

“Fashioning” the Post-War Self in Jessica Goodell’s *Shade It Black** Jessica Goodell’in *Shade It Black* İsimli Eserinde Savaş Sonrası Benliğin Şekillendirilmesi

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Abstract

As a young woman who sets her eyes on “what men are capable of doing,” Jessica Goodell takes the challenge to serve the U.S. Marine Corps. She wants to serve the Corps as a tank crew member. Since the position is viewed inappropriate for a woman, she consents to serve as a heavy equipment mechanic instead. When she is deployed to Iraq, however, she finds herself serving as a mortuary clerk. She has written *Shade It Black: Death and After in Iraq* (2011), five years after her return home. During her service, she is subjected to discrimination by both male and female Marines. Back home, as a veteran with PTSD, she feels tormented by the memories of and philosophical and moral questions about the war. She adopts feminine fashion codes as part of her survival strategy, giving up on the masculine Marine style symbolizing all that is associated with the war and her feeling of guilt resulting from her part in it. This article will focus on Goodell’s two identity conversions: her choosing of “proper femininity” after the military experience and her political journey from being a supporter of the military to a sober critic of the war. Taking her memoir as a text of physical and political self-*fashioning*, this study will observe the relationship between these two conversions by analyzing the gendered aspect of soldiering for female Marines who served in Iraq as well as Goodell’s unique military role as a mortuary clerk.

Keywords: Jessica Goodell; gender identity; Marine identity; Iraq War; life writing

Öz

Gözünü “erkeklerin yapabileceği” işlere dikmiş bir genç bir kadın olan Jessica Goodell, Amerikan Deniz Piyade Teşkilatı’na katılma meydan okumasını kabul eder. Tank mürettebatı olarak hizmet vermek istediği halde, bu pozisyon bir kadın için uygun bulunmayınca malzeme teknisyenliğine razı gelir. Cepheye ise kendini bir morg çalışanı olarak görev yaparken bulur. Goodell savaştan döndükten beş yıl sonra *Shade It Black: Death and After in Iraq* (2011) isimli Irak Savaşı anlatısını kaleme alır. Orduda hizmeti esnasında hem erkek hem kadın Deniz Piyade askerleri tarafından ayrımcılığa uğrar. Savaş sonrasında travma sonrası stres bozukluğu ile mücadele ederken savaşa dair felsefi ve ahlaki sorular ve anılar Goodell’i rahat bırakmaz. Hayatta kalma stratejisi olarak, parçası olmaktan suçluluk duyduğu savaş ile ilişkilendirdiği erkeksi Deniz Piyadesi görünümünden sıyrılıp, kadınsı bir dış görünüme bürünür. Bu makale Goodell’in tecrübe ettiği iki kimlik dönüşümüne odaklanır: savaş sonrası geleneksel bakış açısına göre “kadınsı” bir görünüme bürünmesi ve politik olarak orduyu destekleyen bir piyadeden savaşı eleştiren bir sivile dönüşmesi. Eseri fiziksel ve politik bir kendini-tasarlama metni olarak ele alan bu çalışma, bu iki dönüşüm arasındaki ilişkiyi Irak Savaşı esnasında Amerikan ordusunda bir kadın deniz piyadesi ve bir morg görevlisi olma deneyimlerine odaklanarak açıklamaya çalışır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Jessica Goodell; cinsiyet kimliği; ABD Deniz piyadesi kimliği; Irak Savaşı; yaşam yazını

Introduction

Life writing provides a rich field of representation for Iraq War veterans. The genre provides them the necessary grounds to refute unwanted identities and to claim the ones wished-for or believed-to-have. Defining her individual identities as well as her national identity, her “old” identities as well as her “new” ones, Jessica Goodell’s memoir *Shade It Black: Death and After in Iraq* (2011) attempts to do both. She enlisted in the Marines after her graduation in 2001; was deployed to Iraq in 2004 and published her memoir in 2011, which was co-authored by John Hearn—the instructor of an “American Institutions” course she took at a community college after the war. She served as a mortuary clerk in Iraq in the Marine Corps’ first dedicated Mortuary Affairs Unit and dedicated her memoir to the Mortuary Affairs Platoon of the 2004 Camp in al Taqaddum, Iraq.

Goodell adopts the masculine fashion of the Corps in the first place, both in terms of her appearance and behavior, because she wants to be accepted into the male-dominant culture of the Marines and to be respected by them. Upon returning home, however, she feels

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tormented by the memories of and philosophical and moral questions about the war. Her doubts and emerging critical attitude end up in attempts to hide her Marine identity from American civilians back home, who she thinks are doubtful at best about the cause and the implementation of the war. She intends to avoid being the target of their critical remarks and repress her memories of the war by embracing a feminine appearance. Now a PTSD patient like many of her fellow Marines, she avoids social encounters with American civilians by locking herself up at home. The only thing she still believes in about the war is the Marine "brotherhood" and thus the only people she feels comfortable with are her fellow Marines. Yet, when her war-stricken Marine boyfriend Miguel begins to abuse her psychologically as well as physically, her trust in her fellow Marines is damaged too. As her closest friend in the Corps fails to respond to her call for help, her disillusionment with the Iraq War, the discourse developed to support it, and the Marine ideal is complete. Goodell's choice of adopting feminine fashion codes back home can be read as a symbolic act to dissociate herself from the Iraq War she now despises. Yet, it does not help her get rid of her haunting memories of the war and her share of the blame.

The eleven women service member-authors of Iraq War memoirs, who published their works between the years 2003-2015 (including J. Blair, A. Garrels, V. Gembara, S. Johnson, H. Kraft, K. Olson, Cheryl Ruff, C. Snively, K. Williams, and J. Goodell), dedicated varying portions of their work to the difficulties of being a women in the U.S. Armed Forces. Like Goodell, J. Blair, K. Olson and K. Williams also have joined the Armed Forces to take the challenge to be a woman service member; J. Blair, K. Dozier, and K. Williams also complain about the negative treatment of veterans upon returning home; and K. Olson, in the final part of her narrative, complain about the fact that she had to choose between two options—she could either "keep her head down, draw no attention," "cause no waves" and "do little to improve the institution" or "work within the system, find the right men as mentors, and change the system from within," which means that she also has faced discrimination as a military woman (2006, p.11). None of these authors, however, made gender a central issue to their narratives as Goodell did.

This article focuses on Goodell's two identity conversions: her choosing of "proper femininity" after her military experience and her political journey from being a supporter of the military to a sober critic of the war. The contradicting opinions and attitudes of the prewar, wartime and postwar narrated "I"s of the memoir make observing Goodell's evolving stance towards the war, the U.S. Marine Corps and American civilians possible. Taking her memoir as a text of physical and political self-*fashioning*, this study observes the relationship between these two conversions by analyzing the gendered aspect of soldiering for female Marines who served in Iraq and Goodell's unique military role as a mortuary clerk. Taking Goodell's work of literature as a text of alternative history, this study would reveal the fact that not enough change has been achieved to eliminate gender discrimination in the U.S. Armed Forces so far despite the gender equality claimed in all fields and aspects. An analysis of the changing professional, gender, political and national identity perceptions of the narrating "I" throughout the memoir would make the limitations group identities impose on women service members in general and Marines in specific possible.

The Pre-war Narrated "I" of *Shade It Black*

Although we tend to read works of life writing as "narratives of agency"—narratives of active agents rather than passive subjects "of social structures or unconscious transmitters of cultural scripts and models of identity"—Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson suggest that expecting completely independent narrators is not possible (2001, p.54). Goodell's memoir proves their point. Her narrative harbors conflicts between its narrating "I" and narrated "I"s

of different stages of her life as a result of the ideology she internalized in relation to the American military identity.

The prewar narrated “I” of *Shade It Black* is the daughter of a “comfortable middle class” family living near Chautauqua Lake, in the state of New York (2011, The Girls section, para.1). She plays the piano and the saxophone. She plays soccer and is the “only girl in a Little League baseball team” (2011, The Girls section, para.3). She is always interested in what men are capable of doing and wants to be an attorney like her father, until the recruiters who visited her high school at graduation dispose a challenge to her when they talk about the Marine Corps as a group of “tough men.” “Tough *men*?” she asks, “What about tough *women*?” (2011, The Girls section, para. 12). Upon hearing that the recruiters do not think women can do the “job of a man,” she claims the opposite and asks to serve as part of a tank crew (2011, The Girls section, para.12). Being a woman, she is found unfit for the position and signs up as a heavy equipment mechanic instead (2011, The Girls section, para.12). Her narrative reveals that she has joined the Marine Corps because she wants to challenge the gender assumptions the recruiter dwells on and prove herself to be as capable as a man in all walks of life.

The Wartime Narrated “I” of *Shade It Black*:

The Gendered Aspect of Soldiering For Female Marines in Iraq

When Goodell begins to serve in Iraq, she realizes that being a woman would always be a disadvantage for her military career. She thinks that the Marine Corps is a “masculine world, defined by toughness and courage, and it sees female members as perils to itself and to the nation” (2011, Immorality Plays section, para.8). From Marine point of view, the honor of the Corps and its effectiveness to protect the country are “threatened by small, weak, fearful women” (2011, Immorality Plays section, para.8). Goodell observes that male Marines think female Marines fail “because they are female, because of a reason beyond their control” and this innate defect cannot be “remedied.” Women are perceived as “the embodiment of flaws,” “bags of nasties” (2011, Pressure section, para.13). The wartime narrated “I” of the memoir calls female Marines who do not run, do not participate, fall out or are overweight “Marine-ettes.” Although she does not seem to be very fond of them during the war, the postwar narrating “I” of the memoir thinks the stereotype “limits all women” (2011, Mothers, Sisters, Daughters section, para.8). On the warfront, she realizes that women also discriminate against women. If a young woman does not dye her hair, do her nails or “apply make up at 4:30 a.m.—while holding a flashlight in the darkness of the tent” she would be “stigmatized” as a “bitch” or a “dyke” or a “prude,” or a “religious nut” (2011, Stigma, para.8). Moreover, if she does any of these she is reduced to a “sexual object” (2011, Stigma, para.8), open for assaults and even rape by her fellow male Marines (2011, Pushed section, para.1). Goodell is not accepted as a member of the group by male Marines because they are taught not to want her (2011, Mothers section, para.8). The exclusionary rhetoric is everywhere. Women Marines even stomp and march to it:

See the lady dressed in red, she makes a living in her bed,
 See the lady dressed in brown, she makes a living going up and down,
 See the lady dressed in green, she gives out like a coke machine
 See the lady dressed in gray, she likes to make it in the hay
 See the lady dressed in white, she knows how to do it right,
 Another lady dressed in green, she goes down like a submarine....
 Momma and Papa were lying in bed,
 Mamma rolled over, this is what she said,

Give me some PT! Good for you, Good for me. (2011, Pushed section, para.7)

When Goodell changes the cadences above in favor of women, some male Marines regard her attitude "disrespectful" (2011, Pushed section, para.17). Her depictions of the discriminatory approach of the Armed Forces are grounded in reality. In the U.S. military, being a soldier means being masculine (Crowley, 2010, p.6). Women were not accepted to serve in the battlefield until the Second World War, unless they served as nurses. They were not allowed to carry weapons until the Vietnam War was over. Women were welcomed when men were no longer enthusiastic to serve the U.S. military after the Vietnam War, yet, they were still not accepted to ground and air combat warships and submarines. Until the Panama crisis of 1989, women were allowed to serve in combat support units only. In the Gulf War, 41000 women served the military for the first time since the Second World War (Crowley, 2010, p. 4). During the Iraq War, women were deployed because the military was "so short of troops" and there was no way to distinguish where the frontline was (Crowley, 2010, p.5). Over 191,500 women served the United States military in the Middle East, most of whom were sent to Iraq, a number five times higher than in the Gulf War (Crowley, 2010, pp.1-2). The Iraq War saw women "handling eighty-four-pound machine guns as turret gunners atop tanks and trucks," "guarding convoys by hanging out of vehicles with rifles, kicking open doors and raiding houses," "searching and arresting Iraqis, driving trucks and Humvees along bomb-ridden roads" and "flying helicopters and bomber planes, and killing and being killed" (Crowley, 2010, p.5). Yet, female service members were assigned mainly as truck mechanics, nurses, or typists still seen unfit for hand to hand combat (Ender, 2009, p.99) and as Goodell puts it, "asymmetric conflict between men and women" was always there causing even suicides among female members (2011, Pushed section, para.23).

The situation has been even worse for female Marines since the Marines have always tended to distinguish themselves from the Army calling themselves "a band of *brothers*." The Marines tend to distinguish themselves from the army which is clear in the acronym they use to dismiss the army: "Ain't Ready to be Marines Yet." Mental and physical toughness and courage are believed to be "must haves" in the Corps and Marine boot camp training is known to be more mentally and physically challenging than that of the other military services. In 2009, women made up the 6% of the total Marine Corps and more than 12,000 women were excluded by the Department of Defense from direct combat (Beals, 2010, p.3). A 2010 Marine report labels women's contribution as "a vital asset" in counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, mentioning the Lioness and Female Engagement Teams, who were only responsible for "building relationships, distributing humanitarian aid, and thereby learning the dynamics/relationships within the tribes and communities" and not for direct combat operations (Beals, 2010 p.18). Finally, in 2016, Department of Defense opened all combat jobs to women without exceptions. So far, only three women have become infantry Marines and the Marine Corps is still considered to have a male-dominant environment.

In order to survive in the male environment of the Marine Corps, many female service members choose to "distance themselves from other women" (Crowley, 2010, p.12) and "act like a man/soldier" at an environment where there were few or no other women (2010, p.24). Women, like men, are expected to take risks, control their emotions and be violent. Eventually, they suffer from loneliness belonging to neither group. Although female members of the armed forces have always been expected to be "manly" enough, they should not be "too manly." In *Camouflage Isn't Only for Combat*, Melissa Herbert emphasizes the expectation from women to "balance [their] sex-defined gender role with the gender occupational role" (1998, p.31). Women are given new roles each time and are allowed to carry them out "based on gendered assumptions" (1998, pp.31-32). Women are defined as "givers" and "protectors" of life and not takers of them. And so was the combat exclusion policy justified. Even if it is a skirt women wear as part of a uniform, which on the one hand requires its wearer to have

“regulation, restraint, discipline”; it imposes on them certain attributes of femininity on the other such as “modesty, neatness, demureness-but not others-loose morals, slovenliness or enticement” (Craik, 2003, p.130). The worries over women wearing the military uniform are often solidified in the question: “What would be the effect of the uniform on the “real” woman underneath?” (Craik, 2003, p.142).

In an attempt to answer this question, Jennifer Craik analyzes the tradition and meanings of uniform-wearing. For her, uniforms are “all about” order, confidence, conformity and control of the “social” as well as the “inner” self (2003, p.128). The Oxford Dictionary describes the word “uniform” as “remaining the same in all cases and at all times; unchanging in form or character”; “of a similar form or character to another or others;” as well as a “distinctive clothing worn by members of the same organization or body” (“Uniform,” 1989). As the definitions show, the word connotes membership in a group which assumes conformism and consistency in conduct and opinion. Craik confirms that uniforms embody “sameness, unity, regulation, hierarchy, status, roles” (2003, p.128), which obviously bother many uniform-wearing men because they consider themselves superior to female members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Uniforms are also “indicators of the codification of ... rules of conduct and their internalization” as well as providers of the “‘not’-statements—that is what to avoid or repress” (Craik, 2003 p.129). Put in other words, the uniform imposes on its wearer what and what not to do while one has it on, which brings forth the question “whether bodies wear the uniforms or the uniforms wear bodies” (Craik, 2003 p.129). The Marines wear the uniform on a body “made, broken, and reformed” through “physical exertion, value change, training through the harnessing of emotion, acceptance of personal disconnection, and an intense pursuit of trained physical perfection and sacrifice” (Anderson, 2004, p.180). Accordingly, Goodell is expected to be physically and mentally as “strong” as male Marines. She would be looked down upon by the male majority if she fails to achieve it, while, still, she would be an outcast among female Marines if she manages to do it. These expectations make uniform-wearing a practice which adjusts or deconstructs one’s identity. Success, belonging and even survival is partly related to the internalization of these imposed identities. Nevertheless, things would become much more complicated when she sheds her uniform because she cannot get rid of the projected Marine identity by doing this. Moreover, the expectations of American civilians now skeptical about the justice of the cause of the war and of her fellow veterans who hold on to their wartime identities to survive in the changing environment back home kick in to make things even more complicated.

The Postwar Narrated “I” of *Shade It Black*:

The Influence of Goodell’s Unique Military Role As A Mortuary Clerk

According to Anna Stachyra, veteran identities carry traces of the “organized system of behavior, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, sentiments, acts, customs, codes, institutions, forms of art, speech, tools, implements, ornaments, charms” of the military (2001, p.22). Cultural identification with the military, renders veterans’ lives “meaningful, purposive, and spiritually fulfilling” since the military is “a bonded community,” dwelling on “culturally sustained myths, memories, and meanings” (2001, pp.34-35). Authors of war narratives often report troubled postwar lives because their veteran identities are formed between two communities: the military and the civilian. Although veterans belong to the civilian world, they cannot completely withdraw themselves from the military world, as their veteran identity is derived from their military experience. Therefore, their soldier identity is like a “phantom limb” which the veteran can “still feel” but is “no longer there” (2001, p.129). Although veterans try

to hold on to their military identities as a source of pride and honor, they have to develop new civilian identities to secure a place for themselves in the changing civilian world. This obligation sometimes makes them feel as if they do not belong to either world (2001, p.123). Many veterans report feeling like "refugees exiled from their military homeland" (2001, p.26).

Such double-belonging results from what Erving Goffman calls "the personal front[s]" (1959, p.14). According to Goffman, the term "personal front" refers to the components of identity people bring with them even when the setting changes. These components might be "insignia of office or rank; clothing; sex, age, and racial characteristics; size and looks; posture; speech patterns; facial expressions; bodily gestures; and the like" (1959, p.14). Veterans consciously or unconsciously carry the components of their identities which may retain their performer identity. Watching the war unfold as members of the audience while keeping the shared identity components of the performers makes adaptation to the civilian world problematic. In other words, the remnants of the soldier identity keep veterans' traumatic war memories alive. Dealing with the bitter memories of the past war, some veterans have suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD was present in the past wars, yet it is observed in "epidemic proportions" in today's military (Chamberlin, 2012, p.363). 1.64 million veterans, about 23% of all military members, having served during the Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom have suffered from such a condition (Chamberlin, 2012, p.363). According to governmental sources, this rate is between 11-20%, while back in the Gulf War it was 12% and in the Vietnam War it was 15% (How Common is PTSD?, 2015, para.6).

The homefront burdens of Iraq War veterans are often heavy. They include "inappropriate aggression," "hypervigilance," feeling "locked and loaded at home" and being "detached" or "uncaring" (Hsu, 2014, para.44). On the warfront, male service members were expected to conform to the masculine norms of taking risks, controlling their emotions, pursuing status, being violent and dominant, being popular among and powerful over women, being self-reliant and having a "disdain" for homosexuals; although some of their actions indicated "physical inadequacy," "emotional inexpressiveness," "subordination to women," "intellectual inferiority," or "performance failure" (Hsu, 2014, para.43). Remembering the bitterness of the war and their weaknesses in the face of these memories, authors like J. K. Doran (2005, p.201) and D. Sheehan (2012, p.18) mention feeling destructive physically and mentally; and authors like K. Dozier confess their incapability of behaving "gracious or polite" (2008, p. 140).

The home veterans come back to has been different from how veterans remembered it. Yet, the veterans have also changed. Iraq War experience alters their opinions about the war. The definitions dwelling on binary oppositions, which were once valid in eliminating all the questions about the justice and necessity of the war, are no longer valid. Authors often express their desire to share what they have gone through and explain their reasons for doing what they have done, yet they somehow know that those who have not been there would not understand, because "there was too much to explain," the "stories were too complex" (van Winkle, 2009, p.3).

Iraq War veterans, upon their return from the war, realized that the identities they adopted as soldiers such as "the liberator," "the invader" or "the bringer of the civilization" were not favored by Americans back home. At the beginning of the war, soldiers knew what was expected from them by the military and by their comrades who were their "second selves, social mirrors who help the veterans remember, not just recall, the meaning of their service"—serving selflessly, professionally and honorably and leaving no man behind

(Stachyra, 2001, p.118). They also knew what the civilians expected from them—to prevent further attacks and to protect the American people. At least, this was what they were told. As the war unfolded, however, approaches to the quality of the military action as well as the American foreign policy changed. Citizens began to approach the cause and the morality of the war with skepticism. When service members were back from Iraq, the state power disappeared from their lives and the veterans were left alone in justifying their wartime actions (Stachyra, 2001, p.33). Under these circumstances, many veteran authors had the tendency to depict civilians as antagonists.

Goodell's strategic change in appearance upon returning home can be explained by the necessity she feels to avoid the critical attitudes of the American civilians. According to Jennifer Craik, uniforms are "imprinted on our technical selfhood through techniques of the body (sociological, psychological, and biological)" and thus one's personal experiences with uniforms, or put simply one's memories with the uniform, "are full of images of humiliation, embarrassment, shame, rebellion, transgression, punishment" (2003, p.128). So are the memories Jessica Goodell narrates in her memoir. Therefore, she adopts what Judith Butler calls "performative femininity" as part of her survival strategy to hide her military past from herself and others (1990, p.179). For Butler,

... gender is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free-floating attributes, for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed. (1990, p.24)

As the quotation reveals, Butler thinks, and many others today accept, that "[t]here is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Butler, 1990, p.25). Therefore, it is possible to engage in varying gender performances at different times as in the case of Goodell. Butler explains how performative femininity or masculinity can be possible in these words:

Power, rather than the law, encompasses both the juridical (prohibitive and regulatory) and the productive (inadvertently generative) functions of differential relations. Hence, the sexuality that emerges within the matrix of power relations is not a simple replication or copy of the law itself, a uniform repetition of a masculinist economy of identity. The productions swerve from their original purposes and inadvertently mobilize possibilities of "subjects" that do not merely exceed the bounds of cultural intelligibility, but effectively expand the boundaries of what is, in fact, culturally intelligible. (1990, p.17)

Goodell's varying gender performances in Iraq and the United States befit the explanation provided in the quotation above. Her gender performances serve as her survival strategy in the two different settings of her memoir. In Iraq, among the Marines, she is taught to hide all feelings associated with femininity (such as vulnerability, emotionality, mercy, weakness etc.), to embrace all that is associated with masculinity (courage, patriotism, firmness, decisiveness etc.) and to associate the Marine identity with the Marine uniform. Both in the boot camp and in Iraq, her gender performance is shaped according to the expectations of the male-dominant culture of the Marine Corps in order to fit in the group and be anonymous, which is necessary for survival in the group. Back in the United States, however, she adopts the looks the patriarchal society would expect from her, again for the sake of fitting in and being anonymous. Her looks brings her closer to the "proper feminine" ideal, which she hopes would help her hide her military past from herself and others.

Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément conceptualized "the proper"—*le propre*—as part of subjectivity and gender construction in their work titled *The Newly Born Women*

(1986). According to them, it is a concept that doom women into "territories subordinated to philosophical, theoretical domination" (Cixous & Clement, 1986, p. 92). Since then, the term is used in feminist theory to refer to the socially-constructed defining characteristics of women. Social construction of gender is based on the social expectations of proper masculine and feminine roles in patriarchal societies. "Proper" behaviors for a woman are often listed as being "ladylike," docile and subservient. She is expected to subscribe to the so-called feminine norms of chastity, domesticity and conformity. She is the mother and the wife and is not supposed to intrude upon the public sphere, seeking content in her position supporting men without challenging the so-called gender hierarchy. She should not be too sexual but good enough to reproduce; not too assertive but preoccupied with her looks. She is not supposed to transgress into the boundaries of the male sphere. Decision-making and doing jobs that require physical superiority are considered to be proper for men only.

Back in the United States, in order to avoid criticism for her part in the war, Goodell adopts the "proper feminine" looks, she believes the society would expect from a woman, who "naturally" has nothing to do with the war. She wears high heels and "tight clothes with lace and flowers," does her hair and nails and waxes her eyebrows (2011, Tucson section, para.4). Yet, her efforts to forget her past through changing her appearance do not work. Hiding from "the toughened veteran deep inside [her] by covering her up with a cloak of femininity" is not enough for her to "mute the memories or quiet [her] doubts [concerning the war]" (2011, Tucson section, para.5). She feels the urge to hide them, now that her disillusionment with the war has begun. She hopes to get rid of the traces of her soldier identity, because of the changed meaning of the war in the changed setting. The American soldier, who was once "the heroic American at the Iraqi warfront," is no longer unquestioningly embraced back at home. American military as the "repressive state apparatus"—that offer, if not force, individuals" particular identities, normalize certain attitudes, behaviors and ideas so that people would internalize them without questioning and serve the ideological purposes of the state (Althusser, 1970, *The State* section, para. 2-3)—is no longer there to help her claim a favorable identity. Thus, she is left alone to justify her wartime actions. Since she cannot do it, she tries to hide her identity as a Marine by avoiding masculine looks. She associates feminine looks with "innocence" when Marine masculinity, for her, stands for her war guilt.

Butler thinks, gender is an "impersonation" and "becoming gendered involves impersonating an ideal that nobody actually inhabits" (1992, p.85). What Goodell tries to adopt is, in Butler's terms, "a stylized repetition of acts ... which are internally discontinuous ... [so that] the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief" (2003, p. 320). Naturally, Goodell's efforts prove to be futile, as her choice of identity, in Butler's words, requires nothing but a "repetition of oppressive and painful gender norms" and thereby limits her own "freedom" (1992, p.84). Her behavior is in no way a subversive one. Butler thinks, a behavior could only be subversive when it both "mime[s] and displace[s] its conventions" (1992, p.84). Making "gender trouble," which Butler says women should, is possible "not through the strategies that figure a utopian beyond, but through the mobilization, subversive confusion, and proliferation of precisely those constitutive categories that seek to keep gender in its place by posturing as the foundational illusions of identity" (1990, p.31). Goodell's performance, however, only mimes the oppressive norm, failing to displace any convention. As a result, the only people she feels safe with are her fellow veterans. Yet, her fellow veterans are also troubled with their past lives. Their behaviors no longer fit in the positive aspects of their professional identity such as fidelity and solidarity, since their professional identities have

also been performative and they are no longer performed as they are not on the warfront any more.

While Marines expect Goodell to be “a real Marine” by being emotionally strong and loyal to their common cause of the war, American civilians, who once expected her to protect them, find her guilty for the brutality of the war now. Goodell’s platoon was responsible for identifying and sending the dead bodies of American war casualties back home, preparing reports that display the missing body parts, tattoos, meat tags, birthmarks and scars shaded black on the outline of the body printed on a piece of paper. In addition, they would search the dead to find the pictures and notes in their pockets, their necklaces, dog tags or anything that could identify them. The postwar narrating “I” of Goodell’s war memoir thinks her platoon was the “reality to [the] collective hallucination” of the Iraq War (2011, Stigma section, para.13). Her job is called “processing” the dead, which, she thinks, is a job that “had to be done but that no one wanted to know about” (2011, Processing section, para.12).

The Department of Defense Mortuary Affairs Program covers recovery, identification and preparation work as well as disposition of the remains of the lost members, advising next of kin about burial benefits, assisting them with disposition of remains and monitoring the preparation and arrangement of remains for transport, and arranging for military burial detail (Chairman, 1990, p. 3). A fellow Marine of Goodell from the same unit, Christian Slater, describes the job as “being consigned to some lifeless netherworld” and depicts the difficulty of and alienation caused by it in these words:

Talking could be therapeutic, provided it was only with each other. Other Marines at Al-Taqaddum were already wary of the guys who worked "the meat wagon." Which was just as well. Loose shop talk about their mission could poison everyone's morale. But nobody had much to say anyway Most of us had never seen a dead body before, and our first experience was not just a dead body, but a dead body turned inside out. Even if you watched a million horror movies, you will never, ever get over the impact. Never. (Hirschfield, 2014, para.14)

Although the members of the platoon avoid using the names of the dead, they still could not avoid the difficulty of the experience. “Learning names, looking at family photos, reading letters from home would only make their job a million times worse. Even looking at their faces was discouraged” (Hirschfield, 2014, para.10). Having experienced the brutality of the war serving as a mortuary clerk engaging in the specific mission described above, Goodell is afraid that civilians could tell she had served in Iraq. Feeling “stigma[tized],” she cannot leave her apartment she “hate[s] being in” (2011, Social Phobia section, para.3). “Imprisoned” alone in her apartment, what she calls “the rumination” begins (2011, Tucson section, para.2). Thoughts and memories from her war experience begin to “creep [into] her consciousness” (2011, Tucson section, para.3). She tries to answer the,

... basic philosophical and, especially moral questions. Why had we invaded another country? How could I have been complicit in a war that hurt so many innocent people? I tried to see the honor in what I had done over there, but I couldn't. I searched for meaning in the deaths of the soldiers and civilians I helped to bury, but I couldn't find it. I had put my faith in the Marine Corps, believing that they knew more than me, knew better than me, and know I was losing that faith. (2011, Tucson section, para.3)

She also begins to lose faith in American civilians who she thinks did not know what they support when they supported the Iraq War. For her, “[n]o one should ever support the activities in which [she has] participated.” She thinks, it is not the American service members that should be exemplary, since it is the lives of the “hardworking, church-going, family men and women” whose lives service members yearn for and have fought for (2011, Searching section para.7). All wars, according to the disillusioned narrating “I” of Goodell’s memoir, “are based upon lies and myths,” which creates a tension between the soldier and “the power elite that fabricates them” as well as between soldiers and civilians (2011, Chautauqua

section, para.2). She thinks that the Iraq War, like all other wars, is a collective fault of Americans including civilians, soldiers, the media and politicians who spread these myths and lies (2011, Chautauqua section, para.2).

Her intense fear, helplessness, recurrent and intrusive memories, flashbacks, feeling of detachment from other people, insomnia and physical weakness are symptoms of her PTSD, which, she thinks, is "real like the flu" (2011, PTSD section, para.15). She is not the only veteran to "mentally stuck" in Iraq while being "physically stuck" in America. She meets Miguel during a "two-year stint" in Okinawa, Japan, before they were stationed in Iraq. He is a bilingual Hispanic veteran, who has a "straight-from-the barrio "thug" facial expression" (2011, Miguel section, para.4). Back home, he labels Goodell unfit for being a "real" Marine, discovering that she is on PTSD medication. He associates being a Marine with masculinity, that requires toughness in relation to one's emotions. He also criticizes Goodell for not being a real Marine because she has not participated in the initial invasion of Iraq (2011, Miguel section, para.7). His obsession with the idea of being a "real" Marine suggests that Miguel also has a problem with his wartime identity, most probably due to the traumatic experiences he has gone through during the war. Treating Goodell "like [she is] one of his Iraqi detainees, a prisoner of war," Miguel yells at her; threatens her; hits things and "so [Goodell] hides ... under the dining room table or behind the headboard between the bed and the wall or in the cupboards or behind a rack of clothes in the closet" (2011, St. Louis section, para.9). Miguel's "inappropriate aggression" is one of the common problems of traumatized veterans (Hsu, 2014, para.44). Having lived up to the masculine norms of the Marine environment, Miguel cannot consent to being jobless, without status, unable to control his emotions when he is back home. Remembering the bitterness of the war and his weaknesses, Miguel tends to hurt others. According to the report of National Center for PTSD, anger—like Miguel's—is "a survivor's response to trauma because it is a core component of the survival response in humans—helping people cope with life's adversities by providing us with increased energy to persist in the face of obstacles" (2011, A Break section, para.2). Once he sheds his uniform that has made him a respectable member of a group of tough Marines, he feels powerless. Having lost physical connection to the "heroic" identity gained through his experience on the warfront, all he could cling to has been the experience he has had with his fellow Marines—the initial invasion—to feel better. Goodell also attempts to turn to a fellow Marine for protection, yet the connection to the group embodied by the shared uniform they have once worn does not help her.

When Miguel begins to be unbearable and fatally destructive as an abusive partner, Goodell turns to Leslie, her war buddy from Iraq, who "would have given his life for [her] in Iraq and [she] would have given [hers] for him" (2011, Seattle section, para.3). She was sure that he would come to St. Louis to "rescue" her. His negative response, is shocking to her but still not a sign of betrayal for Goodell. She continues to believe in the Marine way of life and "living according to the Marine Code" (2011, Seattle section, para.7). Yet, being "lied to and humiliated and pushed around," she gradually begins to realize the gap between the real and the ideal. In *Shade It Black*, the depictions of the narrated "I" and "them" (American people) of the first half of the memoir contradicts with depictions of the narrated "I" and "them" at the end; and the narrating "I" of the beginning politically converts to an anti-war "I." Goodell gradually discovers that notions of camaraderie, joint cause and group-belonging, which are absent in the civilian world, are "fostered" in the military for the sake of "interconnection" (2011, Chautauqua section, para.6). The "real" American soldiers who are "anxious and depressed" due to "unearned self-esteem and narcissism" (2011, Chautauqua section, para.7) take the place of the ideal American Marines in her mind, who are "parts of a single organism," and are "brothers 'and sisters'" (2011, To Iraq section, para.15) who "completely

put [their] lives in the hands of [their] fellow soldiers” (2011, Fire and Rain section, para.11).

In the end of her memoir, Goodell also views American civilians in a more pessimistic light. She realizes that her “taken-for-granted assumptions” about Americans have been shaken by her war experience (2011, Home section, para.4). When she returns from Iraq, she observes American civilians to be relentless consumers. For her, their lives are characterized by “carelessness.” They are “busy” and “self-centered”; relationships are “superficial”; favors are “seldom returned”; everyone talks but no one listens; and friends “couldn’t be bothered” (2011, Home section, para.9). She calls her country “The Mall of America” where adjustment for veterans is even more difficult than it was on the warfront (2011, Home section, para.11).

Conclusion

Goodell’s postwar survival strategy emerges as a result of her negative perception of the masculine culture of the Marine Corps and the war she unconsciously associates with the masculine image embodied in the uniform she once wore. Her pre-war narrated “I” is ready to take any challenge addressed to her without having concerns about the nature of the challenge. During the war, she would be looked down upon by the male majority if she fails to achieve being physically and emotionally as strong as men; while, still, she would be an outcast among female Marines if she manages to be so. Things appear to be much more complicated for the postwar narrated “I,” since the expectations of American civilians now skeptical about the justice of the cause of the war and her fellow veterans who hold on to their wartime identities to survive in the changing environment back home come into play. Eventually, she is disappointed both by Americans at home and her fellow veterans, as a result of which her “rumination” begins. Not fond of the war any longer, she distrusts both groups. Goodell’s relationship with the military institution is proven to be as abusive as her relationship with Miguel when she talks about the myths that make people engage in “mindless servitude ... falsely called a career” (2011, Chautauqua section, para.4). To her, the U.S. Marine uniform no longer stands for the values of fidelity and solidarity the Marines take pride in but only for the war she was ashamed to be a part of. Therefore, she adopts “proper” feminine looks which she thinks would be the opposite of her wartime Marine looks in order to avoid encounters with American civilians.

Understanding Goodell’s choice of postwar survival strategy is possible only if her unique military role as a mortuary clerk and the place of women in the U.S. Marine culture are taken into consideration. As the member of a platoon about the job of which no Marine would want to know about; and the member of the Marine Corps in which women were seen inferior to men; Goodell’s postwar experience in an environment other than the warzone causes her to recognize the ideally constructed but unreal values attributed to the position she has filled. As a result, she begins to question the cause of the war, the Marine group loyalty, and not the least, the American civilians’ disowning of the collective fault at war. Eventually she becomes a sober critic of the war and the arrogant exceptionalism it dwells on. By the end of the book, the author’s perception of her professional, gender, political and national identity is altered as a result of the experiences she has had during the war.

Her efforts to re-fashion herself in terms of appearance does not work out for her, because the “proper femininity” she looks up to proves to be just another oppressive norm that limits her freedom. Consequently, she builds her survival strategy on understanding what has happened to her. She studies psychology and philosophy; reads about wars and about her country; starts running again; joins her college’s concert band; and finally writes her experiences in the form of this memoir (2011, Hope section, para.1). She claims having gained a certain degree of control over her life, yet after five years of her return from the war,

she reports thinking about the war every day and still trying to get it over (2001, Epilogue section, para.1). Befitting her ongoing struggle, the ending of Goodell's memoir is left open, implying that getting over the war and coming to terms with her identity is a process which is possible, this time, by "processing" herself.

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