what I see as key elements for each scene I examine. I relate the scene analysis only where it is applicable to the ideology presented in the film. One of the most important things that Gibbs notes is the idea that a film is self-selecting a view of a fictional world (26): there is a range of choices made by the filmmaker; it is those choices that change what we view in the film. He also notes the importance of casting which can have "consequences for our understanding" (33). The most important element in regard to War film is the use of the camera because as he notes, "the position of the camera governs our access to the action. How we experience a given set of events is

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[1] There are a variety of ways that the term "mise-en-scène" is written by film scholars, I have chosen to write the term the way that Gibbs does in his book.

going to be profoundly affected by the nature of the view, or views, with which we are presented" (19). The elements that I will focus on are the positioning of the camera, type of shot, distance from the events and the focus and the emphasis on specific elements within the frame and how these affect the ideology of the film.

Kevin Alexander Boon discusses the notion that the script should be examined along with the film because it gives a broader understanding of the film. In *Script Culture and the American Screenplay* Boon argues that the study of the screenplay is different than film studies as a whole for several main reasons; the most important being that the main "text" of study will be the script instead of the film. Although reference will be made the visual cinematic version, the focus will be on the script. Boon positions the author of the script as the author of the film, instead of the common conception of the director as the "auteur." He argues that examining the script will help to illuminate student's understanding of text. He seems to suggest that the script should be studied separately from the film instead of alongside of it. I would argue it would be more helpful to do both. I equate the idea of examining the script without the film is like trying teach or analyze music without listening to the audio version. Looking at the lyrics alone or looking at the sheet music, but not knowing what it sounds like sung or played, or how fast or slow it ends up sounding seems strange. I believe you have to examine both if you truly want a broader understanding of the film.

With this analysis in mind, I chose to focus on War films. I believe that, as a genre, War films present a unique view of American society and commonly depict a deeper and more complicated ideology than many other popular genres. Their

commonality in the American film system and their use of particular archetypes and norms within films of this genre offer a particularly useful focus. I picked three American films because it seemed like an appropriate sample size for comparing what I did. They each depict war, the warrior hero and death in different ways. *Apocalypse Now* is now considered a military classic, a film that evades simple classification; it presents a rich background of literature for available study. *Black Hawk Down* represents a recent War film that attempts to give an accurate depiction of what conflict is like and what can happen when things go wrong. *Stop-Loss*, though not commercially successful like the other two, presents the problems of returning soldiers. It shows the problems associated with the policy of stop-loss being used to force soldiers to re-enlist. (This policy has been called a back-door draft and is—or was depending on the source—included on standard contracts for members of the U.S armed forces. Any branch of the military could extend any contract in time of war when men were needed.) Additionally each film shows a different location and conflict: Vietnam, Somalia and Iraq. The three different physical locations suggest that these issues are not just limited to one location or conflict, but are an issue across the board. Each film presents a different perspective on war in the War film. *Apocalypse Now* shows the horror and pointlessness of war. *Black Hawk Down* has been described as an extraction film (Doherty 216); it shows the warrior in a positive light, but war in a realistic and potentially negative light. *Stop-Loss*, the most recent film, is more of a commentary on returning from war and then having to go back, something that we do not always see in War films.

Rhetoric and Composition

While the use of film and script in a composition classroom will be discussed in a later chapter, I wish to explain how I see the examination of script to be valuable to students. As part of an increasingly technologically savvy student population the students in our composition classrooms come to the table with a variety of skills and different levels of understanding regarding multimedia. What we hope to teach them is a critical analysis and awareness of a text—written, visual and aural. Film provides a way to teach this awareness in a classroom. While we may not have access to a lot of technology in many of our classrooms, encouraging students to view a film or a film clip with a critical eye is crucial within a liberal arts education.

Using a film script as a part of a class can help to develop critical thinking. I argue this point more in the last chapter. The use of a script alongside a film in a composition classroom can help students to understand the reciprocal process of writing and revising. Examining a script, sometimes one that is quite different than the film version, suggests that people in the real world continually revise their texts, it is not just students in an English composition classroom that revise. This understanding of a text—as both an alphabetic text and a visual text—and the choices that each in term makes, fosters the skills already being developed in a composition classroom. Instead of just looking at textual arguments and viewing a final product, examining an unfinished text, one that changes from one form to another, provides a different approach to teaching about process. The final chapter reviews relevant literature and makes suggestions about the use of the script and film in a composition classroom. This chapter includes a brief lesson plan, sample

assignments and an overview of the units that might occur in this type of a composition course.

Chapter 2: THE AMERICAN WAR FILM AND ITS CONNECTION TO THE WESTERN

Depending on the scholar, genres are separated into different categories. Susan Hayward, quoting Stephen Neale, suggests that there are "three main categories of film: narrative film, avant-garde film and documentary. He reserves the term 'sub-genres' to refer to what we term film genres" (167). Genre studies today focuses on these sub-genres. The most popular or most often discussed as genre films are the Western, Gangster film, Film Noir, the Musical and War film (Braudy; Warshow). Hayward describes genre as not pure and ever changing. "Genre can be identified by the iconography and conventions operating with in it. But genre is also a shifting and slippery term so it is never fixed and, as we have seen, what makes genre have meaning is constantly changing" (171). Hayward also notes that genres produce subgenres and that the ideology within these films can reinforce already held beliefs:

> For example, sub-genres of the war movie are Resistance films, certain
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> colonial films, prisoner of War films, spy films (most of which cross
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> boundaries with the thriller genre) and so on...genre cannot be seen as
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> discrete and ideologically pure...As Robin Wood (1992, 478) makes clear,
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> genres are not 'safe' but are ideologically inflected. Ideological inflections
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> within film genre find representation through a series of binary

oppositions which, among other hegemonic 'realities', reinforce gender distinctions (Hayward 167).

Robin Wood, in his piece "Ideology, Genre, and Auteur," discusses the ideology that comes across in film; he specifically discusses capitalism, marriage, technology, and success and wealth. Wood notes that the list above and the definition of the ideal male, and subsequently female, are a part of the "American Capitalist Ideology" (718) in American films. He notes that there is an "ideal male: the virile adventurer, the potent untrammeled man of action" (719). Wood focuses on these archetypal ideals within a variety of films from different genres and eras. I use Wood's idea of the ideal male to suggest that this same character is one we see present in War films. This "ideal male" ideology plays a role in the development of the warrior hero type in War films. We see that there is a difference in the presentation of this ideology pre and post-Vietnam in War films. While there are certain realities, discussed below, that remain the same, there are certain issues that are brought to the forefront in post-Vietnam films; war is not as idealized and there is a focus on realism.

Within the genre of the War film there are a variety of norms and expectations in the presentation of the subject, specifically how the characters are portrayed in certain circumstances. These norms have been established as a result of many years of film making in this genre. However, they are greatly influenced and shaped by the Hollywood movie system. The narrative structure of Hollywood films and scripts emphasize character. War films focus on a small set of characters and there is a set of narratives that remain consistent across the genre. The focus on a

small group of characters and the emphasis on individual characters within War films provide an introductory framework for the analysis of script for underlying ideologies. The genre's focus on these small groups has not changed, but the treatment of character types has shifted to become more cynical in nature. We see that characters and death are depicted differently dependent on the time period in which the film was made. The genre itself tends to be easily identifiable due to the use of guns and violence, focus on armed conflict and a small group of soldiers within a War. What has changed over time is what the character types represent and how the films present violence and death.

The Western and the War film share many commonalities. Many of the ideals depicted are the same, the portrayal of heroism and the inherent masculinity of those characters, the necessary use of violence and key character types are shared. It is important to have an understanding of the ideals that are presented in one to truly understand the other.

The genre, both of Westerns and of War films, represent much of our cultural history in the United States and show our experiences and expectations surrounding the West, expansionism, imperialism and nationalistic pride. They depict the ideals of masculinity and democracy and the shifting power dynamics at play in the films. Richard Etulain suggests that Hollywood Westerns were successful because "they closely paralleled cultural trends in American society" (viii). The same is true for War films. When the United States is at war the War films made during that time period tend to both mirror and question popular sentiment. I propose that there is a

connection between the focus on rugged individualism, the importance of heroism, duty to fellow soldiers and patriotic duty to country in War films post-9/11.

Robert Warshow discusses what he calls "the Westerner." He describes the Western hero as a "figure of repose" (704). The physical location of the Western provides a space where "men are men." Owning property other than a horse and a gun are irrelevant. There is no desire to take jobs and get ahead; there is nowhere to get ahead. Warshow even describes the Western hero as a man of leisure (705). Given the landscape, "guns constitute the moral center of the Western movie" (705). This is the case with War films as well: guns represent power.

> There is little cruelty in Western movies, and little sentimentality; our eyes are not focused on the sufferings of the defeated but on the deportment of the hero. Really it is not violence at all which is the 'point' of the Western movie, but a certain image of man, a style, which expresses itself most clearly in violence (Warshow 716).

Phillip French also describes the Western hero as an archetype in the "Model Western." In these films "the hero is the embodiment of good" (48). Most importantly he notes this type of Western hero appears in early Westerns. This character has since become less one-dimensional; he is a more nuanced and less idealistic character. Westerns, like War films since the 1970's, have also made a shift in their tone. The issues they address and how they present their heroes has shifted. However, French argues that this shift in the Western began in the 1940's - 1950's:

> [The hero] is upright, clean-living, sharp-shooting, a White Anglo-Saxon
> Protestant who respects the law, the flag, women and children; he dresses

smartly in white clothes and rides a white horse which is his closest companion; he uses bullets and words with equal care, is a disinterested upholder of justice and uninterested in personal gain. He always wins (48).

This same "Model Western" hero is the same hero that we see in early War films, specifically those released during and after soon after WWII. The hero is good, righteous and always makes the right choices in combat and in his outside life. Films like *Sergeant York* (1941) present us with this ideal White Anglo-Saxon protestant.

Other scholars share this view of the Western film shifting to include more social commentary and depicting more violence in the 1960's and 70's. Richard Robertson seems to share in the idea that Westerns made a shift towards the social. "All of these themes, race, sex, violence, and deep psychological motivation, characterize Westerns of the 1960s and 70s" (44). Also he notes the shift, like that in War films, to a different presentation of violence.

> Violence has always been central to the Western, but it was a stylized and predictable violence. Wounds were administered to acceptable parts of the body; arms and shoulders were heavily favored. Bullets seemed to just graze the skull. And when men died they did so cleanly and quickly, even the villains (44).

He goes onto argue that this stylized violence went out in the 1960's and 70's. The type he describes above was popular among earlier Westerns whereas the ones that became popular later showed a more graphic sort of violence. The type of and depiction of violence shifts, but the use of a powerful main character does not. The protagonist in Westerns and War films present a heroic type.

Warshow notes that the Western "hero is one who looks like a hero" (716). The most famous Western hero without a doubt is John Wayne. Both in Westerns and in War films he represents the ideal hero. "Wayne is America; not ordinary America, but super-America, an embodiment of our nationalism, our jingoistic, self-image of success, triumph, and dominance" (McDonald 53). This is due to his prevalence in the films of these genres with his reoccurring strong character; a few key characters of this type are shown in *Stagecoach* (1939), *The Fighting Seebees* (1944), *They Were Expendable* (1945), *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949) *Red River* (1948), and *The Green Berets* (1968). Wayne in his many roles in War films "came to personify American military bravura and sacrifice" (Lenihan 87) and through these roles became "America's quintessential military hero" (91). Although he enraged many critics and scholars on the left with *The Green Berets* this film depicts an earlier idealized version of War similar to many WWII films. Many of the films that Wayne was in earlier presented many of the same ideals, national pride, support for the soldier, but had positive receptions. The idea of what makes a war hero by this point had shifted because of Vietnam. At this point there was a shift to questioning; is there in fact a war hero anymore? Instead of the clear message of patriotism shown in *The Green Berets* we see a sense of cynicism and lack of support for the war effort.

It has been argued that the War film presents an overly simplified view of war and the warrior. "In a war movie we might see that war is bad, but only because of the effect that it has on the characters - we do not learn about the causes of the war, nor do they get examined" (Hayward 65). We see the characters as individuals.

We rarely see the motivating factors behind the conflict. Warshow notes something similar in regards to the use of violence and his discussion of character in War films.

> In war movies, to be sure, it is possible to present the uses of violence within a framework of responsibility. But there is the disadvantage that modern war is a cooperative enterprise; its violence is largely impersonal, and heroism belongs to a group more than to the individual. The hero of a war movie is most often simply a leader, and his superiority is likely to be expressed in a denial of the heroic: you are not supposed to be brave, you are supposed to get the job done and stay alive (this of too, of course, is a kind of new heroic posture, but a new--and 'practical'--one). (715)

The War film is a mode of communication and a regulation of the sentiments of viewers. The narrative we are shown influences our sentiment and perception of war. David Slocum, in "Cinema and the Civilizing Process," discusses a variety of the issues surrounding the use of violence in film to influence social behavior. Slocum comments on Schatz's idea of Hollywood's military Ur-narrative, "which includes prescribed standards of behavior and morality as well as conventions for imagining combat, fighting and killing"(35). The narratives we see depict cultural values.

> Through narratives about the battlefront and the home front alike, cinema helped to position viewers not only relative to the current political environment but more broadly into a constructed realm of reassurance about timeless and empowering American values and, especially, the manifest destiny of the United States. (Slocum 40)

Another theorist, Sharon Downey, posits a specific way that these narratives are put together. She notes five defining elements of the narrative structure of the War film as a genre: "the mission, the justification for involvement in the war, the development of the symbiotic relationship within the unit to survive, the stark and open landscape, and the elevation of characters above the madness and violence of war" (Downey 117).

These elements are important to War film as a genre. I examine the character types put forth in the genre, how they have changed over time and how they change from script to screen. The importance is placed on the camaraderie between men, the ideals of masculinity, importance of strong relationships and the way that death is portrayed. There is an important and notable shift from the War films of the pre-Vietnam era to the post-Vietnam era. However, there are also smaller shifts within eras. *Apocalypse Now* is representative of the sentiment war is bad and the soldier is a tool for destruction in war. *Black Hawk Down* presents the image of a post-9/11 war hero. It goes back to that more positive version of death for your fellow soldiers and the patriotism in that choice. When public support for the war shifts again we get films like *Stop-Loss* that question the cost of war.

From this literature and viewing of American War films I have developed several main character types that appear in most War films. These character types are by no means static, nor all inclusive, but the three types described below are found in a wide array of combat films from different eras. Within these archetypal characters we see other character types presented in the film. The three main character types are the war-ravaged veteran (an experienced soldier), the idealist (a

soldier with strong ideals and conviction) and the new guy (a soldier who is new or relatively new to combat). The war-ravaged veteran character is usually a very powerful presence on screen. These characters are warriors in every sense of the word; they are well trained, able to give and execute orders without problem, are natural leaders and represent an idealized version of masculinity and what it means to be a Western man. The idealist character is a soldier who joined up for moral reasons—he wanted to make a difference. He wanted to serve his country and has an abundance of pride and patriotism; war is something that his military can make a difference in and he believes he can make a difference on an individual level. The new guy character is new to war and has very different ideas of what war is than the actual physical reality of war. The new guy is a character who makes a lot of mistakes because of his lack of knowledge for how things really work. All of these character types come out of the film psychologically and many times physically wounded, but regardless of what else happens they are irreparably changed in some way.

Each of these types is presented differently in films from different eras. War films released during World War II and until the start of the Vietnam conflict tend to present idealistic characters in a positive light, as men who have principles. Post-Vietnam films present idealistic characters as naive or misguided, showing the death or disillusionment of idealistic characters. Again after 9/11 there was another shift in the presentation of idealistic characters in War films. Idealists were once again shown to be patriotic and heroic.

In these films the focus remains on the characters and not on the systemic issues that led to the conflict in the first place. However, this focus on the characters, specifically on lead characters, offers a way to present many of these issues in more subtle ways. The protagonist, as the focus in these films, shapes the ideology. The presentation of the lead character is one of the biggest changes in the pre and post-Vietnam films. The heroic leader character type is not always shown the same way in post-Vietnam films. Instead we see the lead character as an antihero or fallen hero type. We see Willard's character in *Apocalypse Now* as a leader, but filling in the role as an antihero. He is far from the exemplar of a great leader. However, many of the post-9/11 films start to make a return to the types of heroes we see in WWII combat films. A key example here is Sergeant Eversmann in *Black Hawk Down*. He may not always be sure of his role, but always makes the best decision in the situation. The presentation of death and the characters attitudes towards it also made a shift. The death of a new, or relatively new, innocent or inexperienced hero is depicted in different films in differing lights.

War films present a mediated image of war and the warrior hero. The presentation of war, the men involved in it, why they got involved and how death is dealt with has changed based on a variety of outside factors. The character types we see in War films are the same, but how they are presented changes through different eras like the shifts that were discussed earlier regarding Westerns. Earlier films, especially those in the 1940's and 1950's present the idea of war as heroic, duty to country as patriotic and death in battle as honorable. Many films from this era present the idea that war is heroic and it is one's patriotic duty to serve. *Sergeant*

York (1941) presents its hero as one who is against war to begin with, but ends up saving his own men in an act of heroism. (As noted above, the character of Sergeant York also represents the White Anglo Saxon Hero.) *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957) shows some of the indecision in the lower ranks, but Alec Guinness' character in the film serves as a model of the ideal leader. *Bridge* presents the end of era with its focus on the expectations of war. Guinness' character, while clearly obsessed with finishing the bridge and seems to be slightly crazy, he remains true to the ideals of what men are expected to do when captured as prisoners of war.

There are films today that present a similar WWII ideology and there are films that critique these same ideals as well. The modern notion, especially post-9/11, surrounding War films is "love the soldier and hate the war." I will argue that this shift started to occur in the War film around the time of the Vietnam conflict. Films like *Apocalypse Now* (1979) opened the doors to more critical version of the War film. The presentation of the war itself is less idealized; we see through the eyes of the soldier under the influence of drugs. We see a shift from more idealized versions, idealized violence and death, seeing warriors in a positive light as patriotic Americans doing their duty and having a moral compass. With *Apocalypse Now* we start to see the military as broken. There is no celebration of duty, nor is death for a bigger cause.

We see this shift across the board in the late 1960's and 1970's. There was a switch to showing a stylized version of violence to depicting death and violence with no meaning—there is no focus on the patriotism behind service. There are many earlier films that start to set up the norms established in the 1960's and 1970's, such

as *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) and *Paths of Glory* (1957). These films still did not show the same level of graphic violence as later films. They did, however, start to question the sense of patriotism and the role that military authority plays on the men in battle. Even as late as 1963 films like *The Great Escape* (1963) show a stylized version of violence and show all American troops (and in this film other Allied troops) following their orders to escape. Though this film comes at a time where there is shift in the mentality regarding soldierly duty, it demonstrates that trends in ideology cannot be lumped fully into eras.

These two shifts continue today. War films have become increasingly more violent, but there is also a shift in the presentation of the soldier and the war. Today films are continually influenced by politics outside of the movie making system. The "norm" of the War movie genre, if one looks at the films of the past 10 years, especially those since 2001, seem to have made another shift towards this ideal of patriotism and focus on the individual soldier. However, the patriotic celebration is no longer shown at the same level as in the WWII era films. *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), a well-received WWII film focusing on the heroism and duty to country of one unit, sets the tone for the films of the 2000's. Films like *Black Hawk Down* (2001) and *We Were Soldiers* (2002) focus on the heroism within a unit and the meaningful sacrifice in battle. Films recently released, such as *Stop-Loss* (2007), *The Hurt Locker* (2008) and *The Messenger* (2009) continue the notion of celebrating the soldier but questioning the war itself. Here I am arguing what might seem to be two contrary points: newer films focusing on the patriotism of a group and the shift in the most recently released films questioning these patriotic ideals. I see these two

trends as parallel. When we see a higher death toll of our own soldiers, we see a shift toward questioning why we go to war. Whereas, when a conflict is just getting started, there is a great deal more hope toward making positive changes in the world we are fighting in. However, both these types focus on the group of men as a unit and as individuals making them similar in tone. And as we see sentiments shift in the American public we see the presentation of the soldier in war or at home shift as well.

American War films, both pre and post-Vietnam, focus on the emotional impact of war on the individual soldier. However, it is in the post-Vietnam films that we see this emotional impact amplified. The focus is placed on the destruction of the individual. The focus on the characters does not show us the reasoning for the war, the larger systems, and the justification for conflict at the larger institutional level; our view is obscured by the emphasis on the individual. The fact that these issues are never openly discussed within the films does not mean that there are not political issues and ideals that come through via the characters and what they represent.

> Think of the Vietnam War films made by Hollywood – even if the representation of that war is harrowing to watch and war, thereby, is not glamorized (as it was in films about the Second World War), the complex set of historical circumstances whereby the United States got enmeshed in that war is not touched on – rather it is the psychological effect of the war on GI Joe that we see. If, in a war-context, a cause is given at all then it

is in the form of an individual (as with Hitler and the Second World War). (Hayward 65)

To reiterate, there is a lot of crossover between War films and Western films; many of the character types are similar, they tend to deal with social issues on the fringe, and they have certain norms that apply to most of the films within their genre. There are of course exceptions. However, most Westerns and War films focus on a struggling individual(s), mostly men or masculinized women characters. The noted shift from simplified violence to more graphic violence in the 1960's and 70's is a change from the treatment of war in films of the eras preceding the 1950's. Before the Vietnam era we saw a more idealized version of war and death on screen. We saw characters die quickly and little blood was shown in older films. We now see a shift to handheld cameras, close ups on faces, and bodies covered in blood, literally immersing the audience in the violence, visually and aurally. In earlier WWII films, heroic leader characters might have been presented as great leaders with no self-doubts; now we see the doubt and confusion behind their choices. *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) is a key example of an exception demonstrating the horror of war. However, the type of violence shown on screen in that film is quite different than films like *Apocalypse Now* and *Black Hawk Down*. Yes, *All Quiet* shows war as an "appalling waste of a nation's youth"(Kelly 28), however, newer anti-war films present this message in a more graphic way. However, *All Quiet* is frequently cited as one of the first big anti-war pictures and cannot be discounted as having influence on these later films.

We see in the shifting presentation of character types and violence as sort of cultural mirror. Many War films and Westerns that were made during WWII and were commercially successful come across as overdone or even campy to a modern audience. The overwhelming presentation of patriotism and national pride is immediately obvious in these older films. However, we clearly see a crossover of these characters in newer films and we do occasionally get a film that very clearly promotes a historical or political agenda. We see this same sense of humanism and heroism in modern films as well; films like *Valkyrie* (2008) and *Pearl Harbor* (2001) are a clear ideological throwback to earlier WWII films. Films like *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) would have been unimaginable before the War films of the Vietnam era. Both the presentation of violence and the topics addressed through this film would have been impossible before films like *Apocalypse Now.* The change in the popular view of war is partly the reason for the shift in the way that characters and death are portrayed in these films. We see in the next two chapters the differences between the presentation of the warrior hero in the post-Vietnam film *Apocalypse Now*, the post-9/11 film *Black Hawk Down* and the post-9/11 film with a shift in support for the war *Stop-Loss.*

CHAPTER 3: HEROIC ARCHETYPAL CHARACTERS AND THEIR PRESENTATION IN *APOCALYPSE NOW, BLACK HAWK DOWN* AND *STOP-LOSS*

In the following chapter I will examine the ideology presented through the main characters and the hero archetypes that they represent in *Apocalypse Now, Black Hawk Down, and Stop-Loss*, both in the script and on film.[2] After a brief discussion of hero archetype I focus on the way that the film amplifies and adapts the ideology in the script. The chapter focuses on how each of the main characters is presented in the script and then how he is presented in the film. I focus on textual elements within the script that are important to the character. When I analyze the film I examine how the film expands on the script and how certain images and shots are used to amplify the message in the script.

Each of the films presents a different ideological stance towards the armed forces, war and the soldiers fighting in it; each was made during a shift in public support for a war. *Apocalypse Now* was filmed when there was little public support for the Vietnam War. The negative feeling toward the military showed the sentiment that the military was broken. *Apocalypse Now* shows the military as broken in many ways throughout the films. *Black Hawk Down*, released after 9/11, presents the U.S. military as the protector of freedom. The positive image of the American soldier as a warrior hero is crucial to the ideology of entering into "a just war" to save people

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[2] I use he as the generic pronoun in this chapter because the characters I am speaking about are all male and the literature that discusses hero archetypes also use this same pronoun

from genocide. The attitude surrounding "just war" shows the desire to be a patriot and to fight for one's country, an attitude prevalent in the United States at that time. The conflict depicted in *Black Hawk Down* shows the short-lived deployment to Mogadishu, Somalia. However, the reason the patriotic sentiments ran high at the time of the film's release was the Bush administration's "War on Terror." The focus on the individual soldiers within the conflict emphasizes the patriotic idealism and acknowledges that the individuals fighting are the important component in war, not the military as a whole. The focus on the soldiers is the crucial component; they are fighting for a just and moral cause—human rights. However, by the time *Stop-Loss* was filmed there was a shift in the support of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Instead of the idea "a just war" this film presents the attitude of "love the soldier and hate the war" because of this shift. These films, while from different time periods, have one main thing in common: the main character presents the majority of the ideology. The main characters, in representing a particular character type, help to depict the film's ideological stance on war. Each of these films pulls from a set of common archetypes for their lead characters. These common archetypes, developed over years of story telling, in turn influence the way in which the audience interprets the film.

Heroic Archetypes

The archetypes that are presented in these films are common in War films. These archetypes include the hero, the antihero and the fallen hero. Archetypal characters present a particular mythos that we as a western audience understand and accept. Joseph Campbell suggests, "the hero is the man of self-achieved

submission" (16). The hero character leads the life and makes the choices that will ultimately lead to his death, either metaphoric or literal; this individual chooses his path realizing it will lead to his destruction because it is the right thing to do. William Indick discusses the antihero and the fallen hero; many of the characters we consider heroes better represent the antihero archetype. John Wayne and Humphrey Bogart are two notable figures that Indick notes have been type cast in this role (22). "[The antihero] gets his way by breaking laws rather than enforcing them" (Indick 22). He suggests that there are several different types of antiheroes, but they always have to change from self-centered goals to moral ones. The fallen hero is similar to the antihero in presentation but his motivation is different. The antihero's goals are usually self-centered, whereas the fallen hero wants to change and become less self-focused. However, he makes the wrong choices in attempting this change, ultimately leading to his destruction. A "fallen hero is doomed" (24) as a result of his choices past and present. Indick compares the choices of the fallen hero to being stuck in quicksand; the choices that the fallen hero makes only dig him deeper. We see these character types in War films throughout different eras of American cinema. What has changed, and continues to change, is how they are presented in the film based on the time period the film was made.

Historical Framework

As discussed in the previous chapter we see a shift in the War films from the WWII era, to the Vietnam era, and then again after 9/11. Earlier WWII films, those of the 1940's and the early 1950's, present the hero archetypes almost as stereotypes. The characters are one-dimensional. The men who are heroic types in those eras

represent certain ideologies and meet a certain set of expectations: heroes are strong, masculine, always make the right decisions and never question their role in the bigger picture. If they do question their role they do it in a way that results in positive changes for the military. Films, especially those with John Wayne as a protagonist, like *The Fighting Seebees* (1944), *They Were Expendable* (1945), and *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949) show an ideal leader character. For example, in *The Fighting Seebees* we see Wayne's character lobby for his own men to become fighters. He goes from being a supporter of the war as a part of business to helping come up with the Seebees (Construction Battalions) and in true heroic fashion he makes the ultimate sacrifice to save his men. In these films and others of the time there is a strong sense that there is something worth fighting and dying for: the country of the United States and the ideals that the military represents for these men through their duty to one another. The characters only interest is in protecting their men and remaining true to their own ideal version of war and the role warriors play in it. They follow their own moral guidelines for what is right. Their sense of morality is guided by the understanding that the United States is righteous and serves as protectors of freedom. Morality to these characters is killing a tyrannical and almost animalistic enemy. There is no sense of compassion when viewing this enemy because this enemy is depicted as cruel and inhuman.

In the 1960's-1970's there is a noted shift in the presentation of the hero archetype. These same hero archetypes are presented in more three-dimensional ways; post-Vietnam films use the same archetypes as a method of critique. These characters complicate our notions of what it means to be a hero. They question what

is expected of a warrior hero. These films try to show the inner struggle and conflict that real soldiers deal with in representing these heroic ideals. The films attempt to represent the struggles and experiences of real soldiers on screen. Instead of simply fulfilling a heroic archetype or stereotype, they add complexity to these characters and films by attempting to add a human element.

The depiction of these hero archetypes affects the ideological message. The difference in presentation demonstrates a shift in public sentiment towards war. The role of each of these characters is to fill a key part in the larger ideological stance of the films. *Apocalypse Now's* Willard as an antihero mirrors the negative public sentiment towards Vietnam at the time; the antihero in this case represents the military as broken. *Black Hawk Down* released right after 9/11 in the midst of patriotic resurgence depicts Sergeant Eversmann as the clear heroic leader, placing the military in a positive role. When *Stop-Loss* was released in 2007 the public sentiment for the war in Iraq had shifted; the public was questioning: why are we fighting, who or what are we fighting for? Brandon as a fallen hero in this film represents these questions. The use of a particular character types suggests a certain ideology within War films: an antihero type is used when there is distrust towards the military, when there is not a strong belief in the ideas of patriotism and duty; the hero when there is a strong sense of patriotism and duty; and the fallen hero when there is a belief in patriotism and duty but these goals are not seen as possible in the particular circumstances.

In each of these films it is evident that the protagonist struggles with the identity and ideology that they represent through their archetypal character. While

these post-9/11 films have made a turn toward presenting characters more like WWII archetypes, ideologically they still question the heroic notions they represent. We see this inner identity conflict within the characters throughout the film. Most importantly we see this inner conflict as connected to the film's ideology.

Apocalypse Now

Willard's character represents an America that is hopeless, unsure of the right course of action. This ideology, depicting hopelessness, affects the rest of the film as a whole; scenes throughout the script and film portray the notion that the U.S military is broken. Willard's character is the main source of the ideology, though there are other components in the film that suggest it. We see this because of his character type—as an antihero he shows that he, along with the military, are broken. How he is presented as a character and how the other characters responses are shown clarifies the message.

Captain B.L. Willard, played by Martin Sheen, starts out as a Captain who has already served in Vietnam but continues to fight because he doesn't know what else to do. *Apocalypse Now* (1979) presents Willard as a broken Captain, as just one component of a broken military. His voiceover early on in the film notes, "I wanted another mission and for my sins they gave me one, after it I would never want another." He goes from a soldier in Vietnam who cannot live at home with his wife because of what he has done to a man who can't function in either world. He descends into madness along with Kurtz and cannot go back.

The scene below is Willard's introduction to the men on the P.B.R (a Naval Patrol Boat) in the script. It presents the introduction as formal. They greet him at

the dock and they are ready and willing to follow orders. In the script Willard

describes the characters in their military roles; they are at his disposal as a Captain

and leader of the mission.

12 FULL VIEW - ON THE DELTA

A waterway leading out to the ocean -- it is broken and
divided into hundreds of channels, islands, water farms.

A Navy patrol boat (P.B.R) is waiting by the dock area.
This is small, light craft, very fast, and heavily armed.
Its men stand at attention in a small and simple military
ceremony. Willard approaches them in battle dress: Tiger
suit, full field pack, forty-five, helmet, M-16. The boat
commander salutes Willard.

13 MED. VIEW

We hear the introductions faintly, UNDER Willard's VOICE.

> WILLARD (V.O.)
> I met the P.B.R crew; they were
> pretty much all kids, except for
> Phillips, the Chief -- Gunner's
> Mate Third Class L. Johnson --
> Lance Johnson; Gunner's Mate
> Third Class J. Hicks -- The Chef
> -- Radio Operator Second Class T.
> Miller; they called him Mr. Clean

> WILLARD (CONT'D)
> Chief, try to keep out of where
> we're going -- Why we're goin'
> and what's gonna be the big
> surprise.

> CHIEF
> All right with me, I used to
> drive a taxi.

> WILLARD
> Let's go.

The Chief nods. They all break formation and jump aboard
and otherwise go about their work.

The twin diesels kick up -- and the boat moves away from
the dock. The Chef jumps aboard; Lance mans the forward
twin fifty-caliber machine guns -- they wave to the guards
on the dock and move away into the complexity that leads to
the ocean.

The action, description of the scene, suggests the view of the camera. With a

full view and a medium view the audience will see enough of the scene to develop an

understanding of the setting; both the dock area and the P.B.R itself are shown

clearly. We see in the description of Willard's clothing and equipment that he is a

well-versed combat veteran. The script sets up the scene as if the men are all

waiting to be formally introduced. They stand in formation waiting for him to get

onboard the P.B.R. It is also important that they are introduced as Willard boards

the P.B.R because it suggests formality. In the film we see their introduction later as

they are going up river. In the script Chief is shown as a man who does okay not

knowing where and when he is expected to be somewhere. He leaves the decisions

to Willard. Another crucial thing to note is that each of the characters quickly mans

their stations. We see Lance go to his fifty-caliber guns and they all acknowledge the

guards as they leave. We see in the film that many of these things are changed; these

changes suggest a change in tone regarding the men. There is much less formality,

Chief is clearly in charge of the boat and the men do not honor their jobs. In this

scene in the film the message is switched to clearly present the military as broken. It

shows a military that does not have heroic warrior types, but instead apathetic

soldiers.

We get a true picture of the character type that Willard represents through

the extensive voiceovers in the film combined with the visual elements we see on

screen. Both of these components are crucial to understanding Willard's character and the film's ideology. We see in the script that the voiceovers are different than those in the final film; however, much of this is due to the way the film was shot and pieced together by Francis Ford Coppola. The voiceovers are a crucial component to the film, serving as exposition and helping the audience to understand Willard's character and ultimately the film as well. His character as an antihero presents the notion that it is impossible for a normal man to come out of a combat situation unscathed. We see the importance of the combination of voiceover and images in the introduction to the P.B.R street gang.

In the film we see Willard board the P.B.R before we hear the introductions, but there is no formality as depicted above. Willard simply gets on the boat and then later describes the men as they go up river. Here we see an American flag on the boat as it leaves the dock, but it is not emphasized. We see the flag as just another part of the boat—it is not large, looming or immediately obvious as it is in the other films I discuss. It is the images of the men combined with the voiceover that give us a full picture of the military as Francis Ford Coppola sees it, broken. The men sit around informally and mess around ignoring their assigned duties on the boat. We see them drinking and later smoking marijuana. This combined with Willard's no bullshit assessment of them depicts the role of the U.S. in Vietnam to be both humorous and depressing.

We hear Willard's voiceover introduction of each character as we see them on deck. The soldiers do not act like military men; instead they act like untrained civilians. This along with Willard's description of them further complicates and

explains the ideology that they represent. They are the bottom-of-the-barrel soldiers, representative of a military that cannot do any better.

Instead of the formal introduction to the crew shown in the script, in the film Willard wakes up on deck. We see Willard sit up and look to see Clean brushing his teeth using water from a teacup. The script notes, "they were pretty much all kids" (13), however, in the film Willard adds that they are "rock n' rollers with one foot in their graves." He continues with the voiceover description of each character while we view them on the boat. We see Chef reading shirtless, a Budweiser next to him while Willard describes him. "The machinist, the one they called Chef, was wrapped too tight for Vietnam. Probably wrapped too tight for New Orleans." (Figure 1) Our next introduction is to Lance. Lance, also shirtless, jams out to the radio while holding a tanning reflector towards his face. "Lance on the forward fifties was a famous surfer from the beaches south of L.A. To look at him you would believe he had never fired a weapon in his life." After this introduction we see that Willard is sitting next to Clean on the side of the boat. All the while they continue to move up river. Willard looks through papers while Clean sits facing outward smoking. Willard continues his voiceover, "Clean, Mr. Clean, was from some south Bronx shithole. And I think the light and space of Vietnam really put the zap on his head." As Willard puts away his papers the topic of his voiceover shifts to a description of the Chief. "Then there was Phillips, the Chief. It might have been my mission but it sure as shit was the Chief's boat." We then view Chief at the wheel of the P.B.R. and Willard coming up behind him to talk to him.

We see in this scene that the view in the film is different than the one presented in the script. In the script the interaction between Chief and Willard seems more formal; the power lies only with Willard and his mission. The film shows this scene differently. These descriptions present a very different picture of the kind of leader Willard is and the relationship that he has with the men on the boat. Willard is just another part of their existence; his presence on the boat changes nothing for these men. The commentary provided for each of these characters shows Coppola's idea of the war. None of them are heroic, they are not representing some cause, they are just men who are fighting because someone told them to. The fact that the soldiers are on deck ignoring their military roles, not wearing shirts, drinking and smoking demonstrates that the military structure has broken down.
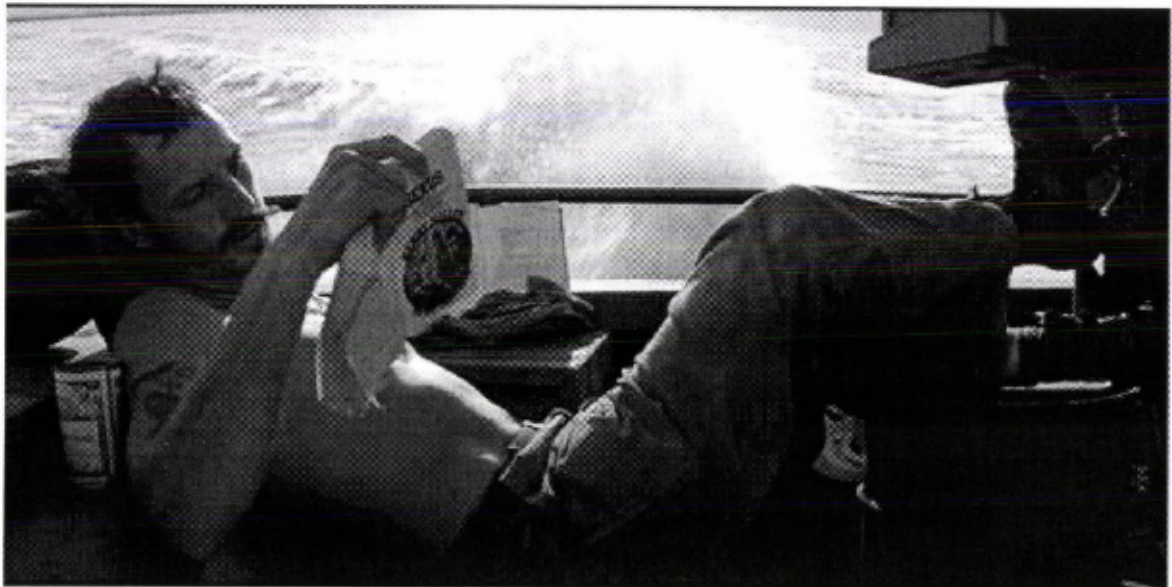
Figure 1 - Chef reading with a beer

Willard as an antihero suggests that the hero is no longer an ideologically important character post-Vietnam. We see through the character of Willard that the protagonist is no longer a hero. The use of drugs, the pointlessness of death and the

single mindedness of the protagonist paint the picture that the Vietnam conflict, at least the *Apocalypse Now* version, was not only hopeless but also pointless. Coppola presents the antihero as the representative character of soldiers precisely because it demonstrates that everything has broken down.

Apocalypse Now had an effect on many films after it. Many films in the War film genre released during and after the Vietnam conflict present war as hopeless and crazy, depicting the military as broken. Films like *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) *The Deer Hunter* (1978) and *MASH* (1970) also present the military as broken from within. However, starting in the late 1990's we see a shift in the presentation of war. *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) is a key example of the return to the hero character in a pre-9/11 film. However, it was after 9/11 that War films once again started consistently presenting protagonists as hero archetypes. *Black Hawk Down* was the first big and commercially successful War film released after 9/11 and it mirrors the patriotic sentiment of that time. Films such as *Pearl Harbor* (2001), released pre-9/11, and *We Were Soldiers* (2002) another post-9/11 film, also present similar ideology. These films exemplify that the American warrior hero is still an important and crucial component to the American way of life. The film *Black Hawk Down* shows the positive image of the soldier depicting its characters as heroic. This is in contrast to the careless soldiers who do not represent the hero we see presented in *Apocalypse Now.*

Black Hawk Down

The film *Black Hawk Down* (2001) focuses on Ranger and Delta chalks throughout operation "Irene" in Mogadishu, Somalia. The emphasis in the film is on

the men and their group dynamic; it does not focus on outside political implications.

Instead the film says, "once that first bullet goes past your head -- politics, and all

that shit goes right out the window" (31). [3] This line exemplifies the ideology of the

film. The emphasis in the film is on the men; it is not on the politics surrounding the

conflict but the interactions and camaraderie between the men in battle. The film

does not show much of the men's personal lives. We see a few images of the men

either holding photographs of family or talking about them briefly, but the focus is

on the men in action. This focus, on the camaraderie between the men and their role

in the military and the United States, reiterates the ideological focus on the men.

This is an important distinction because like most War films they choose not to

examine the wider ideological implications of war. The choice to focus on a group of

men, instead of a wider lens, makes the audience keenly aware that this is a

narrative of the American soldier; we see the "reality" of war through their eyes. It is

this view and the emphases on the choices of the individual men that make us see

the perspective of the "just war". Through the focus on protagonist and hero type

Sergeant Eversmann we see that it is the men and their duty and loyalty to one

another that come to represent the United States military as a whole and suggest the

importance of a "just war" without really ever examining the wider political issues

at play.

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[3] For the analysis and discussion of the *Black Hawk Down* script the page numbers
will be the reference numbers used for quotations. Even though the book is called a
shooting script the scenes are not numbered and as such are not noted in the
chapter.

The character of Ranger Sergeant Matt Eversmann, played by Josh Hartnett, in *Black Hawk Down* is clearly the idealistic hero. We see a soldier who is unsure of his role in war. He supports his fellow soldiers, supports the notion of a warrior hero but he also questions the death and destruction that are the inevitable result of war. Released post-9/11 his character type is more reminiscent of earlier World War II films, emphasizing patriotism and heroism. However, unlike these earlier films, Eversmann represents a more conflicted character. He is aware of his expectations as a warrior and a hero and chooses to honor or ignore these roles when it is appropriate. His character depicts the struggle between representing an ideal hero archetype and filling his role as a Sergeant by protecting his men and getting them through the conflict as their leader. As a representative of the post-9/11 soldier Eversmann accepts his role as a warrior hero, accepting along with it the variety of expectations inherent in that role. Instead of running away from role as warrior hero he fully embraces it. However, he still questions some of the role's expectations and its implications on his own leadership. Eversmann accepts his role as a warrior hero because of his belief in the mission; he believes that the U.S. military and other supporting forces are there for moral reasons. He fights alongside his men because it is a "just war."

Sergeant Eversmann represents the new archetype for the post-9/11 warrior hero. Eversmann questions his role as a soldier, a leader and a perpetuator of violence and war, but is focused in on his relationship with his men and how they respond to one another, never faltering or failing to fulfill this role. The scene below shows Eversmann interacting with the men of his chalk. It occurs at the local army

base at the Mogadishu airport before operation "Irene". Before this scene the audience has seen a few of these men in passing, but this is our first real introduction to these characters. It is evening and they are gathered around for a little rest and relaxation.

ANOTHER CORNER - KURTH, WADDELL, NELSON and GOODALE talk around Eversmann, who busies himself with his letter. LT. BEALES is reading a book on Somalia.

> LT. BEALES
> Listen to this, if one skinny kills
> another skinny, his clan owes the
> dead guy's clan a hundred camels. A
> hundred camels.

Waddell looks up from his book.

> WADDELL
> Camels. I wouldn't pay one camel.

> GOODALE
> Must be a lot of fucking camel debt.
> (carves on a piece of wood)
> Is that really true lieutenant?

> LT. BEALES
> Ask Sergeant Eversmann. He likes the
> skinnies.

Eversmann finally looks up.

> GOODALE
> Eversmann, you really like the
> skinnies?

> EVERSMANN
> It's not that I like them or don't
> like them. I respect them.

Kurth leans back in his chair and deals the cards.

> KURTH
> See, what you guys fail to realize is, Sergeant
> here is a bit of an idealist. Believes in this

> mission down to his very bones. Don't you,
> Sergeant?

>   EVERSMANN
> Look there people, they have no jobs, no food, no
> education, no future. I just figure that, you
> know, I mean, we either, we have two things we
> can do, we can either help, or we can sit back
> and watch the country destroy itself on CNN.
> Right?

>   KURTH
> I don't know about you guys, but I was trained to
> fight. Were you trained to fight, Sergeant?

> They wait for an answer. Lt. Beales watches him with
> bemused interest. Eversmann chooses his words carefully.

>   EVERSMANN
> Well, I think I was trained to make a difference,
> Kurth.

> Kurth starts laughing.

>   LT. BEALES
> Like the man said, he's an idealist.
>   (he looks at the TV)
> Oh wait, this is my favorite part. (18-19)

> . . .

We see through this section of script that Eversmann is not depicted as an

average military man; he sits to the side of his men, writing a letter, while his men

play games. Eversmann justifies his reasons for being in Mogadishu; they are ethical

and guided by the idea that he and the U.S. forces can help these people. He has

compassion for the locals and is guided by a moral compass that we are not shown

from the other men. Eversmann says he is "trained to make a difference" (18). In

this scene we see him interacting with the men under his command; he has to make

sure he does and says the right things to retain his control. The image of him as the

leader of his chalk is crucial to the ideological message. Given that the focus of *Black Hawk Down* is on the men in the conflict we as an audience need to see Eversmann as a hero, an ethical man and a good leader in order to understand the ideology presented through Eversmann. He fulfills the role of hero because of his belief in the mission and in the men that he serves with. The emphasis on the relationships between the men throughout both script and film suggest that the military is strong and decisive both on the individual level and on an institutional level. Yes, in this scene we see some of the men are misguided and even racist, but they work well as a unit and as individuals. The choices made by Eversmann, and others in leadership roles, are ones that are representative of the ideology in the film. Some of the choices made by Eversmann may be questionable, but ultimately they are morally guided. We as an audience need to rally behind the choices of Sergeant Eversmann in this scene to understand his role throughout the film. He is the focus of the script and film as a character and as such he is the main conveyor of information and ideological focus.

This scene on the page presents Eversmann as a thoughtful character, one who "chooses his words carefully." (19) He makes sure to answer questions appropriately as a leader. His men use the word "skinnies" to talk about the locals throughout the scene; Eversmann never uses the term "skinnies" instead using the more generic term "people." This choice is an important one because it marks the kind of character that Eversmann represents. He is one who does not give in to the mistreatment of the Somali people, though he never stops his men from using the term outright. He treads the middle ground carefully, clearly stating his position and

taking his own stance regarding the conflict, but does not try make others feel the same way. This is important because as a new leader he is establishing authority in this scene and does not need to destroy this new authority by trying to force a belief on others.

Here Eversmann is trying to be a leader, and we see him in contrast to Willard in his introduction to his men. Eversmann buys into his role as a leader and does everything to maintain his position in his chalk; his role as a moral leader is important to his character and the ideology he represents. This is in contrast to Willard, who does not try to establish leadership on the P.B.R. Willard's character does not serve as a moral leader for the men, nor does he serve in a leadership role unless it suits him.

In the film the scene plays fairly similarly to the script. We see Eversmann off to the side of the group throughout the scene. The camera repeatedly comes back to Eversmann writing a letter while his men are joking around; while the rest seem lighthearted, he is serious. The camera moves to focus on a view of Eversmann, Kurth and Lt. Beales. The P.O.V. shifts to a view of what the different men are doing. These shots present the men in a medium close up; we can see the men clearly, but we can also see some background. This type of shot is important because we view, albeit for a short period of time, each of the men as an individual. The ability to see the background is crucial because it gives an idea of the scope and size of the operation. What they do with their free time is representative of the individual character as well as a type of ideology that is presented through that character. Goodale is carving off the end of a stick with his knife in a stereotypically masculine

way. Kurth plays cards but doesn't seem to actually play any game in particular; he just appears to need to do something with his hands. All of them seem to need to do something. These men cannot just sit and talk with their peers while waiting for instructions; they have to occupy themselves with something. Even Eversmann writes a letter, unable to just relax and talk to his men. This is important because they are elite soldiers with a lot of training and they are shown itching to go into battle. This complete lack of ability to not interact with the rest of the group and their need to work on something shows their need to feel productive and busy.

When Lt. Beales tells the men that Eversmann "likes the skinnies," it is clear that the men around the circle dislike or distrust these people given their discussion of "camel debt" and their use of the term "skinnies." They pause and look to Eversmann for a response. However, as soon as Eversmann starts to justify his sentiment, the audience sees a notable change in his men; they respect and understand him although it is unclear whether or not they truly agree with his idealism. They acknowledge his points as he speaks, they listen quietly, they do not talk over him and they look in his direction as he answers their queries. While these are all small details they are important because they show that he is the leader in this scene.

Another way the film amplifies the script is aurally through the use of tone of voice. Eversmann goes back and forth between being serious and interjecting just enough sarcasm to be given credit by his men. He playfully says, "he was trained to make a difference"; in the script there is no tone conveyed. Eversmann presents the hero type here because he remains relatively serious throughout the scene. Yes, he

does joke when it is appropriate, but he is very conscious and careful with his role as a soldier, Sergeant and hero type.
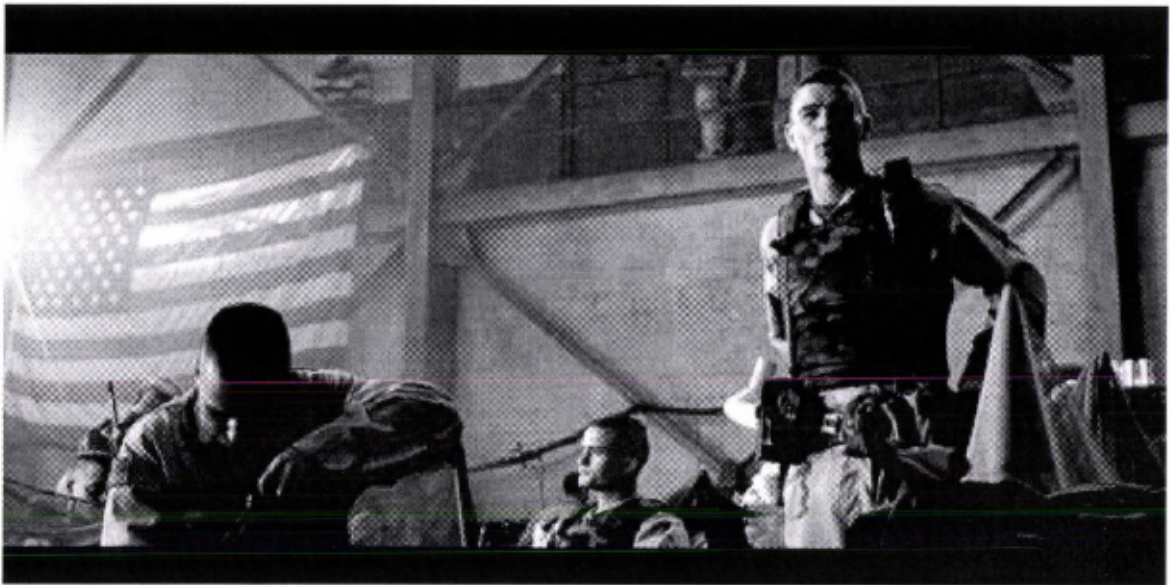
Figure 2 - Eversmann's pep talk to his chalk

Eversmann presents the ideology of the post-9/11 moment precisely because he is the hero character as well as the moral leader. While he questions his role as a hero at times, he does not run from it. Eversmann is aware that he is trying to emulate the role of the hero and makes the choice to be a representative of this role. (A scene discussed in the next chapter exemplifies this when Eversmann and Smith interact before Smith's death). The image above, figure 2, is from the scene before the men enter the Bakara market district to start the operation. This image captures the patriotic sentiment and the sense of pride in leadership that we get from Eversmann. His role as a heroic leader is captured on film when we view his pep talk to his chalk before they enter Mogadishu. They gather around him, listening carefully as he speaks about their upcoming mission; we view a large American flag in the background as we see that he truly is a leader. The flag, the multiple flags we

view in this scene, are used here to symbolize the sense of pride and honor his character feels regarding fighting with these men in combat. The flag is depicted as meaningful both for his character and the film; the flag justifies the actions. The flag imagery is used in each of these films differently, in *Apocalypse Now* we see the flag as just another part of the scene, it is small and insignificant. (See figure 3 below) In *Black Hawk Down* we view the flag as patriotic justification. In *Stop-Loss* it serves to question the patriotic ideal. This is discussed more fully in the *Stop-Loss* section.

Figure 3 - P.B.R leaving the dock

Stop-Loss

Stop-Loss has similar ideology to *Black Hawk Down* but its focus is on the home front instead of the battlefront. There is a closer examination of the implications of War on the warrior once he has returned home. What and where is his place as a warrior once he is no longer involved in combat?

The shift in public support for the war in Iraq by the time *Stop-Loss* was made changes how characters are presented. This film's ideological stance is: "love the soldier and hate the war." This stance is identifiable, given the focus on individual

soldiers and on their stories, instead of the focus on the political aspects surrounding the war similar to *Black Hawk Down* and other Hollywood war narratives. However, it is the focus on them in the states and the view of their trauma that emphasizes: "love the soldier and hate the war." The focus on the men stateside suggests that the impact of the war is on the individual American men fighting it. Brandon's role as a leader shifts as he goes from Iraq to Texas. How he perceives himself and how others perceive him changes based on his location given his assigned role as a warrior hero. This looks at the soldier once he is no longer in his role fighting as a warrior hero. The view we see into the lives of these men leads the audience to question what we see as heroic duty and what we expect from post-9/11 soldier heroes.

We see Sergeant Brandon King, played by Ryan Phillippe as a fallen hero in the film *Stop-Loss* (2007). [4] The character of Brandon is representative of the time period the film was made, just as the characters presented in *Apocalypse Now* and *Black Hawk Down* were representative of their own. This is the first film I focus on written, produced, filmed and released post-9/11 and about the Iraqi conflict. It presents a different view of the modern soldier because the conflict is still close in time and space. In the script Sergeant Brandon King is described as a man in his twenties who looks "like a young John Wayne" (3). This description, though not entirely how I imagine Ryan Phillippe the actor picked for the role, sets his character up to be a traditional Western and War film hero, or even an antihero. As a John

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[4] The script I use is a "writers draft". As such it is an early version and it differs significantly from the final film. I refer to the character of Brandon King as Brandon instead of King because this is how he is referenced in the film.

Wayne type, we expect Brandon will represent certain older War film ideals. However, Brandon in the film serves less as a John Wayne type and more of an homage to that character type. This type sets certain expectations for a soldier in a leadership role. This film's ideology closely follows the post-Vietnam ideology, but with a twist. The film presents Brandon as a warrior hero originally, but his actions lead him to become a fallen hero. Brandon in the first few scenes looks like as a hero similar to Eversmann in *Black Hawk Down*. Brandon is a clear leader in Iraq and a hero to his hometown. However, he does not openly embrace this role as Eversmann does, causing him to go down a different path.

The dichotomy of his roles as both hero and fallen hero suggest Brandon is representative of a time period when public sentiment is shifting. The ideal of "love the soldier and hate the war" leads to this type of dichotomy; people simply do not know how to feel about War and this is mirrored in the dual roles Brandon fills. Brandon represents the conflict between presenting the negative aspects of war and still remaining respectful to the men that the films represent. Most of the country was struggling with why we went to Iraq in the first place, asking: was there really a good reason? The film appears ideologically torn; my understanding is that the content of the film tries to be respectful to the soldiers who had served in what many considered an unjust war. I have arrived at this understanding of this film and others in the time period because of the way that the characters in the film are depicted. Characters are not always shown as right, but they are always depicted with a clear sense of humanity. This is a shift from many of the Vietnam films where the armed forces and the country are shown as broken. We see the characters in

Apocalypse Now as those who have lost their humanity and their sense of American pride. This post-9/11 film presents only the military establishment as problematic and does not question the actions of the soldiers themselves as *Apocalypse Now* does. It is the organization, the Army, the politics at the time, the legislation and the war that has caused the men to become fallen heroes, not the choices of the men themselves. The choices of the men are limited by what the Army—what the frame—chooses to offer them and as such they are not responsible for their lack of good judgment. Their choices are not bad, but their limited options are forced upon them. We see the *Stop-Loss* characters as soldiers wanting to live up to the expectation of the hero but realizing that they cannot. We empathize with the choices of the men in *Stop-Loss* and always view their humanity even if they are presented as broken down by the establishment. In contrast, *Apocalypse Now* shows the men acknowledging that the concept of the ideal soldier hero is a myth and do not attempt to emulate it.

In *Stop-Loss* we see the men fight "the Haji's" in an alley in Iraq. In this scene it is clear that Brandon is the Sergeant in charge and he takes full responsibility for his choices, both good and bad. From this scene we switch to view the men returning home stateside. The scene examined below is their arrival in Brazos, Texas. This scene presents the dual identity of the men as heroes and their own internal notions of not feeling like heroes. This scene shows a small Texas town welcoming home their football champ War heroes. It presents an all American ideology of the celebration of war heroes with a big parade, flags and a visit from a senator.

EXT. INTERSTATE - DAY

The bus rolls along with traffic through Texas hill country
and then sprawling truck farms - onions, strawberries,
citrus fruit; Mexican out in the fields-

...

From an OVERPASS up ahead, a FIRETRUCK is parked,
suspending a HUGE AMERICAN FLAG as the soldiers CHEER. As
they pass underneath, the soldiers SEE fireman and deputies
SALUTING.

The mood ELEVATES on the bus as the soldiers laugh and
clap. CELL PHONES CHIRP and the men speak excitedly.

BRANDON reaches over to his seatmate STEVE and offers him
his hand, and they have a man to man HANDSHAKE.

                    BRANDON
          Told you I'd bring you back in one piece.

                    STEVE
          I only got one piece on my mind.

HIS CELL PHONE RINGS, he looks at the caller ID.

                    STEVE (CONT'D)
                 (into phone)
          Hey Michele, just talking about you.

Steve WINKS at Brandon, Brandon smiles, continues to look
out the window as the bus approaches BRAZOS TEXAS CITY
LIMITS sign PLASTERED with YELLOW RIBBONS.

Brandon leans forward to look across the aisle at TOMMY;
Tommy's listening to his iPod, in another world.

THUNDERING JOHN PHILLIPS SOUSA MARCH MUSIC CUES under

EXT. BRAZOS, TEXAS - DAY

ON LEGGY DRUM MAJORETTE blowing WHISTLE and LEADING
marching band down Main Street PULSING on both sides with
SWOLLEN CROWDS of FLAG-WAVING citizenry, bearing signs of

WELCOME HOME HEROES!!

BRANDON, STEVE, TOMMY and the other SOLDIERS marching down
the street behind the band, following an ENORMOUS AMERICAN
FLAG, looking a little DAZED and JET-LAGGED.

It's everything you would expect in a small town welcoming
parade and it's all a LITTLE MUCH from BRANDON'S POV -

Storefronts are draped in miles of YELLOW RIBBONS
fluttering over PEOPLE jamming the sidewalks, all CHEERING-

KIDS held on shoulders of adults, their faces PAINTED red,
white and blue, SHRIEKING TEENAGE GIRLS, SOBBING PARENTS
calling out NAMES, and saying "There's my baby!"

But the soldiers MARCH on, in formation, in orderly
columns, their regular BOOTSTEPS resounding even louder
than the band. (20-21)

The script notes the band playing "John Phillip Sousa March Music" (21), a

large flag on an overpass, "swollen crowds of flag waving citizenry" (21), and yellow

ribbons around town. All of these descriptions exemplify a sense of patriotism to be

presented visually. However, it is clear that the men are overwhelmed with this

homecoming. The word choice of heroes is used throughout the scene because of the

role it implies. The kids cheering them on and the abundance of flags around the

town really show the patriotic ideals that they expect these men to live up to. The

bold words in the script delineate the shot or focus for that particular image on

screen. These shots suggest that the main focus is on how the town feels towards

the men returning home. It is clear that the men are jetlagged and overwhelmed by

what is going on around them both in this scene and in the one before it. (This short

scene, cut out of the film version, shows the characters arriving at the small local

airport. In that scene we see Brandon watching coffins go down the luggage

conveyor. We see that he acknowledges the death of the men and has to watch from the bus window the impersonal unloading of the bodies.) It is also clear that the crowd is not going to do anything differently. This parade, this lavish attention on the men, is what is expected of them and what is American and patriotic. As a small All-American type of town they are not expected do anything different.

The film expands on the ideals in the script and presents the information visually. The types of shots used throughout the scene add to our understanding of the scene. There are a few crucial differences in the content of the film. The bus scene adds a pep talk from the captain regarding the parade and what they can or should not do while in town. The captain reminds them that they are representing the Army and as such should act a certain way. He gives a list of things that they should not do while on leave, this list includes: not drinking and driving, not beating up civilians, "fucking anyone under age" and not beating your wife, kids or dog. Explicitly stating this list in the film presents a social contract to the men. Clearly stating this list shows the audience they have expected rules and a role that they fill as members of the Army. This list, although not all-inclusive, suggests that there is a higher standard that these men will be held to. However, having to list these things implies that these men might not or will not meet these expectations. What is implied is that their own captain does not think that they will live up to these expectations because they have broken these rules in the past. It is their past choices that make the speech necessary. This list provides the expectations and we see these items as important, but it is delivered in a humorous way. The delivery is an important element as well. If this social contract were delivered in a serious

manner we would view it in a different light; delivering the list with humor suggests that, yes, their Captain wants them to follow the contract, but he does not expect them to live up it. It suggests that while they are soldiers, they are also ordinary men who make mistakes; they are ordinary men who have seen and experienced more than most men and as a result struggle with many thing that other men might not. While the Captain explicitly reminds them of their duties and their roles as soldiers, the men appear to know that they have certain rules that apply to them given their status and position as warrior heroes to this town. Although they acknowledge this reality and this role they are unable to live up to these expectations.

Figure 4 - Welcome Home Parade

Similar to the script we see the start of the parade from the interior of the bus. From the bus "social contract" described above we move on to see the parade and the rest of the town. We see a large banner that says "Welcome Home Troops" and signs held by the people in the town that vary in their message. Some say outright "Brandon is our hero," others say things like "we (heart symbol in glitter)

our troops." (Figure 4) We have a view of the men marching behind an open car where Brandon and Steve sit waving at the crowd. Then the view changes to close-ups of the men's boots throughout the scene cutting back to their overwhelmed faces. The boots present the idea that one soldier is the same as the next. We see their boots marching in formation; one pair is indistinguishable from the next. The focus on their faces in contrast to the boots personalizes them as individual characters, characters that we care about. Putting these two images in opposition to one another presents the dual ideology in the film regarding military service. (See figures 4 & 5 below) The slogan "an army of one" plays a part here because each character is shown individually, but he is also shown as a crucial component of the group as a whole. However, as a part of that larger group the individual is lost. Each man only functions in his role—he is part of the military. Here we see the suggestion of one of the ideological problems we see in the film—once a soldier, always a soldier. The image of the boots as a part of the military formation suggests their perpetual role as a soldier in the Army. The men will live most of their lives outside of the Army, but the Army and this group of men will always be a part of their identity. When they are called back into service the role of soldier takes precedence over their other ones. The Army becomes their family and their friends; this "family" will always be more important than their biological family, friends, wives and children.

Figure 5 - Screen selection - shot on boots
Figures 6 - Screen selection - similar shot on faces

The parade scene ends with image of an American flag hanging from the top of a crane. (Figure 7) We see this flag in a shot angled upwards, making the flag appear looming and large on screen. This image suggests that these men and their role as American soldiers is part of who they are as characters and more importantly who they are expected to be. While they are held responsible for their decisions individually, they are expected to act a certain way because of their warrior hero status in this town. However, the use of the flag, large and looming overhead, as taking up the frame, questions the overwhelming sense of patriotism we see in this scene. The angle we see of the flag, large and looming eerily over everything, suggests that the expectation of heroism is a bit too much. The parade and the over the top patriotism from the town seems ridiculous. The flag serves to question: is military service worth all of the consequences of those that serve? (We see the image of the flag used in the scene depicting the death of Tommy in the next chapter in a similar way.) It is the expectation of heroism and duty that requires Brandon to make certain choices.
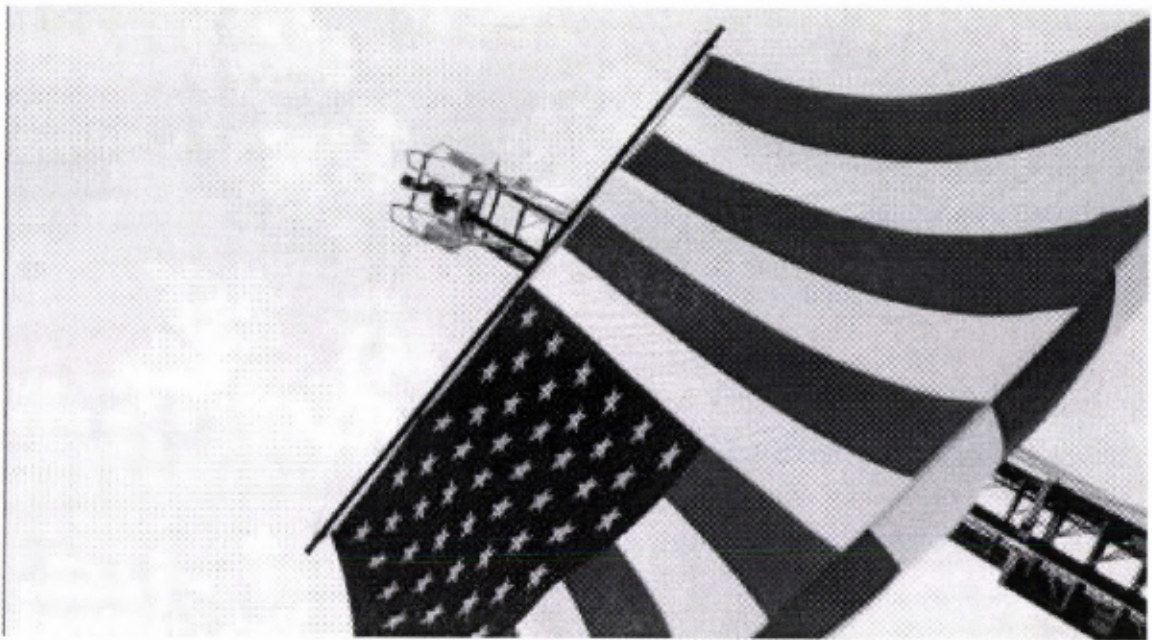
Figure 7 - Flag in Stop-Loss' returning home parade

The people in the town treat the soldiers as if they are heroes, even if the soldiers themselves do not feel like heroes or want to be acknowledged as such. We see Tommy's character in another scene actually hit another character because of a comment made regarding them as heroes. The focus on the all American homecoming suggests the WWII homecoming parade in the naïveté of the crowd. The crowd is proud of the soldiers and does not acknowledge the reality of war. Images of children dressed up to greet the troops suggests that the America the soldiers are returning to embraces them fully and with open arms; this is just not the case. We see their situation as more complex and complicated than we see in *Black Hawk Down*. *Stop-Loss* does not cover up the harm that experiences in war has on the men. This short scene seems to suggest that the populace would like to forget this reality. As civilians they are later forced to deal with the trauma done to the men as a result of War. This scene presents the ideal reality of the soldier through the eyes of the crowd, before we view the real responses of the soldier characters.

Later in the scene we see Brandon, the clear Sergeant and leader while in Iraq, unable to give a speech to the people who cheer him on. Steve steps in and tells the audience what they want to hear: "we are killing them in Iraq so we don't have to kill them in Texas."

Final Implications

The focus on the main characters and how they serve as an ideological message suggests that the main character is crucial because of the role that he plays in the film. The protagonist, as noted by Robert McKee, "creates the rest of the cast" (379). The rest of the characters in the story function in relation to the main character and thus the main character carry most of the ideological weight of the picture. The protagonist is the key element to all the other characters presented in the film. The main character influences the rest of the film in crucial ways. He does not just influence the other actors but the overall tone of the film, the way it is received, how it fits into the genre, and what message the film presents ideologically for its historical time period.

Using already prescribed archetypes and presenting the lead character in a certain way suggests a certain message. Describing a heroic character as a John Wayne type or as the Marlboro man has implications on the ideology that changes the overall tone of the film. For example using a stereotypical description of a character as a John Wayne type automatically implies a certain degree of jingoism or a questioning of the jingoistic sense of pride in country.

The main character in the film is crucial because he embodies the message of the film. Placing a different character or character type in the lead role would

change the message of the film. Examining the main character in this way allows us to focus on the message of the film in a very specific way; through the focus on a particular individual a more nuanced focus can be delineated and the ideology can be picked out more easily and clearly.

The following chapter focuses on the presentation of death within these scripts and films with the same type of analysis. The focus on how death is presented in the film also shows the ideological stance on war. The depiction of death in the films shows the ideology because of the assumptions it put forth in how we view the death. In each film we see death differently: death as pointless, death as heroic, and questioning the death.

CHAPTER 4: THE PRESENTATION OF AND THE IDEOLOGICAL IMPLICATION PLACED ON DEATH

War films as a genre include death, dying, and trauma as a crucial component. The genre shows death as an inevitable part of war. However, the meaning that is placed on death is different in each of the films. How death is presented and dealt within a film differs depending on the era the film was made and the overall ideology and tone of the film. *Black Hawk Down*, released post-9/11, presents death in battle as heroic. Death for a cause and in a "just war" is depicted in a positive light; while death is depicted as horrific and painful there is meaning and justification behind that death. There is another shift in the presentation of the soldier in war post-9/11 with the waning of support for the war in Iraq. Films in this time period, like *Stop-Loss*, are conflicted in their presentation of ideology because they try to remain respectful to the soldiers fighting but present a negative view of the war itself. In this film we see the pro-soldier but anti-war stance, as we do with many 9/11 films. We see death in a conflict lacking popular support in a different light than we do directly after 9/11 when there was public support for the war. The presentation of death—and the era of production—presents the same ideology we see through the main characters. We see in *Apocalypse Now* that death is presented as meaningless. Death is inherent in a conflict; it is not heroic and does not represent a bigger ideal.

Depiction of Death

We see through the examination of death in both screenplay and film that soldier's lives are alternately celebrated and mourned. How individual characters deal with their own death and how the characters around them respond to this reminded of their own mortality show the ideology surrounding death in that film. The change from script to screen, the remediation of text to image, presents more humanity in the characters in the film. The visual and aural elements that are added to a film exaggerate the sentiments expressed in the script. We see the humanity in the scenes I discuss specifically through the addition of close ups on the expressions of characters and the addition of the sound of bullets and explosions.

Script formatting does not provide space for detailed descriptions because there is an understanding that the descriptions will eventually become visual images. It is how these descriptions and interactions are presented visually that impacts the audience. What we see on screen expands on the description in the script in different ways. The addition of visuals—blood and bullets—audio, screaming, yelling and gunfire complicate the emotional response of the audience. A line of description of a character being shot might result in different visuals than the description alone suggests. The inclusion of special effects, makeup and lighting all suggest a slightly different tone for the scene. Like the archetypes discussed in the previous section, the presentation of death on screen presents the underlying ideologies in the film script.

The death of soldiers in battle and at home is a crucial component to these films. We as an audience have a different response to the depiction of death in these

films. *Apocalypse Now* shows a lot of death. Many soldiers from both sides are killed. Natives and non-participants are shown dying or dead. Throughout the film we are shown death, forced to interact with it in ways that we might not want to. Death is not tragic, just par for the course. In *Black Hawk Down* we are shown constant violence, we see and hear bullets flying. However, we see the death of several men in the unit, but are not shown death as consistently as we do in *Apocalypse Now*. *Black Hawk Down* focuses on the death of one particular soldier, Jamie Smith. Death isn't shown to be as meaningless as placing cards on corpses like Colonel Kilgore does in *Apocalypse Now*. The soldiers in *Black Hawk Down* are only shown shooting at and killing Somalis with guns. We never see them firing on unarmed civilians. There are no dead bodies hung up like in *Apocalypse Now*. Death in *Stop-Loss* is similar to *Black Hawk Down*. We see the effect of a soldier's death on both their families and their soldier comrades. While we do see men dying in combat, death is not as prevalent throughout the film. *Stop-Loss* tries to show the humanity of these men and their choices. The emphasis is placed on the effect of their death on those around them and this causes us to focus on their humanity.

These particular post-9/11 films show men that volunteer to be soldiers; the ideological stance that results is the implication is that there is something that is worth fighting and dying for, fellow soldiers and country. In many Vietnam films there is an understanding that many of the soldiers were drafted and did not want to be there. This changes the dynamic of the choices made in these films. If the choice was not theirs to make to begin with then there is more of an understanding behind the hesitancy of the characters. Many post-9/11 films depict the nobility in

the decision to serve one's country even if it leads to their death. The death of men who were drafted has a different implication—they were forced to serve and as such didn't make the choice that will destroy them. Military service was thrust upon them. It is different than men who sign up knowing that death is a possibility and serve anyway. They consciously made that choice while draftees did not get the option. (This idea gets more complex when you add in the notion of stop-lossing current soldiers.)

The main focus of this chapter will be on the presentation of death in the post-9/11 films. I use *Apocalypse Now* to show the contrast between the post-Vietnam film to the post-9/11. *Black Hawk Down* introduces the depiction of death as heroic in contrast to death as meaningless in *Apocalypse Now*. In *Stop-Loss* I focus on scenes where civilians deal with and respond to death. The focus is not on the individual dying, but how the people around them respond to their death.

Black Hawk Down

Black Hawk Down presents the death of soldiers in combat as heroic and sad. It suggests that, while death is tragic, there is significance in that death. It shows the conflict as a "just war" and therefore the resulting deaths are honorable and for a greater good. As critics Bob Graham and Roger Ebert noted, this film presents the experience of U.S. troops. They focus on the idea that this film affects audiences at a gut level. Graham notes that although the film is violent it "transcends exploitation." Ebert notes that "[films like *Black Hawk Down*] help audiences to understand and sympathize with the actual experiences of combat troops, instead of trivializing them into entertainments."

Instead of presenting the ideal of "no one gets left behind" as strange and unachievable, it presents it as realistic and in fact necessary to the way of life presented in the film. This mentality of "no one gets left behind" is depicted in various scenes throughout the film. We see soldiers returning for one another throughout the film because they view it as their duty to take care of each other. We see this notion presented most clearly in the interaction between Eversmann and Smith.

At this point in the film the men have successfully completed the extraction of Aidid's men and are waiting for the convoy to return to take them back to base. Eversmann's chalk waits in one building for the convoy to return for them. Some of the men were attacked on their way to the safe house. Smith goes out to save one of them who get shot, Twombly. In the process Smith himself is shot and wounded more critically than Twombly. This scene below occurs after Smith was shot in the femoral artery and lays dying in "the Alamo House."[5] According to the script the damage done to Smith is irreparable, "Eversmann presses it [gauze] into the wound but it's like trying to cover a fire hose with a mattress" (97). This description is very apt for the one we see in the film. It is clear to Eversmann, Smith and Twombly that that Smith is going to die because of his choice. The following section from the script is when Smith realizes he is going to die. Smith's acknowledgement of his own death presents the ideology behind a "just war" and suggests the tone for future post-9/11 films presentations of death. Death for a cause, especially saving another soldier's

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[5] The Alamo House is what the house in the script is called where they set themselves up over night as a defense position.

life, is heroic. Even in death Smith wants to be a hero; he asks Eversmann to tell his parents he fought well, not that he loves them.

INT. EVERSMANN'S POSITION - NIGHT

It's been some time now.

>   SMITH
>   I can't die here man.

>   EVERSMANN
>   You're not gonna die, all right? You're not gonna
>   die.

Eversmann is kneeling next to Doc Schmid and Smith.
Eversmann is watching Smith, pale white, eyes glazed.

He says quietly to Eversmann:

>   SMITH
>   I'm sorry.

>   EVERSMANN
>   You don't have anything to be sorry for. You
>   saved Twombly. You did perfect.

>   SMITH
>   (eyes move to Twombly)
>   You okay, Twombs.

Twombly has wandered over, stares down at Smith. Doesn't
know what to say. Eversmann looks from Twombly to Smith.

>   TWOMBLY
>   Yeah, I'm okay, Jamie.

Now the whole room is watching as Smith begins
hyperventilating, a sickening wheezing sound echoing off
the stone walls. Smith's eyes start to dart around the
room.

>   EVERSMANN
>   You did what you were trained to do. You should
>   be proud of that. Be proud of that.

Smith nods, teeth chattering.

SMITH
          Ev?

                    EVERSMANN
          Yeah?

                    SMITH
          Do me a favor.

                    EVERSMANN
          Yeah?

                    SMITH
          You tell my parents, that I fought well today.
          That I... that I... that I fought hard.

                    EVERSMANN
          You're gonna tell 'em yourself, okay? You hear
          me.

Smith is shaking uncontrollably.

                    EVERSMANN (CONT'D)
          All right?

                    SMITH
          Are the Humvees here?

                    EVERSMANN
          They're coming, Jamie.

                    SMITH
          They're coming.

                    EVERSMANN
          You just gotta hang in there a little bit. You
          gotta hold out for just a little bit, you can do
          that.

                    SMITH
          I can.
               (gasping for breath)
          I can do it. This is nothin'.

                    EVERSMANN
          This is nothin'. It's nothin'.

SMITH
        This is nothin'.

                    EVERSMANN
        It's nothin'.

                    SMITH
        Okay. Nothin'.

Smith grips Eversmann's bloodstained hand. Eversmann nods.

                    EVERSMANN
        This is nothin'.

Smith's eyes begin to change... a certainty comes into
them. Now he stares somewhere beyond the ceiling -
Schmid runs forward.

                    SCHMID
        Oh shit! Hold the wound!

The Alamo house is silent, everyone watching as Schmid
administers CPR. Compresses Smith's chest again and again.

After a long time, Eversmann reaches out, stops Schmid.
Doc sits back, covered in blood. Stares down at Smith,
resigned.

                    EVERSMANN
        Oh, God. (109-111)

The interaction between Eversmann and Smith is very simple. The lines of

dialog are all short but while the dialog is not dense vocabulary, but has a dense

tone and subject. Smith is clearly dying. We know this because we see him going into

shock. We see the interactions of the men around him; these reactions in the script

are not detailed—they are simple human responses. Each of the actions described

show the feeling of the characters in a short space. A glance and a grip of a hand

suggest the interactions are restrained but meaningful. There are several main

points we need to see in the script from this scene: Smith wants to apologize, check on Twombly whom he has saved and make sure his parents know he is a hero. Eversmann tries to convince himself, Smith and the rest of his men that everything is going to be okay.

In the film the point of view of the camera, the expressions of the men, delivery of the lines and the positioning of the characters in the sequence complicate this scene. In the film the scene starts directly after we see the Humvees leave the base with a super of 11:23. The time stamp suggests to audience the amount of time that has passed since the men started on the operation that afternoon. At this point in the film Smith has been shot and dragged inside. Doc Schmid had already tried to open up the wound to save him. In a previous scene we view an interaction between Eversmann and Doc Schmid where the "doc" tells Eversmann that Smith will not make it if he doesn't get to a hospital in thirty minutes. The time stamp suggests that it is well past that thirty-minute window; we saw Smith shot before it was completely dark and it is now 11:23.

After the Humvees leave the base, we cut to an exterior shot of the Alamo house where we look inward to towards the men. In this shot Hoot sits in a doorway looking outward from the house. We see him first in a medium shot then a close-up of his face off to the left side of the screen. Behind him we can see several of the men in the background at their posts; each man has a gun in hand ready to defend their safe house. All of them do their duty as soldiers even in the time of crisis; they are alert and keeping an eye out for intruders. However, it is clear through the shots we see of the characters that they all are hearing the interaction between Smith,

Twombly and Eversmann and trying not to react. The film shows that each soldier reacts to Smith dying in different ways. We cut quickly between images of the men; they chew gum or look off trying to separate themselves from the interaction of Smith and Eversmann. The film always cuts back to Smith on the table after we view the other characters. While the script says toward the middle of the scene that "now the whole room is watching," it doesn't suggest how this is shown. A line of description suggesting that the men are in fact watching Smith as he begins to hyperventilate only shows that the men are aware of what is happening. Adding in visual images of the men's actual responses to Smith going into shock adds to this simple line of description. They do not acknowledge that they are watching; they sit around the edges of the room doing their duty as soldiers. They are shown as heartbroken and unsure through their actions, their glances, their chewing of gum and looking off awkwardly suggest that they do not know how to respond to Smith's death. Their characters have been trained to fight and trained to kill, but they have not been trained on how to deal with the death of a comrade on the battlefield. We see the strongest reactions in Eversmann's and Twombly's characters.

We get an idea of the guilt that Twombly feels over Smith's death with his verbal responses and physical responses to Smith. It is the physical responses that we don't see in the script that make the audience respond to this scene. After an extreme close up of Smith we cut to Twombly, sitting directly above Smith, holding back tears and pursing his lips inward. Smith asks, "you okay Twombs?" And with a break in his voice Twombly places his hand on Smith's shoulder responding, "yes, I'm okay Jimmy." (Figure 8) This simple action, just placing his hand on his shoulder

is a gesture of comfort. Smith cannot see Twombly's face and view how much he is struggling with Smith's death, but he is still physically there supporting Smith.

Figure 8 - Smith being supported by Twombly (middle background), Doc Schmid (right), Eversmann (left)

Eversmann continues to give Smith the soldierly pep talk, saying he did as he was trained to. In the background we hear explosions and machine gun fire, a constant reminder that the men are not in a safe space, just safer than outside in the city. As Smith asks for his favor, it is clear that he is going into shock and dying. He speaks quietly, gasping for air as he asks Eversmann to tell his parents he fought well. As we hear this request, we cut back and forth between a close up of Eversmann, trying to hold back tears and a close up of Smith--skin gray and starting to shake. The shot we see of Smith most of the time is over the shoulder of Eversmann. We can just make out Eversmann's head on the left side of the screen. It is important here that we see Eversmann's response to Smith. Eversmann as a representative of the vast majority of the ideology makes us focus on his response to Smith. Eversmann tries to do the right thing by comforting Smith and telling him humane things like he isn't going to die, even though it is clear he is beyond saving.

He serves as the leader when it is essential for him to do so. Smith needs to tell his parents he fought well because that is the American ideology; if a soldier has to go in battle it should be because he was doing his duty because he was fighting a "just war." In Smith's case he was trying to, and successfully saving a fellow soldier's life, so his death is honorable.

Smith continues to wheeze as he talks. Twombly's hand is still placed on his shoulder for support. However, the camera continues to cut to shots of the other men sitting alert at the edges of the room, always coming back to Eversmann and Smith. We also see a close up of Doc Schmid, uneasy but silent throughout the scene. He told Eversmann earlier that if Smith did not get to a hospital in 30 minutes he was going to die; it has been over 30 minutes and he seems to realize the inevitable and lets Eversmann take the lead in the situation. As soon as Smith actually dies, quietly and with his eyes still open, Schmid jumps into action. He only stops trying to resuscitate him after Eversmann forcefully stops him.

Figure 9 - Extreme Close up (ECU) Smith

The screen shot above (figure 9) depicts Smith repeating the same lines over and over as he dies. "It's nothin'" is a very provocative way to suggest that dying for

one's country and for your fellow soldiers is nothing. The tone of the film seems to

suggest that dealing with this sort of conflict is far from easy; choosing someone's

life over your own is unimaginable for those of us who have not had that choice. The

interaction between Smith and Eversmann shows them trying to live up to the myth

of the ideal heroic soldier. Smith and Eversmann are aware that they are

representative of their roles as soldiers. How they respond to one another in

dealing with mortality portrays the sense of honor and pride behind being a soldier.

Viewing the death of the individual soldier in this light shows the audience the cost

of war: young American soldiers dying for a "just war." The close facial shots of the

other characters suggest that that they will remember Smith's death for the rest of

their lives. This scene sticks out to the audience because we are forced to see the

depiction of death in a meaningful and patriotic way. It is the final shot of the scene

that represents the ideology that is depicted through Eversmann and Smith. (See

figure 10) We see Eversmann off to the right side of the screen, a tear on his face,

trying not to show his emotional response; while he is clearly distraught he also

clearly is trying to depict strength. His jaw is set and has a resolute look. He wants to

remain strong and represent the ideal soldier even though he has just seen the

death of one of his own.
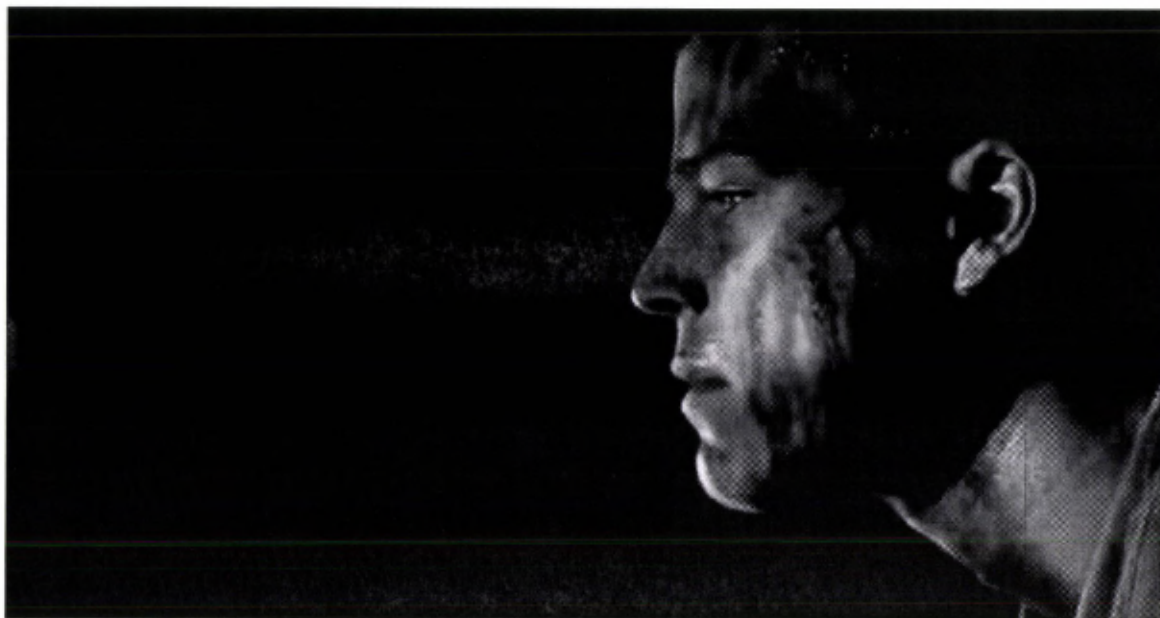
Figure 10 - Eversmann after Smith's death

This presentation of death shows the change in respect level for soldiers depicted in War films. Instead of depicting death in war as meaningless we see that there is a meaning in the death of soldiers on the battlefield. This scene shows us what that meaning is. The scene forces us to deal with death in war, but more importantly it forces us to note the reasons why the soldiers themselves make the choices that they do in war and the choice to enlist in the first place; it is for the guys next to them and it is the belief that war for a cause is necessary.

Apocalypse Now

Unlike *Black Hawk Down*, which focuses mainly on the death of one soldier, *Apocalypse Now* presents the death of many throughout the film. We see soldiers, American and Vietnamese shot up, view Chief shot and killed by a spear, see Chef's head in Willard's lap, and finally view the assassination of Kurtz. Throughout the film, we see the death of countless, unnamed others. These scenes are important to the message of the film overall, demonstrating the prevalence of death in Vietnam,

especially pointless and meaningless death. I have chosen to focus on the death of Clean as a comparison to the other films. Clean's death is not heroic but pointless. Clean's death is presented as meaningless and stands in opposition to Smith's death in *Black Hawk Down*, where we see death for a fellow soldier as meaningful. We see Smith talk with his Sergeant while he is dying, even asking Eversmann to tell his parents he fought well, and it is implied he is dying for a greater cause. Smith's death suggests dying for your fellow soldier is a worthy ideal to live up to. The death of Clean suggests that death in war is almost inevitable. Clean does not tell anyone he cares, nor gives any messages to send back home, he just dies. The scene below from the script shows the death of Clean's character aboard the P.B.R.

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144 POV BEHIND CLEAN

He BLASTS short bursts of tracers into the jungle, cutting
it to salad. Suddenly more tracers from another direction -
- Clean swings around -- BULLETS smash against his shield
and rip chunks from the surfboard. He BLASTS a long heavy
burst at the jungle -- trees crumble.

                    CLEAN
          I'm ripping 'em, man, son-of-a-bitch, it's
          jammed, oh God, it's jammed.

Clean is riddled by MACHINE GUN FIRE.

Chief runs to Mr. Clean -- it is obvious that he is dead.
He looks angrily to Willard.

Willard and Chef are practically through. Willard leaps up,
as Chef finishes the last strokes. He moves toward the
cockpit.

                    WILLARD
          Throw me that ordnance.
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Chef throws him an M-79 and several shells -- Willard opens
it, jams a huge projectile and pulls himself over the edge
of the cockpit.

                    WILLARD
                  (continuing)
            Give me some kind a field a fire --

BULLETS rip by.

                    CHEF
                  (exhausted)
            We're through.

He climbs aboard and collapses.

                    CHEF
                  (continuing)
            Oh, God --

                    LANCE
                  (FIRING)
            I ain't finished ! I ain't finished !

                    WILLARD
            Bring that bow ordnance into those trees.

He jams his gun up as he sees a flash and FIRES -- there is
a low POP and a WHISTLE as the GRENADE arches into the
jungle.
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The following line in the script shows that Clean goes from an avid fighter
who wants to kill the guys shooting him, to a panicked one, to a dead one, all in a
short time period and in one line in the script. "I'm ripping 'em, man, son-of-a-bitch,
it's jammed, oh God, it's jammed. Clean is riddled by MACHINE GUN FIRE." (figure
11) When his gun jams he is quickly killed. The script version suggests that the
death of Clean is hardly even noticed. The men notice that he is obviously dead, but
they don't stop to think about it or to grieve his loss.

Figure 11 - Clean is shot

In the film we see that Chef quickly mourns his death. This quick response from Chef suggests that there is some humanity and sense of normalcy even in this broken of an army. The scene in the film starts out rather innocuously with an aerial shot and then the camera swoops down to the P.B.R. Birds chirp in the background as Chef hands out mail. Included in the mail that Chef hands out is an audio recording from Clean's mother. In the script we see the guys pick up the mail, but we don't see any reference to the audiotape, which is one of the main elements that adds to this scene in the film. The guys sit around the boat just reading their mail; it is quiet, almost serene. Johnson pulls out a purple smoke bomb and waves it around as Clean puts on the audiotape from his mother. Suddenly we see bullets headed towards the P.B.R and the men quickly run to their stations. Again here we see a change from the script. The previous scene in the script shows the guys are struggling to get up river and already in the midst of fighting when we see Clean die. Instead in the film we see the calm before the storm. Depicting the guys reading

their mail quietly and messing around sets the audience up for more of a response when we do view the boat being attacked.

After the film shows the bullets and other large ammunition headed towards the boat without warning, we view the boat as it gets shot up. Then the camera shifts to close ups of each of the men shooting their guns. We as the audience see Clean shot during the firefight, but the men don't really notice. When the shooting stops, Chief turns around and asks the guys to check out Clean. It is obvious he is dead. Johnson ignores the commotion on board and just asks, "where'd that dog go?" as he gets out of his turret. For Johnson and for the audience this little dog is significant; it is the only survivor of a boat search where the men got carried away; they fired upon and killed Vietnamese on a supply boat moving down river. That scene shows some of the most pointless deaths in the film; it shows that the men have truly lost it and that Willard is indeed heartless. He kills a woman at point blank range that the men on the boat shot up because he wants to continue his mission. This scene is the turning point for the men and their loss of humanity. The dog, a little golden lab puppy, is Johnson's last bit of humanity; when he loses it we see that he has truly begun his decent into madness as well.

Throughout the scene and while we see Clean sprawled out, covered in blood on deck we hear the audio of Clean's mother telling him to come home safe. While we view his lifeless body covered in blood on the deck we hear her talk about her future grandchildren and that he has a car when he comes home. Chef yells at Clean's body, "you can't die fucker" (figure 12) Clean looks younger and more

innocent than the other characters.[6] We see that he doesn't have a complicated notion of what it means to be in war, he just shoots when shot at and sometimes he shoots first. We see through this scene that death is something that cannot be prepared for or explained. Clean is killed, but none of the other characters are. There is no reason, other than which gun he is on, that he is killed instead of the other men. He isn't doing anything heroic; it is just his gun jams and he is unable to shoot back. We are shown the death of Clean quickly. This short scene shows his death as simple and his life ends for no greater purpose. We go from a loud scene, the sound of bullets firing from both sides, to quiet once again, eerily hearing Clean's mother on the tape as the men sit shocked on deck. The film, along with other post-Vietnam films, presents death a meaningless. There is no cause, no reason why Clean dies instead of the others. This is in contrast to the presentation of Smith's death in *Black Hawk Down*. Both scenes include the family of the men but their inclusion suggests very different things about how soldiers and families relate to death on the battlefield. Clean's mom says he should get his "hinny" home in one piece. Smith wants to make sure his parents have a positive idea of him even in death. Although he shares his fear and insecurity with Eversmann, he still represents the ideal soldier and the ideal death. With Clean we do not see this. There is no interaction between Clean and the other men on the P.B.R before he dies; he does not save anyone and does not represent any soldierly ideal. His death suggests that death is inevitable and meaningless not heroic. Smith dies a hero because he chose to save the life of a fellow soldier—Clean just dies.

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[6] Larry Fishburne, now know as Laurence Fishburne, played the character of Clean as a 14 year old.

Figure 12 - Chef mourns Clean

Stop-Loss

The shift in the presentation of death occurs post-9/11 and in *Black Hawk Down* portraying death as heroic and for a greater good. However, in *Stop-Loss* we see a shift in the presentation of death based on the shifting support for the war. I focus on the effect of the death of a soldier on those who are left behind. The inclusion of outside character's responses to the death provides a different perspective. Throughout this film there is an underlying tone or question: could these deaths have been prevented?

Stop-Loss presents death as horrific but the sacrifices of the soldiers as noble. The way that we see the death and destruction of the characters in the script and film provide a different meaning because we see their effect once the soldiers return home. The death scene I focus on is the suicide and resulting funeral of one of the soldiers. One of the main characters in the film, Tommy, takes a downward turn once he returns home; he starts drinking too much, getting into arguments and

physical altercations with his wife and others. Eventually his wife kicks him out and he commits suicide. The section I examine focuses on the script and film analysis of Tommy's funeral.

We see this death in a different light than we do the others because we see the effect that Tommy's death has on his family and friends. Instead of showing the effect of his death just on his fellow solders we see its effect on his family, wife and friends, including those who he served with. Because it presents the soldiers once they return home this film is able to address the death of a soldier through the lens of the family and the town instead of just his fellow soldiers. This funeral shows the effects of war on everyone and complicates the audience's understanding of how death affects those that are left behind. Showing the funeral suggests that his death is mourned more than it is celebrated because his death was a suicide; he did not die in battle, he died because he could not handle civilian life anymore. While the other deaths shown in the film are noted, they are not focused on with this level of detail; we do not see the impact of the death on others except through short film clips celebrating their lives. The fact that Tommy's death was a suicide changes the characters and the film's showing of this particular death.

EXT. BRAZOS, TEXAS - DAY

CEMETERY - TOMMY'S FUNERAL

FULL MILITARY HONORS - COLOR GUARD, long PROCESSION rolling in of BLACK HEARSE, LIMOS, and the ARMY CROWN VIC'S.

We see everyone from Brazos and the Base there: BOOT, SHERIFF Boudreaux, SOLDIERS, TOWNSPEOPLE, and we find-

STEVE as part of the COLOR GUARD rolling the CASKET out of
the back of the HEARSE: Steve crisp, sharp in dress
uniform.

People getting out of limos, we see TOMMY'S FAMILY;
devastated MOTHER, FATHER, SISTERS, grieving RELATIVES.

And ROY and IDA, Ida embracing Tommy's mother; they are in
their own kind of "what if" agony as well.

Among them at Jeanie's elbow, is MICHELE, she's STUNNING in
black, beautiful.

AND IN THE TREELINE AT THE EDGE OF THE CEMETERY-

BRANDON, ballcap pulled low, a little unshaven, his Wal-
Mart clothes looking a little slept-in, and probably are.

Brandon watches the whole ceremony from his removed place
in the community; there's his deceased friend, his best
friend, his parents, the woman he loves, the Army, this
town, and he sees it all from a distance - **ALONE**. (114)

The script suggests that we will see the full procession of the funeral, but in
the film the action starts later. In this scene we see all the major players in the film,
Brandon the protagonist; Steve, his best friend and one of the guys he served with;
Jeanie who was Tommy's wife; Michele who is Steve's fiancé and one of Brandon's
childhood friends, and finally Roy and Ida, Brandon's parents. It is important in this
scene that we see each of these characters responses to Tommy's death. The
interactions between these characters suggest the familiarity between all of them.
They are not all related; they are from a small town and have known each other for
many years, and have become like a family. The phrasing in the script of the "what if
agony" that Roy and Ida feel, suggests that they make a connection between Tommy
and their own son Brandon. It shows that they are aware that this could be their son

in the coffin and not Tommy. Also given the size of the town and their interactions in the film we can assume that Ida and Roy view Tommy almost as a son. They saw all these boys grow up together and go off to serve at the same time. Brandon is clearly alone and off to the side throughout the scene. The only word in the script that is bolded is alone. This suggests that he is not only alone physically but emotionally as well. Tommy's death is one the motivating factors that makes Brandon return to Iraq. Steve suggests to Brandon that if Brandon in his role as Sergeant had been around through Tommy's troubles he might have been able to prevent his suicide. Brandon at this point in the script had been trying to escape his renewed contract and had already bought another identity to go to Canada. Brandon only returned to Brazos because he had been told about Tommy's suicide and had returned only for Tommy's funeral. It was the result of the guilt that leads him to return to Iraq.

Figure 13 - Jeanie (Tommy's wife) in foreground, Ida (Brandon's mother) in background

In the film we start with an image of Tommy's wife Jeanie, crying and jumping slightly as she hears the twenty-one-gun salute. She is off to the right of the screen and we see Brandon's mother directly behind her, slightly out of focus, she also jumps slightly as she hears the guns fire. While we see the guys folding up the flag over Tommy's casket, we also see home video images of Tommy from Iraq; they are grainy and hand held, showing him messing around, flipping off the camera, showing a flag tattoo on his arm, and showing off his gun. Our final images of Tommy are of him happy, goofing around or feigning sleep in a Humvee. The images we are shown of Tommy are all while he is serving in Iraq; we never see him at home stateside in the video images. If the images were of him as a younger man, pictures of his life back home it might suggest more of a grieving of the life lost. Just presenting images of him in the service suggest the direct connection between his suicide and his service in Iraq; while it is clear that he chose to serve, what war did to his character was irreparable and ultimately led to his suicide. At the end of the scene Steve takes the flag to Tommy's widow; she clutches it and we see her hands caress and tightly clutch the flag, (figure 13) she stills wears her wedding ring. It is the little details that we see in this scene in the film that make it more complicated than the script suggests. While the script suggests that Brandon is alone. In the script we see that he views the ceremony off to the side of the group. We see Brandon at the tree line; unable to approach the ceremony and be a part of the community that he desperately wants to be a part of once again. However, in the film we never see that he actually watches the ceremony or that he sees it all from a distance. We might assume that he does, because he approaches Tommy's grave

after the ceremony is over, he doesn't really get close to the ceremony location until a cemetery worker is piling dirt on the coffin (figure 14). We see more of the humanity behind the characters in the film. The script here is just is a starting point. The way that the images are presented to the audience is what makes the scenes meaningful. We get an idea of the feeling behind the scene in the script but it is the contrasting images that we see that create an emotional response.
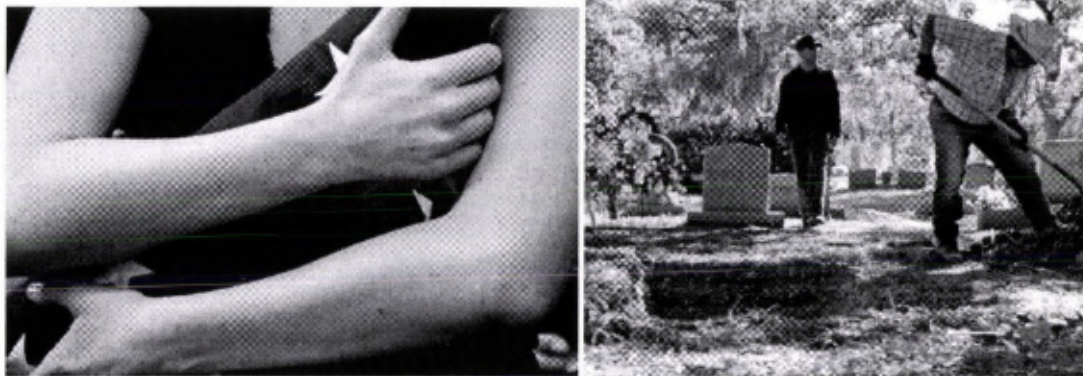
Figures 14 - Jeanie clutching flag Figure 15 - Brandon approaching Tommy's grave after the service

The other visual difference presented in the film is between Brandon and Steve. Here this difference is also included in the script, it is clear that Steve represents the ideal while Brandon has slipped. We compare how well Brandon is holding it together and how well Steve is. They each responded to Tommy's death differently. Steve is shown in his dress uniform, representing the strong-hero type, whereas Brandon is shown barely held together, hardly looking like he belongs there. This visual differentiation presents the choices and responses to death. Steve has already made the choice to return to Iraq at this point in the film. He has reenlisted and is the one who delivers the flag to Jeanie. He is at home in Brazos spending time with his family and friends before he returns. Brandon in contrast is

here only for Tommy's funeral; previous to the funeral scene we saw Brandon purchase another identity to move to Canada. It is only when he learns of Tommy's suicide that he makes the choice to return to Brazos. Brandon's choice to run away is depicted as cowardly because he is in a leadership role and is expected to live up to heroic expectations. Steve holds Brandon responsible for the lives of his men overseas and at home. Brandon, in a later scene, is reminded of his role as protector and guiding leader; it is this conversation that leads to his choice to return to Iraq to protect more of his men from dying. In order to protect the lives of the men under his command, he must once again risk his own and let the Army stop-loss him successfully.

Overall, *Stop-Loss* suggests that the stop-loss legislation and the Army as an institution are the cause for the deaths and the destruction of self of these characters. Brandon makes the decision to go back, even after he notes "his head is too full," suggesting that even though he is traumatized personally, he is still unable to run away from his duty. This is shown to be heroic and problematic at the same time; he gets back on a military bus and ships back out, and the audience interprets why this is the case differently. I would suggest that Tommy's suicide along with Steve's suggestion that Brandon could have prevented Tommy's death causes Brandon to return to Iraq. Suggesting this shows that Brandon's character, as a Sergeant and role model for his men, has to do the "right thing" even when he has faced too much death himself. It is this sense of heroic duty and the responsibility of the leader over the death of his men that changes the dynamic of the presentation of death. Brandon as a Sergeant inevitably feels responsible for the death of any of his

men and opts back into service. As an audience this choice is something we feel mixed emotions about. The film sets us up to feel two different things at the moment we hear that both Steve and Brandon ultimately chose to go back—disgust and heartbreak. We are disgusted with the establishment for instilling the need to return to combat, but at the same time we are heartbroken because the characters feel like they have to make the *choice* to return. However, based on the role the military establishment plays in the film, did they really have a choice? The film is conscious of its varied different roles in the public; as such the characters themselves mirror this duality and are very aware of the mentality "love the soldier and hate the war."

Final Thoughts

What do we gain from looking at both the scripts and the film sections for each of these films? Using both rhetorical analysis of screenplay and mise-en-scene analysis of the scenes from the film is more expansive and inclusive. The screenplay provides the introductory framework, the outline for the film as a whole, and the ideology that underlies the film. However, the film uses visual images to present the story, show the characters, and visually and aurally show us key elements. In the case of the War film, it is the visual and oral elements of the film that show the humanity of its characters, along with the ideology. We see this in the depiction of death on the page when it is compared to what we see on screen. A simple line of action describing a character sitting and watching a funeral does not describe the visual elements of the scene, the lighting, the focus, nor the nuances that the actor adds to the role. A film would be quite different if these elements were not an inherent part of the process.

Films with complicated ideologies and those with explicit and implicit ideological implications like War films need to be examined using as many tools as possible. Looking at the scripts alongside the films provides an alternative framework to look at the films. A script for a film can suggest things that we might not see or understand as important or as crucial as the script suggests. They suggest things that are not always immediately obvious when viewing a film. An undertone or the background of a character or a smaller political element might come across in a script, but not be obvious in the film. Examples from *Black Hawk Down* include the use of the amphetamine khat, never explained or shown in the film, but written about the in book and in the script. Also at one point in the script it notes that the Somali fighters are using Russian night goggles and unless the audience is very familiar with the different types of night goggles this detail would not be clear.

Screenplays have a very specific format and are easily read by students. The examination of death both in the script and on screen in this chapter suggests that there are certain elements that change in between the two modes. The delivery of dialog, the way shots are framed, and other filmic elements add onto the basic information in the script. However, many of the key elements presented in the script remain the same in the film version. The emphasis on certain elements within the script—how lines are written out, which descriptions are bolded or capitalized, place emphasis on that element. Yes, we see these elements in the film itself, but reading the script with a critical eye allows us to see how important that element is. The script gives us a better understanding of that scene, the ideology presented, and

perhaps gives us a better understanding of how the characters feel than we might just in viewing the film.

The scripts themselves demonstrate a certain emphasis on ideology and public support for a war that aren't as obvious in the film. How the military and the characters are described within a script affect the final cut of the film. The description of a scene suggests a basic outline, but it is the addition of all the other little things that we see and hear in a film that make film such an interesting thing for us to study. In an increasingly media oriented society it is important for students to know and understand that films do not just appear in their final filmic form. They do not come from the genius of a single person, but from many.

In the next chapter I suggest other ways to study the underlying framework and ideology in the scripts in a classroom setting. The third and final chapter will focus on how and why the use of script and film in a composition is not only appropriate but also extremely helpful for student's understanding of a text. Using this type of analysis encourages students to think of a visual text as a written text as well and offers them another way to study multimodal texts. The next chapter suggests a thematically based composition classroom that encourages students to create their own multimodal texts.

CHAPTER 5 - RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION PEDAGOGY: THE USE OF THE FILM SCRIPT IN THE CLASSROOM

Ultimately, how does this type of analysis tie into a rhetoric or composition classroom? Film scripts present a unique opportunity to examine a part of a larger process. We examine and analyze play's, why do we not look at film scripts? Film and TV scripts can help students to understand that media is pieced together slowly and in meaningful ways. This understanding of how media is put together will also help students to understand that revision does not just occur within composition classroom but in meaningful ways in other locations. Underlying structure and meaning in a script are crucial to the final visual product. A script and a film go a long way before they become a final product: from the original ideas, to the many draft scripts to the filming, editing, and finally projection onto a screen. This process of filmmaking could be very helpful to students understanding their own writing processes. Examining the different processes behind a film instead of just traditional alphabetic texts shows the differing ways that multimodal texts[7] come together. I believe that the use of film in a composition classroom is useful for two main reasons: the addition of differing types of critical thinking, analysis and awareness of visual, aural and alphabetic texts, and I believe this type of study can help students to develop an understanding of different types of writing and helping them

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[7] I footnote text here because I am referencing text as both visual and written text. I would add aural ones as well.

to build their own multimodal texts. The course I outline includes the critical analysis of script and film, production of a written script, and. finally short film from this script. This combines both Donald Murray's ideas of process pedagogy, as well as an emphasis on building an understanding and awareness of multimodal pedagogy as suggested by Pamela Takayoshi and Cynthia Selfe.

Background

Many composition scholars argue that film can and should be included in English composition classrooms. They note that the components that we try to stress in a composition classroom are emphasized in film as well. Film in particular can help students to develop critical viewing skills, along with the critical reading and writing skills we hope to foster. Film transmits information in different ways than alphabetic texts, using visual and aural modes to present information. More importantly films contain many issues we stress in composition (and literature) courses, such as form, structure, symbols, a narrative along with other visual details (Sheridan et al, Homicz and Dreiser). William Costanzo suggests the use of film within the composition classroom can be helpful to engage students who are increasingly aware of new technology, newer forms of video, and new media composition. Costanzo suggests that film can encourage students to think about composition recognizing "elements of clarity, unity, completeness, continuity, and mechanics more readily in visual terms than they can, initially, in their own writing" (80). Krista Homicz and Petra Dreiser argue that film can be quite useful in the classroom—but when relegated to "relief" sections of the syllabi, students take less care in the essays that they write about the films (3). Film has to be carefully placed

in a composition classroom in order to be the most successful. Film should be used purposefully and when it adds to the overall goals of the course; however, if films are used to fill time instead of as an important component of a course it can be problematic.

Justification for course

You might ask, what will this type of study add to the composition classroom? I believe it will provide two important and connected elements. First, it will add to the students' understanding of how a text, specifically a visual one, is built from a written one. This analysis in turn shapes students understanding of their aural, visual and written world—shaping their critical thinking skills. These critical skills help students to become aware of possible messages. Second, actively engaging in this type of analysis will foster an understanding of how they might write and create a text of their own. While the analysis does not provide a framework for students to fill in, it provides the tools to help them understand how ideological messages can be depicted in nuanced ways.

In our increasingly multimodal culture, I believe it is important for students to not only be able to analyze and critically take apart arguments in the textual form but in the visual form as well. We are bombarded with images and text in different formats, many that we do not give another thought to. I suggest using this type of analysis to look at both the visual as well as the textual. Along with other scholars in the field I believe that there is something to be gained with the combination of these elements.

Diana George suggests the study of visual communication and visual rhetoric in the composition classroom. In selections from her piece "Analysis to Design" she notes, "I am after a clearer understanding of what can happen when the visual is very consciously brought into the composition classroom as a form of communication worth both examining *and* producing" (1431). She suggests that students not only need to examine these types of texts, but need to produce their own. Analysis is useful, but unless students can apply that knowledge it is less valuable. George quoting Neil Postman notes " 'We do not mean to suggest by its use that television is the equivalent of *belles lettres* but rather that certain kinds of television programs employ language and action in ways that duplicate the functions of traditional literary forms" (1433). The New London Group suggests similar ideas surrounding the adaptation of different forms of literacy.

> We argue that literacy pedagogy now must account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies. This includes *understanding* and *competent control* of representational forms that are becoming increasingly significant in the overall communications environment, such as *visual images* and their relationship to the *written word* - for instance, visual design in desktop publishing or the interface of visual and linguistic meaning in multimedia (New London Group). [emphasis added]

With this in mind I believe that a thematically-based upper-level composition class would be the place to implement this type of analysis and the projects that I

suggest later. My course might be similar to the "Writing with Video Course"[8] at University of Illinois in their content and in the focus on critical engagement skills. One of the key differences is the focus on the analysis of script and film analysis instead of the focus on visual design. From my understanding of the course, there is more of a focus on visual design elements and less of a focus on the type of analysis of script and film that I suggest alongside the production of script and film. "Writing with Video in Goals and Policies" suggests their course "will *use video* to explore the challenges of thinking creatively and critically, while exploring the pleasures and perils of composing and communicating ideas that matter. (Andrews et al.) Depending on the instructor the course is slightly different but there is an emphasis on thinking through each of the processes carefully and putting together a meaningful video composition. The ideas used in the "Writing with Video" course are similar to those presented by Takayoski and Selfe in their piece "Multimodal Composition." Takayoski and Selfe suggest that students need to learn not only how to analyze texts with multiple modes—text along with visual—but they need to learn how to design them as well. They suggest that if composition teachers wish to remain relevant they should start teaching students to use multiple modes to communicate.

The course I outline below presents some of the same goals and uses similar types of reading as "Writing with Video." However, I set up different expectations in from the writing and the actual content of the course. A composition classroom

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[8] The Writing with Video course at the University of Illinois is an advanced composition class that produces video as composition. The course encourages technical communication and writing with video. Please see their website for more information: http://writingwithvideo.net/index.html

allows a rhetorical emphasis exploring different types of writing. The use of War film, along with other critical texts, will help students to understand the way that arguments can be pieced together in different formats. This type of class would allow an emphasis on analysis of different types of text—alphabetic, visual and aural. The main reason I suggest this type of analysis as its own course is because it would be the most helpful to students after they had already taken an introductory college writing course. If students have already learned elements of textual analysis this course will help build on this foundation.

Although I suggest these types of lessons as part of a class with an emphasis on multiliteracy, some of the lessons I suggest could easily be adapted to encourage critical thinking skills in a traditional composition classroom. Diana George and John Trimbur in "Cultural Studies and Composition" suggest that the study of popular culture in writing classrooms allows students to study a topic that they are familiar with, one that is "close to the self" and enables teachers to do "close reading and interpretation of texts, in this case, substituting popular culture or media for literary texts" (82). As they suggest, the addition of popular culture to a classroom can be particularly effective to engage students critically with a topic they are already interested in and are familiar with its forms.

There are different ways that English composition scholars suggest the use of film in the classroom; however, given my own script and film analysis of three wars films I will suggest the study of this genre in a classroom to understand the underlying archetypes, assumptions, issues and ideals presented in a script and ultimately the film. My aim is to help students to understand the text itself and to

build an awareness of process pedagogy in different forms. Viewing a film as a text can be useful but the addition of the screenplay can help students to understand the remediation of texts. There is a textual (alphabetical) base that filmmakers work from. I use the term process pedagogy or Lad Tobin's term "post process" (13) to imply the emphasis on the many stages of writing or producing any type of text. These terms have not previously been applied to the study of script. I believe an emphasis on both the writing of the script and then producing that script teaches a different sort of "post process." In this thematically guided course students would build an understanding of how others piece together a film from a script. Then through their own production of a script and then a film they would develop and understanding of the process of making an alphabetic text into a visual and aural text. Post process, like process, emphasizes focus on the students writing process, but instead of just looking at the writing process, there is a specific focus or topic like the one in my suggested course. Peter Elbow and Donald Murray are also influential to my understanding of student writing and composing processes. Elbow's expressivist notions of writing play a key role in putting together something like a short screenplay as Murray's do notions of "the process of discovery through language" (4). I point specifically to Murray's "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product" as my key influence in my choice to scaffold assignments the way I do, encouraging students to work in stages. Murray notes three main stages these stages are recursive and are not just part of a production formula—prewriting, writing and rewriting. I believe that Elbow's notions presented in "Being a Writer vs. Being an Academic" best apply to this course. It is important to me that my students

do not come out of the class disliking writing. This course would encourage different types of writing—both academic and more creative. While I do not suggest letting students create their own assignments and guidelines as Elbow does in "A Method for Teaching" writing I do believe that a certain amount of freedom of expression goes a long way.

Ideal Course

War films present the students with a genre that is well known and accessible to students because of its prevalence. The War film genre has well-established norms and shows particular visual images and ideals. The main emphasis is on the shift from the script to the screen and the important choices that are made from one format to the other. The crucial part is the understanding that different formats allow for the presentation of different information. Information is presented in different ways in different texts. The message has to be presented in meaningful ways in order to have an effect on the audience. The focus would not be just on the ideals shown through script and film, though this would be a component. The main purpose of this course is to provide is a meaningful multimodal course: instead of just a focus on traditional alphabetic text production or just an emphasis on production of a multimedia text, there would be an emphasis on both.

Below I discuss the type of course I see stemming from this sort of analysis. Here I include goals and aims, types of texts that might be used, sample assignments and a sample lesson. This is my ideal course for teaching this sort of analytical reading and writing, actually having the students go from analyzing a script and a film. Looking at the different elements present in both might help with analytical

reading and writing. When they then create their own scripts and films this knowledge of the different elements assists in their creation.

Course Goals and Assignments

Course: 300-400 level English course. This course would be considered an upper-level composition course.

Course Goals and Aims: To develop an awareness and understanding of visual and alphabetic composition and to encourage students to become more critically literate scholars of multimedia texts. Inherent to this class is my desire for the students to develop and think about a text in multiple ways; this text might be video, audio, or alphabetic, but a crucial goal for this course is to develop an understanding that each of these "texts" occurs as an idea and then some sort of written text before it becomes a film, music etc.

Personal Goals for the course and the students: I would hope to add to the students' understanding and awareness of the texts in the world around them. I believe with the various types of analyses, and through the course reading, students will gain a great deal of understanding regarding texts, both analysis and production. I personally would like to teach a course like this because it is something I would like to have taken in my undergraduate career and never had the opportunity because no such class was offered.

An important component of the course is the variety of reading and what the students need to understand to really feel comfortable with the material. Within the first few weeks of class we will read a variety of texts regarding alphabetic and visual analysis. As a class we will come up with working definitions of the terms we

are using. It is important that students have an understanding of visual and textual imagery, signs and semiotics, word choice, as well as an understanding of the term ideology and its implications for a film text before diving into the in-depth analysis of these texts. They also need an understanding of these types of texts for their own compositions later in the semester.

Types of Analyses: The main types of analysis will be textual and visual. Like the analysis I use in my thesis there would be an emphasis on the script text as well as the visual film text in the classroom. Students would be expected to analyze alphabetic script texts along with film texts. Inherent to this study is a critical awareness of these issues. Reading certain texts in the class would be necessary to build student's awareness of critical analysis.

I would teach this type of analysis through active processes in class. Given that many of the students will not likely have taken many courses that include both of these components, I believe that modeling is essential. Demonstration of the types of analyses expected is crucial to building understanding of texts and keeping the students from potentially feeling overwhelmed. (I provide a lesson plan from *Black Hawk Down* of this type of critical analysis scaffolding.)

I also believe that through reading texts, both traditional alphabetic ones and less traditional interactive or multimedia texts, students can start to build an understanding of multimodality. Part of the course that is essential is the reading expected for the class and the resulting in class discussions. The interactions between the students will be invaluable to help them develop an understanding of

these issues. Students from different backgrounds can help one another to build an understanding and awareness of analysis and production of differing texts.

For the films we would be examining in class I will have students focus on a few of the following elements. Below are two categories, textual and visual details, these categories include suggestions of things that would be useful to look for. These two categories do not include all the details that we could look at in regard to scripts and films, but instead provide a starting point.

Textual Details: word choice, ellipses, implication of a scene to the main character, use of reveals, use of V.O., description of location, use of cliché phrases, ideology presented through written lines (both in action and in dialog)

Film Expansion on Text: verbal delivery of lines, background noise, use of music or lack thereof, presentation of visual version of main characters, angle of shots, use of lighting and background, visual reveals, imagery of location, ideology presented in images

Course Readings and Texts: The reading selection would include short scripts or selections from scripts, essays and books on visual analysis, textual analysis and film analysis. Script selections will include selections from the War films I analyzed. Texts regarding visual and textual analysis will likely include works from a variety of disciplines. Texts I suggest here include: *Non-designers design book* by Robin Williams for looking at elements of textual design. John Gibbs book *Mise-en-scène: Film Style and Interpretation* and Timothy Corrigan's *A Short Guide to Writing About Film* to look at film studies. Susan Hayward's *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts* would also be a helpful text for students. Selections from Robert McKee's *Story* and

Sid Fields *Screenplay* would be used to discuss norms and expectations regarding the screenplay. Along with these as the main texts critical essays would be selected as appropriate and include information on semiotics, genre analysis or additional ideological analysis. An example of an additional essay that would prove useful is Robin Wood's "Ideology, Genre, Auteur."

Course Assignments: Course reading throughout the semester, in class discussion, weekly online writing forums

Assignment 1: Critical Analysis of Textual and Visual in a scene—3-5 pages

This assignment (discussed in detail below) would include the in class activity regarding *Black Hawk Down* and then the written assignment for a grade. This analysis paper would be similar to the in class activity but in a written format. The paper analysis would not be the scene discussed in class. This 3 to 5 page paper would include the analysis of visual and textual elements at play in the scene.

Assignment 2: Short Film Script—5-7 pages

This written assignment would occur at midterm and would encourage students to produce their own written script. The script would not have to be about war, as is the focus of the films in the class, but would be a well thought out script suggesting an ideological message. Here they might focus on a particular message that they want to get across to an audience. Crucial to this assignment is the understanding of what can and needs to be put into a successful script. This particular script would be connected to the course because it would encourage them to use the types of critical analysis that they have using and creating their own based on what they have learned. Crucial to this component in the class is the

additional reading regarding script production. The prompt for this assignment will suggest some options for starting points and options of ideological messages that they could present through a script. Their script could be a traditional narrative or end up more like a documentary. The important element is the emphasis on producing this different type of text and starting to think about how to write for a visual medium.

Assignment 3: Movie Short—7-10 minute film and 3-4 page write up

This assignment would occur at the end of the semester. The students would put together a creative film from their midterm script. (For the final projects they are allowed to pick one script and work in groups if they want to). This visual would include the elements discussed in the course and represent of an idea of their choice. The main message that the students are trying to get across should be clear to the audience without looking at the script. This film would then be turned in at the end of the semester graded by the same elements discussed throughout the course.

A short 3-4 page write-up would be the final component of this project. This writing would be similar to a production journal or log and is a reflection of their experience making a film. The students would discuss how they personally made choices to present certain things in the script. This would include trials and tribulations and the reasoning behind the visual choices made from the alphabetic text.

I suggest scaffolding assignments like I do above because I believe it is important to encourage the use of both alphabetic text and visual text within a

classroom. Also I encourage the use of a basic program, iMovie or similar program, to produce their video so the emphasis is not on teaching a particular program, but instead on the visual elements of design, use of shot, framing and other visual and aural elements needed to put together a multimodal piece.

In Class Lesson

This in class lesson and assignment would occur several weeks into the after reading and discussing texts providing a critical awareness of both script and film. At this point students would have read and discussed different types of textual and visual analyses and have a basic understanding of these different types. Discussions on how visual elements play out on screen and how certain textual elements in the script suggest ideals, imagery etc. would continue after this in class lesson.

I would start by giving the students a section of script to take home and read as part of their homework. In class we would watch the film as a group or do an out-of-class screening. After the students have read these pages and seen the film as a whole we would examine a small section of the film in class. Here we would look for the elements we have been reading about and discussing in regard to the script and the film.

Below is an example from one of the scripts that I examined. Here I am pulling a section from the end of *Black Hawk Down* where we see the political ideology at play in the film. An exercise like this one provides an example of the shift between the textual and visual argument. Part of this lesson would include some commentary and background regarding the film as a whole, where this scene fits into the film and how what is presented in the script is expanded upon in the film.

The scene presented below is the one where we see Eversmann talking to the body of Smith once it is back in the hangar. To reiterate, at this point the class would have already read the selection outside of class and have already viewed the entirety of the film. The section below is the script section that the class would be required to read and textually analyze before coming to class.

EXT. WOLCOTT'S BLACK HAWK - DAY

Kids play on the downed helicopter.

>EVERSMANN (V.O.)
>I was talking to Blackburn the other day, and he asked me, "You know what changed? Why are we going home?" And I said, "Nothing..." But that's not true, you know? I think everything's changed. I know I've changed...

INT. A STORAGE ROOM - LATE DAY

Fluorescent lights. . . too bright.. .too constant... a cooler's humming...it kicks off and then on again...and we see EVERSMANN...And he's clean...just some nicks and cuts, band-aid pieces over some small wounds...but there are other wounds, the kind you can't see at first glance...a soldier who's been in combat...a look in a young man's eyes... a look that makes you stop and take a deeper look...into his soul...and that's just what we do...looking at his face...into his eyes...into the window of his soul...as he's talking to someone...easy, conversational...nothing out of the ordinary...

>EVERSMANN
>You know, a friend of mine asked me before I got here, it was before we were all shipping out. He asked me ... "Why are you going to fight somebody else's war? What do ya'll think, you're heros...?"

He laughs at the idea...

>EVERSMANN (CONT'D)
>I didn't know what to say at the time, but... if he asks me again...I'd say...No. I'd say there's

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                    no way in hell...Nobody asks to be a hero...it
                    just sometimes turns out that way...
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And for the first time we see he's been talking to a
familiar man, lying motionless on a stretcher...

And Eversmann, needing to make a final connection touches
Smith's chest...a hero's heart...another somebody who
didn't ask to be a hero..

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                         EVERSMANN (CONT'D)
                    (simply)
                    I'm gonna talk to your ma and pa when I get home,
                    okay?
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And we see there are other men on stretchers, other men who
left a piece of their hearts behind.

And he turns and leaves...the lights forever on...the
cooler humming...the boys going home

INT. AIRPLANE CARGO BAY - LATE IN THE DAY

The cargo bay door close on the empty cargo bay (126-127).

I would hand out a few of the following questions before watching the

selection of the film. After discussing the first set of questions regarding the script,

we would view the section of the film and then discuss those questions as well.

Questions regarding the script:

What does the action (scene description) suggest about the tone of the scene? What

underlying ideologies are presented?

Questions regarding script and film:

Given what we have studied regarding textual and visual analysis: How is the

message shown on the page versus on screen? How does this scene fit into the

overall film? If you were writing or filming this scene what might you do differently?

What kinds of things are complicated by this move to the visual medium? If you are familiar with the director or actors, do you see any of their characteristics presented on the screen? How does the scene change from script to screen? What is complicated in the visual version? What is left out? What questions does the scene in the script create for you as a reader? Does the visual presentation in the film of the same scene answer them?

These questions provide a way for the students to think about their first large assignment. I would point out certain things that I see in the text as well as what I see visually, to help scaffold this assignment. Many of the issues that I discuss below the students might come up with on their own in response to the questions I ask. However, depending on what they do or do not notice about the scene I would add in important details as required. As most instructors understand, lesson plans shift based on what your class is able to do and how much they notice. More or less explanation on my part might be needed depending on the class's response.

Overall tone and important details to film as a whole:

As Eversmann starts his voice over we see children playing on one of the downed choppers. There is a close up of Eversmann's face in the room. Both in script and on screen we cannot see to whom he is speaking to until the very end of the scene. The camera moves back to reveal that he is speaking to Smith dead on a stretcher on base. It is clear in the action (description of the scene in the script) through the spacing, the use of ellipses and the change in phrasing that there is a shift in his character here. Nowhere else in the script is this spacing used to this degree Here it is used to show many things in a short space—suggesting that

Eversmann is a much deeper and darker character than the man he was at the beginning of the film. His monologue further suggests that his point of view has shifted drastically. This scene is the final commentary of the film. The line "nobody asks to be a hero...it just sometimes turns out that way..." shows that Eversmann has in fact changed. He has lost his idealism and sees that his heroism is not as meaningful as he once thought. By wrapping up the character of Eversmann with this scene we see that he has taken up the role of leader, telling Smith he will talk to his parents, as it was his dying wish. The hangar filled with bodies in the script and in the film are potent images; death made so visible, so undeniable it is the one thing no one can beat. It suggests that while we may fight for freedom or democracy or just to survive, ultimately we do all die. There is a sense of cynicism and pain as we see these men dead. However, while the film shows death to be horrific and the violence we see is gut wrenching, the film focuses on the relationships of the men; these relationships, their roles to one another, both in life and in death, present the notion that death is heroic.

After discussing the above scene and reading critical visual and textual awareness texts I would give the following assignment:

Assignment 1 - Critical Analysis of Text and Visual Elements in a scene

Critical Writing Assignment 1 (write up for students)

For your first formal written assignment you will be doing a textual and visual analysis of a scene from *Black Hawk Down*. Using the guidelines provided here and the example we did in class you will be writing a 3 to 5 page analysis of a scene we did NOT discuss in class. Please see me if you have any questions.

Please answer the following questions in reference to a scene you pick from the film.

What is the underlying ideology or message presented in this particular scene? Is there an undertone of patriotism, masculinity, expected roles, imperialism or something else? How does this undercurrent effect the scene on the page and then again on screen? How are these ideas portrayed in both? Does the idea get presented successfully?

With these questions in mind pick a scene (approximately a page or two in length) and analyze the text by itself for important elements. Keep in mind it does not literally have to be a single scene, e.g. scene heading to another scene heading, but a section that depicts what you are arguing. Then examine the scene in the film and explain how the film changes or expands upon the textual document. How does the shift from script to screen complicate the information presented in the scene? Given what we have been studying and discussing, make sure to examine the two media separately and how they play on one another.

Using this assignment and in-class work suggests a focus on how a film changes from the script to screen; it also assists to scaffold their other assignments. Creating their own script and producing a visual film suggest a less traditional type of academic text. Both of these assignments would be longer and require more planning and grappling with the topics.

Breakdown of Class Units

The rest of the course would focus on production of these types of texts. The semester would likely be broken into three units. **Unit I** would be the section discussed in detail above. This unit would help students build an awareness of critical analysis of text and visual elements and then they would product a written analysis using these elements. It would focus on building a familiarity with terms and creating a level of comfort and understanding of this type of analysis in an academic way. **Unit II** would result in the production of a short script. This unit would include the discussion of the elements of script. Building upon the foundation we had set up through the critical terms they would be expected to write their own

script. Some of this unit would include students pairing up and discussing their ideas about how they want to put together a short script individually. Much like other composition classes, they would workshops these texts with other students, helping each other out with this presumably new type of writing. **Unit III** would be the last unit in the semester and the students would produce a visual film text. Here we would continue to study visual and aural elements but there would be a focus on how to successfully put these elements together to produce an effective rhetorical text. Though their film's text would not necessarily be complicated e.g. they would not be expected to produce a cinematic masterpiece, they would be expected to use most of the elements discussed through the course to put together a text of their own.

Conclusions

Given the shift to include the study of pop culture in composition classrooms, adding the script seems logical. Understanding the underlying presentation of characters, ideals, and values presented in a script and film can help students to be more critically aware of the texts they read and view and to create their own texts of the same type. The critical awareness we try to teach students can help them understand how messages are suggested through certain visual or textual elements. In a thematically based course, looking at how masculinity, American ideology or death is portrayed in War films causes students to examine other texts with more scrutiny. Students are familiar with the idea of studying popular culture, but adding the script to it can greatly enhance the study of popular films.

Scholars have been discussing the use of popular culture in the classroom for years both because it is familiar to students and because it encourages critical discourse of an already familiar topic. Online publications like *Kairos* place an emphasis on using technology and film in the classroom. A special issue of *Kairos* in 2002 *Technology, Popular Culture, and the Art of Teaching* was dedicated solely to the use of technology, popular culture and multimedia in the writing classroom. These online and many times interactive articles include selections from various scholars and suggestions from how to examine and use everything from *The Matrix*, to *X Files*, to new media and *the Simpsons* within a composition classroom. Diane Penrod, in her introduction to *Miss Grundy Doesn't Teach here Anymore: Popular Culture and the Composition Classroom* suggests the purpose of uses of using cultural criticism in the writing classroom is threefold:

> First, the topics covered in cultural studies show students in real terms that their knowledge of themselves and of their worlds is socially constructed—produced and influenced by the rhetorical power of social institutions like schools, industry, government, and religion in subtle and not so subtle ways. Second, the college writing classroom becomes the site where students engage in questioning the language of institutional rhetoric and the power and conflict inherent in institutional discourse. Third, writing emerges as the activity where students practice the kinds of interrogation and investigation that encourage a democratic cultural literacy legitimized by 'authorities' (viii).

Using popular culture as a particular focus within a classroom has become increasingly common; I just suggest adding another element to this study—the script and a particular emphasis on a genre type as an exemplar mode. While I suggest the use of scripts to scaffold for production of a script, script analysis could also be used along with a more traditional writing classroom. Below I suggest a few other options for the use of the film script. Depending on the particular focus of a composition class different types of films or even television shows could be used to help expand on the curriculum and ideas presented.

For example, the current topic of the composition course at my University, Colorado State, is the "rhetoric of green". The course encourages students to examine their ideas and practices surrounding our nation's shift to the idea of "being green". It encourages critical engagement and awareness of the different scholars in the field of environmental studies, emphasizing a critical analysis of green arguments. Included in a course like this one, one that already uses documentary films, could be a script from that text. A script from one of these documentaries could be presented alongside the film and examined closely to show the process between script to screen. An activity like this one shows the process between composing a script to switching the information to a visual medium. This type of analysis could be used in any course. Below I provide a few questions that might be used to add a script into a classroom.

If we want to examine something shorter one could look at an episode of a TV show in a course. Examining a variety of texts in a composition course would prove extremely useful and might be fun for students as well. If we look at different

texts in a critical writing class we can encourage students to view the different ways that arguments are put together. In that case an instructor could pick a TV episode relevant to what they are teaching.

Questions we might ask based on a script and an episode of a show include:

What ideals is it portraying with the different characters? Does the vocabulary in the show suggest a certain targeted audience? Are the references made something for everyone to understand, or are they intended for an academic audience? What does the script tell us that the visual doesn't? And alternately, what does the visual version show us that script version does not?

Including an element like a film or TV episode in a class is also encouraging to students because it ties into to their daily lives. Presenting something in a different medium can change the student's sentiments towards analysis. Think how effective bringing in a section of a cult classic film script and comparing it to a movie section could be. Students would get excited to see a film they love in a classroom and hopefully make some connections to the differing types of composition that are available. I cannot think of a better way to introduce students or immerse students in multimodal composition in a classroom.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The notion of "love the soldier and hate the war" seems to have an overarching influence on post-9/11 films including recent films like *The Hurt Locker* and *The Messenger*. The War film, during and after Vietnam, presented war as horrific and presented soldiers themselves as crazy. Post-9/11 there was a notable shift in how the soldiers and war are presented. This shift is important to me because I see that it influences and seems to continue to influence War films in the United States. I see this as an interesting trend for future study because the presentation of war within films influences the public's ideas of war. Just as WWII films helped the war effort and encouraged citizens to support the cause, Vietnam films problematized the war and helped to support the anti-war movement, the post-9/11 War films are shaping our ideas of what it means to be an American and most importantly what it means to be a patriot.

The notion of "love the soldier and hate the war" in post-9/11 films that suggests a duality in the supportiveness towards the men and women in combat placed against the notion of an anti-war movie proves to be problematic. These war movies, though interpreted in many cases as anti-war films, also glorify battle, the sense of honor and camaraderie, and as result sometimes unwillingly, support a war effort. While most of these post-9/11 films portray violence and death graphically, they also portray it as a part of something larger than self. Showing the heroic

nature of the American warrior in the context of a graphically violent film sends a double message—war is bad, but also purposeful. Using graphic violence may keep the audience of the films smaller, but it also caters to a specific niche audience, war film buffs, ex military and future military enlistees. While portraying graphic violence may discourage them from military service, showing the relationships and the importance of the group along with it may have the opposite effect.

Ultimately different audiences take different things from these films, how they might have been intended and how they are taken can be quite different. While *Apocalypse Now* is meant to be perceived as an anti-war picture—sections of it taken out of context, can be viewed in other lights. Films like *Black Hawk Down* represent American ideals throughout. The constant support from the military throughout filming, use of black hawk and little bird helicopters, and military presence on set as advisors and actors discussing their roles with the soldiers who served in Somalia, change how the information in the film is presented. The ideological goals of the film change based on who is involved in the making of the picture. These goals are based upon the ideas of the writer and director primarily, but they are of course greatly influenced by the studio and other entities within the Hollywood system. Films like *The Hurt Locker* are intended to be realistic. The director, Kathryn Bigelow said she wants the audience to have the feeling of grit on their faces when they finish watching the film. Although she notes this, the film also has to follow a certain expected narrative format, certain ideas surrounding soldiers and keep within the genre of the War film, all of which ultimately shifts the ideology slightly. Whether or not the film received financial or technical support or gear from

the military tends to have an effect on its content and ideology. The fact that the film makers of *Black Hawk Down* had actual black hawk helicopters at their disposal suggests that the U.S. military understood the underlying message and supported a film that depicted the Somalia conflict from the perspective of American Soldiers. Whether or not it is realistic and does a good job of representing the conflict truthfully is a subject of debate.

Two of the three films I examined are considered military classics, and recent ones like *The Hurt Locker* will likely be added, to that list of films. These films shown by the military itself in their own training suggest a clear tone of patriotism and the type of realism that is expected by that audience. When death is shown as heroic, not senseless, it sends the message that the warrior hero is still an essential part of the American psyche and will likely continue to be in the near future. The attempt towards "realism" in these post-9/11 films justifies their use in military training. They present the American soldier as a force to be reckoned with, they are strong, masculine and represent American ideals even in death. The fact that flags are used throughout these films in the background suggests that although they may send the message that war is bad at times, they still present war and warriors with a sense of patriotism and duty. This sense of patriotism in service throughout post-9/11 films continues to be problematic in terms of the presentation of death as heroic. I think given our current sentiments I believe that films cannot successfully present soldiers in war any other way. However, I also see that this patriotic sentiment towards soldiers can be problematic if critique is intended.

Especially post-9/11, I believe we as an audience need to see strong heroes, strong leaders and believe in a sense of patriotism and duty; these films mirror that need. Though later ones, *Stop-Loss*, *The Hurt Locker*, and most recently *The Messenger,* do question this mentality to some degree, they still suggest that war has its place, even if it results in the death of many Americans and many others. Where does this leave us though? It leaves us in a space where we need to examine the underlying issues that are presented in these films to get a better idea of what they represent and the effect that they have on American audiences.

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