Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of American Culture and Literature

# IDENTITIES UNDER CONSTRUCTION: IRAQ WAR, LIFE WRITING AND AMERICAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

Merve Özman Kaya

Ph. D. Dissertation

Ankara, 2015

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Merve Özman Kaya

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# ÖZET

Özman Kaya, Merve. *Yapım Aşamasında Kimlik: Irak Savaşı, Yaşam Yazını ve Amerikan Milli Kimliği*, Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2015.

Yaşam anlatıları, özellikle savaş yazını örnekleri, ulusların kültürel tarihinin birer parçasıdır. Bu anlatılar milli söylemi ve bu söylemin öngördüğü milli kimlik anlayışını canlandırma veya gözden düşürme potansiyeline sahiptir. 2003-2011 yıllarında Amerika-Irak Savaşı'nda cephede görev alan Amerikalılar savaş anılarında özgün bir kimlik oluşturma ve kendilerine atfedilen basmakalıp kimlikleri savuşturma çabasındadır. Bu çaba, politikacıların savaş söyleminin kimlik üzerine kurulmasından, diğer bir deyişle, savaşın başında George W. Bush tarafından dile getirilen "Ya bizimlesiniz, ya bize karşısınız!" mantığının politikacılar ve ordu tarafından benimsenmesinden kaynaklanmaktadır.

Bireyin sosyal ihtiyaçlarının yanı sıra, onların gurur ve utanç gibi duygularını da dikkate almak suretiyle davranışlarını inceleyen "Sembolik Etkileşimcilik" yaklaşımı yaşam yazınında milli kimlik olgusunu incelemek için uygundur. Bu çalışmada, sembolik etkileşimcilik yaklaşımından faydalanılarak, cephede görev almış yetmiş dokuz Amerikalının savaş anlatılarında Irak Savaşı'yla ilişkili olarak gelişen ve değişen bireysel ve milli kimlik oluşturma süreçleri incelenmektedir. Çalışmanın konusu olan yazarlar anlatılarında Bush ve Obama yönetimlerinin savaş söylemi ideolojisini barındıran Amerikan milli kimliğine tepkileriyle dikkat çekmektedirler. Politikacılar bireylere bu kimliği atfederek onları ideolojilerinin birer nesnesi haline getirirler. Yazarların savaş öncesindeki, süresindeki ve sonrasındaki milli ve bireysel kimlik tanımlarında gözlemlenen değişim ve savaş sonrası yaşamlarında benimsedikleri kimlikler onların Amerikan milli ve askeri kimliğine olan bağlılıklarındaki azalmayı göstermektedir. İdeolojinin varoluşu ideolojiyle ilişkilendirilen bireylerin varoluşuna bağlıdır. Yazarların savaşa ve ideal/mitik Amerikalı olarak çağırılmaya tepki olarak ideolojik kimlik kavramını reddetmeleri ve alternatif kimlikler benimsemeleri onları bu ideolojik seslenmenin nesnesi olmaktan çıkarmaktadır. Ulusları bir arada tutan unsurlardan biri nesnelere biçilen ortak anlamlar olduğuna göre, söz konusu yazarların

Amerikan milli kimliğini sorgulamaları yöneticileri dış politikalarını gözden geçirmeye sevk eder.

**Anahtar Sözcükler** Irak Savaşı, yaşam yazını, savaş anlatıları, Amerikan kimliği, ideolojik seslenme/çağırma, sembolik etkileşimcilik.

# ABSTRACT

Özman Kaya, Merve. *Identities Under Construction: Iraq War, Life Writing and American National Identity*, Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2015.

Life narratives, especially war narratives, are part of a nation's cultural history. These works have the potential to reinvigorate or outdate national narratives and the national identity promoted in them. Iraq War (2003-2011) narratives of American service members are intensely preoccupied with constructing identities for their authors and dismissing the ones attributed to them. This preoccupation stems from George W. Bush's identity-based war rhetoric which is based on "You are either with us or against us" mentality and internalized by the politicians and the military of the time.

The humanistic sociological approach of symbolic interactionism, which attaches importance not only to individuals' social needs but also to their emotions such as pride and shame in analyzing their behaviors is useful in investigating the construction of national identity in the works of life writing. Using symbolic interactionism, this study analyzes the processes of the individual and the national identity formation in relation to the Iraq War. The war narratives of seventy-nine American service members display reactions to the identities attributed to them through the interpellations of the Bush and Obama administrations. Such interpellation harbored the ideologies these administrations needed to fulfill their foreign policy decisions concerning the Iraq War. The so-called free Americans are subjectified to these ideologies and attributed an ideal/mythic identity. An evaluation of service member identities coined before, during and after the war; service members' definitions of the American national identity; and the identities they prefer to stick to in their post-war lives point to a visible regression in the popularity of national and military identities. Authors' critical attitudes towards their interpellated identities terminate their subjection to such interpellation. If the existence of ideology depends on the existence of its subjects; if the identity the authors reject is the ideological identity that helps the politicians to fulfill their Iraq War policy; and if what keep nations together are collective interpretations; then the authors, who reject

unwanted identities and offer alternative definitions for the self and the nation, have the political power to influence the American foreign policy.

**Keywords** Iraq War, life writing, war narratives, American national identity, interpellation, symbolic interactionism.

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# INTRODUCTION

Iraq War has given rise to heated discussions, caused factional divisions among American citizens and has challenged the way Americans look at war, American foreign policy as well as the American national identity. The different points of view on the war were traceable in the several names offered for the war. For different politicians or for the same ones at different times, the war was the "Global War on Terror," "War against Al-Qaeda," "Operation Iraqi Freedom," "the civil war in Iraq," "the occupation," or "the invasion." The titles attributed to the war pointed to an obscure and shifting enemy who was at the same time the abstract notion of "terror," "Al Qaeda," the Saddam regime of tyranny, or the civilians fighting one another. Besides, the titles politicians attributed to the war automatically determined the expected roles from the service members of the United States military. They were supposed to save the "world" from terrorism, to liberate the Iraqi people, to soothe the insurgency, to invade and occupy the country all at the same time—missions that raised contradictions.

The stereotypical American soldier is a traditional, authoritarian, obedient, rigid macho, bureaucratic and flexible political conservative (Suid 94-95). The media depictions of the Iraq War veteran also have vestiges of myth and reality. The mass media presents the American veteran as "tough yet tortured, disciplined yet uncontrollable, sensitive yet brazen, family-centered yet socially delinquent" (Stachyra 30). During the Iraq War, the media often turned to the practice of narrating an individual story to cover the war (Kagan xii). Generalizing and homogenizing the war experience, however, causes a misrepresentation of the multiple war experiences and thus, it "obfuscates more than it clarifies" (Kagan xiii). As a result, the Americans back home perceived the American soldier either as the protector of innocent American civilians or as the killer of Iraqi innocents. Neither of these definitions, however, provides a realistic image of the American soldier of the Iraq War.

The first American soldiers deployed to Iraq were predominantly white, male, young, full-citizens, who were physically fit, Christian and straight (Ender 4). Among those

who have been deployed to Iraq, 46.9 % were junior, 87.6 % were male, 19.6 % were African, 11.7 % were Hispanic and 55.7 % were white. 3.5 % of these soldiers were between the ages seventeen and nineteen; 23.1 % of them were between twenty and twenty two years of age; 23.1 % were between twenty two-twenty four; while 49.7 % were over twenty six. 51.4 % of them were married; 74.8 % had a girlfriend or were married while 43.6 % had children. In terms of education, 40 % graduated from a college; 16.9 % graduated from a four year college while 5.4 % attended the grad-school. Among these soldiers, 59.6 % have experienced previous deployment (Ender 10-11). As the statistics show, the Iraq War soldiers subvert stereotypical definitions, since the war saw an increased inclusion of "select populations such as homosexuals, women and people with physical anomalies, including the aged" even if the "systematical" discrimination in "institutionalized policy and practice" was still there (Ender 6).

In her work *Being and Becoming a U.S. Iraq War Veteran* (2011), Anna Stachyra, a doctor of philosophy in the field of nursing, poses the questions: "Which interpretation of the war experience is the [Iraq War] veteran eligible to adopt? Will [they] adopt the national memory of war [or their individual ones]?" Will they adopt "traumatic personal memories or triumphant ones?" (43). The answers to Stachyra's questions would reveal how the veterans view the war and themselves in relation to the war. Yet, further questions such as how they define themselves in relation to the war and how they relate to the idealized American identity are also crucial to understand the Iraq War veteran identity.

In order to answer these questions, this dissertation will examine the seventy nine Iraq War narratives published as books available in print or kindle formats, written by American military officers, soldiers, as well as American service members and volunteers such as doctors, medics, nurses, embedded and free-lance journalists, human shields, army lawyers, photographers, and chaplains who served in Iraq during the war. The selected works are mostly written by a single author and all of them treat Iraq War experiences. In this study, the pre-war identities of these Americans, their reasons to join the service, combat training experiences, wartime experiences, the influence of the war on their predefined personal and national identities, their ways of dealing with

critical civilian approaches to the war and their relationships with the American military will be observed in order to display the factors that determine the changes in their perception of individual and American identities by the end of the war.

By focusing on additional eight works written by the members of Bush and Obama administrations that mainly or partly deal with the Iraq War, this dissertation will also reflect on the ideal/mythic American identity that the politicians attribute to the service members during and after the Iraq War. Observing the identity making processes in the war narratives of American service members who served during the war, this study will explain how service members define their individual, professional and national identities in the presence of interpellation. In the light of the data extracted from the eighty seven works of life writing and using the framework of symbolic interactionism, this dissertation will argue that the Iraq War experience has caused a visible decline in the perception of and loyalty to American national and military identities as service members' primary sources of identity, despite the positive and heroic assumptions politicians project to them.

## THE IRAQ WAR (2003-2011)

Iraq is a desert country with abundant oil reserves and a rich cultural history dating back to 6000 BC. Its population is made up of Shi'i Arabs (55%), Kurds (21 %—Sunni, Shia and Yezidi), Sunni Arabs (18.5%), Assyreans, Chaldeans, Armeneans (3.5%), Turkomen (2%) and Mandians (0.5%), the majority of whom are Muslims speaking Arabic (Allawi 19). Iraq's central location in the Middle East and its oil resources have been the reasons for the many invasions and migrations throughout its history (Abdullah xvii). The country emerged with the fall of the Persian Empire; was subjected to Mongol invasion in 1258; lived under Ottoman rule between the years 1534 and 1918; and went under British control after the First World War. During the British rule, a new Arab group claimed the control of Iraq with the intention of building a modern and independent country. Yet, the two-decades-long transition period full of struggles provided the necessary atmosphere for the emergence of the totalitarian regime of Saddam Hussein (Abdullah xviii). Through these fourteen centuries of invasions and

political struggles, the Iraqi population was divided into "several lines including among others, urban/rural, Sunni/Shi'i, Arab/non-Arab, as well as along class, region and tribe" (Abdullah 177).

America was not interested in the Middle East until the end of the World War II when the control over the region became important strategically due to the oil resources of the country and the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. American and British policy initiatives such as The Truman Doctrine (1947), the Middle East Command concept (1950-1953), the Baghdad Pact (1955) and the Eisenhower Doctrine (1957) display the attention paid to protect the country from communism (Hahn 133). When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, the United States engaged in a military intervention to Iraq "demonstrating both the reliance of the Gulf oil producers on American security guarantees and the dependence on Washington's ability to secure their oil lifelines from the Gulf" (Hurst 18). After the intervention, Saddam regime was punished with United Nations sanctions which possibly led to the death of one and a half million Iraqi people including women and children who were deprived of food and medicine (Holden 13). The sanctions, however, could not overthrow the Saddam regime.

Politicians of the First Gulf War were aware of the risks and difficulty of invading Iraq, therefore, they did not view invasion as a profitable action. For Dick Cheney, the decision against invading the country during the First Gulf War was right since the invasion would turn into a long-lasting war with a high human cost (Connely). Similarly, Brent Scowcroft and George W. H. Bush felt that America invaded Iraq, the United States military would "conceivably still be an occupying power in a bitterly hostile land" without gaining any concrete outcome (*A World Transformed* Chapter 19). Therefore, between 1992 and 2001, the United States followed a containment policy about Iraq, building up ground facilities in Kuwait, engaging in intelligence operations, employing warplanes to fly above Iraq, and bombing Iraqi military and intelligence facilities (Ricks 12). However, following the 9/11 attacks, the signals of war could be deciphered in Bush's "Axis of Evil" speech. Bush identified Iraq as a threat to the security of the United States as it allegedly owned weapons of mass destruction (WMD), a claim which would be proven false in January 2004. The Bush doctrine of

the time displayed a clear departure from decades of practice, favoring unilateral and preemptive action. According to this philosophy, the United States did not need allies to take military action nor did she have to wait for the enemy to attack. She would "take the battle to the enemy" instead, as Bush declared during a 2002 West Point address ("Remarks by the President at 2002 Graduation Exercise").

The war that was to begin would be the "longest, costliest, and most controversial conflicts in American history, the final outcome of which remains uncertain" (Holsti 3). It was neither legitimate under international law nor was it acceptable under the United Nations Charter. The aims of the war were declared as ending the Saddam regime and establishing an Iraqi democracy. Although the combat forces were called the United States led "Coalition of the Willing," including the UK, Italy, Spain, Australia, Poland, only Britain provided significant contribution to the United States combat forces. Still, the American forces made up 85 % of the troops (Fawn et. al. 21). On March 19, 2003, Saddam Hussein was overthrown and on May 1, 2003, Bush made his famous "Mission Accomplished" speech. In the first phase of the war, only one hundred and thirty eight American soldiers died, while the number increased from ten thousand to a hundred thousand when Iraqi deaths are considered (Abdullah 160).

The invasion was followed by lootings of food suppliers, warehouses, government buildings and the homes of high officials of the previous regime. As time passed, criminal gangs emerged and looting spread to private homes (Abdullah 160). The lootings, especially the looting of the Baghdad Museum—the "symbol of what Mesopotamian and Iraqi civilization once was; an immense source of pride and hope"—had "massive psychological impact" on Iraqi people since it "shattered trust in American guidance" and caused "pessimism" (Abdullah 161).

The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), which took over the rule of Iraq, was led by Paul Bremer and twenty five Iraqi political leaders who volunteered for being members of the Iraqi Governing Council. CPA started with de-Ba'athification[1] of the public positions and disbanding the former Iraqi Army, decisions which would end up in four

[1] The CPA policy refers to the removal of Ba'ath Party members from certain positions in the government.

hundred thousand unemployed Iraqi people, most of whom had weapons and were the potential insurgents of the future (Fawn et. al. 9).

Once the CPA completed its one year term, the provisional government took over to serve under the CPA (July 13, 2003 - June 1, 2004). The Iraqi Interim Government began its one-year-service in June 2004. In May 2005, the Iraqi Transitional Government took over as the last government before the election of the first permanent government of Iraq. The Transitional Government composed the draft of the new constitution right before the elections in January 2005, which was formally accepted in October 2005. The following elections pointed to a victory of the United Iraqi Alliance, a Shi'a Islamist party. After six months of negotiations in order to come up with a government of "national unity," the United Iraqi Alliance, Iraqi Accord Front, Kurdistani Alliance and Iraqi National List decided upon the leadership of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Nouri al-Maliki took office in May 20, 2006.[2]

The stability and prosperity American rule promised failed, since the country was led into a chaos due to the results of the elections, the struggle to control Iraqi resources, the lack of authority, violent activities and interference from Iran and Syria. The invasion urged small groups into guerilla warfare. Besides, by 2004, the Shi'i population had joined the insurgency.[3] For a time, CPA did not believe that there was "an organized and determined resistance" (Allawi 166). As the insurgency grew stronger, it had to admit it. It was later discovered that the insurgency was caused partly by the American treatment of the Iraqi people. According to Retired Colonel Douglas McGregor:

> Most of the generals and politicians did not think through the consequences of compelling American soldiers with no knowledge of Arabic and Arab culture to implement intrusive measures inside an Islamic society. We arrested people in front of their families, dragging them away in handcuffs with bags over their heads, and then provided no information to the families of those we incarcerated. In the end our soldiers killed, maimed and incarcerated thousands of Arabs, 90% of whom were not the enemy. But they are now. (qtd. in Fitzgerald 140)

[2] The current president of Iraq is Muhammad Fuad Masum.

[3] The Shi'i population of Iraq was managed under an "unwritten pact" for years before the invasion on the condition that they wouldn't claim political authority and would be able to live their freely in Iraq in exchange. The Iraqi government of the sixties and the seventies, however, rescinded the bargain, while the government atrocity following the Shi'i uprising of 1991 completely ruined it (Allawi 145). In the meantime, the United States, who encouraged the Shi'i community to rebel, did not show up for help, which broke Shi'i faith on the American authorities.

According to a 2006 poll, 60% of the Iraqi population supported the insurgency (Abdullah 166). In 2007, the Unites States sent additional twenty thousand troops to calm the insurgency down. The problems with the United States military forces were that they did not know how to deal with an insurgency and that they did not have an organized plan for the post invasion period (Fitzgerald 134). Moreover, different branches and units took different approaches to soothe the insurgency from 2003 through 2004 (Fitzgerald 141). As the post-invasion period unfolded, Americans grew less fond of the war. A 2006 CNN poll indicates to a 70% rate for those who "disapproved Bush's handling of the war" while a 54% wanted the United States "to withdraw from Iraq" ("Approval for Iraq"). Between 2006 and 2008, political and military approaches to the counterinsurgency displayed changes accordingly. An approach of the "hearts and minds" was adopted, which was reminiscent of the Vietnam War (Fitzgerald 157). American forces tried to treat the Iraqis with respect, gain public support, restore basic services, revive local economies, hold secured areas, serve the population and "interact with the people face to face" (Fitzgerald 176). With this new approach and the "election of an increasingly assertive Iraqi government," the mid-2008 saw a decrease in the level of violence in Iraq (Abdullah 172). The United States formally withdrew all its troops in December 2011. What made the Iraq War different from the United States' previous wars were:

> • 24/7 real-time media coverage,
> • the internet technologies that offer service members instant and ongoing communication with friends, family while overseas,
> • increased number of female service members in combat,
> • increased disassembly and reassignment of troop teams,
> • repeated overseas re-deployments,
> • a nationally accepted separation of feelings: that of providing morale and emotional support for military troops and their families despite national opposition toward the Iraq War, itself. (Stachyra 9)

For Thomas Ricks, the war was "a chaotic combination of insurgency, sectarian violence, criminality and factional fighting," to which there was no winner (441). George W. Bush was often blamed for being too aggressive and lacking a plan to stabilize Iraq after the defeat of Saddam Hussein, while Barack Obama was criticized for not taking serious action due to indecisiveness and indeterminacy ("Back to Iraq" 7). While the troops were being called back home, 3482 American service members were killed in action, and 31449 of them were wounded in action. The death toll of the Iraqi

civilians was greater in numbers. Until May 2015, an average of 11935 Iraqi civilians died from violence every year ("Iraq Body Count Project").

The contradictions of the war drove people to turn to public polls to learn about the American responses to the war. Michael Holsti calls the war in Iraq "the mother of all polling events," stealing the status of the Gulf War of 1991 labeled by John Mueller (1). While 93% of Americans supported the war in Afghanistan and thought that it was "a war of necessity" (Holsti 157), the percentage of the supporters of the Iraq War showed a visible decrease as the war unfolded. The percentage of the answer "satisfied" to the question "How satisfied are you with the United States' position in the world today?" have decreased to 35% in 2010 while it was 71% in 2002 (Holsti 108). The percentage of the answer "very favorably" to the question "How does the United States rate in the eyes of the world?" on the other hand, has decreased to 6% in 2011 while it was 20% back in the year 2000. The percentage of the answer "very unfavorably" to the same question, however, has increased to 12% from a 4% of the population (Holsti 111). Parallel to the nationwide dissatisfaction with the war, a 73% of the global populations "disapproved the U.S. handling of the Iraq War," according to a 2007 BBC poll covering 26000 people from twenty five countries ("World View of U.S. Role"). According to Holsti, the changes in opinions on the war follow the deterioration of the situation at the warfront "rather faithfully," in spite of the "unprecedented public relations efforts by the administration to generate support for its policies and to attack the patriotism of those who might question any aspect of its strategy or tactics" (155). A 2009 *Newsweek* poll displays that 67% of Americans think that one could be a patriot and still "raise questions" about the war in Iraq (Nincic and Ramos). The results of public polls about the war point to the development of a generally critical attitude towards the war in which the cause and implementation of the war and Americans' growing interest in warfare was questioned.

According to Howard Zinn, the claim that the wars the United States have fought have always been for the benefit of the common American is nothing but a lie and the myth according to which Americans "are entitled, because of [their] moral superiority, to dominate the world" is false ("Lessons of Iraq War"). For Zinn, war itself is terrorism, "breeding rage and hatred" and it is naïve to believe that one side of the war is innately

good while the other is innately evil ("After the War"). Criticizing the way of thinking about the war promoted by the politicians, Zinn believes that disagreeing with American presidents' attitude towards the war does not make someone "un-American," but anti-president or anti-American instead ("Howard Zinn on the War").

Noam Chomsky thinks Obama's handling of the war was not much different from that of Bush apart from his "use of a different rhetorical style" which makes him believe that the United States "operates under the 'Mafia principle.'" For Chomsky, "the Godfather does not tolerate 'successful defiance'" and thus feels he must stop it immediately "so that others understand that disobedience is not an option" (Ross, "Chomsky: Iraq Invasion"). Chomsky believes that the wars America has chosen to fight cause the "destruction of the lives of future generations to ensure bigger bonuses tomorrow" ("America is the World Leader"). This, Gore Vidal thinks, is possibly through a suspension of the Bill of Rights. For Vidal, the United States has become a "totalitarian minded government" disrespecting individual rights and opinions ("Dreaming War").

Norman Mailer, on the other hand, thinks that the war in Iraq is "the worst war [Americans] have ever been in" and "nothing good can come of it." For Mailer, it is impossible for America to succeed as innocent Iraqis have been "killed for nothing." He finds American neoconservatives to be "ignorant and stupid" and George W. Bush to be the worst president of the twentieth century ("In Conversation with Andrew O'Hagan"). Mailer believes that the United States went to war because Americans "needed" it. He suggests that the politicians started the "empyrean" war, being unable to address the problems of the country—the "sinking" economy, "gloomy and down" market and "the loss of face" of the "bastions of the erstwhile American faith," namely the corporate integrity, the Catholic Church and the FBI ("We Went to War to Boost the White Male Ego").

Some critical reactions available in Iraq War narratives written by the Americans who were there in the Iraq warfronts display opinions similar to those of Zinn, Chomsky, Vidal and Mailer. Yet, in order to understand what lies behind the shifting definitions of their authors' personal and national identities, one has to know about the nature and uses of identity formation, identity formation tendencies in the literary genre of life

writing, formation and the use of national identity, American national identity as well as the reproduction of American national identity before and after the Iraq War.

## LIFE WRITING AND IDENTITY

Narrating lives has always been a major preoccupation. From the beginning of human history, people have narrated their lives. Walter Fisher takes narration as the "master metaphor for human experience" (*Human Communication as Narration* 59). Dwelling on Alasdair MacIntyre's work *After Virtue,* which views man as a "story-telling animal" (216), Fisher conceives people as "homo narrans" or narrating humans ("Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm" 1). The English term "autobiography" was used by William Taylor of Norwich for the first time in 1797, in his review of *Miscellanies* written by Isaac D'Israeli (Smith and Watson 1). Made up of the Greek words *autos* (self) and *graphe* (writing), the term has been in use for over three centuries. Yet, since the 1980s, the definition and usage of the term has been challenged.

Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson state that traditional autobiography suggests a "politics of exclusion" since it has "shift[ed] from genre to discourse" as the medium of expression of the white male only. They also believe that the term is "inadequate to describe the extensive historical range and the diverse genres and practices of life writing" (3-4). In order not to exclude any author or act from the genre, Smith and Watson offer the term *life writing* "for written forms of the autobiographical," and *life narrative* to refer to "autobiographical acts of any sort" (4). The two critics maintain that life narratives are exposed to memory fails, intervention of dreams (in literal and metaphorical sense), attempts at protecting one's reputation, deliberate distortion, and hiding and repressing the factual (15). In the evaluation of the text, however, none of the cases above, which Samuel Taylor Coleridge would approach with "suspense of disbelief," causes the text to be any less "true." After all, writers, as Stanley Fish states, "cannot lie because anything they say, however mendacious, is the truth about themselves" (A19). In other words, "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas 571-72). The writer is, therefore, responsible for his/her identity formation, while the reader has to take it for what it is.

Although there has been a tendency to read traditional works of autobiography 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"—Smith and Watson suggest that expecting completely independent narrators from works of life writing is not possible (54). Perceiving Louis Althusser's concept of ideology not "in the narrow sense of propaganda" but "in the broad sense of the pervasive cultural formations of the dominant class," it is possible to say that narrators in life writing, just like the people in real lives, face subjection to "institutional discourses and practices" (Smith and Watson 55).

In his 1970 work "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Althusser defines man as "an ideological animal by nature." He thinks ideologies have a crucial role in the construction of identities. After all, ideologies exist only if individuals internalize them and thus become its subjects. Individuals are encouraged to believe that the politicians, religious leaders, family elders, school teachers are always right. They offer; if not force, individuals' particular identities, normalize certain attitudes, behaviors and ideas so that people would internalize them without questioning. Althusser categorizes these agents of ideology by calling the army and the police as "repressive state apparatuses" since they function through coercion; while calling schools, families and churches as "ideological state apparatuses" as institutions transmitting ideology. When the politicians say that an American soldier or an American citizen behaves in a certain way, for example, they interpellate these soldiers as subjects who have certain roles. Althusser calls the process of transforming individuals into subjects, "hailing" or "interpellation." In other words, through interpellation, individuals perceive themselves as independent agents rather than passive subjects. This misperception causes individuals to think that their decisions are autonomous which in turn provides the continuity of the system (Kazancı 60). If the subject internalizes the subject position determined by ideology, s/he automatically becomes one of the subjects to that ideology. Althusser believes that such internalization is the key to becoming subjects to an ideology. For him, "[t]here are no subjects except by and for their subjection." Since ideology does not present itself as being ideological, people often do not accept being part of an ideology: "The accusation of being in ideology only applies to others, never

to oneself." Interpellation, therefore, causes a misrecognition of the self (*"Lenin and Philosophy" and Other Essays*).

Ideology harbored in language has a determining role in the subjection of the individual since language is not "a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions." Instead, it is "populated—overpopulated—with the intentions of others." In order to avoid this, one has to "populate" the language one speaks with one's "own intentions," "own accent," "adapting it to [one's] own semantic and expressive intention" so that s/he could speak in a "neutral and impersonal language" (Bakhtin 293-94). The ideological use of language in life writing is furthered by Smith and Watson who add the ideological "I" to Michael Sprinker's idea[4] that the subject, the self and the author "collapse into the act of producing a text" (342). Using the term ideological "I" (72), which they claim to be "everywhere and nowhere in autobiographical acts" (77), they define the self as shaped by the ethnic, social, cultural, political, and religious. Along with the ideological "I," they employ the terms real or historical "I" for the self which can never be completely captured in the text; narrating "I" for the author/subject; and narrated "I" for her/him whose life is narrated. They offer reading works of life writing with the effort to "attend to" the three "I"s available in works of life writing, so that one could look for,

> . . . places where the narrator addresses readers directly or where he calls attention to the act of narrating itself, to problems of remembering and forgetting, to a sense of inadequacy of any narrative to get at the truth of his life as he is defining it. We can watch how the narrator organizes the times of past, present, and future in the telling of the story as a way of teasing out narrated versions of the "I" presented and the ideological stakes of those representations in the present of narration. (78)

Written as well as oral forms of narration often have the purpose of revealing memories which serve as an evidence for the identities one claims to have. Through the process of telling life stories, and with the contribution of the four "I"s mentioned above, people, consciously or unconsciously, shape and reshape identities for themselves accepting or denying the ones attributed to them. Therefore, a narrative could be read "for what it does," since through the identity making process, it "encode[s] or reinforce[s] particular values in ways that may shape culture and history" (qtd. in Smith and Watson 19).

[4] See Sprinker's "Fictions of the Self: The End of Autobiography."

Dating back to the pre-revolution times, life writing has always been a prominent genre for the Americans (Sayre 147). Early examples of travel writing, New England soul writing, Indian captivity narratives and slave narratives are examples of this preoccupation. According to Thomas Couser, autobiography is the "literary form and democracy the political form, most congruent with [the] idea of a unique and autonomous self" for the Americans (13). As Couser's claim suggests, the early works, being "individualistic" and "optimistic," serve well for the promotion of the image favored for the traditional American (Doherty 195). It served for "the wished-for general definition of Americanness" (Lee 9), and compensated for the lack of authentically American historical texts due to the recent formation of the country. Some Americans used the genre as a "medium of prophecy to illuminate the community's history as well as one's own" (Couser vii). In other words, American life writing has a tendency of associating the self with the rest of the Americans and/or engaging, at least partly, in historiography. In Thomas Couser's words, in America, autobiography is "always 'done with mirrors.'" By this, he refers to the tendency to "reflect prevailing cultural assumptions" instead of "adequately enact[ing] or express[ing] the relation between the individual . . . and the social and historical forces," which, for him, turns the genre into one of "self-mutilation—a voluntary amputation of the individual member from a large sustaining body" (Couser 24).

The situation partly changes in the last decades of the twentieth century since there is an unprecedented rise in the genres of life narratives published in the United States. The rise was mainly caused by the civil rights movements, freedom of speech and celebration of diverse cultures. Forming support for such historical changes, life writing provided writers with the opportunity to make sense of the past, solve existential problems, overcome trauma, take revenge, introduce or promote cultural/political backgrounds, and offer alternative definitions for themselves instead of the stereotypical ones presented in grand-narratives. In other words, people from all walks of life wrote their lives, creating their micro-histories. Eventually, many people began to read the work of life writing "for what it does," instead of what it is and should be like (Smith and Watson 129).

John Gillis calls the way microhistories are narrated by numerous people as the "democratization of the past" and states that it causes "anxiety among professionals, most of whom still write in the nationalist tradition, and who still retain a near monopoly over professorships and curatorships, even as they lose touch with the general public" (75). Kenneth J. Gergen contributes to the point Gillis makes by claiming that knowing about one's national history is not enough anymore:

> . . . [W]hile conservatives decry Americans' lack of common factual knowledge about their national history, fearing the loss of a common heritage will lead to a loss of national identity, the reality is that the nation is no longer the site or frame of memory for most people and therefore national history is no longer a proper measure of what people really know about their pasts. In fact there is good evidence to show that ordinary people are more interested in and know more about their pasts than ever before, though their knowledge is no longer confined to compulsory time frames and spaces of the old national historiography. Both Americans and Europeans have become compulsive consumers of the past, shopping for that which best suits their particular sense of self at the moment, constructing out of a bewildering variety of materials, times, and places the multiple identities that are demanded of them in the post-national era. (75-77)

Gergen is aware of the risks of the widespread practice of history-writing such as commodification and commercialization, which might also bear the consequence of political manipulation (Gergen 19). Still, Gillis thinks these are risks one has to take, since new memories and new identities are necessary in order to "communicate, appreciate, and negotiate . . . respective differences" (20). Publicizing memories and identities instead of privatizing them would develop understanding and respect towards "other's versions of the past," which would help "individuals and groups come together to discuss, debate, and negotiate the past, and through this process, define the future" (20).

Contemporary life writing, more than any other genre, deals with attempts of identity formation. Through the textual identities created, people can "create new activities, new worlds, and new ways of being" (Holland et al. 3). Smith and Watson define the forces which constitute "autobiographical subjectivity" as memory, experience, identity, space, embodiment (body as the source that shelters knowledge and memory) and agency (as the process that shapes the collective unconscious) (21). As for identity, the two academics, take identities as multiple, constructed, as well as being "contextual, contested, and contingent" (Joan W. Scott qtd. in Smith and Watson 39). They are not

"additive" but "intersectional" in that one is not a black person and a woman but a "black woman" (Smith and Watson 41). Intersectional identities could be familial, ethnic, religious, professional, political or national identities. Each of these identities influences the formation of the other. Being denied the membership of any of these identities would mean not being part of the informal narratives of these institutions. In order not to be excluded by familial, ethnic, religious, professional, political or national groups, people tend to internalize interpellation which causes them to take a certain identity for granted. Such reification of group identities as a result of the identity politics today may lead to "conformism, intolerance, and patriarchalism'' (Fraser 112–13), which often ends up with "too much group identification . . . and too little human identification."[5]

The attention of the identity studies in the last forty years, according to Karen A. Cerulo, has been on the national group agency and political action, due to their power to "create, maintain and change" the "substance of 'I,' 'me,' and the 'generalized other'" (386). Life narratives are the perfect grounds of literature to observe the national identity choices and/or perceptions of American people. After all, nations, according to Aldous Huxley, are invented by writers of literature (50). Sarah M. Corse, in *Nationalism and Literature*, defines national literatures as "both the product and the partial creator of the nation and our collective sense of national identity" (9). Far from being "passive reflections of naturally occurring phenomena," works of national literature are "integral components in the process of national development, consciously constructed pieces of the national culture, and creators of the world in which we live" (9). In addition, they contribute to the processes of "identification, legitimation and maintenance" of the nation as well as the "construction" and "invention" of it (22). National literatures are often perceived as "reflections of the unique character and experiences of the nation" although they are social constructs just like nations themselves are (Corse 1). If nationalism is an "emotive identity" as David McCrone suggests (6), national literatures promoting nationalism have a very important role in

[5] Rudolf Giuliani was the Mayor of New York City. At a press conference on May 19, 2000, the reporters posed a question whether his administration would change its attitudes towards blacks and Hispanics as a reaction to the charges of favoring the white racist police over them. The quotation is part of his answer to the question.

"fostering the emotion and forming the community" (Corse 22). Despite being a non-social activity, reading these works has a potential of "unit[ing] readers in imagined communities" and thus contributing to the formation of the perception of one's national identity (23).

## AMERICAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

Nations become powerful only when their values and traits are adopted by their citizens who naturally do not know one another in person. A nation is, therefore, an "imagined" entity, as Benedict Anderson puts it in his *Imagined Communities*, as "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members," let alone achieving a consensus (6). Nationalism is "an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'" (Smith, *National Identity* 73). It has become the "operative ideology" of the modern age (Maleševic 150) and is deemed necessary for preventing nations from being scattered (Joseph 95). The term "nationalism," according to Anthony D. Smith, is used in many different ways such as:

> • The whole process of forming and maintaining nations or nation-states
> • A consciousness of belonging to the nation, together with sentiments and aspirations for its security and prosperity
> • A language and symbolism of the "nation" and its role
> • An ideology, including a cultural doctrine of nations and the national will and prescriptions for the realization of national aspirations and the national will
> • A social and political movement to achieve the goals of the nation and realize its national will. (72)

Independent from its uses above, nationalism is crucial in the creation of national identity (Smith 71). Today, each person is "expected and required" to have an identity (Maleševic 13), but "must" have a nationality "as [s/]he must have a nose and two ears" (Gellner 6). Therefore, national identity is the *sine quo non* of citizenship. National identities have the following fundamental features: "a historic territory or homeland," "common myths and historical memories," "common, mass public culture," "common legal rights and duties for all members" and "common economy with territorial mobility for members" (Smith, *National Identity* 14). They also have certain functions such as "defining the membership, the boundaries and resources, national identity," providing

"the rationale for ideals of national autarchy," legitimating "common legal rights and duties of legal institutions, which define the peculiar values and character of the nation and reflect the age-old customs and mores of the people" and socializing "its members as 'nationals' and 'citizens' (through compulsory, standardized, public mass education systems)" (Smith 16-17). The national identity provides "identification with the nation," helps "surmount the finality of death and ensure[s] a personal immortality," "promises a 'status reversal,' where the last shall be first and the world will recognize the chosen people and their sacred values," with the realization of "the ideal of fraternity" (Smith, *National Identity* 160-163). With its "ubiquity," "pervasiveness," and "complexity" due to their "abstract and multidimensional" aspects (143-144), national identity "today exert a more potent and durable influence than other collective identities" (Smith, *National Identity* 175). It has been embraced by many, since it provides a feeling of security and a collective identity which people turn to for understanding the world around them especially at times of political upheavals and ethnic conflicts. Approaching national identity as a "discursive field" "furthers the comparative analysis of national identities without denying their variety or the indeterminacy in their production," and "identif[ies] the common discursive structure behind different symbolic repertories which explains cross-national differences" (Spillman 10).

National identity has a special meaning for the citizens of the United States. As Vanessa Beasley suggests, "Nowhere in the European world did so many different types of people consider themselves part of the same *demos*, and yet, there was perhaps nowhere else where the contradictions implicit in a people's union were so apparent" (24). According to a 1996 General Social Survey (GGS) report, 45% of the attendants view being American as "the most important aspect of their lives" (Davis and Smith). 25% rated being American as an eight or nine in a scale from one to ten. Over 80% said they were "very or somewhat proud of the way American democracy works" and of America's history (Davis and Smith). The 2004 National Election Study (NES), presents similar results. 80% of the respondents said they feel "extremely or very good" when they see the American flag. According to the report of The Roper Center Public Opinion Research of 2006, between the years 1983 and 2006 over half of the population defined themselves to be "very patriotic," with at least another 20% as "somewhat

patriotic." In other words, over the twenty-three-year period, at least 90% of the population defined themselves either "very or somewhat patriotic."

Americans regarded their national identity highly since the Revolutionary War. Although nations are defined to be based on ancestry, American identity is based on an America that has a common set of principles as Gunnar Myrdal wrote in 1944, including "individualism, the notion and promise of hard work, a belief in the rule of law, freedom, and equality" (Schwartz 846). Other American values are known as beliefs in equality, opportunity, freedom, rule of law, and limited government intervention into citizens' private lives, civic republicanism,[6] ethnoculturalism,[7] and incorporationism"[8] (Schwartz 858-59). What is expected from American people is the love for the country and obedience. As Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "Americanism" is considered to be "a matter of mind and heart" since it is not a matter of race and ancestry. For Roosevelt, being a good American is all about loyalty to the country as well as to its liberty and democracy (Schlesinger 37). The ideological aspect of the American identity is so powerful that one can be "un-American" when one does not recognize these values, but never "un-English" or "un-Swedish" since such European identities, unlike the American identity, are related to birth and not to one's "ideological commitment" (Lipset 18).

According to Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, an American is the one "who leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, the new rank he holds" ("Letter III" 44). Beasley draws attention to four characterizations of American identity: an American mission (from God to "build up in the midst of the wilderness a foretaste of paradise" as God's chosen people), an American yearning (suggesting to "the expansionist cry of Manifest Destiny," the belief that Americans are destined to expand their national territory), an American idea (equality, liberty, rights and consent of the governed), and an American psyche (made up of "religious faith, scientific and secular

[6] The term "civic republicanism" indicates an emphasis on American citizens' responsibilities to their nations.
[7] The term "ethnoculturalism" points to the idea that American identity is based on ascriptive characteristics.
[8] The term refers to the view of America as a country which benefits from its people's multiple cultural traditions.

rationality, idealism and perfectionism, equality, self-reliance, tolerance for diversity, and external conformity") (Beasley 26-36).

Yet, there are challenges to such shared beliefs such as the problem of diversity, the problem of economics, lack of equality of opportunity and the problem of modernity due to "the gradual erosion" of the ties between the members of the traditional community as "both the cause and the result of extensive social mobility, individuation, anonymity, and the consequent prevalence of purely monetary social relationships" (Beasley 38-40). National narratives could also be considered as "bordering narratives" leaving out and/or marginalizing ethnically or culturally different groups, which could lead to legitimized violence. Romanticizing the nation and the national identity might also become problematic since the idea of conformity might prevent critical approaches towards the shared goals of the nation. In other words, "blind nationalism" might be adopted by the citizens as reflected in Stephen Decatur's nineteenth century remark: "Gentlemen, our country! In our intercourse with foreign nations, may she always be in the right; but, our country, right or wrong!" The quotation suggests the favored fanaticism with one's nation and could be criticized for the lack of critical perspective it encourages. The "blind" nationalism it offers requires an unquestioning loyalty to the nation. While patriotism is often associated with the love of one's country and civic engagement, nationalism today connotes xenophobia, anti-immigrant attitudes, mythical definitions of the American, national arrogance which brings with it a foreign policy that is based on the belief that the country has a right to interfere with other countries' internal affairs. Billig calls such nationalism as "banal nationalism" and thinks that it is "hardly innocent" as it is "reproducing institutions which possess vast armaments [that] can be mobilized without lengthy campaigns of political preparation" (7). In the cases of the adoption of a banal nationalism, the notion of the nation is daily recreated for the citizens according to the needs of the politicians of the times and nationalism becomes an "endemic condition" (Billig 6). Scholars critical of banal nationalism favor "constructive" patriotism, "an attachment to country characterized by critical loyalty" and "questioning and criticism" driven by "a desire for positive change" (Schatz, et.al.153).

Governments need nationalistic narratives to maintain citizen support, especially at times of war (Vlahos). Being a "mobilizer of ethnic sentiments and national consciousness, a centralizing force in the life of the community and a provider of myths and memories for future generations" (Smith, *National Identity* 27), wars require politicians to "balance the need for national unity with the competing claims of other group identities" without excluding the rights and freedoms of any (Citrin et. al. 71). In such chaotic times, citizens need assurances provided by the administrative offices. Presidents of the post-9/11 era had the tendency to define the American "ideationally," asking citizens to "transcend their differences" by "adopt[ing] a set of proper attitudes" (Beasley 150). In the weeks following 9/11, United States' political leaders began to emphasize publicly the power and values of America and the Americans. They worked hard to enforce a powerful national identity to citizens because a nation "can only ensure the stability of its legitimacy if its members are strongly committed to one another by means of a common allegiance to the political community" (Taylor, "Dynamics" 144). According to David Cressy's "National Memory in England," leaders also manipulate a national identity in order to,

> . . .calm anxiety about change or political events, eliminate citizen indifference toward official concerns, promote exemplary patterns of citizen behavior, and stress citizen duties over rights. They feel the need to do this because of the existence of social contradictions, alternative views, and indifference that perpetuates fears of societal dissolution and unregulated political behavior. (76).

George Schöpflin, in his "The Construction of Identity," defines how the earlier times of human history depend on concrete dangers—natural catastrophes, and compares these earlier times to today when existence depends on rather abstract dangers—"the unknown, the different, for which we have no solutions, which we have no way of decoding" (1). He presents the latter as causing people to cling to their relational identities—among which national identity is one—to overcome the chaos and gaining a sense of order and security since constructed meanings of these collective identities help to rationalize the threatening situations people face (1). The abstract danger in the post-9/11 era has been the threat of terrorism. Swept by a feeling of insecurity, people looked up to the President for providing a sense of relief after the terrorist attacks. Facing the unknown and unpredictable threat of terrorism caused people embrace their relational identities for a feeling of belonging and protection. Iraq War was an ideal occurrence to

observe shaping and reshaping American national identity for political purposes in the face of the "invisible" threat of terrorism.

The Bush administration's post 9/11 strategy was to invoke nationalism and present it as a driving force for America's future foreign policy (McCartney 408). He used national symbols to feed the epideictic rhetoric and boost identification with the American nation. He turned to the definitions of the "other" as the "terrorist" or the "savage" in order to construct the national identity. With the help of the media's theatrical presentation of the people and events at the warfront and its depictions of fear and patriotism, the Bush administration has been successful in convincing Americans about its foreign policy goals as well as the justifications they provide for them. In other words, national identity invoked by the wartime administrations "created the political environment that allowed post-9/11 U.S. foreign policy, and the war in Iraq in particular, to be carried out" (Schonberg 2). The national identity policies of the post-9/11 administrations engaged in,

> • affirmation of American values and ideals that drew upon the U.S. "mythology" of individualism, liberty, and equality;
> • affirmation of U.S. international power and dominance, thereby tapping into the nation's long-established self-image as a world super-power;
> • emphasis on unification among Americans across ideological and racial lines, which paralleled a pattern in presidential inaugural rhetoric of emphasizing national unity within diversity;
> • shifting of blame for the September 11 attacks away from the United States and portrayal of the international community as united behind a U.S. campaign against terrorism, both of which positioned the United States as a moral leader among nations;
> • and, finally, demonization of the "enemy," which followed a familiar good-versus evil discourse employed effectively during the Cold War and the Gulf War. (Hutcheson et al. 30)

During the Iraq War, public cognition was under constant manipulation. The governments were preoccupied with defining the ideal citizen and the American way of behavior. The mission in Iraq was partly unknown to the soldiers. Therefore, reading the accounts of political and military authorities and writing their own ones was a means to understand the war. Bush and Obama administrations encouraged Americans to identify with the group. Coercion into a unified orientation caused questioning of the former as well as the newly required sense of selves. Americans, who were skeptical of governmental policies, were labeled "bad Americans" or even "traitors" and they turned

to traditional narratives of national identity. On the other hand, there were many authors who produced increasingly hybrid and fragmented works, due to the "confusion, instability, strife and terror, particularly in the areas of mixed ethnic and religious character" (Beasley 17-18).

Although the oral and written, formal and informal narratives of the politicians played a crucial role in the reproduction of the American national identity, the function of individual attempts in the definition of the national identity cannot be ignored. Because these narratives are produced in greater numbers and because they are often thought to be "politically innocent or neutral" and thus more "authentic," readers often turn to these works some of which are "counter-narratives" to the dominant discourse (Hogan 79). Narrators in these works wrote to understand what happened, to eliminate misunderstandings, to justify or to criticize their individual or national actions, to overcome the traumatic experiences, to reveal what they believe to be visible only to them, to acknowledge their good deeds, achievements, difficulties etc. For Hynes, veterans write to use the opportunity to have a "contract with the world of greater doings," to "intersect with history" and to say "I was there" (2). The war changes them as well as their civilian-held ideology which motivates them to write. Life writing practices have given them the opportunity to pass on their experiences of war and their works dealt with "what war does to men as well as what men do in war" (Vernon 165). In other words, their works were at times critical, questioning and revealing.

Life writing provides a rich field of representation for the 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. Among the sixty subgenres of life narrative Smith and Watson mention, autoethnography,[9] autohagiography,[10] autosomotography/autopathography,[11] autotopography,[12] bildungsroman, captivity narrative, confession, conversion narrative,[13] diary, journal, letters, memoir, poetic autobiography, meditation,[14] relational life writing,[15] scriptotherapy,[16] self-help

[9] Narratives about the story of the social group instead of the self
[10] Narratives praising the life as exemplary
[11] Narratives about illness or disability
[12] Narratives depicting the relationship between a person and that person's objects.
[13] Narratives that depict conversion, usually religious or political
[14] Narratives that focus on processes of mind.

narrative, spiritual narrative, survivor narrative, trauma narrative, travel narrative, war memoirs and acts of witnessing (Smith and Watson 253-286) have been fertile grounds for American writers who intend to narrate their experiences during and after the war in Iraq with the purposes mentioned above. The Iraq War narratives have become a cultural space where identity formation of people from various walks of life in relation to warfare can be observed. In this cultural space, there might be times when the written selves are dominated by national identity; times when writers turn inward in an attempt to articulate the trauma experienced during the war for self-healing; as well as times when writers define the interruption of changing warfare on the practice of identity formation and defy this interruption by attempting to provide new definitions for the self.

The task of the writers of Iraq War narratives has been more difficult than that of the writers of the wars in the past. Identity construction for the narrating "I" is problematic because the national identity enforcing itself on the multiple personal identities causes trouble and the transnationalization in contemporary warfare, which is shaped by the increase in information and communication speeds, brings difficulties. The definitions of "American," "un-American," "patriot," "traitor," "enemy," "ally," "good guy," and "bad guy" have no fixed and identifiable qualities. Definition of each term is under constant change. The so-called objective truth announced by the authorities has the potential to change with a new declaration at any time. Anyone can be announced to be belonging to the categories above. Therefore the narrators do not only have to create identities for themselves but also discard unwanted identities and convince the readers that the identity claimed by the writer is true.

Like the authors of every other genre, the authors of Iraq War narratives wrote with the expectation that the intended reader would read, enjoy, understand and appreciate their works. Therefore, the readers as the interpreters have a significant role in how life stories are narrated. A social constructionist identity theory—symbolic interactionism—provides the necessary background to understand the relationship between the reader and the author of the work of life writing and illuminates the tension between the

[15] Narratives that claim a shared identity with other members of the group
[16] Narrative written for the purpose of self-healing

narrating "I" and the narrated "I" as well as the discrepancies between what Americans are interpellated as and who they claim to be.

## SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Jackie Hogan takes nations to be "integrated symbolic systems," which are "constituted and sustained in part through stories and images that convey a sense of national belonging, of the nation's character, its accomplishments, its defining traits and its historical trajectory" (61). While members agree upon the idea that citizens are naturally the ideal Americans they are interpellated as, they also agree on certain national assumptions such as:

> • Humanity is divided into nations, each with its own national character, history and destiny;
> • The nation is the sole source of political power;
> • Loyalty to the nation takes precedence over other loyalties;
> • To be free, human beings must belong to a nation;
> • Nations require maximum autonomy;
> • Global peace and justice can only be built on the basis of a plurality of free nations. (Smith, *Etho-symbolism* 61)

According to Anthony D. Smith, national assumptions such as autonomy, identity, national uniqueness, authenticity, unity and fraternity construct a discourse promoted through the medium of ceremonials and symbols. He believes symbols are the "most potent and durable aspects" of nationalism, visualizing, crystallizing and concretizing the basic concepts of the national (77). "National icons and events," "major victories, heroic defeats," and "spectacular events of individual or collective bravery," "rulers, soldiers, saints, poets, scientists and other charismatics" become symbols for people (Maleševic 150). A "psychological identification" with the nation requires internalization of national symbols (Hutcheson et al. 29). Exposure to these national symbols strengthens the feeling of national identification and strengthens the influence of the epideictic rhetoric of a nation (Butz 779). Yet, national symbols sometimes work against marginalized others or ethnic groups and cause internal conflicts among the citizens of the nation (Butz 779). Nationalism, in this context, does not appeal to ideology any longer but to identity. Once the nation is formed, its tenets should be

protected by the identity attributed to its people. National narrative, in this respect, function as a guide to fulfill the requirements of the interpellation.

National narratives often include ethno-symbolisms. Ethno-symbolism studies nationalism with a focus on "cultural elements of symbol, myth, memory, value, ritual and tradition" (Smith, *Ethno-symbolism* 25). Ethno-symbolism could be observed in the works of life writing this project deals with, since, for Anthony D. Smith, it is used most frequently during times of crisis and change. In order to achieve public support and unity in action, national leaders turn to the authentic elements such as "earlier 'golden' ages of the nation's history," "its heroes and saints" as well as objects that stand for the nation such as its flag, all of which function as national symbols (Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism* 35).

Guenther Kurt Piehler, in his article titled "The War Dead and the Gold Star: American Commemoration of the First World War," argues that American leaders have a tendency to "make the war dead a central symbol of a national identity divorced from the often divisive ties of class, ethnicity, religion, and region" in order to "exemplify the willingness of males to serve and die for their country" (169). In his dissertation titled "Remembering War the American Way, 1783 to Present," Piehler gives a concrete example of ethno-symbolism. He writes about how the United States honored a selected anonymous soldier in 1921 who was killed in France during the World War I. "The Unknown Soldier" was buried in a special tomb in Arlington National Cemetery on behalf of all the fallen soldiers, in order to express the gratitude of the nation, gifted with medals, wreaths, poems and eulogies. As this incident demonstrates, the average soldier became "a uniquely 'American'" figure that remained above the ties of race, religion, class or region. Important political and military figures such as President Warren G. Harding and General John J. Pershing honored him for his courage, selflessness and loyalty to the nation. Thousands came to visit the tomb of the anonymous hero to show respect. Thus, as a symbol of the exemplary American citizen, the American soldier was successfully interpellated as a mythic American (154-165).

Ethno-symbolism was employed in the rhetoric of American political authorities especially in the beginning of the Iraq War. Politicians developed a national rhetoric that associated the war in Iraq with the efforts of national heroes like Abraham Lincoln

who ended slavery, with national events like the World War II, which was known as one of the "good" wars the United States fought and with the national flag, which was everywhere especially after 9/11—on windows, T-shirts, car banners etc. Although the flag originally symbolized all the American people, it was turned into a banner for pro-war Americans only. The post 9/11 rhetoric of American national decision-makers attempts to homogenize the American culture thorugh the use of ethno-symbolism. They "confine oneself—and to continue to define oneself—by a single source of identity," forcing limitations for other possibilities (Sheehy 284). They "link history to destiny through exemplary heroes and authentic tales, and thereby reveal the 'one true path' for reversing the nation's lamentable present decline" (Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism* 35).

Another good example for national symbolism is a 2009 piece of news about Cynthia Benton of Fort Worth, Texas who displayed the American flag upside down in order to express her critical stance to the political events going on in the country. Benton thinks the government spends the money that it does not own and adds: "I think they're destroying our country" (Cavazos, *cbs11tv.com*). Her seemingly small protest ended up in "an uproar." Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) organization was seriously disturbed by what Benton did at a time when the country was not in distress. David T. Mayeda, a professor of sociology, explains the event with symbolic interactionism. For him,

> This whole situation is an excellent example of symbolic interaction. According to Vincent Parillo, symbolic interaction is "the shared symbols and definitions people use when communicating with one another" (12). Because there is a universal understanding in America that an American flag should only fly upside "except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property" (*ushistory.org*), when someone violates this they have interrupted everyone else's social construction of reality. It confuses them and often presses them to act out unfavorably because who ever decides to fly the flag upside down is going against the norm and using this very powerful symbol as just a political statement, which can be perceived as an unpatriotic act. People who understand this specific concept of *symbolic interaction* feel threatened because everything they have grown up to know to be true is being communicated in a way which does not make sense. ("Symbolic Interaction and America," my emphasis)

The "symbolic interaction" Mayeda talks about is what determines the reaction of the people to Benton's protest. They evaluate and interpret her behavior in the light of the agreed-upon definitions of nation and respond to it by starting an "uproar" since they found her behavior unfit to a patriotic American. Being an enduring sociological

perspective raised in North America, symbolic interactionism has roots going back to philosophers such as Charles Pierce, John Dewey, Charles Horton Cooley, and George Herbert Mead. Herbert Blumer, who coined the term in 1937, adopted and developed Mead's ideas in his foundational work *Mind, Self and Society* (1934) into a systematic approach. According to him, symbolic interaction refers to,

> . . . the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or "define" each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Their "response" is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions. Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions. This mediation is equivalent to inserting a process of interpretation between stimulus and response in the case of human behavior. (180)

For Blumer, few "things are more irritating than to read a piece of research conforming most stringently to accredited techniques and abounding in numbers, or units, or elements, only to discover outstanding sloppiness in conceptual usage" (170). Therefore, despite the critics who find symbolic interaction relying more on qualitative than quantitative research, Blumer prefers this concept to explain human behavior. Symbolic interactionism dwells on the idea that identity is a social construct. Individuals, either "cooperate" or "conflict with each other"; might be "tolerant of" or "indifferent to" one another; sometimes they obey "rigid rules" during their interaction; at other times, they "engage in a free play of expressive behavior[s]" (Blumer 54). Interaction is not only between the individual and the society. People also interact with their own selves. Blumer takes the self as a "mental concept," and a "working theory about oneself, stored in memory . . . amended with use" (63). The self is not a mere storing unit of autobiographical memories but is made up through past, present and future (63). Many researchers agree that autobiographical memories and mental images become part of the self only if they are used in the process of self-definition (Schwartz 117). One produces such a meaning through an interaction with oneself, and only through this reflexivity can he become a "self" (Blumer 62-63).

To understand the dynamics of identity formation in groups, symbolic interactionism views the self and the society as the products of "symbolic" communication. In this context, people are assumed to possess the capacity of thinking which is shaped by social interaction. They learn meanings and symbols through social interaction and they

are able to change these meanings and symbols under different circumstances while interacting with others (Blumer 2). The shared meaningful symbols—objects (including the self) that have the same meaning for the members of a group—are keys to the emergence of identity (Blumer 1969, Mead 1934). The meaning of an object determines the nature of the object. This meaning is not "intrinsic to the object but arises from how the person is initially prepared to act toward it." It determines people's action towards the object (Blumer 68-69). Meanings attributed to objects might change in time. Therefore, to understand a group of people, one has to know the value and meanings attributed to their objects (Blumer 69). For an effective group interaction, one must continuously consider and reconsider how one is viewed as an object by the group and must alter her/his actions accordingly to fit in the norms and symbolic behavorial patterns of the group. Mead defines this process as becoming an object rather than a subject:

> The individual experiences himself as such, not directly, but only indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same group, or from the other generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs. For he enters his own experience as a self or individual, not directly or immediately, not by becoming a subject to himself, but only in so far as he first becomes an object to himself just as other individuals are objects to him or in his experience; and he becomes an object to himself only by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself within a social environment or context of experience and behavior in which both he and they are involved. (Mead 138)

The self, Mead describes above defines oneself from the viewpoint of the people in one's social environment and naturally behaves in the way that would satisfy these people. This phenomenon "reaches its full development by organizing these individual attitudes of others into the organized social or group attitudes, and by thus becoming an individual reflection of the general systematic pattern of social or group behavior in which it and the others are all involved" (158). In short, one attempts at an identity "ideal" of the group, and in so doing "conceals or underplays" certain activities, facts and motives just to convince oneself that he has naturally been an ideal member (Mead 30). Mead calls such appropriation of one's behavior as "taking the role" of "generalized others," who could either be a specific person or a group (82). Joel M. Charon thinks that in order to influence the behavior of people one should give them roles to fulfill which Eugene A. Weinstein and Paul Deutschnerg call "altercasting" (454-66). Motivating people by saying "You are a very good Christian person. Christian

people do not swear;" or "You are a man. Men do not cry," the addresser interpellates the addressee as a person who has certain qualities. This identity might even be contradicting with the addressee's own understanding of identity. What influences the addressee is simply the suggested power of the addresser. This power is "based on intelligence, wealth, control of employment, grades and so on" which plays "a role in whose definition wins in the long run" (Charon 145). Sometimes, even if the addressee does not adopt the attributed identity, once the addresser convinces others about her/his identity, their attitude towards that person changes. For example, even if Americans who were critical of the Iraq War did not perceive themselves as "traitors" to their nation, once Bush declared: "Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists" ("Address to a Joint Session of the Congress"), some Americans might have begun to perceive critical Americans as traitors who aid and abet terrorists.

In order not to be exposed to negative labeling, people regulate their behaviors. Many symbolic interactionists agree upon the existence of two forms of self-regulation. The first occurs at significant-other-related situations, and the second occurs as a result of "strategic responses aimed at defending the self and one's relationship in the face of threat" (Schwartz 158). Yet, one cannot always interpret the world around her/him and construct her/his acts in a correct manner. S/he may "misinterpret things that [s/he] notes," "exercise poor judgment," "be faulty in mapping out prospective lines of conduct" or "be halfhearted in contending with recalcitrant dispositions" (Blumer 64). Still, their actions are determined "out of what [s/he] takes into account" (64).

In the process of regulation, the "me," of the individual identity is shaped by the "I" taking into consideration the expectations, definitions and symbols created by significant others such as the family, ancestors and religious/political authorities/institutions. In short, there is no "me" at birth. Ames's explanation of the relationship between the "I" and the "me" might be useful at this point:

> The "I" is spontaneous, impulsive, ceaselessly venturing, not only out in the world, but confronting the "me" in dialogue. The "me" is the result of dealing with other people. It is an internalization of the community, with its institutions, whereas "I" remains more isolated, more untamed, though cautioned and controlled by the "me." On the other hand, the "me" is constantly prodded by the "I" which breaks away to say and do more as less unexpected things in society; while society in turn is constantly being stirred up and tested by fresh impetus from the "I" of each of its

> members. The plunging and daring "I" is civilized and guided, also given opportunities, incentives and support by society. But there is always an unstable equilibrium between society, representing what has been achieved or bugled in the past, and exploring reforming, revolutionary "I." This sets the problem and promise of education confronting parents and teachers, and statesmen. (1973, 51-52).

This point of view, confirms the definition of life writing proposed by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, according to which, the "I" of symbolic interactionism is the active narrating "I" and the "me" is the passive narrated "I." It is the ideological "I" of Smith and Watson that causes the "I" of symbolic interactionism to shape the "me" in the very manner explained above (72). In parallel to the process of developing relational identities, many scholars in the field of life writing agree that autobiographical acts are "relational" or "routed through others" (Smith and Watson 86). The narrators form their selves by looking at the lives of "significant others." These "related others" are an important part of the narratives as well (Smith and Watson 86).

A similar action takes place when the writer writes with the reader's reaction to her/his work in mind. The narrator "tells his story to someone," to "the addressee" (Smith and Watson 88-89). Some writers idealize an addressee or multiple addressees (89). The communication between the narrator and addressee is central to the act of life writing (90). The addressees shape the "inclusion of certain identity contents and the exclusion of others" (Smith and Watson 97). Works could, therefore, be manipulative in quality as well as being products of the manipulated. Anthony D. Smith thinks, social constructionism might also engage in essentialist identity formations based on conscious manipulation (*National Identity*). In such cases, manipulation comes from significant others and the manipulated might not always be aware of the fact that their choices to identify with a certain self have not been made independently.

Manipulations exist to regulate behaviors since failure of complying would cause punishment of some sort. Erving Goffman thinks members of a group—a national group for example—guide their efforts in a certain way in order to avoid such punishment. Goffman, in his famous work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), uses theatrical performance in analyzing the presentation of the self to others. In it, he emphasizes that if one does not fulfill the requirements of the informal agreement on one's identity as the member of a certain team, that person is criticized and denied

membership in order to prevent this situation from becoming a case threatening the strength and definition of the team (Goffman 51). In order not to be criticized or condemned, the member engages in the "joint actions" of the group to fit its definitions. In other words, one might fulfill the requirements of the role one is interpellated into for protecting oneself.

Blumer uses the term "joint act" for Mead's "social act" while he talks about the collective action of the groups and gives war as an example. For Mead, group life is a "process of building up joint actions" (Blumer 75). A joint act is "the larger collective form of action that is constituted by the fitting together of the lines of behavior of the separate participants," such as the citizens of a nation (Blumer 70). Yet people who are participants of the joint act do not necessarily have the same stand and behavior towards the act (70). People identify the social act, evaluate one another's actions and formulate their reaction. The function of symbols in human interaction as well as in group relationships is a mediating one (Blumer 79). Symbols are, therefore, communicative markers for the readers.

Although symbolic interactionism and interpellation might not seem to be relevant to one another, in the context of the Iraq War narratives, interpellation leads to a symbolic interactionism among the group as well as within oneself, making the authors feel the pressure to behave according to the symbolic definition of the American provided by the state and its apparatuses. Being interpellated into a certain subject position places the individual into an ideological position. American politicians, who define and redefine American national identity to create the atmosphere in which their foreign policy decisions could be put into practice, interpellate American soldiers/citizens as subjects to their ideology concerning the war. This ideology presents the war as a "good" and just war waged to help the Iraqis and protect the Americans. Most of war narratives reflect the pressure of being subjected to an ideology whether or not they support the war. Some of these works consciously or unconsciously harbor conflicts between their narrating "I"s and narrated "I"s. In them, the narrated "I" which is defined as an ideal/mytic American is defined by a "narrating" "I" who reports to have negative experiences during the war and thus feels discontent with it. In other cases, the narrating

"I"s and the narrated "I"s are in conflict until a consensus is reached and a critical or a supportive stance to the war is established.

The first chapter of this dissertation observes the formation of national identity in the works written by the members of the two wartime administrations in relation to the Iraq War: *My Year in Iraq: The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope* (2006) by Paul Bremer, *Decision Points* (2010) by George W. Bush, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (2011) by Condoleezza Rice, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (2011) by Donald Rumsfeld, *In My Time: A Personal and Political Memoir* (2011) by Dick Cheney,[17] *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (2014) by Robert M. Gates (who served in both administrations), *Hard Choices* (2014) by Hillary Clinton and *Worthy Fights: A Memoir of Leadership in War and Peace* (2014) by Leon Panetta. The chapter begins with an historical overview of the construction of American national identity in the United States, followed by analyses of the foreign policies of the Bush and Obama administrations. Once the background to the chapter is set, the definitions of the narrated "I," both for the American and the Iraqi, are given. This section also displays the ethno-cultural elements politicians prefer to employ and discusses how symbolic interactionism functions in their narratives.

The second chapter of this dissertation focuses on the service members' perceptions of national identity before and after the war. The first part of the chapter is dedicated to the pre-war self-definitions of service members followed by the reasons they declare to join the military and the influence of the boot camp experience on their self-definitions. The second part of the chapter analyzes the authors' post-war experiences back home displaying their in-between existence among the opposing views of the civilian and military cultures and their struggle to find an answer to the question who they should be. As their narratives come to a close, not many authors prove to be overtly enthusiastic about sticking to their military or national identities as their primary source of identity.

[17] Paul M. Bremer is not a member of the administration, yet he is "Presidential Envoy to Iraq with full authority over all United States government" (12), and therefore, is the most authoritative figure in Iraq after the President. A key figure in the invasion of Iraq, his narrative is thoroughly dedicated to the war.

The final chapter is dedicated to finding the reason for the diminishing interest in service members to hold on to their national identities. In this chapter, authors' perceptions of American and Iraqi identities during the war are presented; factors complicating the definition of individual identities are displayed; emerging self definitions of American service members are demonstrated; transformations of identity are presented and finally, alternative definitions of American national identity that emerge with the experience of the war are established.

Using the approach of symbolic interactionism, this study tries to determine the influence of politicians' wartime ideology in eighty seven narratives written by American politicians and service members. The findings display the changes in service members' perceptions of their identities especially during and after the war and present the alternative national and military identities offered in the texts which clearly contradict with the identities employed during the interpellation process. Although an important portion of the definitions American service members provide for the war and the American seem to degrade the American citizens and soldiers, they prove that many American service members liberate themselves from being passive subjects of interpellation and claim the identities of their own choice. By questioning the war and their involvement, authors indirectly question who they are. The outcome leads to the refutation of the unwanted identities and/or construction of new ones. This political act of self-definition causes them to risk exclusion from the national and the military group for the sake of fulfilling their individual aspirations, and thus regaining their human agency which has been diminished during their service due to the repressive function of the state and military institutions.

The works under discussion are politically capable of bringing positive changes to American foreign policy by making the readers question the misconceptions about the war and the mythic American identity. Collective questioning might bring social change, since as Blumer suggests, the fate of institutions are "set by [the] process of interpretation" of their "diverse set of participants" (19). The authors of the war narratives are the diverse set of participants who interpret the war. Their interpretation sets the fate of American foreign policy in Iraq, challenging the credibility of the war as texts of alternative history and discrediting the notion of the ideal/mythic American. In

other words, these works threaten the continuation of the ideological system American foreign policy rests on, since ideologies cannot exist without depending subjects.

# CHAPTER 1

## NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE LIFE NARRATIVES OF AMERICAN POLITICIANS

Presidential memoirs are probably the most skeptically-treated of all types of memoirs, especially after Ronald Reagan, at the press opening of his work said: "I hear it's terrific. Maybe someday, I'll read it" (Gleaves 1). Although readers often question the authenticity of presidential memoirs, they have not ever ceased to be bestsellers. The first presidential narrative was written by John Adams in 1802 which he titled *The Autobiography of John Adams* and was followed by almost half of the American presidents up to our day (Cole 6). Some of these works fall into the category of autohagiography, praising lives as exemplary; some have been written in the form of a bildungsroman, narratives of development and social formation; and the paths of almost all presidents crossed at the subgenre of relational life writing, presenting a sense of shared identity with other nationals. Some of these works have common features with self-help narratives, spiritual narratives, survivor narratives, trauma narratives, travel narratives, war memoirs, and acts of witnessing.

Past lives of the presidents as well as of other high rank politicians are politically and culturally significant which makes their works of life writing more valuable in terms of understanding a nation. Presidency is the embodiment of the power given to one American citizen and presidents together with their teams use this power to shape internal and external politics especially at times of conflict. Iraq War was such a conflict during which Bush and his administration promoted American national identity to gain support for their foreign policy, since they were aware that national identity is a determining factor for establishing unity. Even if some members of the administration were cautious of such an emphasis, they nevertheless followed Bush's policy. The policy makers needed a reinforced national identity which would evoke and maintain public support for the war during the long-lasting insurgency. The war in Afghanistan was, after all, justifiable since the attack to the twin towers aroused almost as much

wrath as the loss of nearly three thousand American lives. In the case of Iraq, however, Americans had to be convinced.

When Barack Obama took office in 2009, his administration displayed a critical attitude towards the foreign policy of Bush administration and aimed at ending the on-going wars by gradually decreasing the number of troops. Obama offered his version of American national identity in his public appearances, which he believed would support his domestic policy. His second term, however, saw a different Obama whose foreign policy rhetoric was more assertive and reminding one that of Bush's, despite their seemingly very different political viewpoints in the beginning. Members of his administration generally supported Obama even if they exhibited caution at times.

The formation of national identity in the works of life writing written by the members of the two wartime administrations would shed light on American discourses at a key moment in the early twenty first century. Evaluating life writing would be different from analyzing politicians' public speeches, since whether intentionally or unintentionally, identity-making processes are revealed in these works. This chapter will refer to the life narratives titled *My Year in Iraq: The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope* (2006) by Paul Bremer,[18] *Decision Points* (2010) by George W. Bush, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (2011) by Condoleezza Rice, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (2011) by Donald Rumsfeld, *In My Time: A Personal and Political Memoir* (2011) by Dick Cheney, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (2014) by Robert M. Gates (who served in both administrations), *Hard Choices* (2014) by Hillary Clinton, and *Worthy Fights: A Memoir of Leadership in War and Peace* (2014) by Leon Panetta.

## 1.1. CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

The presidency is unique in being an institution with social and constitutive power enough to define and redefine American national identity (Stuckey 10). From time to

[18] The Under Secretary for Defense for Policy for the United States from 2001 to 2005, Douglas Feith's 2008 memoir, *War and Decision: Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism*, is not included in this chapter since it does not deal exclusively with individual and national identity.

time, presidents reshape the national identity in order to "redefine standards of membership, adjust common goals, and accommodate the ironies and contradictions inherent to attempting a shared vision of community" (Moreno 21). The definition of the characteristics of the citizens is used as a basis for the nation's foreign policy (Schonberg 4). Presidents have related national experience to the political conditions in different ways. Some of them were more influential on the public perception of the national identity and some were less so. The national narratives they formed aimed at renewing or reinvigorating discourses of national identity especially at times of national or international crises. During such crises citizens often turn to their collective identities to overcome fear; to bring order into chaos; and to have a "sense of security" (Schöpflin 1-3). Presidents try to protect the collective values by constantly reminding citizens about them in an attempt to unite citizens under a national discourse and interpellate them as subjects of their political ideology.

According to Stuart Hall, the process of constructing a national narrative focuses on "*origins, continuity, tradition, and timelessness"* (294), or in Anthony D. Smith's terms elements of ethnocultural symbolism. Like Anthony D. Smith, Stuart Hall thinks politicians present the national identity as it was always there, based on a foundational myth, "a story which locates the origin of the nation, the people and their national character so early that they are lost in the mists of, not 'real,' but 'mythic' time" (Hall 294-295). Befitting the approaches of Hall and Smith, the presidents of the United States, whether republican or democrat, have been making use of the nation's mythical past as well as the deeds and ideas of the founding fathers and evoking ties to the Protestant ethic. In addition to references to the origin of the nation, widespread use of symbolism and an inclusive rhetoric despite the actual exclusion of certain groups could be observed.

American identity, today, is different than it was two decades ago, let alone going back to the time of the emergence of the nation. Yet, constant references to historical identity have been used as a mechanism for legitimizing domestic and foreign political decisions for all times. In the early republic, the perception of Americans as "Anglo-Saxon people chosen by the Protestant God to carry forth His work on earth" and America as the "asylum"—"home for the dispossessed" served the national identity rhetoric of the

times. (Stuckey 24). There was an apparent hierarchy of citizenship, which rendered unprivileged citizens politically invisible (58). Presidents were seeking to achieve stability at a time when conflicts with Native Americans, wars with other countries and anti-government violence were frequent (Stuckey 25). Presidents believed that such threats posed for the stability of the nation could be prevented through westward expansion (27). The foundation for the cowboy myth was laid during the early republic. James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, and later Andrew Jackson adopted the idea. Especially for Jackson, the "key to citizenship" was land and a citizen who developed the land and became a part of the market economy was the ideal citizen (Stuckey 22, 54). According to the national identity myth of the times, Americans were people "who could triumph over danger and emptiness, bringing America civilization—safety, order, churches and schools, to a dangerous, empty place" (Brockmeier and Carbaugh 135). Presidents aimed at creating a "governable citizenry" through a "disciplinary project" which was followed by legal acts limiting the coverage of the word "citizen" (Stuckey 30). The infinite opportunities for the self-made American was part of this national rhetoric (Stuckey 40).

Before the Civil War, the hierarchy among citizens was still present. Presidents were busy with the clash of interests of land between the slaveholders and free white men. In the face of such conflict of interests among Americans, Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan viewed respect to the federal structure as the key to American identity. According to them, "local arrangements" should be out of the reach of the federal government. Therefore, they supported the rights of the states—including making the decision in regards to slavery their own —which meant supporting the slave states at the same time. The presidents of the time chose a rhetoric which dwelled on the founders' interpretations of the Constitution to legitimate their stand (Stuckey 63-67). "Good" citizens were those who obeyed the laws and were temperate (Stuckey 86). "Bad" citizens were threatened as Franklin Pierce did in his fourth Annual Message in 1856: "Extremes beget extremes" (Pierce 399). Similarly, for James Buchanan, citizens could have different opinions, but this did not allow them the freedom to act according to their opinions (Stuckey 92).

After the Civil War, money-making was seen as the "patriotic" duty of American citizens (Stuckey 108). Good citizens were cooperative, doing their part of labor to contribute to the general good and not asking for more (Stuckey 119). A good citizen meant a good "worker" in the eyes of Grover Cleveland (Stuckey 114). Each citizen's work depended on the other, which formed an "organic union" among the citizens (Stuckey 119). Government encouraged standardization of the people—which meant that every person should assimilate, leaving their differences behind even though they were not yet citizens of the United States. Still, the hierarchy remained and was presented as equality (Stuckey 137).

In the Progressive era, strikes, race riots, women's rights protests were in their peak. Formerly marginalized groups severely demanded inclusion. Since he could not openly exclude certain groups, Woodrow Wilson tried to solve the "problem" by claiming that "no one ever was excluded" (Stuckey 163). Good citizens were expected to "respect the system and accept its limitations" (Stuckey 183). He thought Americans could only be unified ideologically under American values (Stuckey 197). He was famous for his rhetorical inheritance of separating the world into the camps of "good" and "evil" and for putting a clear end to the non-interventionist politics of the United States. He carried William McKinley's stand during the Philippine War further with the rhetoric he came up with during World War I, which was also adopted by the presidents during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War and finally the Iraq War.

In the 1930s it was Theodore Roosevelt's job to maintain unity in the face of nation's great economic problems. His understanding of citizenry was, thus, based on one's contribution to economy (Stuckey 199). He saw America as an "organic whole" (Stuckey 201), which is still in the making. The good citizen was, for him, committed to work (Stuckey 211), and would put her/his interests behind those of the nation (Stuckey 229). His speeches included groups that had been excluded for a long time. Yet, even if his "New Deal" partly convinced Americans that there is space for everyone in the nation, he would later find their demands belonging to the special advantages category and ask for their patience to meet them (Stuckey 206). Despite his inclusive rhetoric, he did not really take much action to better the lives of those he included (Stuckey 221).

He labeled those who criticize his policies to be “selfish,” “unprincipled” and “cynical” (“Radio Address” 147).

Roosevelt saw Americans as the heirs of the pioneers (Stuckey 240). He used the frontier myth in order to keep people content (Stuckey 237). Referring to the heroic story of the pioneers, he claimed that the pioneer spirit “still lives, unshaken and undiminished,” which was proven by American farmers of the time. He also reminds the desolation and hardships of the frontier life and, suggesting the frontier hero as the role model for the Americans of his day, invited American farmers to show the values of the frontier hero: faith, courage, patience and hope (“An Address on the Accomplishments” 380).

“Containment” was the policy of Eisenhower during the Cold War. He aimed at a “stable, temperate, contained” “citizenry under God” governed by a “limited and contained” state (Stuckey 243, 245). A contained citizen was one who was ready to relinquish his personal rights and for whom contributing to the ideological war with the Soviet Union always came first (Stuckey 251, 253).

During the Vietnam War era, which lasted the terms of five presidents—Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford—the new multiculturalism began. Subgroups, as Jens Brockmeier and Donald A. Carbaugh explain, “began to separate themselves from the canonical narrative, or rather to relate themselves to it in a variety of new ways” (Stuckey 135). Thus, the “canonical” part of the “canonical triumphalist narrative” became dissociated. The blow to the “triumphalist” part of the narrative came more or less at the same time, with the defeat in Vietnam. As the war unfolded, Americans “refused to interpret the battles of the war as good against evil or civilization against savagery, or [their] engagement there as progressive” (Stuckey 137). In other words, the American soldier was no longer the embodiment of John Wayne, the Westerner. War caused disillusionment. Americans saw that the real life was not like the one in the Westerns and they began to see that they were not Western heroes nor was their definition of heroism the same. By the end of the Vietnam War, the cowboy story was no longer the most popular element of the national narrative of the Americans.

The George W. H. Bush administration in the late 1980s, tried to cool down the effects of the "fragmentation" in the lives of Americans after the Vietnam War which showed itself with the emergence of lobbies of minorities, oil interests, environment etc. (Stuckey 289). National identity began to be openly discussed by the citizens. According to Mary E. Stuckey, in the face of these challenges, Bush chose to favor change and faith in the system at the same time, and thus never had to change much of the ideology (290). He also engaged in what Stuckey calls "celebratory othering" like many of his predecessors and followers—suggesting that citizens asking for inclusion are already included in the system in spite of the fact that they are politically invisible (350). He idealized the Americans who had "lower expectations" and who "managed their own concerns" without asking for help from the government (300).

As a quick overlook to the basic constructions of national identity in the United States reveals, politicians have often attempted at renewing or editing the national identity in order to solve the nation's domestic or foreign issues, such as achieving unity, joining a war or supporting economic expansion. The politicians who followed them also had similar tendencies. George W. Bush and Barack Obama are among the presidents who evoke national identity for the support of their policies.

## 1.2. FOREIGN POLICY OF THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

During the term of George W. Bush, one of the most severe terrorist attacks to the United States happened, which ended up in the wars of Afghanistan and Iraq. The war in Iraq soon stole a march on the one in Afghanistan. After the Vietnam War, a combat in this scale did not happen and a considerable attempt to renew American national identity did not take place. Americans had to be convinced about the justness and future success of the war in Iraq. When the Iraq War began, the defeat of Vietnam was almost forgotten due to the successful outcome of the 1991 Gulf War. Championing the fall of Baghdad so easily and quickly in 2003 deleted the last remainders of the Vietnam War from the memories, only to be gradually recalled back when the insurgency broke out. Bush administration had to prepare Americans for the war and its aftermath.

Bush administration's vision of American identity with regards to its defined enemies shaped the ground for the United States foreign policy after 9/11 and during the Iraq War (Schonberg 2). The spread of the rhetoric of "fear, patriotism, consumption, and victimization" with the contributions of popular culture and the mass media helped Bush convince Americans about the need for a reevaluation of American national identity which would prepare Americans for the war and for the perception of terrorism not as a strategy but a "condition" (Altheide 290). The administration drew a picture of the United States as a nation under a never-ending threat unless the enemies were fought. The threat was posed by terrorist groups, assisting states and rogue states who cannot naturally win a war against the United States and thus turn to "evil" and "dark" strategies like using weapons of mass destruction and engaging in "barbaric" terrorist attacks. Americans were, for the first time, depicted openly to be potential victims of further terrorist events, as the enemies were "like ticking time bombs" ("State of the Union Address" 2002). Such a vulnerable American image caused citizens to desperately turn to one another; to their collective identities, namely to their national identity which was in a process of reinvigoration by Bush administration's foreign policy. Bush asserted democracy and peace as the key to American identity and thus to foreign policy. The world, according to his point of view, was a place in which there will always be a fight between "civilization" and "terrorism" or "good" and "bad." In the face of such a world, America's role was to defend freedom and democracy. Dictatorships were viewed as "aggressive," "violent," and "evil" as well as irrational which rendered warfare legitimate for the Bush Administration to overthrow such governments (Jewis 80-83). The Bush doctrine favored an America that engaged in the preeminent war and favored unilateralism.

According to Bush, 9/11 happened because America was "the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity" ("A Day of Terror" A4). The terrorists were, thus, "enemies of freedom." They "hate[d] [Americans'] freedoms, [Americans'] freedom of religion, [Americans'] freedom of speech, [Americans'] freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other" ("A Nation Challenged"), as well as hating the "Christians" (Woodward 45). The fight America began against these terrorists was the "civilization's fight" ("A Nation Challenged"). It would be "a monumental struggle of good versus evil, but good will prevail," according to Bush ("Remarks by the President in Photo

Opportunity"). He gave equal importance to Iraq's Saddam Hussein with the claim that Hussein aided and abetted Al-Qaeda. He associated the deeds of Saddam Hussein with Hitlerism and communism ("State of the Union Address" 2002). Saddam Hussein was, after all, "a homicidal dictator who is addicted to WMD" ("Remarks on Iraq in the Cincinnati Museum Center") as well as a "student of Stalin" (Collins, *CBS*). Bush associated the 9/11 attacks of Al-Qaeda with Saddam Hussein since, according to him,

> . . . [one] can't distinguish between Al Qaeda and Saddam when [one] talk[s] about the war on terrorism. They are both equally as bad and equally as evil, and equally as destructive. . . the danger is that al Qaeda becomes an extension of Saddam's madness and his hatred and his capability to extend weapons of mass destruction around the world. ("Remarks by the President in a Photo Opportunity")

By attributing the enemy the qualities of evil and madness, Bush automatically rendered Americans as good and sane citizens. His rhetoric built the image of the American as the opposite of the enemy, which made fighting the enemy easier and justifiable. The way Bush interpellated his citizens as ideal/mythic Americans was promoted with the support of the media. In the beginning of the Iraq War, interpellation proved to be successful. Once the government owned its intelligence failures and the insurgency began and the war was extended, Americans' reactions to the identity offered through interpellation began to change.

## 1.3. FOREIGN POLICY OF THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

Ian Reifowitz, the author of *Obama's America* (2012), believed that Obama would transform American politics like Abraham Lincoln once did ("Foreword" by Ellis Close). He thought Obama's nationalism was in the tradition of Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, and Martin Luther King Jr. ("Preface"). Obama's national rhetoric below presents his outlook:

> When you put on that uniform, it doesn't matter if you're black or white; Asian, Latino… conservative, liberal; rich, poor; gay, straight. When you're marching into battle you look out for the person next to you, or the mission fails. When you're in the thick of the fight, you rise or fall as one unit, serving one Nation, leaving no one behind… So it is with America… our destiny is stitched together like those fifty stars and those thirteen stripes. No one built this country on their own. This nation is great because we built it together. This nation is great because we worked as a team. (Preface)

As his speech displays, Obama was obviously an "inclusive strong identifier" (Theiss-Morse 172). He dwells on America's values of justice, equality and liberty. In his children's book, *Of Thee I Sing* (2010), which is on American national identity, he talks about thirteen American heroes he picks: Martin Luther King, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Georgia O'Keefe, Albert Einstein, Chief Sitting Bull, Billie Holiday, Helen Keller, Maya Lin, Jane Addams, Neil Armstrong, Cesar Chavez, and Jackie Robinson. His choices show his demographical inclusion of Americans from different races, cultures and religious affiliations as models in his rhetoric of national identity.

America is, for Obama, a "gumbo," an African soup with "big chunks of stuff in it. . . seasoning each other" (Wolffe 237). His presedential campaign dwells on the idea of "transcendence of all national difference, be it political, cultural, or racial" (Barreto 94). His rhetoric treats Americans as "choosers, deciders, and accomplishers of collaborative identity performance" who are "flawed, never perfect, and always in the process of perfecting" (Sweet and Enser 602).

Barack Obama inherited Bush's war in 2009 and, in spite of his openly declared anti-war sentiments, increased the number of troops and currently waged a new one in the Middle East against the Islamic State (known as ISIS or ISIL). His team, according to Tom Engelhardt, is made up of the "advisor of former Clintonistas or Clintonista wannabes or protégés" like Tim Geither. He feels Obama's Security Advisor James Jones could well be picked by Senator McCain; and Hillary Clinton could fit any republican president who would want to attract democrats to the party (145). His administration—as Inderjeet Parmar's conclusion in his research proves—is "more continuous with the past than some of its supporters, and detractors care to admit" (161).

In the beginning of his presidency, Obama promised to close the Guantanamo Detention Camp, to reject the Military Commissions Act, to stick to the Geneva Conventions, to support the Israel–Palestine peace process, to reduce the number of troops in Iraq, to be in dialogue with Iran, and to seek for Congressional approval in his acts. Yet, he did not fulfill these promises. He has not yet closed Guantanamo; has not taken concrete action to reject Military Commisions Act; has supported Israel despite its violation of United

Nations resolutions; has sent additional 30000 troops to Iraq before the war ended in 2011; has fostered dialogue with Iran; has not sought Congression's support for his decision to take military action against Islamic State (ISIS or ISIL). Richard Jackson points in his article that Obama could not go beyond being merely the "guardian" of the war on terror (407), employing "existing identity narratives and myths, rather than suggest entirely new ones," which obliged him to stick to the rhetoric of the Bush administration (408). Obama believes America is exceptional because "it has always opposed torture, it supports the rule of law and it accepts people of all faiths" (408). His vision of America is the one he has adopted from Lincoln: "the last, best hope of Earth" ("Remarks of Senator Barack Obama"). Reminding one of Bush's association with al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, Obama tended to see al-Qaeda and Taliban in similar terms (Mullin 269). Following Bush's steps, in his 2009 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech he used Bush's Manichean approach to justify the war he now prolonged by saying:

> Evil does exist in the world. A non-violent movement could not have halted Hitler's armies. Negotiations cannot convince al Qaeda's leaders to lay down their arms. To say that force may sometimes be necessary is not a call to cynicism—it is recognition of history, the imperfections of man and the limits of reason." (*whitehouse.gov*).

According to Philip Gorski, Obama's stand on religion is similar to Bush's in the sense that it supports a "civil religion," "a universalist, prophetic religious voice," built on "covenant theology and civic republicanism, that balances religion and politics in such a way to be more inclusive than religious nationalism, but that also provides a better basis for solidarity than liberal secularism" (qtd. from Williams 254). In other words, he employs religion in his public speeches as a unifying and relating element unlike many secular liberals, a choice which places his rhetoric closer to that of the Bush administration.

Obama wrote three books that revealed his perception of America and of American national identity. His first book titled *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* (1995), which reveals Obama's past as well as that of his family's. His second book *Of Thee I Sing* (2010) is a children's book introducing the thirteen American heroes to children. His 2012 book *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*, deals with Obama's political and spiritual views, and

his perception of America. None of the books deal with the Iraq War. Yet three members of his administration—Leon Panetta, Hillary Clinton, and Robert M. Gates (who served both administrations)—came up with narrations of their lives during the time they worked for Obama and mentioned their perception of and ideas about the Iraq War. The works written by the members of Obama administration are few partly due to the shorter term (maximum two years) of experience they had with the war. The number of those who narrated the war during and after Bush administration are naturally more. George W. Bush, Condoleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, and Paul M. Bremer (and Robert M. Gates) wrote the war as they experienced it.

## 1.4. WORKS OF LIFE WRITING BY THE MEMBERS OF THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

Writers of Iraq War narratives present different ways of relating their experience to the present condition. How authors perceive America plays an important role for establishing a relationship with the war. Their perception determines "the sense of self and structures" of the discourse in their works (Reaves 2). Politicians often see America as ideology and Americans as the practitioners of that ideology. Therefore, especially during times of war, American politicians often engage in providing definitions of the mission Americans are expected to fulfill. Similar to their audiences listening to their public speeches, the readers of their works of life writing are also viewed as "heterogeneous collectives for whom certain discourses of identity, certain stories, certain truths make sense at various moments" (Smith and Watson 97). Therefore, politicians' narratives include an epideictic rhetoric. Some presidents have made use of symbolism, religion and the frontier myth in their rhetoric of war. Yet, the members of Bush administration combined all these tendencies sometimes to carry them to the extremes to guarantee support for their foreign policy.

Those who dedicated part of their narratives to the Iraq war among the members of the Bush Administration are George W. Bush as the president (2001-2009), Dick Cheney as the Secretary of the State (2001-2009), Donald Rumsfeld as the Secretary of Defense

(2001-2006), Condoleezza Rice as the Secretary of State (2005-2009) and Paul M. Bremer as the Presidential Envoy to Iraq (May 12, 2003 – June 28, 2004).

In comparison to the public speeches they gave, Bush's and Rice's narratives seem to adopt a more cautiously employed, softer rhetoric. Bush confesses some of his administrative errors and he is apologetic at times. Rice views events from Bush's standpoint most of the time, but watches her language in an attempt not to be offensive like Cheney. Cheney, on the other hand defies criticisms by supporting the administration's past decisions, trying to justify the war by invoking public fear the way Eisenhower once did. He talks about a next attack which could be worse (330), a botulinum toxin attack on the White House (341) and possible anthrax or smallpox attacks which could kill one million people and would spread to four generations (384-385). Rumsfeld writes in the manner of a teacher, busy with justifying what others claim to have gone wrong with the United States foreign policy in Iraq. Finally Bremer, tries to emphasize the "impossibility" of the job he achieved in Iraq throughout the most of his work.

Instead of writing "an exhaustive account of [his] life or presidency," George W. Bush chooses to write about the decisions he took during his presidency, among which the ones about the Iraq War are multiple in number (*Decision Points* 2010, xi). Dick Cheney begins *In My Time a Personal and Political Memoir* (2011) with the moment he learns about the 9/11 attacks. His memoir deals with his service following the event, which also covers the Iraq War. Donald Rumsfeld, as the title of his work, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (2011), suggests attempts at revealing the "unknowns" of his time. Condoleezza Rice's *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (2011) deals with her term as a Secretary of Defense. Finally, *My Year in Iraq: The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope* (2006) by Paul L. Bremer depicts Bremer's reconstruction efforts in Iraq.

The similar themes and outlook of these works, especially their claims to present the historical truth, are obvious. Bush does not present his work as a testimony or memoir but as historiography, history once being his "passion" and later becoming his "major" (14). Cheney also chooses to write an alternative history of the war. He writes that the surge, which is known to have caused the loss of many American and Iraqi lives,

"worked so well" (403), simplifying its ups and downs. Rumsfeld's work is based on a documentary archive which he currently presents on his website. Reminding that he has lived "for more than one third of the history of the United States," he promises his readers "that slice of . . . amazing history" of the United States. Condoleeza Rice, on the other hand, criticizes the media coverage of events in her preface and implicitly promises to present "history's judgment" to her readers (xvi). Last but not the least, Paul L. Bremer, uses the simplifying rhetoric to narrate the war befitting a historical text. He associates Saddam Hussein with Hitler; draws a picture of a thankful Iraq; defines American values that "led" America into war and concludes by stating that the rest depends on the Iraqi people.

Apart from Bremer, none of the authors above dedicate their entire account to the war, but the war covers an important portion of their books. These writers' perception of the Iraq War and the following insurgency are written in the form of master-narratives. The use of simplifications is, after all, "proper only for textbooks" (Levi 150). Writers openly or implicitly refer to their works as historical texts; accounts that should be taken for granted. These works attempt to justify the war, emphasize the nobility of the American effort in Iraq; define the favored American; defy popular criticisms the administration received about the war; provide explanations for the events they claim to be misunderstood, confess mistakes and blame other members of the administration, or the Pentagon, or the Congress, or Saddam Hussein for what has gone wrong. In other words, they are perfect examples for the "transgressive" quality of the genre of autobiography (Vernon 5). Apart from being considered as works of life writing and history, some of these works fall in the category of other genres such as legal defense, war propaganda, and testimony. To appeal to their readers, writers employ ethnocultural values in their narratives such as the mythical definition of the American, portrayal of America's enemies, depiction of the people America has "saved" so far; America's national symbols, idealistic definitions of America and the American; America's founding people and foundational past; victories from American history; principles and requirements of Christianity and the mythology of the American West.

### 1.4.1. Defining the Narrating "I"

Dick Cheney, in *In My Time*, defines himself as a "gentleman from Wyoming" (126), a conservative Republican (372), the vice president, a constitutional officer, the speaker of the house (494) and the president of the senate (494). He seems to be amused and proud of having been called a "one-man Afghani wrecking crew" by Dorrel Hammond of Saturday Night Live (337). Cheney derives strength from the myth of western identity, his political stand and his broad-ranged authority.

In *Known and Unknown*, Rumsfeld affirms being the secretary of defense, a son and a father. At one point, he places the nation to be more important than his son (426), drawing the image of an American committing self-sacrifice for his nation. He quotes Jack Watson who served President Jimmy Carter, calling a White House Chief of Staff a "javelin catcher" (161), highlighting the difficulty and importance of the job he undertakes.

Rice's *No Higher Honor* presents her as "the daughter of a Presbyterian minister and . . . a church organist" (83), "a middle-class black daughter of the South" with Texan accent (295), "an academic" (263), a "chief diplomat" (504), the national security advisor, the "warrior princess," a nickname the *New York Times* gave her (262), the secretary of state and a Republican. Like Bush who associates himself with Lincoln, Rice associates herself with Thomas Jefferson. She mentions her pride in being the "nation's notary," the sixty-fifth successor of Jefferson and being the "keeper of the Great Seal" like him (318). Jefferson, the principal author of the "Declaration of Independence" provides her with the image of the keeper of the American ideal of equality and rights of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. She also associates herself with Brent Scowcroft, whom she finds to be an "honest broker, not a separate power" (14).

Bremer's *My Year in Iraq* reveals his desire to legitimize his status. He defines himself as a diplomat (12), "President George W. Bush's personal envoy" (4), "Presidential Envoy to Iraq with full authority over all United States government" (12), "the Iraqi

government" (36) and the doer of the "impossible job" (7). He also calls himself "the most threatened American official anywhere in the world" (142). His insistence on his authority and the difficulty of his job probably stem from the criticism he receives during his term of service.

### 1.4.2. Defining the American

Cheney presents Americans as the liberators rendering Iraqis free (347) and "the friend and ally" of the Iraqis (390). The Americans he praises are the family members of soldiers asking him not to "let [their] son[s] have died in vain" (445, 446) and soldiers whom he defines to be "Gods," and "agents of correction" who engage in "selfless service" (464). Americans, according to him, "love [their] country more when she is threatened" (343). He quotes the motto of the West Point 2007 graduation ceremony "Always Remember, Never Surrender" (457).

Rumsfeld defines America by quoting Adlai E. Stevenson's address at the Senior Class Banquet in 1954, where he says "if America stumbles, the world will fall." Rumsfeld agrees with Stevenson in that he also thinks that the "decisions which [America] makes, the uses which it devotes its immense resources, the leadership which it provides on moral as well as material questions, all appear likely to determine the fate of the modern world" (725). For him, Americans are those "who control [their] destiny and are not ruled from abroad by officials [they] did not elect and courts [they] cannot hold accountable." They have rights to "choose their own leaders . . . make their own laws, to limit the powers of government and enjoy due process of law" (600). The "finest traits" of the Americans, according to Rumsfeld, are "respect for religion and individual liberty" (721). However, he believes that these characteristics make them "vulnerable" to the enemy (721). His Americans are "proud and resilient," and supportive of the actions of the government (725). They have "withstood tragedies and traumas of unimaginable scope" (725) and are "privileged" and honored to serve the country (726).

Rice, similar to the others, thinks that Americans fight for their "democratic values and way of life'" (154). She agrees with Bush in that Americans should be "forward-looking, resolute and . . . ready for preemptive action when necessary to defend . . .

liberty and to defend . . . lives" (152). For her, Americans should not be "neutral in the struggle between freedom and tyranny" (730). They should be able to forgive those who made wrong decisions and have remorse (quoting Tim Russert of NBC News 235). The experiences she tells offer the image of an American who is willing to die for the nation and replace "sadness" with "rising defiance" (83), who does not want to take a mission but does so out of patriotism (talking about Margaret Tutwiler, the ambassador in Morocco on 209) and who approaches some decisions of Bush administration critically yet is a patriot (talking about Senator McCain on 187).

For Bremer, on the other hand, Americans are not "scared of" their responsibility (142). They are those who are "always cheerful, willing to accept risks and sacrifices" (219). He thinks Americans are "custodians of Iraqi unity" (296) and supporters of democracy (365). They are selfless (396) and "courageous" (397).

The politician/authors often turn to definitions of the enemy to display who Americans are not. Accordingly, Cheney defines Saddam Hussein as "ruthless" (329). He thinks he is a "new kind of enemy" (330). He refers to terrorist groups as "bad guys" (335) and "evil people who dwell in shadows, planning unimaginable violence and destruction" (343). Rumsfeld calls Hussein "the Butcher of Baghdad" (429), who hid in a "spider hole" (530). For Rumsfeld, Hussein is brutal, unjust and totalitarian (723). He also depicts the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces to be: "posing as merchants, shop-goers" with "explosives on children" just like the 9/11 hijackers who clad like "businessmen in suits" (562). He agrees with Bush's 9/11 speech where he says that the enemies "hate [their] freedoms—[their] freedom of religion, [their] freedom of speech, [their] freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other" (722). Rice adds the list two more enemies that are "Syrian and Iranian regimes" (733). Bremer often associates Hussein with Adolf Hitler (39), who held power almost three times longer (71) and built mass graves in Al-Hillah like the "Einsatzgruppen during the Holocaust" (51).

Authors also engage in defining the victims of their enemy as another attempt to determine Americans' differences from the victims with an emphasis on American superiority. Cheney depicts the appreciation of the Iraqi people in the embodiment of an Iraqi man who thanks him (401). For Rumsfeld, Iraqis, like all the Muslims, are those who are not given "democracy, civil liberties and laws made by men." Bremer, on the

other hand, thinks that Iraqis "can't be secure without America's help" (369) and the only Iraqi he quotes is a thankful one (395).

Symbolism is a tool politician/authors use to highlight the distinction between the Americans and their enemies. Symbols provide for the creation of abstract notions of the enemy and the American which simplifies how war is perceived. The foreign policy discourses of nearly 75% of American presidents do not include "people" in their speeches (Coe and Neuman 834). They rather dwell on abstract definitions of war (like "war on terror") and notions of enemy. Cheney uses the light-dark dichotomy to simplify the understanding of the war. He depicts the enemies "dwell[ing] in the shadows" (343). Light, in this case, is what America stands for (343). Yet, in order to win over the enemy, Americans can go into the dark as well: "spend[ing] time in the shadows in the intelligence world . . . [doing] what needs to be done . . . quietly" (335). Rumsfeld calls Saddam Hussein a "spider," which is most probably poisonous (530), and thus, he deserves to be destroyed by the Americans. Rice, similarly, defines the war in Iraq as "the struggle between freedom and tyranny" (Rice 730), America being the symbol of freedom and enemies being the symbols for tyranny. As the examples reveal, the symbolic treatment of the enemy helps authors to justify the war through simplification.

The politician/authors also turn to selective history[19] to strengthen their definitions of the self, America and the American. They make use of the essentials of a national narrative—"major victories, heroic defeats, and spectacular events of individual or collective bravery . . . . rulers, soldiers, saints, poets, scientists and other charismatics" the citizens are expected to keep in mind (Maleševic 150). This tendency to evoke national interests is an old tradition among American presidents. During the antebellum era, presidents often referred to the founding fathers (Stuckey 71), as, back then, the easiest option was to legitimize slavery. Lincoln's difficult decision provided other presidents with an example to highlight and thus project themselves as politicians who deserve to be appreciated for the job they have done. Wilson "reinterpreted" the founding fathers during the World War I (Stuckey 156); Frederick Roosevelt used the

[19] Mary E. Stuckey uses the term in her book about the national identity rhetoric of American presidents, *Defining Americans: The Presidency and National Identity*.

common past rhetoric to keep immigrants content and asking for less (Stuckey 216); Eisenhower employed a "mythologized view of national identity and national history" (Stuckey 283) and George W. H. Bush preferred a "selective history" to support his stand in his national identity politics regarding the inclusion of many Americans (Stuckey 299).

Yet, the politicians do not always refer to the victories and successes. David Lowenthal, in his "Identity Heritage and History," points out to the fact that tragedy has sometimes been more influential than triumphs in terms of unifying the members of a community. For him, "Nations are unique not only in what they choose to remember but in what they feel forced to forget" (Gillis 50). Giving unpleasant examples from history could also convince citizens to accept and support government policies.

Cheney refers to Winston Churchill's "brave leadership and the heroic fights of the allies against Hitler" (374) to imply that their endeavour is as brave as heroic. Rice not only associates herself with Jefferson but also deems herself as charismatic and refers to her own past through which she gives the message of being patient. She tells the difficulties her father had while registering to vote in Alabama in 1952 "due to poll tests and harassment of black voters" and adds that she did not have a white classmate until she was twelve (731). She implicitly points to her power and position now as the secretary of state. Doing so, she indirectly refers to America's successes of bringing democracy in the past and promotes hope (731). Bremer refers to a dialogue between Lincoln and George B. McClellan (a major general during the American Civil War) while McClellan was "marching the Army of the Potomac up and down and refusing to give battle to the Confederates" (228). Lincoln mocks him by saying: "If you're not going to use the army, could I borrow it?" (228). Such reference to McClellan's pitiful inertia, legitimizes Bremer's opposition to hesitation.

According to Samuel P. Huntington, religion has been and still is "central, perhaps the central, element of American identity" as a country which was "founded in large part for religious reasons" and whose citizens are "far more religious than the people of other industrialized countries" (20). Naturally, politicians have always had a tendency to associate American identity with Protestant Christianity. In the nineteenth century, all presidents referred to god in their political addresses, yet religion "did not have a major

presence in their lives" with an exception of Abraham Lincoln (Schlesinger 152). Yet, even Lincoln did not let the words "Almighty God" and "Lord Jesus Christ" be written into the constitution (152).

Woodraw Wilson saw Christianity as "the most vitalizing thing in the world" (329) and he thought "[b]y this faith, and by this faith alone, [could] the world be lifted out of its present confusion and despair" ("State of the Union Address"). A patriot, for him, was one who saw the nation's interests above his own, which was parallel to the Christian model for redemption (Stuckey168). Wilson thought that America had a mission of internationalizing American understanding of liberty which would also bring material prosperity (Stuckey 192). He declared America's cause as "the cause of humanity itself" ("An Address to the Daughters of the American Revolution" 49), an idea which would later be adopted by George W. Bush during the Iraq War. Theodore Roosevelt also associated "human security" and "social justice" with Christianity ("Informal" 1). The concept of America as a "promised land" occupied by a "chosen people" was behind the "national calling . . . absorbed in the doctrine of Manifest Destiny and then into a vision of America's worldwide mission that was championed by Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson" (Herbert 2). Westward expansion was the initial step taken which was followed by expansion to other countries. In this view, Christians are obligated to do their part in executing the divine wrath against evil-doers (Herbert 4).

In a similar manner, Dwight Eisenhower wanted American actions to prove the world "American mission of freedom under the faith in God" (Stuckey 246). He thought Americans had a moral duty to work for the good of others—a "role of vigorous leadership, ready strength, sympathetic understanding" in fulfilling the American mission ("Annual Message to the Congress" 18). According to him, Americans were "custodians of a way of life that can be instructive for all mankind" ("Address before the Council" 173). He thought Americans did not only have the "American system" to offer but also "those moral values, spiritual values of the worth of man" (Remarks at the Twelfth Annual Washington Conference 362), which could light "fires in the souls of men everywhere" ("Annual Message 19). His religious philosophy also reminds Bush's convictions.

Christian Americanism, therefore, was not invented during Bush's term in the White House (Herbert 7). Yet, George W. Bush was different in comparison to other presidents. After all, his "favorite philosopher" was Jesus Christ (Schlesinger 155). He once told the Texan evangelist James Robison: "I feel like God wants me to run for president. I can't explain it, but I sense the country is going to need me. . . I know it won't be easy on me or my family but God wants me to do it" (Phillips xxxiv). On a TV program on BBC2, during the war in Iraq, he says God spoke to him saying: "George, go and fight those terrorists in Afghanistan" and "George, go and end the tyranny in Iraq' and [he] did. . . ." (Banks-Smith). Although his public speeches include such religious rhetoric, his narrative avoids direct association of the war with Christian religion to avoid criticism. Yet, Bremer openly talks in reference to God and religion. He is proud to tell Bush that his wife's favorite passage from his State of the Union Address was "Freedom is not America's gift to the world. It is God's gift to mankind" (8). He addresses the soldiers in Iraq saying: "God, who asked us to make this sacrifice, would give us the strength to endure it" (21). In another address, this time to the Iraqi people he quotes their common Prophet Jeremiah 29:11: "For surely I know the plans I have for you says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future of hope" (137). This last quotation is almost improper, since, in the meantime, as the "Presidential Envoy" and the "Iraqi government" as he calls himself, he was the only one to decide the fate of the Iraqis; and thus, the quotation is suggestive of Bremer acting as God.

Speaking with reference to the Western scene and ideals in nostalgic terms was also precedented by previous American politicians such as Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt used the myth to "replac[e] the conqueror hero with a farmer hero" which was needed in his time (Dorsey 1). The western references in the works of Bush and the members of his administration who included narrations of the West in their life narratives, however, used the myth to legitimize their foreign policy. The proof that such a myth did not exist was not enough to stop Bush and Rumsfeld. By the time Iraq War began, the Vietnam War was almost forgotten. The victory of the Gulf War, and the fall of Baghdad were what Americans had in mind. Yet, even if Americans were convinced about the legitimacy of the war in Afghanistan, they were not completely sure about waging a war

in Iraq and they needed to be assured. To ensure support, Rumsfeld also evokes the Western myth.

Rumsfeld's work favors the freedom, tolerance and diversity in the West. While depicting Taos Pueblo, where he owns a house with his wife, he refers to the population as "skiers, self-described free spirits, and graying hippies . . . . [in the] crossroads of Hispanic, Indian and Western cultures, combining the millenia-old traditions of the original inhabitants of the continent with the pioneering spirit of settlers who first headed West" (724). He says that he cherishes "what this great land of [theirs] presents: promise, possibility and renewal" (724). He also favors a Western style patriotism, when he narrates the story of the twenty-four-hour-there flag in Taos. He tells how a group of men "including the legendary frontiersman Kit Carson resolved to nail the Union flag to a tall wooden pole" and how the Congress passed a special law authorizing Taos to be the first city in the nation allowing to fly the flag all day. He is proud of the fact that the flag has always been there "through times of war, economic despair, disease and disaster—in the cruelest of times as well as the best of times" (725).

Rumsfeld, talking about his youth, remembers how they listened to the *Lone Ranger* at the family radio and quotes the famous *Lone Ranger* credo which he thinks is still a good philosophy: "I believe that to have a friend, a man must be one. That all men are created equal and everyone has within himself the power to contribute to a better world. That God put the firewood there, but that everyone must gather and light it himself" (37). Building his argument upon the idealized values, he also mentions a similar outlook in an urban setting, Chicago, and the citizens' "rough-and-tumble" ways in earning their living "not so much by pedigree but by sweat" (42). Quoting from Saul Bellow's *Adventures of Augie March,* he favors the people of Chicago, who Bellow thought behaved with their own incentives and do not owe anything to others (35). Rumsfeld adopts Bellows words and defines himself as "an American, Chicago born . . . and go at things as [he has] taught [himself]" (35). Like all other members of the administration, he is critical of the "layers of bureaucracy" (295), especially that of Pentagon (333), which could be associated with the free Western spirit, which favors going against authority if needed.

Some of the writers in this group tend to celebrate American action at the end of their books. Bush is one of them, but his words are cautious: "Because the United States liberated Iraq and then refused to abandon it, the people of that country have a chance to be free" (393). Rice picks her words carefully when she concludes the book, and does not declare victory. Cheney, on the contrary, is assertive. He says they "had done all these things—and keep the American people safe from another attack" (420). He declares the surge to have "worked so well" (403). Rumsfeld stays away from making a conclusive evaluation of the war as his book draws to a close. He focuses instead on the potential of the Americans, and the "obligation" to serve the American army (725-726). Bremer ends his narration with the knowledge that the job has not yet finished (398). Still, he celebrates the success saying: "The days of the tyrant are over" and adds: "justice will prevail—the justice you have prized in the Land between the Two Rivers since the time of Hammurabi . . . . Today, Iraq is united . . . by a shared vision of freedom for every single Iraqi—man, woman, Arab, Turkman or Kurd, Sunni or Shia, Christian or Muslim" (395).

Although the references for national identity in the works of the members of the Bush administration may vary in certain aspects, the national identity presented in these works complement one another. The Americans in these works of life writing are mythologized as people free, independent, powerful, good-willed, and respectful to individual rights. They liberate; fight evil; end tyranny; bring civilization; bear light into the dark; take risks. They are privileged and honored to be soldiers/citizens. They are patriotic, selfless, courageous, self-taught, heroic and cheerful in the face of pain. For them, America comes first. Americans are good Christians, chosen people and God's agents. They are naturally masculine.

Such an image of the American presented in these works of life writing is different from the image of the American politicians favored in their public speeches and interviews. Their approach is less direct in terms of defining the requirements of being an American. In addition, they sound less exclusive than they do in their public speeches. Refraining from an exclusionary rhetoric, these authors either confess their mistakes or blame others. The less assertive and partly apologetic approach Bush, Rice and Bremer adopt in their works prove that these writers obviously avoid using an imperialistic and

exclusionary rhetoric and being seen as leaders who lack foresight and clever political strategy.

## 1.5. CLOSE READING: GEORGE W. BUSH'S *DECISION POINTS*

George W. Bush's 2010 memoir *Decision Points*, which was written during the Iraq War, sheds light on American discourses at a key moment in the early twenty first century. It is also a work of national literature, being "both the product and partial creator" of American "collective sense of identity" (Corse 9). Many Americans have read it and have been either influenced from or reacted to what it says about the wars the United States have fought. Bush says he wrote the memoir because distinguished historians told him that he "had an obligation to write" and because Karl Rove[20] recommended him to (xi). With a claim in historiography strengthened with his major in history, Bush prefers to focus on "the most important part of the job: making decisions" (xi). He dedicates each chapter to one of his decisions under question and attempts at justifying it using "government documents, contemporaneous notes, personal interviews, news reports" (xii). His memoir, therefore, does not claim to be a subjective account of his experiences but an objective historical account. Perceiving himself as a person who makes history (13), Bush hopes the book would serve as "a resource for anyone studying this period in American history" (xi). His attempt to write a memoir seems to stem from the need to create a grand narrative of his time: to provide answers for the questions that have been asked during his presidency and to refute negative criticisms that has been made so far in relation to his political decisions.

In the first chapter, "Quitting," Bush narrates his experiences that led to his decision to quit drinking. This chapter is the only one that deals with a non-political decision. In it, Bush is defined as having a "habitual personality" who has smoked, dipped snuff, chewed long-leaf tobacco and drunken alcohol (1). Once he realizes that his problem with alcohol has made him behave selfishly, he decides to quit since his family does not deserve such behaviour. He describes his decision to quit as "one of the toughest

[20] Karl Rove is a Republican policy adviser who has served for both George W. H. Bush and George W. Bush.

decisions [he] has ever made" (3). The chapter associates his success in quitting drinking with the religious piousness he has developed. He narrates his transformation from someone, who "really wasn't a believer" to a man who grows faith and reads the Bible for "self-improvement," which "made it possible to quit drinking" (31, 34). His alcohol addiction story makes him a president who is down to earth, having common problems with the public. Yet, it also makes him heroic in that he refused to be weak and acted responsibly which helped him to become the president of the United States. In this chapter, Bush claims full control over his life and "establish[es]" his "own identity" (19) by having studied at "Andover by expectation," "Yale by tradition" and "Harvard by choice" (22).

In the second chapter titled "Running," Bush narrates how he decided to run for office under the influence of Mark Craig's sermon—his "high-pitched Texas twang coming from the pulpit"—which is about how God calls Moses into action in the Book of Exodus. He was inspired by Moses' decision to take on the "moral and ethical leadership" of his country and to "go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt" (61). Bush's decision to run for office through the story of Moses suggests that America also lacks moral and ethical leadership, a belief which has made Bush claim the role of a savior.

As its title reveals, in his third chapter, "Personnel," Bush explains the reasons for his choices of his administrative personnel. He attempts to justify his choices and defend them against the negative reactions he had received. An important point in this chapter is Laura Bush's advice for Bush that if he wanted to be the president he should not let others define him (73). The fourth chapter, "Stem Cells," is dedicated to justify Bush's decision to oppose the use of federal funds for embryonic stem cell research and the abortion issue. He stresses his thought that "human life is sacred" (112) and that these practices are "ethically complicated" (124). The chapter also displays his choice of Lincoln as his role model (108); a source of his identity which he would keep on mentioning in the forthcoming chapters.

The fifth chapter, "Day of Fire," covers the 9/11 attacks and Bush's decision-making process for starting "the first war of the twenty first century" (137). In an attempt to justify his decision about the "War on Terror," Bush describes his reaction to the

attacks. Adopting the role of a "protector" of his country, Bush makes the promise that he would do anything necessary to fulfill this mission. Defining himself as the "protector" and the Americans as those who depended on him for protection, he appoints part of the responsibility for the war on the American people. On one hand, he claims to protect his people, on the other, he personifies himself as one of the victims of terrorism having lost a family acquaintance, TV commentator Barbara Olson (136). Being both the protector and a victim, he attempts at gaining his readers' sympathy.

The sixth chapter, "War Footing," aims at justifying the decision of coming up with the USA Patriot Act[21] (160). The chapter reveals Bush's regrets about the name of the act which had put him in the position of a president who calls citizens who criticize the law "unpatriotic" (162). The chapter openly displays the fact that Bush was aware and defensive of the criticisms he received concerning his administration's exclusionary identity politics.

The following chapter, "Afghanistan," deals with Bush's decision related to the war in Afghanistan. Associating "War on Terror" with the Civil War, Bush implies that his war shared the necessary and noble cause of the Civil War (183). In the eighth chapter titled "Iraq," Bush adopts an apologetic tone about the "Mission Accomplished" banner hung up too early (257), the state of lawlessness Iraq suffered from afterwards (258), and being "all wrong" about WMD (262). In a letter to his father, he confesses that the decision to start the war was an emotional one (224). In order to prove that the war was one with a just cause, he quotes thankful Iraqi people (256), Bill Clinton's words emphasizing the necessity for eliminating Saddam Hussein (227) and tells heroic stories about the American soldiers of the Iraq War (264).

In the ninth chapter, titled "Leading," Bush tries to explain why he did what he did with Medicare, his reason for making a "faith-based initiative" central to his campaign (281), his reason for supporting Cheney when his daughter's lesbian relationship was being

[21] A law abbreviated for "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001."

questioned (293) and his reason for modernizing the No Child Left Behind Act[22] (307). The tenth chapter, "Katrina," depicts Bush as a president who tries to justify that he is not guilty about what happened during and after the Katrina. He blames the governor, who did not "request that the government assume control of the emergency" (309) and gave up her authority to the federal government (321). In the eleventh chapter, "Lazarus Effect," Bush attempts to justify his decision to help people in Africa and Uganda fight AIDS (334), and to "make it a key element" of his foreign policy (335) associating it with his religious standpoint (354).

In the twelfth chapter, "Surge," Bush explains why he didn't stop the war in Iraq and why the surge started. He confesses that he wondered whether the American "approach matched the reality on the ground." He questions whether they could do any better in Iraq just to blame the Al-Qaeda for the things they failed to achieve (363). He doesn't give up the war in Iraq because Lincoln wouldn't either (368), and because he had Petraus and Odierno, the way Lincoln had Generals Grant and Sherman and Roosevelt had Eisenhower and Bradley (389).

In the thirteenth chapter, "Freedom Agenda," Bush explains why he wanted "a democratic Palestinian state, led by elected officials who would answer to the people, reject terror, and pursue peace with Israel" (403). He also attempts to convince the reader about Iran's being a hindrance for his freedom agenda (420); about the need of the people of North Korea to be free from the Korean leader Kim Jong-il, the tyrant (425); about China's need for an "independent press, open Internet and free speech" (429) and about Putin's mistake of going into Georgia (435). He says America is responsible in all these foreign issues because "it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world" (396). In the fourteenth chapter, "Financial Crisis," Bush tries to get rid of the blame for the failing firms and convince the readers about democratic capitalism's being "the best economic

[22] No Child Left Behind is an 2001 act which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Its full title is "An act to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind."

model ever devised" (471). Finally, in his epilogue, he tries to convince his readers that "right or wrong" all he did "was in the best interests of" America (476).

Bush's memoir falls into the genre category of autohagiography in that it praises Bush's life as exemplary, as a man who dedicated his life to his country. It is also a work of relational life writing since it is built on the idea of a shared identity in general and offers a bond with its readers with whom he shares American national identity. The chapters dealing with America's wars directly fit in the tradition of war memoirs and acts of witnessing. The way almost each decision is supported with Bush's religious beliefs and the religious overtones throughout the book evidently makes it a spiritual narrative. In addition, the first chapter, in which Bush narrates how he quit drinking with the help of religion, bears the content of a self-help narrative. Bush himself also thinks that his memoir would "even prove useful as [his readers] make choices in [their] li[ves]" (xii).

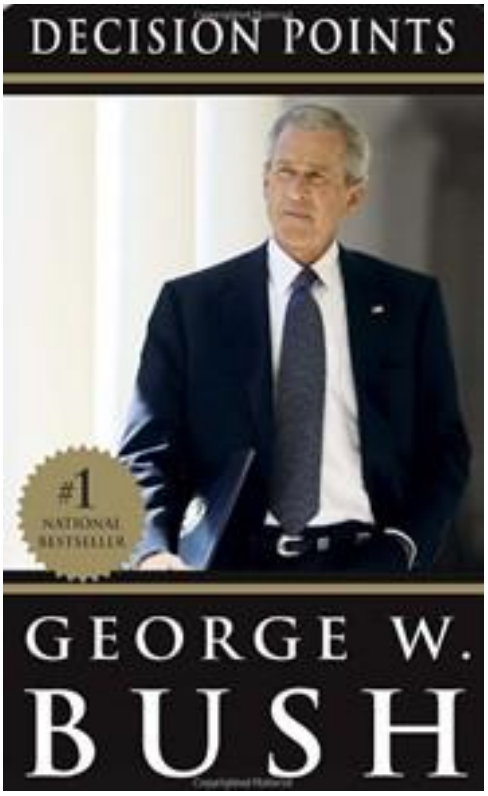


Fig. 1. Cover of George W. Bush's 2010 memoir

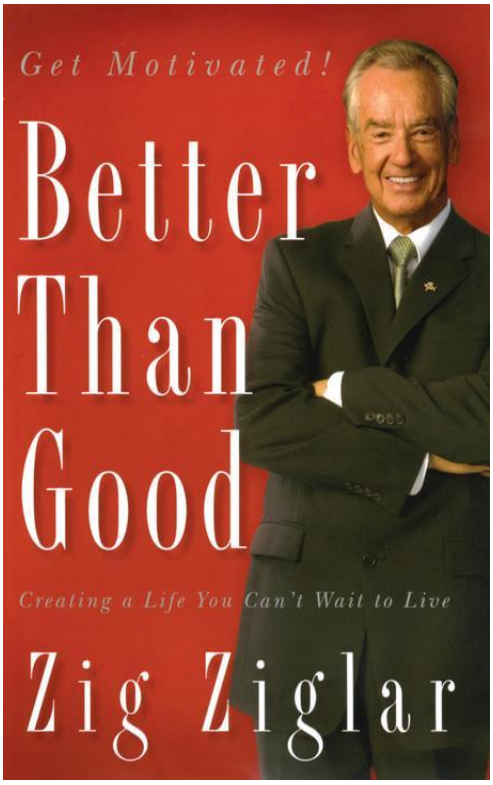


Fig. 2. Cover of Zig Ziglar's 2006 self-help book

The cover of the book presents the former president of the United States, walking to somewhere with a file under his arm, a pensive look on the face, a suit and tie on and his hand in his pocket. Resembling the covers of self-help narratives and with the contribution of the title *Decision Points*, the cover of the memoir prepares the reader for the book's didactic content. The covers below differ from one another only in terms of the facial expressions of their authors, one being a political memoir on wars and other political upheavals of Bush's time and the other a self-help narrative titled *Better Than Good* (2006) by Zig Ziglar on tips for having a better life. Both being Texan and Republicans, late Hilary Hinton "Zig" Ziglar's identity tags of motivational speaker, educator, salesman, author, as well as historian surprisingly match to those Bush presents in his memoir, except for the salesman. While Ziglar's book offers motivation for a better life, Bush's offers his tips for decision-making.

The tone of the memoir shifts from self-assertive to apologetic, from emotional to religious and from confessional to defensive. The narrating "I" of the text is overtly self-conscious from the beginning to the end. He meticulously tries to subvert charges against his leadership and administration; he is careful not to contradict himself; and he does not want to sound exclusionary for which his administration was widely criticized. The narrated "I" of the text is depicted as a Texan, American, father, husband, president, priest, believer, member of "a family of best-selling authors," "protect[or] of Iraqi's" (127), the commander in chief, the savior of his people and "the calcium in the backbone" as Bob Woodward defines him (199). As these definitions reveal, he derives support for what he writes from the identity he constitutes for himself in relation to his famous family, his belief in Christianity, his Western origins as well as his political position. He also presents himself as the wager of the war and the single authority to decide the faith of Iraqis and Americans. Referring to the Congress Resolution dated October 12, 2002, he defines himself as the authority to decide whether or not America will engage in combat in Iraq (241).

In contrast to the self-conscious and defensive narrating "I" of Bush's memoir, the narrated "I" is a heroic sacrificer and a patriot with full authority. The contradiction between the narrated "I," who is depicted to be powerful and potent, and the narrating "I," who is struggling to convince the reader, results from the memoir's concern to

determine identities. The need to justify these determinations is a crucial act since the domestic and foreign policies adopted by the Bush administration are legitimized through identity politics.

The "I" that is defined by the narrator is the historical "I," which like all historical "I"s could hardly be fully captured, while the "I" that defines the American national identity is the ideological "I," busy with interpellating readers as Bush's version of ideal American. The ideological "I" of Bush's memoir, like the ideological narrators of all texts, deal with the ethnic, social, cultural, political, and religious aspects of the identity claimed and promoted in the text. The ideological "I" of Bush's *Decision Points* makes use of ethnocultural symbolism—elements that have authenticity for the members of the nation—such as the mythical definition of the American, traditional depictions of America's enemies and "saved" ones so far, America's national symbols, founding people and foundational events (selected history), victories as well as principles and requirements of Christianity and the mythology of the American West. This ideological "I" plays a significant role during the identification process of the narrated "I" since a constructed ideal American identity determines the relationship of American people to the Iraq War.

Bush's memoir, like any other life narrative, can be read for what it does, besides what it says. It encodes and reinforces certain qualities on its particular narrated "I" as well as its directly and indirectly narrated "they"—the American people—which renders the memoir as one that shapes American national identity. Even though only two chapters directly deal with the Iraq War, each chapter contributes to Bush's definition of the ideal American of his time. In fact, his text seems to be more concerned with defining the American than defining Bush himself, which makes the memoir a work that fits in the genre of "auto-American-biography." In other words, it discusses what an American should or should not be, while referring to a selective as well as subjective national memory (Bercovitch 136) by "amput[ating]" Americans from "a large sustaining body" of multiple and individual identities and exposing them to a single generic national identity (Couser 24). Viewing and presenting America as a myth and an "embodiment of a prophetic universal design" (Bercovitch 136), Bush's memoir also reflects the Iraq War as a "good" war that is "morally justified, altruistic, and often divinely sanctioned"

(Hogan 78) and associates the combat with "unity, efficiency, prosperity, security and victory" (Robertson 325). His work provides an optimistic and idealistic national identity which dwells on "prevailing cultural assumptions" instead of the actual connection between the Americans and the political/historical conditions of their country (Couser 24).

The narrating "I" of the memoir is preoccupied with defining the American identity because Bush's foreign policy decisions need to be justified. Adjusting American identity to America's foreign policy mission in Iraq serve Bush's purposes of calming public anxiety, in weakening the influence of critical approaches to the war, in maintaining citizen support, in mobilizing ethnic sentiments, in arising national unity and in ensuring stability during the chaotic moments of the Iraq War. As at all times of crisis, in the time of the Iraq War, also, Americans clang to their relational and collective identities to relieve their anxiety about the invisible threats of possible terrorist attacks.

In *Decision Points*, Bush attempts at spreading an ideology infused with his perception of the war and aims at a reader who has internalized it. As the most powerful figure of the nation, Bush employs the state apparatuses of the church, family and the army in his memoir in order to justify his foreign policy, although he cautiously does not present them as ideological or repressive institutions. In the definition Althusser provides, the army is a "repressive state apparatus" since it functions through coercion while the family and the church are the "ideological state apparatuses," transmitting a preferred ideology. Bush often turns to religion to justify his policies. He depicts the war as one that aims at ridding the evil in the world (146), which reveals that he views the war as part of the Christian mission. Yet, he does not always use religious justifications directly. His memoir often employs them indirectly, since he does not want his memoir to face the negative criticisms he had faced in relation to his former public speeches. He says he "find[s] solace in reading the Bible, which Abraham Lincoln called 'the best gift God has given to man'" (368). He gives references to religion and hymns, reminds God's expectations from man and believes that Lincoln also owed his success to "his faith in God" (368). He ends his narrative by quoting from Psalm 18:12: "'The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock in whom I take refuge'

Amen" (473). As his textual references to Christianity suggests, Bush takes Christianity as the common heritage of all Americans, yet, naturally, avoids presenting it as an ideological tool for implementing his foreign policy goals. He calls himself "the commander in chief" (199) and refers to the American soldiers as the liberators of Iraq (393), while the American army is depicted to be an instrument of justified cause, unlike the "repressive" state apparatus Althusser defines it to be. Bush's depictions throughout his memoir only scarcely refer to the function of the American military other than protecting or saving Americans and people of other nations.

Befitting the definition provided by Althusser, one of the ideological state apparatuses Bush uses to present the Iraq War is the function of the family. The war, according to Bush's definition, is fought for and by the families. According to the identity offered in *Decision Points* Bush defines Americans as the liberators of Iraq, who gave the country a chance to be free (393). The American mission defined in the text requires Americans to fulfill "the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world" (393). Bush includes dialogues with exemplary Americans and attributes a heroic identity to them. The soldier who asks him not to feel pity but to get him another leg to go back to the front (263); the wounded soldier who asks for a promotion of the soldier who saved his life (264); a family of a fallen service member, saying "Our greatest heartache would be to see the mission in Iraq abandoned" (369) are model identities Bush presents to his American readers. While referring to the "heroic" success, loyalty and selflessness of some American soldiers during the Iraq War and presenting them as ideal American soldiers (204, 263, 264, 369), Bush also exemplifies the ideal soldier family as one which is more than willing to enlist their sons and daughters, see the war to continue for the sake of the country or take revenge of their deceased sons and daughters. As the quotations display, the family apparatus, according to Bush's treatment of it, goes hand in hand with the army in that the patriotism of the soldiers feed on the ideological apparatus of family.

Through the state apparatuses Bush employs in the text, but most importantly using his position as the utmost authority of the state, the narrating "I" of the memoir interpellates American service members as selfless, heroic and loyal citizens. Still, Bush avoids naming those Americans who are skeptical of governmental policies, "bad Americans"

or “traitors” the way he did in his public speeches. He also defines the Iraqi people as well as the terrorists to distinguish the Americans and to build a superior and contrasting identity to those former two groups. He defines Saddam Hussein as a murderer, performing “act[s] of pure evil” (137). Hussein is the “state sponsor of terror,” a “sworn enemy of America,” “a violat[or] of international demands,” a “brutal ruler,” a “terrorist sympathizer,” “a hostile government that threatened its neighbors” and “a regime that pursued WMD” (228). When it comes to the Iraqis, they are depicted as victims thankful to the American soldiers, which reinforces Americans’ claimed heroism. Bush defines the insurgency as an event during which Iraqis were “looking for someone to protect them” (258). His depiction of the Iraqis after the fall of Baghdad reveals his optimistic view about the responses of the Iraqis to the occupation: “Women came out of their homes. Children flew kites. Men shaved off their beards and danced in the streets” (200). Other times, Iraqis are just “grateful” to the Americans (373). As the definitions reveal the Iraqi people are underestimated in terms of their abilities of establishing a government and protecting themselves, while the enemy is literally demonized. The depictions of the victim and enemy identities, therefore, help Bush aggrandize Americans with the “mythology” of individualism, liberty, and equality as the most dominant values in American life. Eventually, the definitions of the victim and the enemy together with the mythic definition of the American creates the necessary political environment to justify the Iraq War and deter harsh criticisms towards the Bush Administration.

Bush’s definition of himself also contributes to the definition of the American indirectly. He depicts himself as the ideal American and the role model for the Americans at home and at the warfront by referring to his protecting role, his authority and the heroic sacrifice he undertakes. In his memoir, Bush identifies himself with Abraham Lincoln repeatedly. On the wall of his presidential office, where he is supposed to hang a painting of his “most influential predecessor,” he places the painting of Lincoln as one of America’s founding fathers, because he had “the most trying job of any president preserving the Union” (108). The quotation suggests that Bush is well aware of the fact that there are problems of keeping Americans together under the tenets of his foreign policy, which later pushes him to convince the public through the renewed definitions of national identity. Trying to justify his decision to remain in Iraq,

he quotes Lincoln again: "these [soldiers] might not have died in vain" (369). In a letter, his father contributes to his self-associations with Lincoln by saying that he had to "face the toughest bunch of problems any president faced since Lincoln" (224). Thus, he aggrandizes his self-image with the success, respectability and grandness of Lincoln in American national memory. He also compares the Civil War and the war in Iraq suggesting that the wars were being fought for the same ideal and therefore, are equally heroic. He reveals that he especially admires and claims Lincoln's "moral clarity and resolve" about the Civil War when he quotes his words: "The clash between freedom and tyranny [is] an issue which can only be tried by war, and decided by victory" (224).

Bush also refers to his upbringing in West Texas as one of his "greatest inheritances" (5). He describes the life there and views it as the setting of the American Dream: "Those were comfortable, carefree years. The words I'd use now is idyllic. On Friday nights, we cheered on the Bulldogs of Midland High. On Sunday mornings, we went to church. Nobody locked their doors. Years later, when I would speak about the American Dream, it was Midland I had in mind" (6). As the quotation reveals, although he and his wife left Texas, "Texas never left [them]" (475). Moreover, he claims to have "the same values [he] brought eight years ago" (475). The values he talks about—the mythical values of the Old West—are widely known to be: individualism, self-reliance, equality of opportunity, optimism, patriotism, tradition, masculinity and courage. The individual of the mythic West was a rugged-individual, one that does not need the help of others and can face the dangers all alone. S/he believes in self-justice and is an anti-authority figure.

The ideas and values surrounding rugged individualism reminds Bush's foreign policy during the Iraq War. Declaring war even if there would be no allies; calling the war as America's war and refusing to consult or to conform with second parties in making decisions; disregarding the power of the congress and endowing himself with full authority are examples of how the president viewed himself as an ideal cowboy figure.[23]

[23] According to the decision of the Congress quoted in Bush's work the president is "authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations, or persons" (*Decision Points* 154).

According to the definition of Brockmeier and Carbaugh, the author of *Narrative Identity: Studies of Autobiography, Self and Culture*, the prototypical Westerner is "a strong (that is even more dangerous had he been not civilized) American who could triumph over danger and emptiness, bringing American civilization—safety, order, churches, schools to a dangerous empty space" (137)—ideals reminiscent of Bush's foreign policy discourse. His pleasant narration of his past in the West and implicit promotion of Western values makes American Western identity a part of the American identity he presents in his memoir.

The symbolism Bush employs in his memoir also invokes the image of a superior American. The ideological "I" of his text offers "light" to the enemies of the United States who have no alternatives to the "dark vision" (232). Depicting the enemy as being located at "the axis of evil," "the link between the governments that pursued WMD and the terrorists who could use those weapons" (233) and quoting Elie Wiesel who tells him to fulfill "[his] moral obligation to act against evil," he places Americans as the "good" figure who should fight against the evil (247).

The effort to deal with American national identity places Bush's memoir among national narratives. National narratives function as guides of the identities national leaders define for the citizens. In this sense, they are also "bordering narratives" leaving out those who do not fit in the symbolical identities provided. According to Blumer's definition of symbolic interactionism, the self and the society are the products of "symbolic" communication and each behavior of the individual is determined by the interaction between the two (Blumer 54), as well as within oneself (63). Likewise, in his memoir, Bush determines the symbolical definitions of being American. In other words, he interpellates citizens as the ideal/mythic American, when he says Americans are responsible "to rid the world of evil" (146) and refusing to abandon Iraq gives Iraqis "a chance to be free" (393). Such interpellation renders Americans who do not favor the war either irresponsible, not "good" enough or merciless.

According to Erving Goffman's approach of symbolic interactionism, the definition of a situation, which is in Bush's case the Iraq War, also determines the identities of the members of the group. In his memoir, Bush defines the war as one which "redefined" sacrifice, duty and his job as the president (151). Promising he would "pour [his] heart

and soul into protecting the country, whatever it took," Bush defines the situation as one which requires true Americans to do what he does. He compares the faces of the innocent Iraqi children to "the brutality of the attackers" and as an ideal American himself, feels determined not to let down those who depend on him for protection (127). All Americans who support Bush's policies and war efforts become heroic under Bush's definition. Moreover, his definition renders those who do not favor the war as "un-American" or less "heroic" Americans. Such a suggestion has the power to make individuals willing to fit in the given definition to be part of the group and, thus, makes his interpellation work. As the definitions and their implicit meanings suggest, Bush populates the language of his memoir with his own intentions to support the war and to draw less criticism towards himself. His memoir favors citizens who adopt a blind nationalistic view that requires an uncritical and unquestioning loyalty to the national policies of the time.

## 1.6. WORKS OF LIFE WRITING BY THE MEMBERS OF THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

Having served a rather shorter term during the war in comparison to the members of Bush administration, only three members of the Obama administration, not including Obama himself, wrote narratives which include sections dealing with the Iraq War. A general look at the works by the members of Obama administration—Robert M. Gates as the Secretary of Defense (2006-2011), Leon Panetta as Secretary of Defense (2011- ) and Hillary Rodham Clinton as Secretary of State (2009- )—proves the difference of these works than those of the Bush administration in their treatment of identities. Unlike the writers of the Bush Administration, neither of these three writers have claims on historiography. Gates calls his book "simply my personal story" ("Author's Note"). Panetta calls his "my story" (Prologue) and Clinton calls hers "a book about the choices I made as a Secretary of Defense ("Author's Note").

The rationale they follow in their narratives is keeping their rhetoric loyal to key American values and American exceptionalism, but approaching the war and the experience of the soldiers on the front in realistic terms to distinguish their foreign

policy from that of the Bush Administration. They abstain from using symbolism, making references to the western ideals, or other forms of rhetoric which could remind their readers of the former Bush administration. They openly declare that lessons should be learned about the war and they attempt at conveying these lessons to their readers. By presenting slightly different versions of American identity, they hope to recover the wounds of war and keep Americans obedient to their authority.

### 1.6.1. Defining the Narrating "I"

Robert M. Gates defines himself as a Republican ("Transition"), "a kid from Kansas, whose grandfather as a child went west in a covered wagon" ("Transition"), and "strongly pro-Israel" ("Beyond Iraq: A Complicated World") but he does not talk about the western identity. He reports having worked for Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and George W. H. Bush, as well as his personal heroes George W. Bush and Barack Obama, Gates declares General George C. Marshall and General Dwight D. Eisenhower ("Summoned to Duty") and his former hero Colin Powell ("Transition")—"former" probably because of his notorious intelligence failure about Iraq's WMD.

Among the two presidents he served during the Iraq War, Bush and Obama, he favors none over the other and is critical of both. Instead he builds his identity in relation to American soldiers and defines himself as "the one who sent them in harm's way" ("Mending Fences"). The more he is frustrated with the White House staff and the National Security Strategy (NSS) during the process, the more "protective" he becomes "of the military" ("Afghanistan: A House Divided").

Gates also mentions Lincoln's success. Yet, his approach is not in the manner of those from the Bush administration who refer to Lincoln. He looks up to the statue of Lincoln "ritually" everyday, since it is on his jogging path "and sadly ask[s] him, "How did you do it?" Thinking about possible answers, he approaches America's policy in critical terms: "This is their country, their fight, and their future. We too often lost sight of that" ("Good War, Bad War"). He is a secretary of defense who "hate[s]" and even "detest[s]" being one ("Transition").

Leon Panetta depicts himself as a "Catholic," "an altar boy," "a husband," the "father of three sons," "the son of Italian immigrants who came to this country to give their children a better life" and "one who "believe[s] in duty to country" (Prologue). He is a "native of California" with "a law degree" ("A Better Life"). As the "chief of U.S. military" ("I Cannot Imagine the Pain"), he complains that he has to perform as a "battlefield commander," "bureaucratic infighter," and a "highschool principal" all at the same time ("I Cannot Imagine the Pain").

Hillary Rodham Clinton, on the other hand, views William Henry Seward as her role model. Seward was Lincoln's choice for the Secretary of State and she was Obama's. This association might be suggestive of Clinton's perception of Obama as Lincoln if she had not stated that "she would not always agree with" Obama. Instead, she is "a big fan of [Seward]" whom she finds to be someone who "follow[s] up his words with actions." She appreciates Seward as "a humble servant of democracy," "devoted to his constituents" ("2008: Team of Rivals").

### 1.6.2. Defining the American

Robert M. Gates defines American soldiers as the "country's sons and daughters" ("Mending Fences") "ready to do violence on behalf" of others who "sleep peaceably in their beds at night" ("At War to the Last Day"). However, if "everyone is a hero, then no one truly is." Therefore, Americans should not utter the word "too casually." His definition of heroism covers those "who fought bravely, those who saved the lives of their comrades often at the risk of their own, those who were wounded, and those who fell" ("Reflections"). He quotes himself from a commencement speech at Notre Dame on May 22, where he said "there will always be evil in the world, people bent on aggression, oppression, satisfying their greed for wealth and power and territory, or determined to impose an ideology based on the subjugation of others and the denial of liberty to men and women." American policy against such evil should be made up of a "'soft' power, of diplomacy and development" combined with "hard power" when necessary ("At War to the Last Day"). For him, America should "continue to fulfill its global responsibilities" as the "indispensable nation" but her powers have "limits"

("Reflections"). He does not think that every "outrage, every act of aggression, every oppression, or every crisis can or should elicit an American military response" ("Reflections").

Leon Panetta sees America as Obama defines it: a country which "will never tolerate [its] security being threatened, nor stand idly by when [its] people have been killed." Americans "will be relentless in defense of [their] citizens and [their] friends and allies" and remain "true to the values that make [them] who [they] are" ("Go in and Get Bin Laden"). Again referring to Obama, he provides a definition of an "American": Americans "are united by [their] most basic needs and by the dreams [they] have in common. Leadership can help keep [them] safe and let [them] prosper; the alternative brings instability and uncertainty, and makes life harder instead of easier" (Epilogue: "Leadership or Crisis"). "[P]reserv[ing] democracy" is a "worthy fight" for the American he favors (Epilogue: "Leadership or Crisis") and patriots are "families who offer up a son or daughter to the country" ("The Combatant Commander in the War of Terrorism"). In his own example, he suggests that Americans should "take seriously [their] obligations to serve and protect [the country]" (Prologue). They should "ask not what [their] country can do for [them]" but "ask what [they] can do for [their] country," as President John F. Kennedy declared in his inauguration speech ("A Better Life"). He defines the United States military as "an institution where cultural values are learned and transmitted." It "defend[s] American values" and "uphold[s] them" ("I Cannot Imagine the Pain"). For him, the United Statets military is a "great equalizer," which "takes men and women from all parts of the country, from all ethnic and religious backgrounds and economic strata and joins them in common purpose" ("A New Defense Strategy for the Twenty-First Century"). He believes Americans should ask God's "blessing and His help" but should also be aware that on earth "God's work must truly be [their] own" ("A Better Life").

Hillary Clinton disregards Middle Eastern references and defines America "as a Pacific power" ("2008: Team of Rivals"). She also perceives America to be "exceptional" ("Epilogue") and hopes her work would be useful for those who want "to know what America stood for in the early years of the twenty-first century" (Clinton, Author's Note). Therefore, she attempts to define the American if indirectly. Joining the group of

those who quote Lincoln, Clinton sees America as "the last best hope of earth" ("Human Rights: Unfinished Business"). Yet, she emphasizes a clear break from Bush's unilateral foreign policy when she says, "While there are few problems in today's world that the United States can solve alone, there are even fewer that can be solved without the United States" ("Author's Note"). Although America remains as the "indispensible nation," American leadership in the world "is not a birthright. It must be earned by every generation" ("Author's Note"). Like Obama, she believes in "the basic bargain at the heart of the American Dream," which means "if you work hard and play by the rules, you should have the opportunity to build a good life for yourself and your family" no matter what ("2008: Team of Rivals"). Americans, in her point of view, are hard working and creative ("Foggy Bottom: Smart Power"). She favors those who "strive to learn from [their] mistakes and avoid repeating them. She believes Americans "do not shrink from the challenges ahead" ("Benghazi: Under Attack").

The analysis of the narratives of the members of Obama administration proves that their authors adopt a more realistic approach in their treatment of the war in comparison to that of the Bush administration. Robert M. Gates quotes himself confessing that "the opportunities in front of the Iraqis had been purchased 'at a terrible cost' in the losses and trauma endured by the Iraqi people, and in the blood, sweat, and tears of American men and women in uniform." His "anti-triumphal" answer to the question whether the war was worth it, is as follows: "It really requires a historian's perspective in terms of what happens here in the long run." ("War, War … and Revolution"). He confesses that America has begun wars "profoundly ignorant about [its] adversaries and about the situation on the ground" ("Reflections"). He knows that "[m]ost Iraqis wanted [Americans] gone ("At War to the Last Day"), and that by 2006, "America was sick of war" ("Reflections"). He calls the Iraq War "the unpopular war in Iraq," "the "bad war," the "war of choice" while the war in Afghanistan is "the good war," "the war of necessity" ("Good War, Bad War"). He says everybody should accept the four key realities of the war: that sectarianism "was spiking"; that political and economic progress "was absent"; that Iraqi leaders were "advancing their sectarian agendas; and that "the tolerance for American people for the effort in Iraq was waning" ("A Better Life").

Refusing the dichotomies of the past such as "the 'free world' versus 'those behind the Iron Curtain'; 'North' versus 'South'; 'East' versus 'West'; and . . . even . . . 'old' Europe versus 'new'" ("Beyond Iraq: A Complicated World"), Gates is critical of the congress, Bush and Obama. The congress for him is "[u]ncivil, incompetent . . . micromanagerial, parochial, hypocritical, egotistical, thin-skinned, often putting self (and reelection) before country" ("Reflections"); while Bush "[a]fter six years as president, . . . knew what he knew and rarely questioned his own thinking" ("Mending Fences") and Obama "doesn't trust his commander, can't stand Karzai, doesn't believe in his own strategy, and doesn't consider the war to be his" ("At War to the Last Day").

Similarly, Leon Panetta defines the Iraq war as a "war of choice" ("Disrupt, Dismantle, Defeat"). For him, Iraq "had distracted the United States from the genuine threat to [American] security" and had caused Americans to lose their "focus on those who actually had attacked the United States" ("Disrupt, Dismantle, Defeat"). He confesses that, in Iraq, "to leave a stable nation was at best incomplete" ("A New Defense Strategy for the Twenty-first Century") and that it is "a lot easier to start wars than it is to finish them" ("In Together, Out Together"). He knows that Americans do not want another "full-scale war" but this does not mean that Americans should "sit idly by" ("A New Defense Strategy for the Twenty-first Century"). Instead, he thinks America should build a new military "leaner, more nimble, and more technologically advanced ("A New Defense Strategy for the Twenty-first Century"). He is also critical of Obama's Syrian policy. He reminds his readers that although Obama said Assad's use of chemical weapons would "change [his] calculus" and his "equation" he hesitated and eventually gave up taking action against Syria. Panetta sees Obama's behavior as "a blow to America's credibility" ("I Cannot Imagine the Pain").

For Hillary R. Clinton, America has not yet managed to give "every one of [her] citizens equal freedom and equal opportunity" ("Human Rights: Unfinished Business"). When it comes to the "war on terror," Clinton criticizes the Bush administration for "putting the burden on [the troops] alone" and lacking a "robust diplomatic policy." The Iraq War, according to her, was "a war that weakened [their] country's standing in the world" ("Af-Pak Surge"), and that Americans should view the Iraq War as "a cautionary tale" ("The Arab Spring: Revolution"). She believes in a foreign policy based on an

understanding of America as a "smart power." For her, America should combine the "traditional tools" of "diplomacy, development assistance, and military force" with the help of the private sector and civil society ("2008: Team of Rivals"). She thinks America should be "Europe-friendly" and is highly critical of Bush and Rumsfeld's anti-Europe perspectives and their unilateralist perspective. Believing in building "a world with more partners" ("Af-Pak Surge"), she favors realism, perceiving the "limits of American power" ("Europe: Ties That Bind").

As the analysis above reveals, Robert Gates, Hillary Clinton and Leon Panneta seem to be more realistic in perceiving the limits of American power. They have a critical outlook and they view the war in Iraq as a situation that should not happen again. Still, they do not want this war to pacify America. All agree on the point that when citizens are under threat America should not refrain from taking military action but in a cautious and wise manner. Each writer emphasizes the importance of having friends and allies. All the three writers avoid using an exclusive rhetoric in their definitions of American identity. Yet, they also build their rhetoric on American ideals and the idea of American exceptionalism. The American image they have drawn in their works of life writing is patriotic, self-sacrificing, and brave. The Americans they favor learn from their mistakes. Their remarks could be interpreted as motivational when they say Americans should not be afraid to face further challenges because of the negative experiences in Iraq. Therefore, they are not completely anti-war. They are just cautious. For Clinton, America is still "the last best hope on earth" ("Human Rights"). Gates' notion includes the existence of evil people in the world, excluding Americans since they are innately good ("At War to the Last Day"). Panetta's self-sufficient Americans who do not expect everything from the government remind the rugged-individuals of the West ("A Better Life"). The idea of citizens owing to America because of all it offers sounds enforcing (Panetta, "Prologue") when heard from a United States military personnel ("In Together, Out Together"). Panetta's call to follow and trust the leaders since the contrary would bring "instability and uncertainty," is reminiscent of Bush's approach, as well as his vision of preserving democracy as a "worthy fight" ("Epilogue"). Their works do not have claims on historiography. Their rhetoric does not include religious references, heroic victories of the past, purpose-driven symbolism or explanations through binary oppositions; yet the mentality behind the war does not seem to have

changed dramatically. The writers of the Obama administration do not offer or promote a thoroughly new attitude in American foreign policy or the American national identity in their works of life writing. Still, they are aware of the negative reaction to politicians' interpellation of American citizens before and during the war and they try to distinguish themselves from the politicians they have replaced.

In this chapter, the politician-authors reduce Americans to a mythic/ideal American, who for the Bush administration, fights evil, ends tyranny, brings civilization, bears light into the dark and takes risks. Americans, for these politicians, are privileged and honored to be soldiers/citizens. They are patriotic, selfless, courageous, self-taught, heroic and cheerful in the face of pain. They are good Christians, chosen people and God's agents. Obama administration's imperfect Americans, on the other hand, learn from their mistakes. They are not afraid of a new war as the citizens of "the last best hope on earth." They are innately good and self-sufficient. Service is what they owe to their country. They conform to their president. What comes to one's mind when one thinks about the American soldier of the Iraq War is not a soldier of flesh and blood with varying individualities but instead a heroic soldier symbolically created to serve the foreign policy interests. Reducing the image of the American soldier to a mere symbol, these works directly influence the social process of "symbolic interactionism."

Contary to one's expectations, the thirty seven service members who wrote their wartime experiences during Bush's term are more critical of the Iraq War and their interpellated identities in comparison to the forty two authors who wrote during Obama's term. Despite the cautious pro-war rhetoric employed by the members of the Obama administration, the chart above shows that %40 of the authors of Obama's term question their identities while in Bush's term the rate is 54%. Likewise, the ratio of the pro-war veterans, whose narratives were published during Obama's term (2008-2013), is %36, while it is 22% for the works published during Bush's term (2003-2007). The chart below shows that Obama administration's cautious wartime identity rhetoric does not emerge a critical influence on authors' perception of self and the war.

2003-2007

| YEAR | PRO-WAR VETERANS | | | ANTI-WAR VETERANS | | | VETERANS QUESTIONING THEIR IDENTITIES | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2003 | 0 | 2 | 0% | 0 | 2 | 0% | 0 | 2 | 0% |
| 2004 | 1 | 3 | 33% | 2 | 3 | 67% | 1 | 3 | 33% |
| 2005 | 4 | 15 | 27% | 7 | 15 | 47% | 10 | 15 | 67% |
| 2006 | 0 | 6 | 0% | 3 | 6 | 50% | 3 | 6 | 50% |
| 2007 | 3 | 11 | 27% | 4 | 11 | 36% | 6 | 11 | 55% |
| **2003-2007** | **8** | **37** | **22%** | **16** | **37** | **43%** | **20** | **37** | **54%** |

2008-2013

| YEAR | PRO-WAR VETERANS | | | ANTI-WAR VETERANS | | | VETERANS QUESTIONING THEIR IDENTITIES | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2008 | 4 | 8 | 50% | 2 | 8 | 25% | 1 | 8 | 13% |
| 2009 | 5 | 10 | 50% | 2 | 10 | 20% | 9 | 10 | 90% |
| 2010 | 1 | 8 | 13% | 2 | 8 | 25% | 2 | 8 | 25% |
| 2011 | 1 | 6 | 17% | 2 | 6 | 33% | 4 | 6 | 67% |
| 2012 | 1 | 7 | 14% | 2 | 7 | 29% | 1 | 7 | 14% |
| 2013 | 3 | 3 | 100% | 2 | 3 | 67% | 0 | 3 | 0% |
| **2008-2013** | **15** | **42** | **36%** | **12** | **42** | **29%** | **17** | **42** | **40%** |

Fig. 3. Pro-war veterans, anti-war veterans and veterans questioning their identities by year, displaying how each tendency was observed in works of Iraq War life writing during the times of Bush and Obama administrations.

As it is revealed in the chart, the narratives' treatment of the Iraq War renders them platforms of identity-making. Identities introduced in these narratives are either shaped through internalization of the dominant discourse of identity or through the creation of new ones. Life narratives which deal with creation and reinvigoration of identities are also influential in promoting identities. According to Jackie Hogan, although official narratives are considerable sources of the national identity, the most powerful bond between people and their nation is created by "mundane, everyday practices and texts" (12-13). This partly stems from the less critical approach to these texts than to the works of the politicians. Nevertheless, such works give citizens "invaluable insights into taken-for-granted notions of national belonging" (Hogan 13). Iraq War narratives written by those at the warfront, both supportive and critical of the national identity offered by the politicians, fall into this category. Among these works, it is possible to find national tragedies as well as narratives of heroism. Some works favor the point of view of politicians, while others approach the war and those who waged it with a critical attitude, resisting the interpellated Americanness. These two contrasting tendencies are going to be the subject matter of the following two chapters.

# CHAPTER 2

## PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICAN NATIONAL IDENTITY BEFORE AND AFTER THE WAR

Writers of life narratives tend to view the nation "as an ideology, as a set of cultural codes, a geographical place, a metaphorical space, a myth, a fiction, or even a state of mind" (Reaves 2). Their choice among the definitions above determines "the sense of self" in the national discourses they employ (Reaves 2). Writers who view America as a myth, celebrate the narrated "I" in their works as "America," which is an "embodiment of a prophetic universal design" (Bercovitch 136). Some of the works in this study fall into the category of autohagiography, namely the works presenting the life experiences as exemplary. Such works also tend to reflect the wars America has fought as "good" wars that are "morally justified, altruistic, and often divinely sanctioned" (Hogan 78), associating combat with "unity, efficiency, prosperity, security and victory" (Robertson 325). Other narrators of the Iraq War, on the other hand, perceive nation as a fictional construct and attempt at questioning, criticizing and even deconstructing the taken-for-granted notion of the nation.

Whether the authors in this chapter deal with the nation as a myth or a fictional construct, they are bothered by the discrepancies between the mythic American and themselves. In addition, the majority of them question who they are interpellated as during the war and attempt to arrive at a self-definition. This chapter is going to deal with American service members' pre-war identities, their reasons to join the service and their boot camp experiences. The narrators' perceptions of national identity before the war will be compared to their perceptions of national identity after the war. Once the expectations and the reality about the combat training and post-combat experiences are disposed, the identity preferences of certain narrators will be explained through symbolic interactionism.

## 2.1. PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICAN NATIONAL IDENTITY BEFORE THE WAR

### 2.1.1. The American Soldier and the Iraq War

Military service in the United States has always been perceived as a "rite of passage to manhood" (Elliot and Bacevic 22), providing for "the transformation of boys into men" (Brown 3). Many people still consider the warrior figure as a symbol for masculinity. Although the Marine Corps dwell on the traditional notion of masculinity, each military branch of the United States Military promotes masculinity to a certain extent. With the passage to the all-volunteer force (AVF) in 1973, however, the traditional masculinity was no longer popular among Americans. This was mainly due to the decline in sympathy for the soldiers in the Vietnam war, the women's movement as well as the alternative forms of masculinity that were on the rise such as the breadwinner, the businessman, or the technology expert. The 1990s were dominated by a "hegemonic masculinity" which values militarization less and promotes men who were "corporate executives, investment bankers, and international businessmen" in civilian clothes (Sharoni 151).

According to Michael S. Kimmel, social, political or economic crises lead up to crises in manhood, since, then, male identities of workers, citizens, fathers and thinkers are also under threat (10). The events of September 11, 2001 point to such a moment of crises for American masculinity. As Nancy Ehrenreich puts it, the attacks rendered both male and female Americans "emasculated," a term she uses for those who experienced "a humiliating loss of power" (132). Ehrenreich believes that such an experience has given way to an American masculinity that is "sexist," "white supremacist," and "homophobic" in nature (Ehrenreich 138). The events have also caused a move towards militarism and a longing for the "romanticized" view of soldiers who would display the greatness of the nation (Bacevic 2). 9/11 instigated a re-masculinization of the nation. The "hegemonic masculinity" of the 1990s based on economic achievement was no longer valuable. As Simona Sharoni states, in that new atmosphere, "strong men in uniform replaced corporate billionaires" (Sharoni 151).

Such a challenge on American masculinity was naturally going to breed images other than those of figures in uniforms. Action was required. Therefore, playing the "heroic rescuer" of Iraqi people and defining Saddam Hussein with a "toxic masculinity" would help to restore the lost territory of traditional masculinity (Messerschmidt 50). From then on, the male other would be "demonised, feminised and dehumanised," whereas the female other would be saved by the "morally and physically superior, and ultimately legitimate in pursuing military intervention" (Khalid 27-28). To complete the reconstruction of the national identity, the identity of the American soldier was soon realigned. "The Soldier's Creed" which has been taken as the embodiment of the American soldier for so long was modified to adapt the American soldier to the post 9/11 environment. The original four lines—"I will always place the mission first. / I will never accept defeat. / I will never quit. / I will never leave a fallen comrade"—were expanded by General Schoomaker to eleven lines that hailed the American soldier as "a warrior" ("Soldier's Creed"). Embodying the merits of "obedience, loyalty and physical and mental toughness" (Gardiner 379), which are suggestive of the traditional masculinity, the American soldier was now the "guardian of freedom and the American way of life" ("Soldier's Creed"). The military was, then, expected to be "a modern analogue to the frontier masculinity that allowed a man to test his physical and mental abilities—economic independence and breadwinner status, dominance and mastery through technology, and hybrid masculinity, which combines egalitarianism and compassion with strength and power" (Brown 5).

The identity composed by the politicians of the time for American citizens, whom the American service members are assumed to be representing, has been manipulative in nature. The messages spread through the media favored strong and decisive leaders and expected Americans to be Americans in unison with the government in terms of their approach to the war. Americans were victimized and the enemy was demonized. Revenge and punishment was necessary. Moreover, those who do not agree with any of these ideas were "unpatriotic." The war was symbolically constructed "into a worldview" (Altheide 292) against an ambiguous group of enemies and an abstract notion of terrorism. Consumption in order to "keep America rolling" was symbolically offered as a response to the terrorist attacks (Altheide 300). Even the symbol and meaning of the American flag was reconstructed. The flag was still associated with

patriotism but it also became a symbol of the war on terrorism used during the war campaigns and public meetings as well as on cars and T-shirts (Huntington 3). The equation unfolded like this: supporting the war was patriotic; those who were not supportive were thus unpatriotic. Heroes are patriotic; therefore, in order to become heroes, service members had to support the war and, thus, the decisions of the government. The definition of heroism was expanded to include people working in fire or emergency services or people donating blood (Adams 17-18). Such an unwritten judgment system based on a play with symbols attempted "to bridge divided identities and reduce conflict and to eliminate critical approaches to governmental policies" (Butz, 779). This outlook caused some service members to keep their views about the war to themselves, since they did not want to be marginalized in their national and military group. The above-mentioned rhetoric was also influential on the war narratives of the Iraq War.

### 2.1.2. Earlier Self-definitions

The earlier lives of the authors matter, since processing psychological contracts starts before one is employed (Rousseau 511). Out of the seventy nine American authors of this study, only sixteen mention their ethnic backgrounds.[24] Eleven of these authors are female and two are gay. Fifty four of them are soldiers or officers; seven of them are doctors or medics; three of them are chaplains; ten of them are journalists, two of them are from the state department; one is a military strategist; one is a human shield and another one is a lawyer for the United States Army. Many of these authors join the military at high school[25] level. Thirty eight of them question their identity and are bothered by the identities attributed to them. Twenty of them defend the cause of the war; twenty six of them remain neutral about it and thirty two of them are completely or somehow critical of it. Five of the authors mention having been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

[24] Among the sixteen ethnic authors, there are those of Hispanic, Irish, Arabic, Italian, Jewish, Polish and African origins.

[25] Talking with numbers might be deceptive for this category, since many of the life writers have not shared their education level.

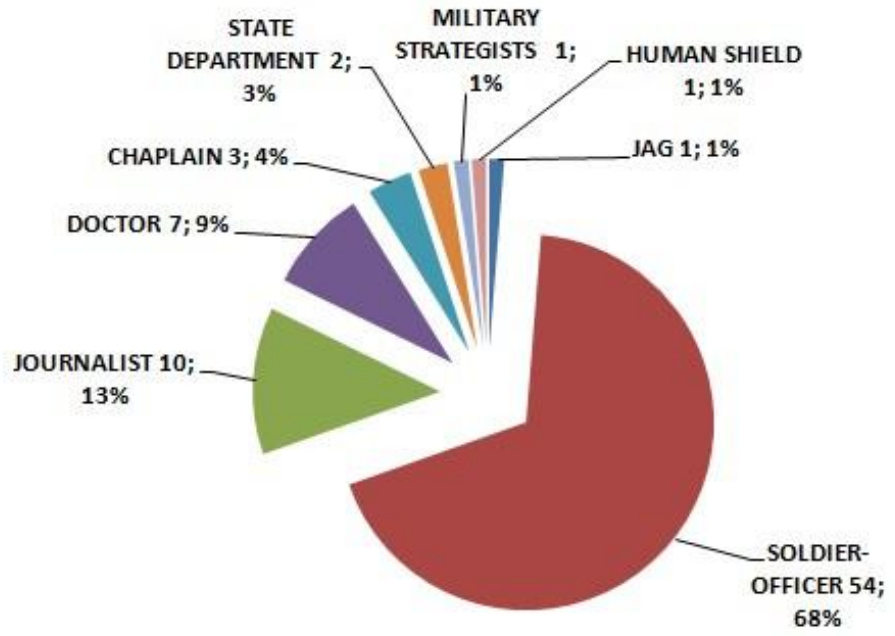


Fig. 4. Military jobs and careers of the authors

Taking a look at authors' earlier definitions of self, it is possible to say that their definitions do not always fit into the ideal/mythic definition of the American celebrated by the politician-authors in the previous chapter. Some of these authors have already been soldiers or state members and are either enthusiastic[26] or unhappy[27] with the fact that they are going to war again; some imagine to be like their fictional heroes;[28] some others are idealistic about serving;[29] while many service members are discontent with their previous lives.[30] The authors who are not content with their past, report reasons such as being lonely, being a "social misfit," being unemployed, or unhappy in their jobs, being in need of money, being dependent on their parents, having broken families, having experienced sexual assault, having used drugs, being Mormon, being gay, being underestimated, being a "tomboy," being "sinful," being the "weakest link of the

[26] Kyle et.al. (2012), Gembara (2008), Meehan and Thompson (2009), Workman and Bruning (2009), Brownfield (2010), Jadick and Hayden (2007), Rieckhoff (2006), Doran (2005), Olson (2006), Turnley (2003), Hartley (2005), King (2006), Coughlin and Davis (2005), Campbell (2005), Pantano (2011), Buzzel (2005), Ruff and Roper (2005), Crawford (2005), Lynch and Lynch (2009), Middleton (2009), Popaditch and Steere (2008), Wojtecki (2010), Rios (2007), Sheehan (2012), Blair (2011)

[27] Koopman (2004), Coppola (2005), Crawford (2005),

[28] See page 89.

[29] See Gembara (2008), Meehan and Thompson (2009), Workman and Bruning (2009), Brownfield (2010), Olson (2006), Campbell (2005).

[30] See Feuer (2009), Hartley (2005), Blair (2011), Bellaviaand Bruning (2007), Doran (2005), Ruff and Roper (2009), Smithson (2009), Cox (2009), Buzzel (2005), Dozier (2008), Busch (2012), Lemer (2011), Meyer (2005), Williams (2005), Jadick and Hayden (2007), Yon (2008), Johnson and Doyle (2010).

family," having a weak body and soul, having a lack of control over their lives, harboring a "self-disgust," being incarcerated, feeling the need to escape their environment or feeling ashamed about a disappointing past deed.

### 2.1.3. Reasons for Joining the Service

Despite the revival of patriotism after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the politicians' attempts to redefine the attacks in patriotic and traditionally masculine terms, Americans, after 9/11 have not joined the United States military forces for patriotic reasons only. According to the interviews made by Wilbur Scott, David McCone and George R. Mastroianni in 2004, although troops prove a high level of commitment "to their units and the army as an institution during their deployment to Iraq and thereafter" (64), the most popular reason for serving the military was not patriotism. 60% of the enlisted (lower-ranking soldiers) were motivated by "utilitarian considerations," while the rate is 46% for officers and 47% for non-commisioned officers (58). 10% of the enlisted stated "adventure and the lure of military lifestyle" as their motivation, while the rating is 11% for officers and 10% for the non-commisioned officers. Rating for a "family history of military service" is about 20% for each group (58). "Serving the country," on the other hand, was rated 10% by the enlisted, 20% by officers and 5% by the noncommissioned officers (58). In the meantime, 16% of the enlisted, 6% of the officers and 16% of the non-commisioned officers did not mention their reasons for joining (60).

The advertisement campaigns have been crucial in enlisting the young candidates to different branches of the United States military. Each branch was appealing in different aspects. The Army—with its core values of loyalty, duty, selfless service, honor, respect, personal courage and integrity—emphasizes its peacekeeping mission and the inclusion of women in its 2000 advertisement. Civilian voices name the American soldier as their brother, sister, son, a "peacekeeper," a freedom-keeper and a "hero," while they mention their respect and pride for United States soldiers (Brown 54). In 2001, the Army attempted to reach its candidates with the slogan "An Army of One." The advertisement has hints of the 1981 slogan "Be All You Can Be," as it connotes

self-improvement due to the opportunities provided by the Army. The new slogan defines the soldier to be an anonymous member of a heterogeneous unit made up of strong individuals. The notions of anonymity and heterogeneity obviously clash with individuality and strength and offer a mixed message:

> I am an army of one. Even though there are 1,045,690 soldiers just like me, I am my own force. With technology, with support, with training, who I am has become better than who I was. And I'll be the first to tell you the might of the US Army doesn't lie in numbers. It lies in me, Corporal Richard Lovett. I am an army of one, and you can see my strength. (Brown 51)

A 2004 advertisement depicted the army member as a "selfless defender of [American] rights and freedoms" and "heroes" of their generation (Brown 164). Others depict the wars, the United States has been fighting in association with the "good" wars of the past (164). Another 2004 campaign includes a dialog between a daughter and her father, where it is suggested that soldiers who join the Army would be appreciated by their families and make their parents (especially fathers) proud:

> Daughter: "OK. Number one, it's a challenge. Number two, it's not what everybody else does."
> Father: "I'll give you that one."
> Daughter: "It's important. And as far as careers go, I'll do more and I'll have more choices later."
> Father: "So, when did you start talking like me?" (Brown 165)

The United States Navy, on the other hand, with its values of honor, courage and commitment, have used adventure, career opportunities, preparation for future nonmilitary jobs and navy pride for its earlier advertisement campaigns (Brown 82). In the 2000s, the slogan was "Accelerate Your Life" (Brown 100). The campaign basically addressed individuals with a colorless existence, offering them action and adventure. The Marine Corps, was different since it is known as the military branch with "the most macho and aggressive men" (Brown 104). It has attracted young people by referring to the values of honor, courage and commitment. The 1970 advertisements presented the American Marine as someone who is there to confront physical challenges and tests to prove toughness because "pain is weakness," and "quitting" is not an option (Brown 114). In the 2000s, however, the United States Marine Corps webpage defined Marines as those who come "as orphans" and leave "as family" (Brown 118). As the advertisement suggests the Marine Corps promises its candidates camaraderie and a

sense of belonging as well as mutual care and loyalty. The Corps, like the Army, emphasized the freedom-fighter identity of the Marine, as the voice-over in an advertisement said "Not one among them would exchange torment for freedom" (Brown 119). The United States Air Force, on the other hand, appealed to its candidates with a discourse of masculinity which is related less to war and the military and more to machines and technology, as the "least militaristic of the military services" (Brown 130, 132). With its three core values of service before self, integrity and excellence, the advertisement campaign of the 2000s focused on the alternatives the Air Force offers:

> But let's not kid ourselves. The Air Force trains men and women with the idea of keeping them as valuable contributors to its ultimate mission … the defense of our nation. But, inevitably perhaps, each year some choose to leave us. Yet, even then, the Air Force can take pride in knowing that of all the military services, *we* are the foremost producer and provider of this nation's most precious resource: its skilled workers. (Brown 148-149)

As the military advertisements right before and during the war indicate, the approach of the United States military in recruiting soldiers was based on reaching larger groups of young people with the prospects of physical strength, an honorable life, self-development, a purpose in life, adventure, heroism, nonmilitary career opportunities, and proud families. Informing the candidates about the rest of the promises of military service was the job of the recruiters. In their war narratives, many soldiers talk about how they were allured to different branches of the military as a result of the favorable treatment of the recruiters. Richard Meyer,[31] a Marine who fought the Iraq War, depicts his feeling in his memoir *Four in the Corps: From Boot Camp to Baghdad—One Grunt's Enlistment* (2005) in these words: "The only way that a guy can know what it's like to be a pretty girl is to walk into a recruiter's office. All eyes are on you, chairs are pulled out and promises are made. Security with a hint of adventure is offered. Who could turn it down?" ("Boot"). Another soldier, an infantryman, who had been to the war recalls the day he signed the Army contract:

> "Just so you know, the Army offers two-year enlistments right now and up to a four-thousand dollar signing bonus." Right when I heard him say that, the weirdest thing happened. I immediately envisioned myself in an Army uniform singing Airborne Ranger cadences. I felt like Samuel L. Jackson character in *Pulp Fiction*

[31] Meyer questions his identity yet proves to be neutral about the war. His memoir displays his transformation from a "soft" civilian to a "hard" Marine grunt and the depression that follows his return home. The identity he adopts in the end of his narrative is that of a civilian.

> when he says, "Well, shit, Negro, that's all you had to say! (Buzzell "Help Wanted")

Not all the authors of the Iraq War narratives in this study mention the reasons for joining the military or attending the war. Military officers, employees of the state department, independent journalists, poets and authors holding a neutral stance toward the war tend to skip narrating the earlier phases of their lives. Yet, those who mention their reasons for joining are enough to refute the validity of American identity and American soldier identity provided in the war narratives of the politicians. Out of the forty two works which acknowledge the reasons for joining the military/choosing to go to Iraq, only twelve of them present patriotism as their motive. Moreover, only five out of these twelve works, mention patriotism as the only reason for joining, which suggests that the members might be referring to patriotism for the sake of supporting the mainstream ideas and political discourses (Fig. 5).

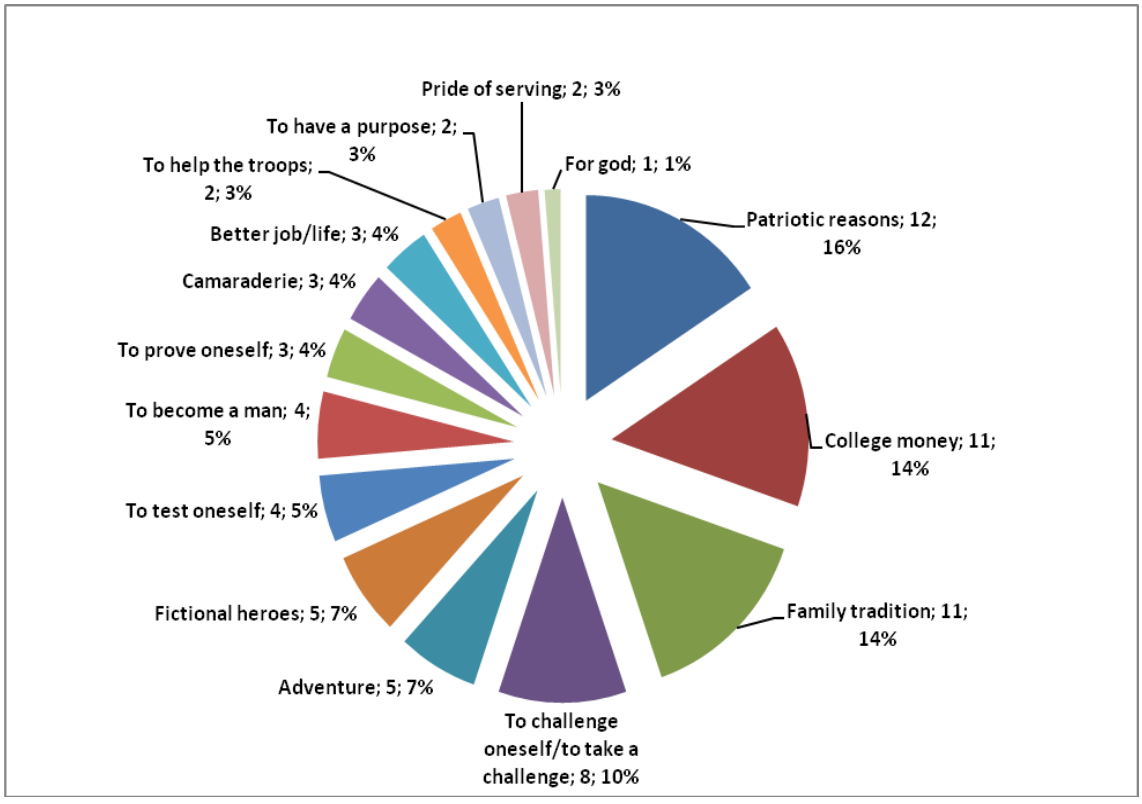


Fig. 5. Reasons for joining the service (Out of 42 works with the relevant data)

The experiences of the narrators who report their reasons for joining, would help to highlight their earlier identities they contested or wished for, which, in return, may

contribute to the understanding of how war influences their perceptions and definitions of identity. Two authors, a doctor and a chaplain, claim that they went to war for their people, with the desire to help those who enlisted, and kept their perception of the war neutral, which separates them from the patriots.[32] Another two, who come from military families,[33] whose fathers or uncles have served at a certain point of their lives, choose a military career unwillingly. Those who joined for college funds, on the other hand, combine financial reasons with other reasons such as accepting the challenge, proving their adult status, harboring patriotic feelings and having a better job/life.[34] A group of authors define their reason for joining as their need for a challenge, accepting the challenge of their friends who claimed that they could never become a member of the military.[35] The latter group is largely made up of female service members.

Those who joined for patriotism were not unfamiliar with the discourse of the politicians, even though some of them changed their attitude towards the war as it progressed.[36] Malcolm Rios,[37] an infantry man who claims patriotism as his reason in his *Under the Gun: Infantryman, Medic, Tattoo Artist: My Year in Iraq* (2007), uses these words to define his patriotism: "I reenlisted to defend this nation from the jackasses who would try to destroy our way of life. If that meant killing them then I was more than okay with taking their lives" ("Enter the Dragon"). Patriotic reasons are mentioned either in a bold manner as the quote above illustrates or in a more moderate and compassionate tone like that of Lt. Christopher Brownfield,[38] the author of *My*

[32] See Hnida (2010) and Jadick and Hayden (2007).
[33] See also Hnida (2010), Pantano (2011), Middleton (2009), Ruff and Roper (2005), Wojtecki (2010), Gallagher (2011), Lutrell (2012), Meehan and Thompson (2009).
[34] See Cox (2009), Poppaditch (2008), Lemer (2011).
[35] See Williams (2005), Workman and Bruning (2009), Blair (2011), Poppaditch (2008), for those who needed a challenge; Cox (2009), Olson (2006), Goodell (2011), Jadick and Hayden (2007) for those who took the challenges posed to them.
[36] For those who mention patriotism as their reason for joining the military/going to Iraq, see Jadick and Hayden (2007), Smithson (2009), Mansoor (2007), Rieckhoff (2006), Brownfield (2010), Lynch and Lynch (2009), Middleton (2009), Rios (2008), Kyle et.al (2012), Benderman and Benderman (2007) and Conklin (2010). For those whose attitudes have shifted after experiencing the war firsthand, see, Jadick and Hayden (2007, neutral), Rieckhoff (2006, critical), Brownfield (2010, critical), Benderman and Benderman (2007, critical) and Conklin (2010, neutral).
[37] Rios depicts himself as a patriotic infantryman who is willing to fight his countries' enemies instead of taking part in the reconstruction efforts. His treatment of the war is neutral and he identifies with the civilians in the end of his memoir.
[38] Brownfield questions his identity in his memoir and is a severe critic of the war. As he narrates his experiences in Iraq, which causes his transformation from a Republican into a democrat, he touches upon

*Nuclear Family: A Coming-of-Age in America's 21st Century Military* (2010), who later changed his stance towards the war: "I needed to do something good in the name of the United States" (8).

Jack W. Lynch,[39] who wrote *The Majestic Twelve: The True Story of the Most Feared Combat Escort Unit in Baghdad* (2009) with Rick Lynch, is a retired master sergeant who claims that Marines serve in order "to test themselves as warriors."[40] He rejects the "liberal stereotype of the all-volunteer military as being made up of poor, uneducated 'victims'" and portrays American Marines as "intelligent," "thoughtful," and "dedicated" (58). Some members reveal that they joined service for the adventure it offers besides other reasons.[41] Kimberley Olson,[42] a retired Colonel of the Iraq War, is one of them. In her 2006 memoir *Iraq and Back: Inside the War to Win the Peace,* her explanation for joining the Air Force is as simple as this: "I wanted to take some time off from academics, do something exciting and see someplace exciting and new" ("A Soldier is Born"). Some others long for the adventures their fictional heroes go through. In his *Camera Boy: An Army Journalist's War in Iraq* (2009), for example, Fred Minnick,[43] an embedded photojournalist states his reason for joining the service as his aspiration to be like the character Joker in the movie *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), "who carried a camera and a gun during Vietnam" (Introduction). Minnick wants to be a "marine journalister" like Joker, yet recruiters tell him that "it doesn't exist." Eventually Minnick consents to become a "camera boy" (Introduction).[44]

Proving one's manhood as one of the motives for joining the military appears and reappears throughout many of the works[45]. David Bellavia,[46] a staff sergeant during the

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the discouraging and lethargic nature of the American military institution. At the end of his narrative, he prefers to define himself as a human being.

[39] A pro-war author of the Iraq War, Lynch could be viewed as the mouthpiece of George W. Bush in his approach to the war and the enemy. Still, he reports hating his job as a Marine journalist.

[40] See Campbell (2009), Rieckhoff (2006), Doran (2005) and Lynch and Lynch (2009).

[41] See Buzzel (2005), Ruff and Roper (2005), Olson (2006), Minnick (2009) and Popaditch and Steere (2008).

[42] A female pilot and colonel in the male-dominated world of the Air Force, Olson declares herself as a survivor and not a victim. She questions her identity, yet remains neutral in her treatment of the war.

[43] See page 161.

[44] See also Kyle et.al. (2012), Mansoor (2008), Pantano (2011) and Rieckhoff (2009).

[45] See Cox (2009), Koopman (2004) and Doran (2005).

[46] As a pro-war Iraq War veteran, Bellavia questions his identity through his memoir and suffers as a result of his wartime actions. Having joined the Army partly because he wanted to gain his father's respect, he chooses to give up his military career to be a good father to his son.

war, talks about his victimization early in life and his desire to change his misfortune. Bellavia's 2007 memoir written with John R. Bruning and titled *House to House: An Epic Memoir of War*, starts with Bellavia's past experience which had an ever present influence on his life. He narrates himself as a college student unable to stop burglars who steal his family's valuables. He sketches himself as a "timid" boy, "the weakest link" who was "paralyzed with fright" and confesses his reason for joining the military as "the look on [his] dad's face that day." From that day on, he decides to become a "man" ("Beyond Redemption"). Bellavia's wish to prove himself to his father is the wish of many other candidates. Without the presence of traumatic events in his past, Shannon Meehan[47] has a similar purpose. In his *Beyond Duty: Life on the Frontline in Iraq* (2009) written with Roger Thompson, he explains his reasons to be a platoon leader. He wants to prove to his family that he is capable of leading the life his parents "imagined" for him. He summarizes his life as one that is dedicated to "demonstrate that [he] was a success"[48] (1). Other authors[49] want success to feel content with their lives. They feel a better life is possible through a better job. Colby Buzzell's[50] *My War: Killing Time in Iraq* (2005) demonstrates such a purpose. As an unemployed twenty-six year-old who lives with his family, he presents the range of his petty positions such as: "flower-delivery guy, valet-parker guy, mailroom guy, bike-messenger guy, busboy guy, carpet-cutter guy, cash-register-at-Orchard-Supply guy, car-washer guy, gift-shop sales guy, telemarketing guy" ("Help Wanted"). He talks about his previous failures and even though he does not expect much of a difference, he still joins the Army. Another way of achieving fulfillment in one's life is having an honorable existence. Soldiers like Jane Blair,[51] who is a Major in the reserves, offers the Marine pride as her motive for joining the military. Her memoir[52] titled *Hesitation Kills: A Female Marine Officer's*

[47] Meehan's memoir follows the transformation of a wrestling star into a veteran who questions his role in the war. He wonders whether he has been a patriot or a traitor and eventually decides on his familial identity as his primary source of identity.
[48] See also Meehan and Thompson (2009), Lemer (2011) and Jadick and Hayden (2007).
[49] See Buzzell (2005), Johnson and Doyle (2010) and Lemer (2011).
[50] Having joined the army for many reasons except for patriotic ones, Buzzell's narrative presents an infantry soldier's disillusionment with the war. Being a critic of the war and a soldier questioning his interpellated identity, he does not hesitate to display himself and his fellow soldiers as mistaken in joining the Army since they are far from being heroic Americans. At the end of his narrative, he defines himself in civilian terms.
[51] See Boudreau (2008) and Johnson and Tarr (2013).
[52] Blair's memoir is preoccupied with definitions of civilian and military identities. Throughout her narrative she goes between the decisions of staying in or going back to Iraq and becoming a civilian.

*Combat Experience in Iraq* (2011) shows how she intends to "burn the weakness from [her] body and from [her] soul" as a Marine, since she would then possess the "abstract quality that Marines seem to magically possess." The word "Marine," she believes embodies the qualities of "a warrior mentality, courage and leadership" to rebuild her "too safe" and "too privileged" but unreal life ("Home and A Country").

Some writers join service because they lack a sense of belonging. Kayla Williams[53] is such an example. Her 2005 narrative *Love My Rifle More Than You: Young and Female in the U.S. Army* narrates an early life in which Williams' divorced parents do not show love to or take care of her; her schoolmates reject her; and boyfriends mistreat her (110). As an outcast, she becomes a punk and intimidates people with her appearance which both amuses and upsets her (29). She likens the camaraderie of the military to the family-like community of her Lebanese ex-boyfriend which made her feel at home (34). She wants to be a part of the military because there, "they don't give a fuck who you are, but you're wearing the same uniform and they immediately help you. That's the way it works in the military" (35). Williams hopes to find the family she longs for, where Aidan Delgado[54] searches for a spiritual brotherhood: in the military. A light-wheeled vehicle mechanic, he is attracted to the military due to the camaraderie in the movies he has watched. In his memoir, *The Sutras of Abu Ghraib: Notes from a Conscientious Objector* (2007), Delgado affirms that what attracted him to the military most was the "legendary esprit de corps, that unbreakable bond conveyed in the black-and-white war movies" ("The Objector"). Authors[55] like Ryan Smithson[56] have everything they want in life but simply need a purpose to go on living. In his memoir *Ghosts of War: The True Story of A 19-Year-Old GI* (2009), Smithson highlights the colorless existence of the members of his generation. He illustrates himself and his

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Although she is obviously troubled with the war, she remains neutral in expression and eventually defines herself in civilian terms.

[53] As a female soldier of the Iraq War, who faces misogyny and sexual assault from his fellow soldiers, Williams criticizes the war and her part in it. Seeking camaraderie and the feelings of belonging she has always lacked in the United States military, she confesses feeling "failed horribly." At the end of her narrative, she feels more comfortable in the civilian world.

[54] Delgado is a Hispanic, pacifist, Buddhist and vegetarian American soldier who claims a conscientious objector status as a result of his dissatisfaction with his role in the war. Becoming an outcast upon the spread of the news, he narrates his difficulties during the war and resorts to his identity as a human being.

[55] See Koopman (2004).

[56] See page 96.

schoolmates as "wannabes" who want to be rich, cool, hot and tough (3). He thinks their lives are "boring as hell" and he "long[s] for a purpose" (8).

The examples above show how purposes for joining the military may vary among the authors and that the advertisement campaigns of the United States military consciously address the various needs and concerns. Compared to the mythical/ideal definitions provided by the politician-authors of the previous chapter, according to which Americans are the patriotic, selfless, courageous and self-sufficient agents of God, the authors prove to be somehow unfit to the ideal markers of American soldiers, whether or not they support the war. In the examples above and in many more, authors' motives are obviously dominated by an anxiety over what others think. They are mainly concerned with the rewards they are likely to receive by joining the service, which are appreciation of others or being accepted by their environment.

### 2.1.4. The Boot Camp Experience

Once candidates sign their contracts or are appointed, a combat training experience at home awaits them. Many soldiers believe that Boot Camp experience is definitely an identity-making/changing process. Among the twelve works which narrate the boot camp memories, three of them present it as an empowering practice;[57] another three talk about the experience in neutral terms,[58] while the remaining five authors talk about the military education in negative terms.[59] Two of the three authors who find the experience empowering do not have an all-positive approach to the exercises. Theirs is rather a love-hate relationship as they liked "how much damage it could do" (Smith "An Education"); or they "hated it, loathed it, cursed it. . . but loved it" (Kyle et.al. "Bustin").

Those who narrate negative experiences in relation to the Boot Camp, direct readers' attention to the negative consequences the experience led to, or the damage it caused to

[57] See Pantano (2011), Kyle et.al. (2012), Smith (2013).
[58] See Koopman (2004), Doran (2005), Busch (2012).
[59] Boudreau (2008), Hartley (2005), Williams (2005), Smithson (2009), Koopman (2004).

one's self-respect and individual autonomy. Journalist John Koopman,[60] in his work *McCoy's Marines: Darkside to Baghdad* (2004), complains about not being allowed to speak about himself in the first person, but rather in the third and emphasizes the perception of the soldier as less-than-human (Koopman "Growing Up"). He thinks that the practice is an implication of the worthlessness of the soldier. Approaching the military training from a professional point of view, resigned Assistant Operations Officer, Tyler Boudreau,[61] talks about the aftermath of the boot camp experience. In his memoir, *Packing Inferno: The Unmaking of Marine* (2008), Boudreau warns against the computer games and paint ball practices through which soldiers are taught to kill ("War Games"). He also criticizes the yelling of the drill sergeants while giving commands, since such actions prevent soldiers from thinking before making important decisions such as killing: "When a man is trained so vigorously to act instantly without contemplation, he is, by definition, denied the opportunity to distinguish between the good order and the bad. . . [yet] he is expected to use judgment as well, and to know right from wrong. And like it or not, the two do not always go hand in hand" ("The Yelling"). A female soldier, Kayla Williams, draws attention to a different aspect of the boot camp experience: what has been taught about the war during the training does not reflect the reality of the war. She thinks that everybody knows the problem but no one tries to change the situation:

> It was like going to the movies when the Picture is totally out of focus. Or the projectionist left the image off-kilter, and the actors' faces are all split in two. And you're sitting there in the middle of a row toward the front. You've got your popcorn, your soft drink. You're settled. And when the film rolls you think, No problem. Someone near the exit will get up and tell the kids at the concession stand to fix the goddamn Picture. But no one moves. The audience sits there. Everyone just kind of adjust to the situation. Like they squint or turn their heads a certain way. Deal with the fuzziness or that the actors' foreheads are below their chins. Maybe the movie is *supposed* to be that way? (42)

Many of the war narratives this study deals with naturally fall into the category of relational life writing, written out of a sense of shared identity that is the American

[60] An ex-Marine who serves as an embedded journalist in the Marine Corps, Koopman is disturbed of being exposed to the enemy as a non-soldier in Iraq. In the course of his narrative, he develops a critical attitude towards the war and questions his role in it.

[61] Being a part of the Marine Corps for many years, Boudreau displays its vices without hesitation. Questioning the practices of the United States military training, strategy and mentality, the war and the so-called heroism of the Americans, he becomes a constructive patriot.

soldier/citizen. The relational identities, as Gerard Delanty suggests, are "based on some kind of exclusion," as one's identity can only be defined with reference to a "non-self" (15). In other words, the identity composed as a result of the relating process is a combination of the "I" and the "me," (Mead 60), and although it might cause a loss of the original identity of one's own, it gives the individual a sense of belonging (Schwartz 156). The adopted identity makes individuals respond to certain cases in "expected" ways as a result of imagining possible reactions to certain stimuli (Ashmore and Jussim 107). This is called self-regulation. The boot camp, in the light of this definition, could be considered the platform of learning about self-regulation under the repressive control of the military apparatus.

According to organizational support theory, individuals who are valued by their organization, display "high levels of commitment and performance" in exchange for a certain treatment (Eisenberg 51). The boot camp experiences of some service members, however, show that many soldiers are mistreated during the adaptation process to the military, although they do not necessarily perform less. On the contrary, some soldiers report self-regulation and an increase in their performance levels after being mistreated by the drill sergeants. Although many service members are aware of the fact that there are problems in the camp, nobody really complains or does something about it. As Kayla Williams' movie hall analogue suggests, everybody expects the other to take action and eventually no action is taken at all. The reason why no one actually defies the system of the boot camp could also be explained with symbolic interactionism.

According to symbolic interactionism, in the social interaction within a group, "objects are created, affirmed, transformed and cast aside" (Blumer 12). In the case of the authors in this study, the objects created in the boot camp are the soldiers. Their behaviors are affirmed if appropriate; transformed if not and they are excluded if their behaviors do not fit in the meanings and definitions of the group. Individuals appropriate their actions by modeling them on "previous joint action" and thus provide a "connection and continuity with what went on before" (Blumer 20). Yet, joint action—a consensus on a certain type of behavior—does not necessarily stem from a philosophical consensus. Members often adapt their behavior to the norms, "so that open contradiction will not occur (Goffman 3). If individuals' behaviors do not fit in or

contradict with the joint action, they would be discovered and would lose their anonymity. They would be labeled unfit and excluded. Therefore, even if soldiers do not originally have the qualities attributed to group members, they might still behave as if they possess the mentioned qualities either to avoid punishment, or to be accepted in the group or to be respected by its members (Goffman 12). Jason Christopher Hartley,[62] in his memoir *Just Another Soldier: A Year on the Ground in Iraq* (2005), talks about this process and how one has to fit in in order to protect one's reputation. His definition of reputation explains the reason for his concern about fitting in. For him, reputation is,

> . . . how you are judged by the other soldiers in your unit. Anytime anyone does something stupid, word spreads instantly. What usually happens is one or a few guys will interpret and assess the event, share this interpretation, and then an opinion is spread along with the story. The same process takes place anytime someone does something noteworthy as well. This is, for the most part, how a soldier's reputation is generated and propagated. (217)

A similar anxiety over fitting in shows itself in Hugh Martin's[63] poem "Tomorrow, We Go Up North" in his autobiographical book of Iraq War poetry titled *So, How Was the War?* (2010). In the poetic section below, he narrates his feelings when he had to smoke in order to be accepted into camaraderie:

> I cracked one and take a sip—it tastes
> like shit, but I drink half
> just because everyone else is and just so I
> can stand next to them and do whatever
> you're supposed to do before crossing into
> what is called *the combat zone*.

As the lines above reveal, narrators are well aware about the fact that peers also serve as a control mechanism for their behaviors. Richard C. Meyer, in his memoir *Four in the Corps: From Boot Camp to Baghdad—One Grunt's Enlistment* (2005), has already discovered the influence of peer pressure over their performance in the boot camp: "Peer pressure worked its magic and everyone, whether they were scared of heights or not, climbed up forty feet up and slid down the rope, each time wearing more gear until they maxed out with a full pack" ("Boot"). Some narrators worry about their physical

[62] Describing his experiences ranging from being an unwanted Mormon in Utah, to a son taken to a mental institution by his parents; from a wartime blogger to a critic of the war, Hartley questions who he has become as a result of his Iraq War experiences and decides to remain a civilian for the rest of his life.
[63] Martin's Iraq War poetry treats the war in neutral terms, yet, describes the American soldiers as human beings who are scared and vulnerable despite their robotic, impervious and numb appearances.

performances during the drills as well, since weakness in performance would also cause exclusion. The anxiety Bronson Lemer[64] depicts about his boot camp performance sheds light to the very experience. Bronson Lemer in his 2011 memoir, *The Last Deployment: How a Gay, Hammer-Swinging Twenty-something Survived a Year in Iraq*, narrates how he worries over the loss of anonymity due to performing weakly in the drills. He says, "I don't need this stupid war to tell me who I am," but thinks about the weak runners who were humiliated, mocked and left out of the group and adds: "It is that failure that keeps me going" ("Baghdad in My Boots"). What is more, Lemer suffers from another aspect in his life. He hides his homosexuality from his family because he was "looking for [his] parents' respect and praise" ("Vets").

Many selections presented in this chapter prove that service members feel pressured not only by the military but also by other institutions. There is obviously a civilian side to the pressure. In some cases the pressure is caused by the family or the loved ones and the authors are afraid of failure in general. According to Blumer's understanding of symbolic interactionism, certain actions gain certain meanings for individuals due to "other persons' act towards the person with regards to the thing" (4). Therefore, the service members notice possible reactions and choose to take up certain roles to ensure appreciation. A similar concern occurs in Matthew D. Wojtecki's 2010 memoir[65] titled *Every Other Four: The Journal of Cpl. Matthew D. Wojtecki, Weapons Company 3rd Battalion 25th Marines, Mobile Assault Team Eight*. Wojtecki's worries about the opinions of others in such an extent that he cannot focus on his daily tasks. He dreams of returning home, where he hopes his fiancée would call him a "hero" (18). He confesses that he worries all the time over her fiancée's possible responses to his service. He wonders whether his father would ever say "you make me proud, son." (23). He wants to know what people think about him and feels thankful about his service to the country (2). He also worries about the reactions of his friends and wishes he would not "totally change and separate [himself] from them" (17). In short, "Every time [he]

[64] Bitterly criticizing the war and his role in it, Lemer 's narrative follows his transformation from a timid gay man to a no-longer-afraid LGBT activist as a result of the difficulties he has gone through during the war which he believes to have empowered him.

[65] Wojtecki's memoir presents him as an "American above all else." He is a pro-war Marine whose main concern in Iraq was not the war and survival but what others would think of him when he goes back home.

closed [his] eyes [he] pictured [himself] getting off the place to a crowd of people and coming home as a hero" (29). The way Wojtecki reports his feelings prove the fact that individuals may take certain actions based on what that action means for the significant others in their lives (Blumer 2).

Sometimes, the confirmation of significant others might turn into a burden. Dan Sheehan's 2012 memoir,[66] *After Action: The True Story of a Cobra Pilot's Journey*, depicts Sheehan as a soldier who had a similar experience. In Sheehan's case, fitting into the family tradition of military service causes his burden. Even though he sees fitting in the tradition as a source of pride, he cannot help but worry over failing the expectations. He says being like his father and grandfather causes an "intoxicating feeling" (2). He calls this "the peculiar curse of fatherhood" (19). Shaping his life on the opinions of others make him feel "shallow," "fragile" and "exposed" (19).

All the examples mentioned above reveal that the authors sometimes shape their actions in a "calculating manner" (Goffman 3). Leaving their personal ideals and wishes aside, they adopt the meanings and behaviors acceptable to the group which cause them to suffer from a feeling of not being in control of their actions. Such "*diminished human agency*," which is "a feeling that individuals cannot effect meaningful social action and, in extreme cases, may not be able to control their own behavior," would lead to weakness, depression and even self-disgust in some of the authors (Melley 11).

## 2.2. CLOSE READING: RYAN SMITHSON'S *GHOSTS OF WAR*

Ryan Smithson's 2009 memoir presents the Iraq War experience of a nineteen-year old soldier. The author defines his work as a memoir that is made up of "words we use every day," but claims that they are the "words of a heart, the silhouettes of a generation." He calls his words as "[his] silhouettes," where, in between them, there is "the resilient silence of humanity. . . *[his]* silence" (301). His definition could be

[66] Despite being neutral in his depictions of the war, Sheehan questions his innocence and heroism as an American Marine Cobra pilot and fights with his inner voice, which refutes his optimistic perceptions of self and the war throughout his narrative. His feelings of guilt draw him out of the military and he resorts to his familial identity.

interpreted as a claim of having written a universal testimony on the war. The cover of the work presents Smithson as a sillouette which is fading away with a dissatisfied look on his face, as if he is a "ghost of war" befitting the title of his work. The title, together with the cover designed for the memoir, play upon the readers' expectation of an anti-war memoir. Yet, the nature of the memoir proves to be more ambiguous with the rhetorical question "If I don't do something, who will?" on its cover.

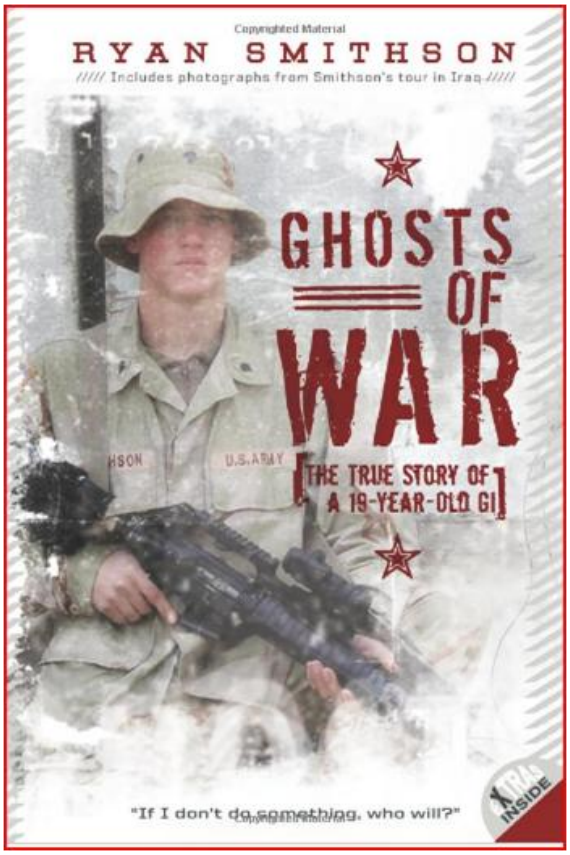


Fig. 6. Cover of Ryan Smithson's 2009 memoir *Ghosts of War: The True Story of A 19-Year-Old GI*

The memoir is divided into three parts under the main titles "Red Phase," "White Phase" and "Blue Phase," bringing together the colors of the American flag. The phases refer to the first three weeks of sacrificing freedom for learning one's duty; the second three weeks of learning the meaning of freedom, love of mission, heroism, camaraderie and dealing with pressure; and the last weeks of learning humility, that "no one is ever prepared for war" (33-34). The tone of the memoir shifts from bitter and cynical to affirmative and propagandistic. Smithson's *Ghosts of War* is an example of a war memoir as well as a work of scriptotheraphy written for self-healing purposes. Since it

displays Smithson's life as examplary, it could also be considered as a work of autohagiography. The memoir's claim on a shared identity renders it a relational life writing, while the depiction of the trauma during Smithson's boot camp experience classifies his work as a trauma narrative, although partially.

He decides to write his memoir with the encouragement of a college professor who helps him compile his writings into a book (296). The book is a worthy read for its display of the transformation of the would-be-soldiers through the military training experience. Before he joins the military, Smithson sees freedom as "responsibility" and he "wasn't sure if [he] was ready for all that" (8). During the basic training, however, he claims having learnt to "appreciate freedom," only because he lacked it (108). In the memoir, a sergeant interpellates him as a "defender of freedom" by asking Smithson the almost rhetorical question of "Do you appreciate your freedom so much that you're willing to fight for the freedom of others?" (40). Smithson's affirmative answer satisfies the sergeant. "That, Smithson," the sergeant says, "is why you deserve to wear this uniform. . . . the army needs more soldiers like you in Iraq" . . . . Because . . . [Iraqi people] deserve to be free" ("Red Phase" 240). The ideal American soldier of the Iraq War, according to the sergeant, is one that is willing to fight for other countries' freedom. This definition is one of the discourses used by politicians of the time to justify the Iraq War. Smithson readily internalizes the interpellation because answering the question negatively would automatically make him a "bad" American soldier, as well as being "unAmerican," inhumane, racist, indifferent etc. In addition, the basic training he has gone through is shaped with the aim of convincing soldiers to adopt the identity the sergeant interpellates him as.

The basic training subjected Smithson to a systematic brainwashing. This process turns Smithson and other American soldiers into "pieces of equipment in an assembly line" (20), who are "worthless," whose "mommy ain't there" and who "are no different than any other rotting piece of compost in army fatigues," who "are not wanted," whose recruiters lied to [them]," and who "should just go home," since even "God Himself" can not save them now (25). Now that their perceptions of self are completely "destroyed" and their clothes are taken and camouflage is given in exchange "to hide

who [they] are and to make out of them "An Army of One," the transformation begins (26-28):

> They take who we are and flatten it, everything we think we know about it. They take it away so all we're left is each other and the hair on our chinny-chin-chins. Then they give us a razor blade and tell us to shave . . . . Sitting in the barbershop chair, we get the hair cut off our heads like dogs at the vet. We watch in the mirror as our identity floats to the ground. We watch as the barber sweeps it up, puts it in the trash. Right where it belongs. The hair of a hundred recruits, a hundred other identities mixing and blending until they are all the same. We're all the same.

In the description of the military training experience above, the soldiers lose their identities composed of the ethnic, cultural, religious, political, intellectual and social and are given an occupational identity fed by the national identity discourse. The narrated "I" is depicted to be anonymized through the process of erasing the notions that makes him a specific person. He calls this process the "red phase" and favors it as part of a process which attempts at making soldiers realize the importance of freedom for human beings. For him, this phase is "about reflection . . . about looking around and realizing how much all this means. This ground, this place we call a home. The space and time given to us for free. These people we call country men. And the way it feels to lose it all, to lose our free will" (33). He depicts the way they are being told "when to train when to push and when to pull, when to laugh (never) and when to cry (don't even think about it) . . . and how to talk and how to sit and how to eat, and when to shower and when to shit" as part of the learning of duty which is "opposite of freedom" (33). If they sacrificed freedom, according to the narrator, they would understand the worth of freedom and why they should fight, since the Iraq War aims to give Iraqi people freedom (34). Still, the narrating "I" cannot help but come up with a cynical depiction of the American soldier between the lines: "'I serve my country' is tattooed right accross my forehead. I am a part of the all warrior circus. We are snarling clowns with spiked teeth and bleeding gums. We smell like rotten war paint" (34). As the quotation reveals, for the narrating "I," contrary to what the narrated "I" is told to have learnt about freedom, American soldiers are nothing more than "the property of the U.S. government" (155). He goes further to define a narrated "I" in contradiction to the one he has previously described:

> I am only one of these simple GIs, and I am nothing special. I am a copy of a copy of a copy. I'm that vague, illegible, pink sheet on the very bottom of carbon paper stacks. They will not make movies about me. There will be no video games revolving around my involvement in the war. When people write nonfiction books about the Iraq War, about the various battles and changes of command, I will not be in them. My unit will not be mentioned. We are not going to be part of any significant turning point in the war. We're not going to bust down doors and search for weapons caches. We're construction. We're going to build crap. We're not going to hunt for insurgents. Our job is to stay away from the enemy. Our job is small, a minute part of the larger picture. And I'm not even sure what this "larger picture" means. I'm not sure why we invaded Iraq. I am just a GI. Nothing special. A kid doing my job. A veritable Joe Schmo of the masses, of my generation. I am GI Joe Schmo. (57)

The quotation presents the narrator's position in the war, making him think that his dreams of "accomplishment" in any field of life (10) and his wish of becoming a hero are impossible to come true. In fact, his dissatisfaction concerning the war and being a part of the United States military resembles his disillusionment in the very beginning of the memoir when he learns that he would be stationed in Iraq. The narrated "I" early in the memoir is described as "the average teenager" in Greenbush, New York." He is depicted to have blond hair and blue eyes and is "smaller than average build." Like the rest of the high school students, Smithson is also narrated to be a "wannabe" who dream of being "rich," "cool," "hot," "tough" and "self-confident" (3). His fictional heroes are "those valiant, stone-jawed warriors in World War II and Vietnam flicks. Maybe Matt Damon or Mel Gibson. . . . Maybe Willem Dafoe or Charlie Sheen (232-233). For him life is "boring as hell" (16) and high school is "so typical and predictable" (4). Members of his generation are desperately "trying to be something" they are not and thus, "restricting" their identities (4-5) so much that even the "nonconformists conform" (5). In the beginning of his final year in college, Smithson "dread[s] going back to school" and wants to avoid "making all the decisions about the future" (8-9). He wants to "stay a kid" and delay the " 'real world' and taxes and mortgages and bills and insurance" for as long as he could. Still, he "long[s] for a purpose" (8). When he ruins his knee, he loses his chance to become a wrestler, in his words, his "last chance for accomplishment" (10).

9/11 occurs at a time when he longs for something that is "atypical, unpredictable, kind of real" (6). From that point on, the narrated "I" is depicted as a young man who feels that his generation has a "responsibility to do something" (9). Yet, despite coming from

a family of soldiers, he decides to be a "weekend warrior" (294), which refutes his earlier claims on taking responsibility for his generation. For him, being a "weekend warrior" is a cure for purposelesness, a job which poses no risks, since he would not be fighting and would be "doing reconstruction" (13-14). Weekend warriors or the reserves usually drill one weekend per month and join a two-week mandatory annual training (13). Yet, the situation changes when the Iraq War begins. He is to be stationed in Iraq. Smithson records feeling "trapped in ruble" and so much under pressure that he feels as if the Twin Towers "fell on [him]" (17). To add to this, "[t]here was no easy way out" of service, since "desertion equals jail time" during times of war (14) and one cannot "respectfully decline" (44). As his reaction shows, his feelings about war obviously do not harbor heroism in them. Still, the narrating "I," at the expense of contradicting the negative experiences, attributes a heroic mission to the narrated "I" and declares his decision of "[e]nlisting, volunteering, giving oneself for the greater good" (12) and "abadon[ing] [his] family in the name of [his] country" (51), since this is what he should do, now that his people and nation are "under attack" (12).

Smithson's definitions of the military training experience also reveal similar contradictions between the narrating "I" and the narrated "I" of the text. For him, being in Iraq is "like being on a new planet. It's something other people do like curing world hunger. It's something that's not supposed to happen in real life. Not to [him]. It's getting AIDS. It's being broken down. It's the first day of the Red Phase" (74). He feels Americans are "occupying" Iraq and they are not wanted by the Iraqi people (76). Still, he says, it is not his choice to be there either since he is there "on order" (76). As Smithson's words reveal, the narrating "I" of the text once again contradicts with the narrated "I" of the text who adopts the heroic mission of serving his country and people under attack.

Once the basic training is over, Smithson appears to have regulated his behaviors according to the ideal/symbolic American soldier image drawn by his sergeant and this, in turn, changes his descriptions of the narrated "I." The interpellation of the sergeant is fully adopted by the narrated "I," while the feelings and experiences reflected by the narrating "I" point to his dissatisfaction with military training as well as the war experience that would follow. Befitting the view point of symbolic interactionism, the

"me" (the narrated "I") of Smithson's memoir has become what it is as a "result of dealing with the other people" (Ames 51). He is "constantly prodded by the 'I'" (the narrating "I") and does "less unexpected things" due to being interpellated (Ames 51), while the "I" of the text is "spontaneous, impulsive, ceaselessly venturing," "out in the world," "isolated, more untamed though cautioned and controlled by the 'me'" since it follows the "joint actions" of the military group he identifies with (Ames 52). Interpellation transforms Smithson into a subject through internalization of the definitions given and causes a "misrecognition of the self" ("*Lenin and Philosophy*" and Other Essays). Through sergeant's interpellation, who is the embodiment of the United States military in the text, the repressive state apparatus spreads the ideology by coercive force. Smithson's unreliable sympathy for the war is supported further by religious symbolism as an ideological state apparatus at work during the war. At the end of the narration, ambiguities continue to exist as the narrator depicts the war both as "hell" and "paradise," where he is made aware of "the ghosts of war." He concludes that there is "something out there bigger than [himself]" and converts to "faith," proving his sergeant's motto that "there is no atheist in a foxhole" and that he "can save the world" (308-310). To the readers' surprise, the narrator displays a conviction to religion to describe his relation to war, which is another medium of interpellation also presented in Bush's memoir.

By the end of his memoir the narrating "I" contradicts with the narrated "I" again when he says that he has gone to war "because of the bazoona cat" an Iraqi child has given him—"a rabbit's foot that resembles a cat"—in exchange for a bottle of Gatorade. The quotation suggests that he has done all for the children of Iraq and the children of his country (207, 305-306). Giving up his previously questioning attitude towards the war, leaving behind his purposeless life and taking responsibility for the sake of "freedom," the narrated "I" depicted in the end of the memoir claims to have lost his "innocence of childhood" (297).

The clash between the narrating "I" and the narrated "I" as well as the newly offered reason for joining the war result from being interpellated by the sergeant, which is actually a restatement of the interpellation provided by the politicians during the basic training and the Iraq War. Once the narrating "I" becomes a subject to interpellation, he

takes “the role of generalized others” (Mead 82). Smithson’s memoir narrates the process in which American soldiers are “created, affirmed, transformed and cast aside” (Blumer 12). Their behaviors are affirmed if they are found appropriate, as in the case of the affirmative answer Smithson gives to his sergeant’s question about his belief in freedom. Soldiers, like all other social groups, appropriate their behavior by placing their acts among the “previous joint action[s]” to achieve “continuity” (Blumer 20), which are not necessarily based on reaching a consensus with the group (Goffman 3). In order to keep his anonymity, to be labeled fit, to be included or to be respected, Smithson adjusts his behaviors to the behavorial patterns of the Iraq-War-time United States army. In other words, he engages in “self-regulation,” even if he cannot completely “silence” his narrating “I” in the memoir. The sillouethe he draws in the narrative, places the narrated “I” of the text as the ghost of the war who is “everywhere and nowhere” in the text (Smith and Watson 77), as the product of the ideological “I.” The contradicting depictions provided by the narrated and narrating “I”s of the text, makes the memoir a culturally significant work of life writing revealing the influence of prewar interpellations on the American soldier.

## 2.3. PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICAN NATIONAL IDENTITY AFTER THE WAR

In the aftermath of wars, each service member becomes a veteran. The term “veteran” comes from the Latin words “vetus” meaning the “old, ancient, of long standing; [and] experienced,” and “veteranus” referring to “old soldiers” (“Latin Dictionary” n.p.). The word is often associated with experience, endurance and reverence. According to the definition Veterans Health Administration (VHA) provides, a veteran is “a person who served in the active military, naval or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable” (VHA). Every service member becomes a veteran but the service members do not come back home with the title “automatically” (Stachyra 15). Veteran identity is gained through a process of adaptation to the social construction of veteranhood in the society and the era. The dominant image of the veteran of the Civil War era was the wise and noble Union Army veteran who was the protector of the unity of the nation, while in the post-Vietnam era, the dominant veteran

image was the "Crazy Nam Vet." In other words, the term veteran refers to an idea rather than an individual person (Stachyra 13). Some authors are bothered by the constructed nature of veteranhood and disclaim the assumed veteran identities of their time.

Shannon Meehan, in his 2009 memoir *Beyond Duty: Life on the Frontline in Iraq*, confesses being on sleeping pills and that he was becoming the stereotype of "the wounded vet or the broken soldier" (27). He is aware that people expect him to fit into such a stereotype. Yet, he is determined not to become "Hollywood's fallen hero." He would, instead, "write [himself] a new script and act out a role [he] was supposed to play as husband and son and brother" (27). Kimberley Dozier's work *Breathing Fire: Fighting to Survive and Get Back to the Fight* (2008)[67] similarly narrates Dozier's denial of the stereotypical veteran identity and civilians' disappointment on this matter. She reports having told people that she does not have pain or nightmares since her hospitalization. She feels that her lucky situation causes hostility because others feel as if she is not telling the truth or that she is making them worry without a cause. She imagines their response: "[b]ut we were all sympathetic and spent a lot of time feeling sorry for you because you just had to be horribly screwed up. You're not? How ungrateful you are" ("Coming to Terms"). Dozier defines their attitude as "pity tinged with wariness, instead of respect" (Postscript). Michael Anthony's 2009 memoir[68] *Mass Casualties: A Young Medic's True Story of Death, Deception, and Dishonor in Iraq* touches upon the same problem by including a poem in his work by Samuel W. Turr titled "Reintegration" (xv). The persona of the poem addresses the civilian reader and tries to convince his audience that he does not fit into the stereotype in their minds:

> Straighten up, it's alright
> You can look me in the eyes
> True, I am an American soldier
> Serving this country, called home
> This doesn't mean I've humiliated prisoners
> Burnt villages
> Or killed any babies,

[67] Troubled with the interpellated news-reporter identity, which requires her to either champion the invasion of United States or to condemn it, Dozier remains true to her individual perspective. Keeping her personal opinions about the war to herself, she sticks with her professional identity as a news reporter in the end of her narrative.

[68] An emotionally disfigured doctor in the Iraqi warfront, Anthony openly criticizes the war and the Americans. Narrating his wartime experiences with psychological depth, he defines himself as a human being at the end of his memoir.

I am just like you.

Many Iraq War veterans have experienced extended and multiple deployments in unique combat environments. Like veterans of all wars, they were wounded emotionally or physically, if not both. Many of them engaged in actions they would never have committed if they were not at war or they were not under command. Many others lost their fellow soldiers in combat. They have also experienced coming back home and integrating into their previous lives or starting new ones which were almost always difficult. Out of the forty two veterans who narrate their post-war experiences, twenty six of them reported difficulties upon their arrival. Among these twenty six authors, however, only six of them are critical in their approaches towards the war.[69] In other words, the unpleasant postwar experiences are common among authors from different political stances (Fig. 7).

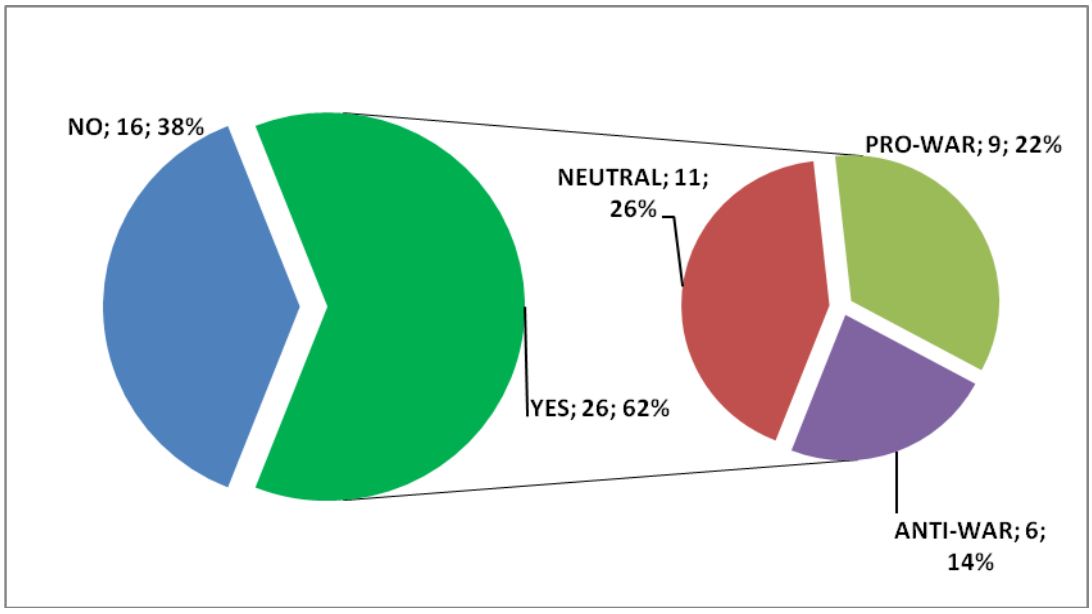


Fig. 7. Home coming/Difficulties and reactions to the experience

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" (Stachyra 22) of the military. Cultural identification with the military, renders veterans' lives "meaningful, purposive, and spiritually

[69] See Taylor (2012), Busch (2012), Rieckhoff (2006), Crawford (2005), Glass (2006) and Anthony (2009).

fulfilling" since the military is "a bonded community," dwelling on "culturally sustained myths, memories, and meanings (Stachyra 34-35). The problems authors suffer from stem from the fact that 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 the veteran identity they hold on to dwells on their military experience. Therefore, their soldier identity is like a "phantom limb" which the veteran can "still feel" but is "no longer there" (Stachyra 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, which sometimes make them feel as if they do not belong to either world (Stachyra 123). Many veterans report feeling like "refugees exiled from their military homeland" (Stachyra 26) or outsiders in the civilian world. The authors of this study also find civilian transition problematic. Some feel like "everything [has turned] upside down" making their lives "hellish" (Boudreau "Loyalty"), while others name this process as "the most devastating perpetual trauma" they have ever gone through (Odom "Chapter 19"). The crude language they are used to speaking and the violent attitudes they turn to for solving problems with others are no longer acceptable in their new environment. Many soldiers suffer from the bitter memories of war even though they are no longer in Iraq. This feeling is mentioned as being "mentally stuck somewhere and physically stuck somewhere else, wanting to be in both places at the same time but not wanting to believe in either" (van Winkle 12).

According to Goffman's understanding of symbolic interactionism, the theatrical analogy of performances are used and the setting determines the actions of the individual (13). Actions are part of the "performance" and the performance cannot begin until the individual takes his/her place in the setting and actions must end once the setting changes. "Only in exceptional circumstances" the setting "follows along with the performers" (13). In the case of the Iraq War veterans, such an exceptional circumstance exists. Many soldiers who went to Iraq were members of the military reserves or the national guardsmen who thought they might never witness a war. Most contracts cover more than one term of service and soldiers never know when and where they will be called back to service again. Kayla Williams' 2005 work *Love My Rifle More Than You: Young and Female in the U.S. Army* reveals her uncertainty about the future. Now

that she is back home, she wants to be free, yet, she has to inform the military about her whereabouts so that they can find her whenever she is needed. Obviously the setting of the warfront follows Williams back home, haunting her: "I'm not completely safe until 2008. I could be in graduate school. I could have a job I love. And the letter could come. Tomorrow. Next week. Next month. Next year. No it's not over. Not for a long while yet" (288). Goffman thinks people must not be allowed to be members of both team and the audience (58), which is being part of the military and the civilian world in the case of Iraq War service members. When they are allowed to, the requirements of the two roles and the expectations of two different groups of people will cause individuals to suffer in the long term. This is actually what happens to the veterans coming back from the war as Williams' case reveals. She has been forced to become the performer and the audience at the same time, which brings out feelings of insecurity and restlessness and makes it difficult for her to take sides when she has to.

The double-belonging in Williams' case results from what Goffman calls "the personal front[s]" (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" (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 suffer from a psychological dysfunction called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD was present in the past wars, yet it is observed in "epidemic proportions" in today's military (Chamberlin 363). PTSD rates have been higher in Iraq mainly because of the nature of the war. Soldiers could not discern between the enemy and the ally due to the lack of uniforms of the opposing forces. In addition, safe zones did not exist. Soldiers frequently experienced firefights or roadside bomb incidents. Suffering from "a first-hand experience that characteristically involves a threat of death or serious injury, or

witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person," PTSD victims experience "intense fear, helplessness and horror" (363). The symptoms of war PTSD include "recurrent and intrusive" memories and/or dreams of the trauma; having flashbacks and hallucinations about the trauma; trying to avoid thinking about the traumatic event; being unable to remember the traumatic event; feeling "detached and withdrawn" from other people; and insomnia, anger, irritation and hypervigilance (American Psychiatric Association, qtd. in Finley 5). Suicide among victims is not a rare choice (Finley 161). Recently, the definition of PTSD is extended by the fourth edition of *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV) and it is coined as a psychological problem that is also observed when a family member or loved one is lost or is seriously harmed, injured or under the threat of death. In other words, losing fellow soldiers or witnessing their suffering might also cause PTSD (qtd. in Chamberlain 364). 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 (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?").

According to the traditional understanding of masculinity, men do not express their emotions or accept "vulnerability that accompanies illness and suffering" (Finley 7). Such masculine norms detain victims of war from seeking medical help or social support (Finley 7-8). Victims worry about "stigmatization" of the diagnosis due to the emphasis of military culture on "toughness and stamina" (Finley 173). However, scientifically, PTSD has nothing to do with physical strength. Traumatic events like war can affect the physically strongest man, since "it was not the man; it was the horror of the battlefield" that causes PTSD (Chamberlain 364). Familial responses also back veterans down since PTSD might at times be seen as an "explanation ('Aha! That's why he's been acting this way!") or an excuse ("He blames everything on his PTSD")" by the family members (Finley 9). Approaches above as well as the military stigmatization and civilian constructions of the veteran identity cause veterans to hide and suppress their emotions. PTSD, in such cases, has the potential to become an identity (Finley 172).

Jeremiah Workman's 2009 memoir[70] titled *Shadow of the Sword: A Marine's Journey of War, Heroism and Redemption* written with John R. Bruning highlights the definition above in metaphorical terms. Workman thinks the human mind functions like a record. When the record is scratched, the scratch becomes "the record's nemesis" (45). The tune cannot be played all over again but the needle repeats "over and over" and "it will never escape the damaged part of the record on its own" (45). When the brain "gets stuck in mid-process," it would fail to heal. Eventually the trauma becomes the "brain's obsessive fixture" which does not allow progress (45). The traumatic event is played and replayed in the veteran's mind every day, preventing the veteran from fulfilling her/his daily chores (45).

A research made on a male group of one hundred ninety eight Iraq and Afghanistan veterans shows that veterans who suppress "outward displays of emotional distress" were "more likely to screen positive for post traumatic stress disorder and depression" (Jakupcak et. al. 100). In the works of life writing dealing with the Iraq War, examples of emotional suppression and psychological breakdown are numerous. David Bellavia's 2007 memoir *House to House: An Epic Memoir of War* depicts Bellavia's suppressed feelings when an Iraqi woman shows sympathy to him:

> All the emotions, all the bottled-up angst and grief I'd pretended didn't exist suddenly broke free. Tars rushed down my cheeks, and I began to sob uncontrollably. I covered my face in complete shame, but I knew the woman still watched me. . . an anonymous elderly woman lost in a city I unapologetically helped destroy. ("Broken Promises")

Another case of an emotional outlet is also observed in Dan Sheehan's 2012 memoir *After Action: The True Story of a Cobra Pilot's Journey*. Sheehan suffers from an emotional outlet after his return and consciously allowes himself to grieve which leads to a "complete mental and physical breakdown." He realizes how "shallow, fragile and exposed that reliance upon others' opinions made [him]" (19). So far, his emotions have been "chained like unruly dogs. They sat quietly in their cages until they recognized the bark of actors' emotions—then all hell broke loose" (18). The process of adaptation to the civilian world takes time sometimes because of the "survivor's guilt" veterans suffer

[70] Defining the transformation of a muscular and tough achiever in sports into a frail veteran with PTSD, Workman's memoir narrates his postwar experiences as a feared and loathed drill instructor with flashbacks from his traumatic experience of the war.

from,[71] feelings of guilt for not doing enough for the Iraqi people[72] or for leaving soldiers/buddies behind.[73] At other times, veterans discover that their former place in the family, marriage or professional life has changed. When soldiers come back from war, their roles and responsibilities are not restored right away which often cause a feeling of being out of place and having lost one's belongingness (Yerkes and Holloway 31). Under such circumstances, veterans struggle to adapt to changes; "reevaluate" their "belongingness"; and eventually fit somewhere in the society (Stachyra 140). Yet, the process cannot be completed by every veteran and fitting in might take time and effort. Meanwhile, veterans would suffer from feelings of alienation. They do not only perceive those they left behind as strangers but they are estranged to themselves. John Crawford's 2005 work *The Last True Story I Will Ever Tell: An Accidental Soldier's Account of the War in Iraq,*[74] depicts this situation with an example of "being at a party and going for the restroom for fifteen months and then trying to rejoin the conversation." In his case "[e]veryone and everything had changed without asking [him] first." In the face of this situation he feels like he is "becoming the kind of self-deprecating drunk who shows up at parties naked and wonders why everyone reacts the way they do" ("Epilogue"). Many soldiers who narrate their war experiences give an account of retreat from social circles into silent corners of their own either because they think they do not belong there or that they want to belong but cannot. According to Charles Glass,[75] the journalist/author of *The Northern Front* (2006), this new place was "a place where home is not home, and you're not you" ("Wednesday 2, April 2003"). This feeling of alienation makes some authors feel that they have failed to fulfill their cause as in the case of Kayla Williams. In the end of her memoir, *Love My Rifle More Than You: Young and Female in the U.S. Army* (2005), she confesses that she sometimes feels she has failed "horribly. Even here. Even now. With this book" (282).

[71] See Williams (2005) and Workman and Bruning (2009).
[72] See Blair (2011).
[73] See Hughes (2007).
[74] As a depressive soldier and veteran who has accidentally joined the Army, Crawford covers his disillusionment with the war, what it has done to him, and his struggle to readjust to the civilian world in his narrative.
[75] Being partly Middle-Eastern by blood, Glass is a war correspondent who can speak Arabic. His critical approach to the war and America's relationship to warfare parallels his descriptions of the American service members as regretful and traumatized people.

The home is different from how veterans remembered it. Yet, the veterans have also changed. War experience alters their opinions about the war. The definitions dwelling on binary oppositions which was once valid in eliminating all the questions about the justice and necessity of the war, is no longer valid. Kimberley Dozier's 2008 memoir *Breathing the Fire: Fighting to Survive, and Get Back to the Fight* reflects Dozier's restlessness about the binary worldview. Defining her reporting as a "field of gray," she complains that people are not satisfied with her explanations since they "don't like gray. They like black and white" ("Getting to Work Again"). Shannon Meehan, the author of *Beyond Duty: Life on the Frontline in Iraq* (2009), complains about the fact that veterans who are proud are perceived either as a "monster" killing Iraqis, a "zealot who blindly follows the orders of an oil-thirsty government that has no regard for others," or a "duty-bound beast." One who is critical of the war, on the other hand, could not be anything else but "an unpatriotic soldier or a traitor who has been too easily swayed by questions that [her/his] military training and love of country should have taught [her/his] to ignore" ("Epilogue"). In Clint van Winkle's *Soft Spots: A Marine's Memoir of Combat and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* (2009),[76] the binary opposition limiting self-expression, "us" vs. "them" has changed to "a nuke-the-world conservative" or a "hug'em-all liberal". Winkle complains about the lack of a middle ground and that "[e]ither way, the troops . . . were ignored" (Chapter 12).

Authors 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" and that the "stories were too complex" (van Winkle 3). The author of *An Angel from Hell: Real Life on the Frontlines* (2010), Ryan A. Conklin,[77] has a similar problem. He joins the war as "a small-town kid who'd done big world things" (Epilogue). When he returns home, however, he realizes that the "small-towners" among which he lived "would

[76] Having a bitter experience of war in Iraq, van Winkle views himself to be lucky to suffer from PTSD, since the psychological state has made him feel emotions and remind him of his humanity. He expresses his dissatisfaction with the binary oppositions he has to choose between in defining himself. He refuses to define himself either as a "nuke-the-world conservative or a hug'em-all liberal;" a democrat or a republican.

[77] Unable to share his wartime experiences with civilians back home as they would not understand, Conklin confesses not having been out in Iraq to win their hearts and minds. He does not criticize the war and neither does he question his role in it. Still, he emphasizes his longing for home and chooses to remain a civilian for the remainder of his life.

never understand the things [he] spoke of" (Epilogue). Besides, he says he has "too much pride to talk with anyone other than those who were there with [him] in war" (Epilogue). In some cases, the audience is not interested in the stories veterans tell, while in others, the audience does not care. Some narrators blame Americans for going on with their daily lives and not being concerned with the veterans, which, in turn, cause feelings of resentment as to why the soldiers fought (Blair "Dread Silence Reposes"). Others would complain about the immense interest Americans' have in the lives of celebrities and not in soldiers, a fact which makes them take offense at risking their lives for "these fucking people who wear sweatshirts with little kittens on them" (Williams 275).

At the homefront, Iraq veterans realized that the identities they adopted as soldiers such as the liberator, the invader or the bringer of the civilization were not favored by all American citizens. At the beginning of the Iraq 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" which is serving selflessly, professionally and honorably and leaving no man behind (Stachyra 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 they were back from Iraq, the state power disappeared from their lives and the veterans were left alone in justifying their wartime actions (Stachyra 33). Under these circumstances, civilians are presented as antagonists in several war narratives exemplified by the shoppers who would "bump into" them with their shopping carts and blame them (Williams "Epilogue"). Such behavior causes the wish to punish the insensitive citizens by making them pay back for the soldiers' "wasted year of life" during the service (Minnick "Home").[78] Sometimes the enmity between veterans and civilians is fictionally created due to paranoid thoughts. Hugh Martin's 2010 work of poetry *So How Was the War?* exemplifies this paranoia.[79] The narrator and a fellow soldier are at a restaurant and their self-

[78] See also Minnick (2009).
[79] See also Goodell (2011).

consciousness leads them to groundless worries about the intentions of the people around them:

> . . . we're shaking for some reason, just feeling out of place and his face is red and I know mine is and we know people know we're there. They don't look directly at us, but they see us, staring out of the corners of their eyes, everyone knows we're there. . . . we both know we want to get the hell out of there and go somewhere quiet, with no one around, no one looking. . . . We stand on an escalator, and it takes us up, up, up, whether we want it or not. ("First Time Back, Atlanta International Airport")

A similar paranoia is observed in the case of soldiers who report feeling stigmatized as veterans of the Iraq War and that everyone somehow knew about their actual identity as a veteran. Paul Rieckhoff is one of them. In his *Chasing Ghosts: Failures and Facades in Iraq, A Soldier's Perspective* (2007) he likens his situation to that of an outsider who wore "a scarlet letter V" on his forehead (266). Being discerned as a veteran is unpleasant for these veterans, since their conversations with civilians reveal the fact that what was once important for them—their service—is not valued or appreciated by everyone. Under these circumstances, some authors turn to their wartime identities and prefer to go back to Iraq as a soldier since they feel they do not belong in the civilian world. Turning to their "brothers and sisters-in-arms," and sharing with them their war experiences "as a means of rejoining their social insiderness" (Stachyra 118) give a sense of belonging to the veterans. Narrating, therefore, becomes a practice of healing, an act to reach an understanding of one's experiences, to communicate experiences to justify one's service, to refute negative labels associated with them, to reclaim one's military or civilian identity or to articulate one's discoveries and disillusionments as the results of wartime experiences. The interaction between the members of the civilian and the military worlds influence the "inner representations" of the veterans (Stachyra 27). Some soldiers long for doing more than writing about their experiences. They miss the combat zone and/or want to go back. Authors like David Rozelle[80] literally go back to the war willingly while others only long for the life back in Iraq. Jane Blair, in her 2011 memoir *Hesitation Kills: A Female Marine Officer's Combat Experience in Iraq*,

[80] As an American soldier who has lost a leg during the war, Rozelle narrates his decision-making process to reenlist, his second-term and his life after coming back home. He becomes an American hero and a symbol for courage and self-sacrifice. Considered as the ideal American by politicians including George W. Bush, his memoir reveals the fact that he was "certainly not dying to go back" and that his message was "misinterpreted" (187).

emphasizes the difficulty she sees in "relating to civilians" and confesses that she feels "[s]omething sick inside [her]" that pulls her back to Iraq where life was "strangely safe"[81] and "familiar" ("The Twilight's Last Gleaming"). Clint van Winkle's *Soft Spots: A Marine's Memoir of Combat and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* (2009), highlights the freedom Winkle misses about the war (8), while Jesse Odom's *Through Our Eyes* (2008)[82] depicts the narrator as an "American nationalist," who "would do anything to . . . go to war again or even scrub shit off of toilets" (19).

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 n.p.). At the warfront, they 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 n.p.). Remembering the bitterness of the war and their weaknesses in the face of these memories, some authors acknowledge their desire to "hurt other people;"[83] others mention "seeth[ing] with anger" as people question the cause of the war;[84] feeling "destructive physically and mentally;"[85] and being incapable of being "gracious or polite."[86] Tyler Boudreau, an Assistant Operations Officer of the war, as well as the author of *Packing Inferno: the Unmaking of A Marine* (2008), explains the rage in veterans' postwar behavior. For him, as combat's "old war buddy," it is combat that "breeds" rage. He perceives rage as a "parasite," feeding on the "emotional disarray of its host, sucking away its life until there's only energy left for itself" ("Fucking Rage"). He observes that many veterans cannot get rid of the feeling throughout their lives which might lead to "domestic violence, to abuse, to withdrawal, to broken families, to drunken driving and disorderly conduct, to jobless and homeless veterans" ("Fucking Rage"). Veterans' rage is

[81] See also Smithson (2009).
[82] Being a pro-war Marine track commander, Odom describes himself as an American nationalist who would do anything to go to war again.
[83] See Van Winkle (2009) and Castner (2012).
[84] See Folsom (2006).
[85] See Doran (2005) and Sheehan (2012).
[86] See Dozier (2008).

originated in the disappointment they feel due to their wartime experiences. Whether or not veterans overcome their rage, the anger makes them question the war and their roles in it.

According to David Flores, many soldiers joined the service during the Iraq War, due to "powerful ideals of fulfilling a sense of obligation and service, which led to admiration toward military leaders that they were trained to follow," yet the complex conditions of the warfront caused some soldiers to question the war and their service (37). After the war, ideas veterans perceived as normal in the chronotope of the war were assessed differently. This led some veterans to question their roles in the war and their identities. The differences in the perception of the service members and the Americans back home is another reason for soldiers to question their wartime identities and blame themselves for their roles they have played during the war. Philip Sharp's questions in his 2012 memoir *Not in the Wind, Earthquake or Fire*[87] reveal his self-doubt and his disappointment with the war itself: "Why does everyone who thanks me seem obligated or scared to do so? Do I really look like a monster now? Am I some unthinking machine that needs appeasement?" ("The Human Cost"). Dan Sheehan, goes through a similar inner struggle in his 2012 memoir *After Action: The True Story of a Cobra Pilot's Journey*: "Good people don't kill. I killed. What does it make me? . . . Was I a poser—a fake?" (18).[88] Illario Pantano,[89] another soldier who overcomes his bitter memories of war by embracing religion, defines himself as a "lost sinner, a wide-open, profane, tattooed war machine" (543). The soldiers start doubting their interpellated conditions as the liberator, the savior of the Iraqi, the harbinger of democracy etc. once they are back, since the identities they readily accepted in Iraq, such as the killer,[90] the trigger

[87] As a pro-war veteran of the Iraq War, Sharp blames the unappreciative attitude of American civilians. His love for his wife and for religion is emphasized in his narrative and his religious side proves to be the most dominant source of his post-war identity

[88] See Taylor (2012) and Goodell (2012).

[89] Pantano's narrative defines him as a sinner who overcomes the feelings of guilt related to the war by turning to religion. Considering himself neither as a victim nor a hero, he supports the war, but questions his identity during the war. At the end of his memoir, he claims his religion as the primary source of his identity.

[90] See Van Winkle (2009).

puller,[91] or the no-more-angel/innocent soldier, turned out to be negative in the United States.[92]

Michael Anthony, who served as a medic in Iraq, perceives himself in even more difficult terms. His 2009 memoir *Mass Casualties: A Young Medic's True Story of Death, Deception, and Dishonor in Iraq* depicts the narrated "I" as worthless (25), unlike a "real man" (25) who would not have "a choice in the matter" (17) and like a "fucking holocaust victim" (36). Through his eyes, the hospital looks like an insane asylum. He narrates having seen a trail of blood on the floor and follows the traces until he notices a patient in soldier uniform who is in pain and in need of help. Suddenly he realizes that he is looking in his eyes and that all is just a dream (188). His depiction presents him as a soldier who is "inside a prison that [he] was sent to liberate" (21). In some cases, authors try to stick to their old identities as they discover the negative effects of the war on their newly gained negative identities. In such cases, they suffer from fragmented identities, being unable to control their behaviors since the two identities randomly alternate and take control of their actions. Tyler Boudreau narrates having a similar problem. He defines himself as a schizophrenic "figuratively speaking," with his "split" mind where "voices [are] coming at [him] from all sides." The "angry voice, the broken-hearted one, the tender [him], the savage, the Marine" all collide head on with one another just to make "him"—a man who has no name, identity, credentials, skills, titles, rank, or a cause (Preface). Brian Castner's[93] 2012 memoir *The Long Walk: Story of War and the Life that Follows* presents a similar narrator. In his case, the narrator has two identities in clash with one another: the "logical" one and the "crazy" one. The logical one is "powerless, trapped, a shade looking over the shoulder of the Crazy one frantically whirling" suffering physically as well as mentally ("Whirl Is King"). The "logical one," on the other hand, takes him over and renders him unfit as a veteran who is supposed to be cold and strong. He complains about the fact that his old self is no longer alive and his new self is despised by all:

> . . . the new me is frantic. . . didn't laugh for a year. . . cries while reading bedtime stories to my children . . . plans to die tomorrow. . . runs almost every day. . . takes

[91] See Folsom (2006).
[92] See Boudreau (2008) and Busch (2012).
[93] A soldier whose job back in Iraq was to disarm roadside bombs, Castner describes his clashing selves as a PTSD patient—the logical and the crazy one—reminiscent of his bitter experiences of the war.

> his rifle everywhere. . . is on fast-forward. . . . doesn't remember all of the old me. But he remembers enough. Enough to be ashamed. Enough to miss the old me. Enough to resent the old me. Resent the way everyone mourns him, while I am standing in front of them. ("The Science and the Chakras")

Defining their individual identities as well as the American national identity, their old identities as well as the new ones, most narrators are intensely busy with the question of who they are and who they should be. Wartime experiences made them question the identities they have claimed earlier. When they return home, their identities are exposed to further questioning.

As the narratives come to a close, authors reveal changing levels of enthusiasm for the war and interest in defining themselves as Americans. Some authors directly adopt transnational identities while others implicate them. Twenty works point to a civilian identity,[94] sixteen works point to a professional identity,[95] ten works point to national identity,[96] nine works point to a family identity,[97] other nine works point to human being identity,[98] three works point to a gender identity,[99] one work points to religious[100] identity, while five works point to in-between identities[101] as their remaining identities in their post-war lives. Among those who prefer their professional identities, only six of them are soldiers, which would mean that soldiers do not often stick to their soldier identities after the war. In addition, half of those who keep their national identity as their remaining identities are critical of the war. These statistics demonstrate that even pro-war authors rarely choose to hold on to their national or soldier identity as their primary source of self-definition. Authors rather show a tendency to hold on to their pre-war occupations, families, humanity and gender sources of identity which they have

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[94] Koopman (2004), Sheehan (2012), Doran (2005), Hartley (2005), Williams (2005), Buzzell (2005), Folsom (2006), Rios (2007), Minnick (2009), Cox (2009), Lynch and Lynch (2009), Meyer (2005), Crawford (2005), Lemer (2011), Ready (2012), Gallagher (2011), Blair (2011), S. Johnson (2010), Wojtecki (2010) and Conklin (2009).

[95] Coppola (2005), Kittleson (2005), Ruff and Roper (2007), Sharp (2012), Kraft (2007), Olson C. T. (2007), Hughes (2007), Dozier (2008), Poppaditch (2008), Middleton (2009), Hnida (2010) and Kyle et.al. (2012).

[96] Harley (2005), Rieckhoff (2006), Stephenson (2007), Mansoor (2008), Earle (2008), Boudreau (2008), Odom (2008), Yon (2008), Smithson (2009) and Campbell (2009).

[97] Hogan (2005), Coughlin and Davis (2005), Kopelman and Roth (2007), Bellavia and Bruning 2007),Lewandowski (2007), Meehan and Thompson (2009), Workman and Bruning (2009), Van Winkle (2009) and Olson (2006).

[98] Ferner (2006), King (2006) and Benderman and Benderman (2007), Snively (2010), Turner (2010), Busch (2012), Castner (2012) and Brownfield (2012).

[99] See Olson K. (2006), Smith (2008) and Lemer (2011).

[100] See Pantano (2011)

[101] See Jadick and Hayden (2007), Cash (2004), Koopman (2004), Middleton (2009) and Minnick (2009)

ignored or underemphasized during their service. The numbers that appear above prove that not many veterans are overtly enthusiastic about keeping their military or national identities as their primary definition of identity. In other words, the identities veterans adopt are suggestive about the descending popularity of the war and the decreasing interest in the military profession. However, their choices do not make the narrators any less heroic when one dwells on the post-9/11 definition of heroism Hollywood offers. Like their predecessors in the twentieth century who displayed "traditional femininity. . . being out of control and in need of help" despite their attempts to behave in a masculine manner (Boyle 149), soldiers of the Iraq War present identities that are not traditionally masculine. Such untraditionally feminized narrators were not available in previous wartime life narratives. Clinton and Bush eras saw "the most hopeless, wretched, and pathetic type of male" in American cinematic history (Kord and Krimmer 197). Actors like Adam Sandler, William H. Macy, Christian Slater, Will Ferrell, Steve Carell "have built their acting careers on the 'loser' type" (197).

Although some critics of the war interpret the failure of conforming to masculine norms in the Iraq War as the failure of "martial masculinity" and the "cowboy presidency" (Gross 309), this failure has not caused the recent veterans of the United States to become less heroic in the eyes of most Americans, as long as they integrate back to the society. As Susanne Kord and Elizabeth Krimmer put it, in today's cinema—the definition-maker of heroic identity—"the most potent hero" is not the "steady fighter" but "the man who has undergone castration and still emerges as the guy with the biggest stick," now that masculinity is perceived as "the proud product of a prolonged struggle" (3). An overview of the Holywood depictions of the characters, prove that the losers lose not because they are "effeminate" but because "they remain stuck" with being a loser, a theme that is beneficial for the remaking of the American identity following 9/11 (3).

According to Kord and Krimmer, this is what led George W. Bush mention his problem with alcoholism, in his 2010 memoir *Decision Points*, which establishes him as a person who has overcome his weakness to become an American hero (3). According to Elwood Watson and Marc E. Shaw, Obama displayed an identity similar to that of Bush in his 2006 memoir *The Audacity of Hope*. He does not hesitate to depict himself as a "fully

domesticated, soft, and helpless" man after thirteen-years of marriage and narrate how he once had "forgotten to buy a shower curtain and had to scrunch up against the shower wall in order to avoid flooding the bathroom floor" (Obama 45). Obama seems to be okay with the idea of presenting himself in "pathetic" terms (Watson and Shaw 147), as long as his work also presents him as an American who has struggles with life (Dorning n.p.).

The narrators of the war narratives this study deals with could fit in the emerging "soft" definition of the all-American males and females even though some authors try to neutralize the negative influences of the war. Not all the narrators included in this dissertation have managed to avoid their "feminine"/"weakness"-displaying identities. Most of the authors prefer open-endings, implying that getting over the war and fitting in a new identity of their own choice is a continuing process. Yet, the visible regression of authors' dwelling on national identity in the remainder of their lives opens up the inquiry for such a choice. The following section is going to deal with the question of former and current identitites by examining an American service member's wartime experience.

## 2.4. CLOSE READING: JESSICA GOODELL'S *SHADE IT BLACK*

*Shade It Black: Death and After in Iraq* is an Iraq War memoir written in 2011 by Jessica Goodell (with John Hearn[102]), a female Iraq War veteran. The memoir is dedicated to the Marines of the Mortuary Affairs Platoon of the 2004 Camp in al Taqaddum, Iraq, of which Goodell was a member. Her 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, meattags, 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, dogtags or anything that could identify them. Goodell thinks that her platoon is the "reality to that collective hallucination" of the Iraq War ("Stigma"). Her job is

[102] Goodell's conversations with her college Professor John Hearn made up the content of the book (Afterword).

called “processing” the dead which, she thinks, is a job that “had to be done but that no one wanted to know about” (“Processing”), making her platoon feel as if they were “living in two worlds or between two worlds, between the living and the dead. . . . among the dead, living in their world more than they were in [theirs]” (“Toll”). Although they were “the ones piecing together and shipping home the remains of the dead,” they were never sure “what [they] were doing to the souls of the dead, or what they were doing to [them]” (“Toll”).

Goodell decides to write this memoir because her college Professor, John Hearn, tells her that arranging her thoughts “into a coherent narrative” would help her “exert greater control” over them (Afterword). In other words, she writes for self-healing purposes. In her work, she quotes M. L. Lyke from Seattle Post Intelligencer, who touches upon the fact that military statistics do not follow soldiers home after the war and that they do not deal with the postwar lives often made up of “broken relationships, money troubles, legal hassles, and mental stresses” (“Home”). Her work is culturally and historically significant in that it deals with what statistics do not reveal. The subject matter of her memoir is the difficulties in the life of an American female veteran after coming home from Iraq and her survival strategies. The memoir also displays the changing point of view on the Iraq War, on American military institution and on American civilians after the war.

The cover of the book features a triangular folded flag placed on a coffin. This refers to the symbolic gesture of presenting the folded flag to the family of the fallen soldier during funeral services. When taken together with the title *Shade It Black: Death and After in Iraq*, the cover image suggests that American soldiers have psychologically died during the Iraq War. Their lives back at home is the life after that death as the cover emphasizes the difficulty of an American veterans’ survival in the civilian world. Jessica Goodell receives a major in psychology and a minor in sociology after she returns from Iraq. She attends college with hopes of getting over her PTSD and wishes to help others overcome it (Afterword). She also dedicates herself to understand why American people fight (“Chautauqua”). Making use of newspaper articles, as well as psychological, sociological and statistical information, she tries to highlight what Iraq War meant for women and what life was like once Iraq War veterans returned home.

Her memoir seeks an answer to the question "despite the open option to leave the platoon given us by The Sir [the platoon commander] we stayed. Why?" (Afterword).

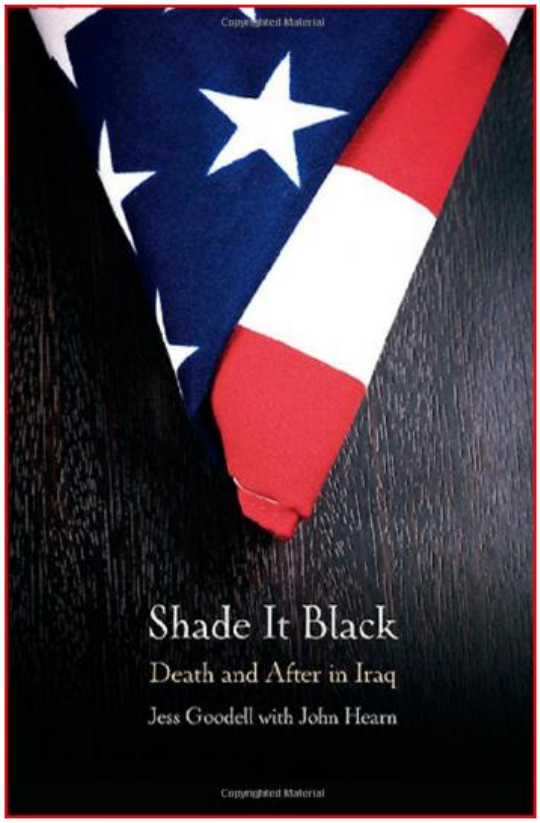


Fig. 8. The cover of Jessica Goodell's 2011 memoir *Shade It Black: Death and After in Iraq*

The memoir is made up of thirty chapters, ten of which deal with its author's post-war experiences. The tone of the work shifts from hesitant and questioning to decisive and definitive. In terms of the subgenres it belongs to, *Shade It Black* is an autosomotography narrative, that is a narrative about an illness (PTSD); a conversion narrative, highlighting Goodell's political conversion from an admirer of the American military institution and the Marines to a critic of them; a scriptotheraphy, as a narrative written for the purpose of self-healing; a survivor narrative depicting Goodell's survival strategies weak and strong; as well as being a trauma narrative and a war memoir.

The prewar narrated "I" of the text is the daughter of a "comfortable middle class" family living near Chatauqua Lake. She plays the piano, and the saxophone, plays soccer and is the "only girl in a Little League baseball team." 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 highschool at graduation dispose a challenge to her. “Tough *men*?” she asks, “What about tough *women*?” (“The Girls Generation”). Upon hearing that the recruiters do not think women can do the job of a “guy,” she claims the opposite and asks to serve as part of a tank crew. After not being allowed for the position, she signs up for being a heavy equipment mechanic instead (“The Girls Generation”). Her narration reveals that she has joined the Marine Corps because she wants to take the challenge the recruiter poses and to prove herself to be as capable as a man in all walks of life.

When Goodell goes to Iraq and begins to serve, 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 admits females only at its and the nation’s peril. Thus, the honor of the Corps and its effectiveness to protect the country are “threatened by small, weak, fearful women” (“Immorality Plays”). She 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” (“Pressure”). Goodell calls those who behave in feminine terms—those who do not run, do not participate, fall out, are overweight,— “Marine-ette”s, a stereotype “that limits all women.” She almost finds male Marines rightful in excluding them (“Mothers, Sisters, Daughters”).

She perceives that it is not only men who discriminate women. Women also do it. 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.” Moreover, if she does any of these she is reduced to a “sexual object” (“Mothers, Sisters and Daughters), open for assaults and even rape by their fellow male Marines (“Pushed”). She is not wanted by the male Marines because they are taught not to want her in (“Mothers, Sisters and Daughters). 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 laying in bed, Mamma rolled over, this is what she said,
> Give me some PT! Good for you, Good for me. ("Pushed")

Upon hearing that Goodell changes the cadences above for the favor of women, (women, according to her, make up for six percent of all the Marines), she is warned for what she does and is considered to be "disrespectful" ("Pushed"). Her depictions of the condition of women in armed forces dwell on reality. In the United States military, being a soldier means being masculine (Crowley 6). Women were not accepted to serve in the battlefield until the World War II, unless they serve as nurses. They were not allowed to carry weapons until the Vietnam War was over. Women were welcome when men were repelled from service 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. In the Gulf War, however, 41000 women served the military for the first time since the World War II (Crowley 4). During the Iraq War, women were pushed to the forefront because the military was "so short of troops" and there was no way to distinguish where the frontline was (Crowley 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 the one in the Gulf War (Crowley 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" (5). Yet, female service members were assigned mainly as truck mechanics, nurses, or typists still having been seen unfit for hand to hand combat (Ender 99) and as Goodell puts it "assymetric conflict between man and women" is always there causing even suicides among female members ("PTSD").

In order to survive in the male environment of the military, female service members had to "distance themselves from other women" (Crowley 12) and "act like a man/soldier" (24) at an environement where there was few or no other women (3). Women, like men, are expected to take risks, control their emotions and be violent. Eventually, they suffer from loneliness belonging to neither group. Goodell also suffers during the war because

of her gender. Still, when life after the war appears to be even tougher than life at the warfront, she adopts a performative femininity as part of her survival strategy.

Once she is back from Iraq, she dresses as feminine as she can to "hide the past from [herself]." She wears high heels and "tight clothes with lace and flowers," does her hair and nails and waxes her eyebrows ("Social Phobia"). She is not proud of being a part of the Iraq War. Yet, her efforts to forget her past through changing her appearance does 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]" ("Tucson"). Her soldier identity is like a "phantom limb" which she can "still feel" but is "no longer there" (Stachyra 129), which urges in her a need to hide it, now that her disillusionment with the war has begun. She hopes to get rid of the traces of her American soldier identity such as "looks; posture; speech patterns; facial expressions; bodily gestures; and the like" (Goffman 14). She also paranoidly thinks civilians "could tell that [she] had served in Iraq." Feeling "stigma[tized]," she cannot leave her apartment she "hate[s] being in" ("Social Phobia"). Being "imprisoned . . . alone" in her apartment "the rumination" begins ("Social Phobia"). Thoughts and memories from her war experience begin to "creep [into] her consciousness" ("Social Phobia"). She questions what she has done in Iraq and deals with,

> . . . 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. ("Social Phobia")

Unable to gain weight, sleep or relax ("Miguel"), she starts to drink and even smoke weed. The narrating "I" of Goodell's memoir is troubled with the questions: "Why are we fighting this war? Why had I volunteered? What is the allure of the Marines? Is there anyone who understands anything about the widespread suffering that is going on?" ("Living Alone," see also "Nightmare"). She also criticizes American civilians who she thinks do not know what they support when they support the Iraq War. For her, "[n]o one should ever support the activities in which [she has] participated." She believes 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 they have fought for ("Searching"). 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"—the state apparatus or the politicians—as well as between the soldier and the civilians ("Chautauqua"). After reading Chris Hedges' *War Is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*, she realizes 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 ("Chautauqua").

She hides her past experiences related to the Iraq War because of the changed meaning of the war and the changed setting. The American soldier, as liberator, the bringer of the civilization, the heroic American at the Iraqi warfront is not favored back at home. American military as the repressive state apparatus and the embodiment of the state power engaging in interpellation, is no longer there to strengthen her positive 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. She feels safe only when she has fellow veterans around. Yet, they are also troubled with their pasts (as in the case of Miguel). Their behaviors no longer fit the military identity, since they are no longer in Iraq (as in the case of Leslie).

Goodell 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" ("Miguel"). Discovering that Goodell is on PTSD medication, he labels her unfit for being a "real" Marine. He associates being a Marine with masculinity, that requires toughness in relation to one's emotions. He also discriminates Goodell for not being a real Marine because she has not participated in the initial invasion of Iraq ("Miguel"). His obsession with the idea of being a "real" Marine proves the fact that Miguel also has a problem with his wartime identity, most probably due to the traumatic experiences he has gone through during the war. In van Winkle's words, like Goodell, Miguel is also "mentally stuck" in Iraq while he is "physically stuck" in America, "wanting to be in both places at the same time but not wanting to believe in either" (12).

Goodell's intense fear, helplessness, recurrent and intrusive memories, flashbacks, feeling of detachment from other people, insomnia and physical weakness are all symptoms of her PTSD. She experiences that PTSD is "real like the flu" ("PTSD"). Like many female veterans with PTSD, Goodell is also prone to psychological abuse and domestic violence ("Miguel"). Treating her "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" ("Miguel"). Miguel's "inappropriate aggression" is one of the common problems of traumatized veterans (Hsu n.p.). Living up to the masculine norms of veterans, 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" ("A Break").

When Miguel begins to be unbearable and fatally destructive, 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" ("Seattle"). She was sure that he would come to St. Louis to "rescue" her and take her back to Seattle and would "provide protection while [she gets] back on [her] feet and start[s] a new life but he refuses to help. His negative response, however, is not a sign of betrayal for Goodell. She continues to believe in the Marine way of life and "living according to the Marine Code" ("Seattle"). Yet, being "lied to and humiliated and pushed around," she slowly begins to realize that there is a "wide gap" between the "real" and the "ideal":

> Maybe you're the nicest person in the world and are married to or living with the second nicest person in the world, but that relationship is made up of understandings and expectations and beliefs and values that you must abide by, and maybe they're not fair or they're not suited to your temperament or we've become too self-interested to bother abiding by them. Or maybe the other doesn't abide by them, in which case you're also pretty much fucked, and alone, on US-212, in Montana. ("Seattle")

Goodell's description above presents her disappointment with her relationships but her description also perfectly fits to her disappointment with the Marine Corps. The narrating "I"'s questioning of where her friends and Marines are now proves this point ("Seattle"). Her relationship with the military institution is revealed to be as abusive as his relationship with Miguel when she refers to how myths make people engage in "mindless servitude . . . falsely called a career" ("Chautauqua"). She asks the vital questions such as "What if Miguel's un-Marine-like behavior was not an aberration? What if the dishonesty, disloyalty, and selfishness of the civilian world return once we leave the Corps? What if Leslie's refusal come to St. Louis to help me was not a lapse in judgement but was the typical behavior of an ex-Marine?" ("Disillusionment"). Eventually, she discovers that living up to the "Marine Code" is a belief based on the mythic American Marines and they were interpellated into that role. Such an image does not reflect the real life of American Marines. According to Goffman's understanding of symbolic interactionism, setting determines the actions of people (13). When Miguel and Leslie are back from the war, they realize that they no longer have the prestige of being the ideal/heroic Americans they have been interpellated as. The identity they adopt in Iraq has been promised them in exchange for "performing" their roles well in Iraq and the performance cannot take place unless the soldier takes her/his place in the setting. Moreover, since Americans' approach to the wartime identities are critical, soldiers naturally disown them as in the case of Goodell herself. The homefront behaviors of Miguel and Leslie destroy Goodell's belief in the "ideal" life of the Marines and shows her the "real" world. She perceives the "real" American Marine, American civilians and the war under a new light.

The narrated "I" and "them" (Americans) of the first half of the memoir contradicts with 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 camaderie, joint cause and group-belonging, which are absent in the civilian world, are fostered in the military for "interconnection" ("Interconnectedness"). The "real" American soldiers who are "anxious and depressed" due to "unearned self-esteem and narcissism" ("Chautauqua") take the place of the ideal American Marines in her mind, who are "parts of a single organism," and are "brothers and sisters" ("To Iraq") and who "completely put [their] lives in the hands of [their] fellow soldiers" ("Fire and Rain").

The military is responsible for the negative identity in Goodell's memoir since interpellation offers a so-called freedom and self-esteem to the American soldier. In reality, the military institution does not provide the esteem promised, which causes the problem to become "social in cause and resolution" rather than a personal issue ("Chautauqua").

In the end of her memoir, Goodell also perceives civilians differently. She realizes that her "taken-for-granted assumptions" about Americans are "shaken" by her war experience ("Home"). When she returns from Iraq, she thinks Americans are always "eating" and consuming. 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" ("Home"). She calls her country "The Mall of America" where adjustment for veterans are even more difficult than the warfront.

Goodell's survival strategy is built upon 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 ("Hope"). She gains a certain degree of control over her life, yet after five years of her return from the war, she still thinks about the war everyday and she still tries to get it over (Epilogue). Befitting her ongoing struggle, the ending of Goodell's memoir is left open, implying that getting over the war and fitting in a new identity of her own choice is a process.

# CHAPTER 3:

# PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICAN NATIONAL IDENTITY DURING THE WAR

Veteran recollections are made up of individual and collective memories (Stachyra 42), which means veteran narratives might be influenced by the narratives of others, be it their fellow soldiers, politicians, or civilians. Self-definitions evolve through "an internalized dialogue of [these] voices" (Schwartz 102). People's definitions of themselves at certain points of their lives might not be the same as the definitions they come up with at other stages of their lives. Works of life writing in this chapter demonstrate their narrators' changing beliefs about who they are individually and as Americans and serve as a medium for forming and reforming their definitions of the self. Focusing on authors' definitions of their individual identities, American soldier identity, American national identity and Iraqi identity, this chapter will expose how wartime experiences, military-civilian tension, diminishing human agency and the impasse nation's foreign policy led to, make authors question and/or give up internalizing interpellation.

Although war writing could be considered as a genre that does not follow a tradition, military memoirs display certain characteristics (Harrari 4). They are "synthetic," written retrospectively, based on personal memory, cover a certain period of time; their authors are the protagonists and they narrate combat experiences (Harrari 290). Until the 1930s, the genre had no visibility for its historical value. In the 1930s, however, personal war narratives began challenging official narratives and eventually in the 1960s they became "the mainstream public narrative of the war" (Harrari 302). In the narratives of World War I, war is depicted in a positive light while American soldiers appear to be chivalric in nature and romantic in their idealism (Huebner 5-6). At the beginning of World War II, the American soldier is presented as "a specimen of American manhood," "a good citizen in the postwar economy of the future," "a selfless

team player," "a beneficiary of his time and military" (Huebner 275). As the war unfolds and soldiers return home with violent tendencies, the depiction of the American soldier changes. He is now "victim" to his military superiors, the "horrors of war," and "governmental neglect" (276). According to Patrick Hagopian, he has become the "silent veteran who never achieved recognition of emotional and psychological burdens [he] suffered" (qtd. in Huebner 280). During the Korean War, the American soldier is depicted in works of literature as the "dog-tired," "battered," and emotionally "suffering" soldier, who is "traumatized yet resilient" and who is "in tears" from time to time, a scene which was not possible to observe in texts of World War II (280). The image of the American soldier is not heroic any longer. He is the victim of "violent training" (278). The military is not his/her only source of identity. He is now a person who has a family (Huebner 139). As the changes in the depictions of the American soldier suggest, the twentieth century saw a "revolution in the image of war and soldiers (Harrari 43). The romantic and heroic image of the soldier is replaced by a realistic and a bitter one. War is now seen as a "disillusioning experience," while the soldier is reduced to a victim (43).

With the Vietnam War which cost 58.002 American lives, left 23.104 soldiers completely disabled and 303.704 of them wounded, the idealistic perception of the American soldier has shattered (Hellman 222). According to Philip Beidler, the Vietnam War was "a racist war waged by a racist army in a land of people whose condition they perceived as greatly analogous to their own at home" (16). The war was presented as a "symbolic war," the true terrain for which was claimed to be the American character (Hellman 4). The result of the war challenged Americans' understanding of national identity. The enemy was called "the bad guys," and the friendly people were "the little people," or the "dinks, slants, slopes, gooks, zips" (Beidler 15). Many American soldiers did not have an "external purpose" for fighting the enemy such as "defending national goals," "resisting an evil enemy," or "defending motherhood and apple pie," which made it difficult for soldiers to unite under a cause (Baritz 288). Even though camaraderie existed at a certain level among the soldiers, individuality overweighed (289). American soldiers fighting the Vietnam War were perceived as "symbolic heroes entering a symbolic landscape" (Hellman 38). The war experience made the American turn into the "rebel without a cause," the "hipster," and

the "beatnik" of the 1950s, who took on the guise of the Indian, "the natural man who in the popular culture of their childhoods had been presented as the savage or noble other" fighting against the white American (Hellman 76). Many critics of the war saw the war as the failure of the frontier myth, in that those who fought it no longer believed that America could or should be the bringer of the civilization or the agent of vigilante justice. The war, thus, alienated Americans from "the ideal self-concept" (Hellman 136).

Some literature on Vietnam War focused on the contradictions of the war. Works included violent images, and a "surreal dreamscape in which language could never hope to keep pace with the cinematic potential of the event" (Myers 3). The language of the works reflected the language of the war, employing terms like free-fire zone, winning hearts and minds, light at the end of the tunnel, peace with honor etc. (Myers 5). Texts were "less finished" in comparison to the literary works of the previous wars and were "less-trustworthy" (Myers 5). The war pushed the authors to an examination of their principles. Some literature, however, dealt with "myth-making" (Beidler 19). According to Beidler, Vietnam War soldiers were like James Fennimore Cooper's famous frontiersman Natty Bumppo who is,

> . . . sublimely oblivious to the damning irony of a view of culture that can somehow divide the rest of the world into good Indians (those who can turn out to be just like us) and bad Indians (those who cannot), that defines the earthly mission of that culture in terms of propagating in the name of good the implicit, self-feeding racism that is its special hidden curse. (20)

Early works on the Vietnam War displayed the mythical outlook and the war experiences as interchangeable (Beidler 31), while the works written during the war presented a self-conscious (Beidler 92), and questioning American soldier (Beidler 101). The later works were "voices of consciousness . . . struggl[ing] to speak" (Beidler 136). As the war came to an end, narratives became bitter so much so that the fate of the American soldiers was perceived to resemble those of the "gooks'" (Beidler 165). According to Toby C. Herzog, Vietnam War literature also revealed that some American soldiers thought "war is hell;" others understood the workings of the war and discovered their identity during the war; some felt insignificant and helpless at certain points, and arrived at a conclusion that the Vietnam War was different from America's

previous wars (8). Yet, some literary works employed American characters who represent the "ideal soldier in an ideal war" while harboring "unrealistic expectations" from the soldiers and "romantic illusions" about the war. Herzog calls such works as works influenced by "The John Wayne Syndrome" (17-19). The language of such works employ patterns such as "doing John Waynes" and "to John Wayne something." From their perspective, the movie character John Wayne is a man who,

> . . . performs, delivers the goods, is a loner, has the equipment, usually a six-shooter or a superior rifle, to beat the bad guys, and he knows what he is doing. He does not need to depend on others because he can perform, can deliver, and can bring home the bacon. He is also very good. (Barritz 37)

Yet, neither the negative approaches to the war nor the idealistic approach of "doing John Waynes," created a unique perspective on war. Similar attitudes towards wars and soldiers have already existed and they still do (Huebner 1980). There are similarities between the approaches of the soldier/authors of both the Vietnam and Iraq wars. The Iraq War, like the Gulf War, was based more on technology, but the guerilla warfare of the Vietnam War resembles the insurgency in Iraq. According to Alex Vernon, Iraq War was a "monstrous hybrid" of the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War of 1990-1991 (302). What distinguished soldiers of the Iraq War from those of the Vietnam War was that they were the members of an all-volunteer force. They knew about the Watergate, the Iran-contra affairs, the Monica Lewinsky scandal and were thus "already cynical, hardened against idealistic patriotism" (Peebles 3). Although their knowledge of war was based on the Vietnam War movies they watched, many soldiers believed that their country was "on a fool's errand in Iraq." They were "politically cynical, but personally idealistic, believing themselves to be beyond the strict categories of race and gender, to be technologically and culturally savvy" (Peebles 3). They were more aware of the rhetoric and ideas in the United States in comparison to the soldiers of earlier wars. Since the government, the media and the military were too busy attributing identities to them and the Iraqis, Iraq War soldiers were also more conscious about the processes of identity making.

The identities attributed to American service members during and prior to the Iraq War reduce men and women to mythic/ideal Americans Yet, the American soldier in the definitions of the politicians has never existed. S/he is rather a symbol—"a political and

cultural artifact for a nation diverse in culture, uncertain in unity, and concerned through much of its history with proving its superiority to the rest of the world" (Kohn 556). S/he is defined in anonymous and "faceless" terms as a "typical" soldier by governments, artists and in memorials through repetition "generation after generation" and turned into a myth (Kohn 556). Bronisław Kasper Malinowski feels that the made-up nature of myths does not make them less important in the lives of the people, since a myth is not an "idle rhapsody" or an "outpouring of vain images" but a "hard-working, extremely important cultural force" (qtd. in Stachyra 29). For him, myth "expresses, enhances, and codifies belief . . . safeguards and enforces morality. . . vouches for the efficiency of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of man" (qtd. in Stachyra 29). Anna Stachyra sums up the functions of myths Joseph Campbell mentions in his three works:

> 1.To help the human to see the wonder and mystery of life, the world and the universe.
> 2.To accept the structure of the universe as beyond complete human understanding.
> 3.To support and validate a social order of things.
> 4.To teach the human how to live under any condition (28)

Myths also show people where they are in life and guide them through "transforming loss, hardship, suffering, death in general, human traits, mortality and imperfection into transcendental and intergenerational connections of faith, spirit, passage and hope" (Stachyra 28). The functions of myths listed by Campbell show why the myth of the American soldier is so passionately promoted before the Iraq War, at a time when the soldiers would be sent to a culturally and geographically unfamiliar place, under orders that do not necessarily dwell on legitimate causes and traditional norms of morality.

## 3.1. PERCEPTIONS OF THE AMERICAN SERVICE MEMBER IDENTITY IN THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR

As illustrated in the graphic below, among the forty five narratives which specifically deal with defining the American soldier, only eleven authors perceive the American soldier in all-positive terms. Among the remaining thirty three works, eighteen of them reflect the American soldier in all-negative terms while fifteen of them describe him/her in both positive and negative terms.

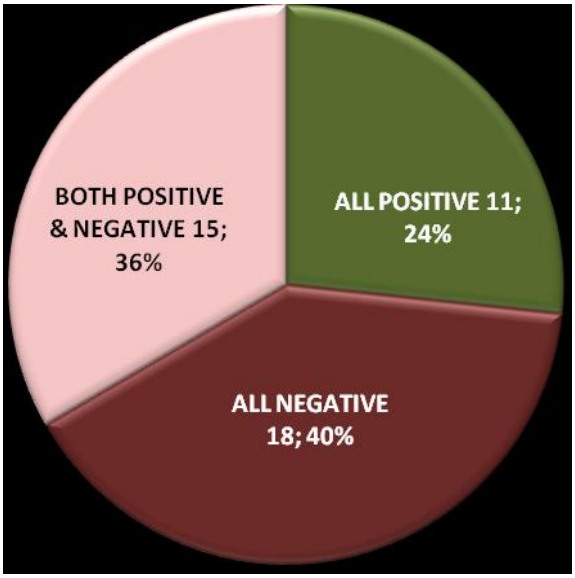


Fig. 9. Perception of the American soldier (Out of 45 definitions available)

Those with an all-positive delineation think that the American soldiers are almost flawless. Nick Popaditch,[103] in his memoir, *Once A Marine: An Iraq War Tank Commander's Inspirational Memoir of Combat, Courage and Recovery* (2008) written with Mike Steere, defines American Marines as "heroes" and not "whiners" who would not even say that they hurt and for whom "[d]ying is not authorized" ("Bang"). According to Popaditch "Marines win because [they] are Marines" ("Gangbanger Redeemed"). In his memoir *On Call in Hell: A Doctor's Iraq War Story* (2007) written with Thomas Hayden, Richard Jadick[104] illustrates the American Marine as "being interoperable, being expeditionary, taking the lost causes and turning them around, taking the tough fists and winning them" (66). For Jadick, every Marine is a hero (206) with the "courage, guts and professionalism" (190). Alan R. King's 2006 work *Twice Armed: An American Soldier's Battle for Hearts and Minds in Iraq*[105] construes the

[103] Popaditch, who gained fame as the Cigar Marine of Laurent Rebours' famous photograph taken right before the toppling of the statue of Saddam Hussein, is the symbol for the mythic American Marine who is uncaring and all powerful. Despite losing his sight and hearing in his second term, he remains pro-war and sticks to his professional identity of being a Marine.

[104] see page 160.

[105] King is the embodiment of the compassionate side of the Iraq War policy of compassionate conservatism. Having nothing to do with the "conservative" part of the ideology, his narrative displays his efforts to gain the hearts and minds as an ideal American soldier, a senior advisor for reconstruction in Baghdad and an honorary sheikh, who speaks Arabic, knows and respects the culture and religion of the Iraqi people.

American soldier as one who "defend[s] the freedoms that every American cherishes" (246). Other authors delineate the American soldier as "bright and clear" (Mansoor 31) with "undiminished courage" (353) and "adaptability to harsh conditions" (350); as having the principles of "self-sacrifice," "dedication" and a "concept of duty" (Rozelle 22); as fighting "in the name of God and country" (Lutrell, Preface), and as defined through the adjectives of "nonconformist, streetwise, innovative, adaptable, often highly intellectual" (Lutrell, "Shakeout").[106] These definitions remind the definitions given by the American politicians, which were discussed in the second chapter of this study. Yet, the rest and the majority of the authors who have attempted at defining the characteristics of the American soldier have critical attitudes towards some of the qualities American soldiers possess.

The authors whose definitions include positive and negative qualities come from both critical and supportive outlooks. Ryan A. Conklin's 2010 memoir *An Angel from Hell: Real Life on the Frontlines* presents the American soldier as "young," and "tough" but "filled with "a vibrant passion to kill anyone who stood in [his/her] way" (Introduction). He depicts his friends cheering at Richard Wagner's "The Ride of the Valkyries,"[107] a song of the movie *Apocalypse Now* (1979). The celebrative song is in the background of the mass destruction of Vietnamese guerillas by American soldiers from helicopters and serves as a mirror showing who Conklin and his fellow soldiers look up to: soldiers taking pleasure from killing. Jane Blair, in her 2011 work *Hesitation Kills: A Female Marine Officer's Combat Experience in Iraq*, characterizes the American Marine as a warrior for whom patriotism is "like a body odor; [they]'ve all got it, but [they]'re too polite to mention it" ("Home and A Country"). They are the people who would "protect the world from its problems" ("Home and A Country"), being the "toughest, meanest, bravest sons of bitches in the world" ("War Plan"). Yet, they do not care about the causes or the legitimacy of the war. They "just wanted everyone to shut up and start the show" ("Home and A Country"). Although in his memoir *So This Is War: A 3rd U.S. Cavalry Intelligence Officer's Memoirs of the Triumphs, Sorrows, Laughter, and Tears*

[106] See also Middleton (2009), Meehan and Thompson (2009),Workman and Bruning (2009) and Folsom (2006)
[107] Valkyries are female figures in Norse mythology who decide on who would die during combat.

*During a Year in Iraq* (2007), Craig T. Olson[108] describes the American soldier as those "killing evil men" ("The Assault on Tal Afar"), he also mentions that some American soldiers deem themselves to be superior to other people which is the direct result of their "upbringing." He talks about the ignorance of the soldiers about Islam or the Middle East or any other society outside American cities like Tampa and St. Petersburg" ("Father of the Banished"). Similarly, Jesse Odom's 2008 memoir *Through Our Eyes* defines Odom as a "role model Marine" (Chapter 2), but he also talks about his alcohol problem, that he never made it through the tenth grade, that he was sent to a military school for troubled teens and that this is actually why he is serving in the military now (Chapter 4). From the point of view of other soldiers the American soldiers are not very good husbands and boyfriends (Gallagher "Embrace the Suck"). They are "determined to kill as many of the people as [they] could" (Lynch and Lynch 130). They are "slayers" (Kyle et.al. "The Devil of Ramadi") who "enjoy" killing the enemy (Yon 74) and who kill people "including unarmed, innocent people, rather than risk their lives" (Glass, Tuesday 1 2003). They are "arrogant" (Sharp "Into the Land"), if "psychologically vulnerable" (Kraft, Prologue). Many of them are addicted to alcohol and valium (Rios, "Growing Pains") and are "patch[ed] up with Prozac" by the authorities who do the "nation's dirty work" (Bellavia and Bruning "Hearts and Minds"). Some soldiers serve only for money (Brownfield 286), while others are "cowards, slackers, petty thieves and homicidal maniacs" (Koopman, Prologue). According to these definitions, at least some American soldiers are arrogant, money-oriented, ignorant and cowardly addicts. They are defined as killing machines without a conscience for whom the cause or the legitimacy of the war does not really matter. They are displayed as the pawns of the government.

The authors who are completely critical of the qualities of the American soldier, describe the soldier as "the street fighters, thugs, drunks, and rednecks" (van Winkle 4). They are "kicking in doors/and raiding houses, separating the men/from women and children, flexi-cuffing/wrists and sandbagging their heads" (Turner "On the Flight to Alamosa"). They are doing things that "had to be done but no one wanted to hear about"

[108] Displaying American soldiers' arrogance and ignorance about Iraqi culture and history, Olson points out to the reversal of the roles attributed to the American and the enemy during the war. Still, he supports the war and sticks with his professional identity at the end of his narrative.

(Goodell "Processing"). They are trained to kill "with Pavlovian conditioning" (Kopelman, Chapter 5). They are fighting for oil (Hogan 71-72). They are "trained American killers" (Feuer 171). They are coldhearted (Kyle et.al. "A Call Home"). They are powerless to protect their rights (Benderman and Benderman 163). They are doing "shit jobs" doing drugs, committing crimes, and "are criminals, molesters and adulterers; people doing anything they can to only help themselves" (Anthony 153). They are "prisoners" between walls of their own making (Anthony 218). They are "inevitably less civilized" (Van Buren "Soldier-talk"). They are "war-machines" (Hartley, Introduction), without morality (Hartley 95). They are the "Ali Baba"[109] (Rieckhoff 214). They are paranoid (Rieckhoff 119). They "pray for war" and not peace (Meyer "OKI/FAP"). They do not want to be "policemen or cultural ambassadors" but "fight" instead (McAllester 269). They are "ready to kill anything, ready to drink a bottle of anything, and ready to hurt the most experienced whores" (Doran 168).

Through the depictions of the authors, readers learn about American soldiers who are unlike the media images. These soldiers do not always fit in traditional norms of masculinity and the warfront does not have a catastrophic atmosphere. Soldiers have abundant food, internet connection and their own books, magazines and PCs. Among the soldiers there are less educated, less courageous, less talented, less coldhearted ones, as well as those who like bullying, fighting and killing more than the rest. The critics and the supporters of the war display certain negative characteristics of the American soldiers they have been acquainted with. Sometimes they set out to glorify their fellow soldiers, but their definitions end up serving the opposite end.

## 3.2. PERCEPTIONS OF IRAQI IDENTITY

"Without the creation of abstract images of the enemy during training," argues Richard Holmes, "battle would become impossible to sustain" (361). People define who they are in relation to those who they would and would not want to be like. In order to fight for a noble cause and to become a hero, one has to have an enemy who is not noble but cowardly. Since the depiction of the self depends on the depiction of the "other,"

[109] The term refers to the "thief" in Arabic.

negative identities are attributed to the "other" especially during times of war. These negative identities prompt hatred and "because virulent hatred [is] believed to stimulate pugnacity, which [is] the most effective antidote to fear and anxiety," those who promote the war often engage in unpleasant depictions of the other who is not always the enemy (Burke 139). According to media critic Frank Rich "Iraqis are the better seen-than-heard dress extras in this drama, alternately pictured as sobbing, snarling or cheering" (qtd. in Allan and Zelizer 24). Like the derogatory names given to the Vietnamese during the Vietnam War, the Iraq War saw the nicknames of—Ali Babas, cunts, camel jockeys, towelheads, ragheads, sandniggers—and the most widely-used one—"hajjis" for the Iraqi people. The term "hajji" is so internalized that even those who turn against the war cannot help but use it. Some soldiers deny the term to be an insult, while others confirm its derogatory nature. It is "this war generation's term for any person of Arab descent," essentializing all Middle Easterners (Olson "The Joys of Kuwait") or all Muslims under one title (Delgado "Etemennigur"). Originally, "hajji" is an "honorific" title for someone "who has gone on the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca that is one of the five pillars of Islam," while in army usage it means "gook" or "Charlie" or "nigger" (Delgado "Etemennigur"). With this term in use, an Iraqi man is,

> . . . no longer a man, a father, or a human being—he becomes for the aggressor a living embodiment of evil, and therefore all is allowed . . . . we lose any sense of ourselves as flawed, limited human beings; we become avenging angels, righteous destroyers, and therein is the path to perdition. (Delgado "Father of the Banished").

Unlike Delgado, who is able to realize the function of calling names, Matthew D. Wojtecki, in his 2010 memoir *Every Other Four: The Journal of Cpl. Matthew D. Wojtecki*, defends his team by claiming that those they kill were "not humans" but "savage uncivilized terrorists that deserved to die" (9). Moreover, for him, "[t]en or even twenty Iraqis lives were not worth injuring or killing one Marine" (22). Carey H. Cash,[110] the author of the memoir *A Table in the Presence: The Dramatic Account of How A U.S. Marine Battalion Experienced God's Presence amidst the Chaos of the War in Iraq* (2004), goes further and resembles the Iraqi territory to the old west. For him, Iraq is a place where there is "no sign of civilization," being "empty wilderness" ("Fiery

[110] See page 160.

Furnace"). Like Cash, Chris Kyle,[111] the author of *The American Sniper: The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History* (2012) written with Jim Defelice and Scott McEwen, calls the place the "Injun Country" ("The Punishers")[112]. Iraqis are, thus, naturally the "savages" and the "uncivilized" Indians. Many authors liken Iraq to the Wild West and define the Iraqi in similar words.[113] Paul Rieckhoff, on the other hand, think their enemies are evildoers (Smithson 83), cowards (111), and infidels (100), who hate Americans and can be bullied easily (117). Authors, who are aware of the dehumanization of the Iraqi people, try to explain the reasons of the behaviors of American soldiers. According to Kayla Williams, the words used to refer to the Iraqis "ensured that [they] didn't see [their] enemy as people—as somebody's father or son or brother or uncle," so that they could easily be fought against and killed (200). She tells that the soldiers are angry with the local people because they are engaging in the insurgency against American forces, while American forces are there to help (238). She defends the American soldiers by claiming that they are not "bad people" and that they are only "beyond frustrated. Beyond angry. Beyond bitter"[114] (254).

Some soldiers do not initially have prejudices toward the Iraqi people, but they are influenced by the definitions referring to the Iraqis. Thomas A. Middleton's[115] 2009 memoir *Saber's Edge: A Combat Medic in Ramadi, Iraq* is one of them.[116] Middleton narrates how he is shocked to see that Iraqis have the same blond hair and colored eyes of most people in the United States. He finds the experience "unsettling" since his enemy's outward appearance is not different from his people and that he feels he is "pointing a weapon at an ally" ("Taking the Fight to the Enemy"). For Jason Christopher Hartley, the author of *Just Another Soldier: A Year on the Ground in Iraq*

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[111] A pro-war sniper who is proud to kill the bad guys, Kyle defines himself as a real cowboy whose dream as a young lad was being James Bond. The dehumanization of the Iraqi people in his narrative has been criticized by many of his readers. As his narrative comes to a close, he places being a sniper before being a father or a husband and keeps his job as a sniper as his primary source of identity.

[112] The memoir was adapted into a movie with the same title in 2014 and severely criticized for displaying its protagonist as an American hero, despite his high number of killings and his dehumanization of Iraqi people.

[113] See also Kopelmanand Roth (2007), Jadickand Hayden (2007), Cash (2004), Mansoor (2004), Pantano (2011), Bellavia and Bruning (2007), Kyle et.al. (2012) and Wojtecki (2010).

[114] See also Campbell (2005).

[115] See page 161.

[116] See also Conklin (2010),

(2005), the emergence of the "terrorist Joe" goes back to the *Bad Boys II,* one of the movies Hollywood made with "so much offensively unwatchable garbage," "aggressively [sold] . . . to the world" (68). The movie presents America as "the big evil land of the infidels" and then "Islamic Fundamentalist Joe looks at the proud and history-rich culture he comes from, and how the main character Martin Lawrence is encroaching on it, and he becomes Terrorist Joe" (68). Hartley knows that he could but only be "one-sided" in his explanation attempts of the enmity between the American and the Iraqi, yet, he goes on (230). He writes a fictional story about the killing of an Iraqi boy, Raed, by the American soldiers. In the story, the Iraqi character receives money from Al-Qaeda to place road-side bombs on the route of American combat vehicles and eventually gets killed. The story he writes reveals how much he tries to be objective and think from the point of view of the Iraqi people but fails to do so (230). For him, Iraqi people do anything for money, and material gain is the only explanation for figthing Americans. Jack Coughlin's 2005 book *Shooter: The Autobiography of the Top-Ranked Marine Sniper,*[117] written with Donald A. Davis, deals with a case different than Hartley's. Coughlin, like many soldiers is aware of enemy's "dehumanization" process which is necessary for his survival. He narrates how close he sometimes comes to "humanize" the enemy by "thinking of the enemy as individual human beings who might have families and dreams and identities of their own" and that he has no option but to "dehumanize" them in order to stay alive as a sniper ("Touch of an Angel"). Coughlin's words reveal that he is aware of the "identifying game" but he chooses to go along with it for practical reasons.

Some authors, however, manage to humanize the enemy so much so that they develop empathy towards them and claim that they would also become insurgents if they were in Iraqi people's shoes. James Harley's 2005 memoir *The Trouble in Iraq: A Diary of a National Guardsman,*[118] reveals how he understands Iraqi people's "hopelessness

[117] Adopting a neutral approach to the war, Coughlin views being a sniper as a profession for which he is getting paid. In his narrative, he talks about the difficulties and the crucial importance of maintaining control over emotions for a shooter to survive in the war zone. Upon his return home, he describes himself in familial terms.

[118] Being a Vietnam veteran as well as an Iraq War veteran, Harley's narrative depicts commanders as those who bring out the evil in soldiers and soldiers as those who lack morality, ethics, compassion, and honor. He associates his critical attitude towards the war with his religious standpoint and calls for Christians who would speak about the injustices of the war. He describes American soldiers as citizens incapable of helping others because they themselves are in need of help.

thanks to the unemployment," purposelessness and drug-addiction of his own people back in America (3). He treats Iraqi people as individuals as worthy as his fellow citizens and says that he can comprehend how "pissed" they are as a result of Americans' invading their land (25), since he has had the same feelings toward the terrorists who attacked the World Trade Centers (47). Like Harley, John Koopman also claims he would have been an insurgent if "foreign troops drive through" his country. He becomes "buddies" with some Iraqis and finds them to be "kind and wonderful people" who naturally resent the American occupation ("On the March").

Some authors criticize the approach of the Americans toward the Iraqis. Tyler E. Boudreau is one of them. His memoir *Packing Inferno: The Unmaking of Marine* (2008) refutes the idea that "the perfect 'Iraqi People' would have had to love all [Americans] loved and reject all that [Americans] loathed including themselves" ("An American Dream"). For Boudreau, now that Iraqi people are called hajjis, "manhandled like animals," "detained with bags over their heads, stuffed in kennel-like cages and sometimes abused like dogs," Americans have "stole[n] their dignity" which makes their fighting back not much of a surprise ("Law of War"). Brian Turner's[119] collection of autobiographical poems, *Phantom Noise* (2010), most visibly humanizes the Iraqi.[120] His girlfriend looking at the dead bodies of the Iraqi people, says "We should invite them into our home/We should learn their names, their history./We should know these people/we bury in the earth" ("Illumination Rounds"). In these lines, Turner calls attention to Iraqi people's humanity by holding them equal to friends visiting their home and highlighting their individuality as well as their history. In another poem, Turner, depicts Iraqi people praying, waving, singing—simply existing as human beings just like anybody else:

[119] Describing vulnerable and down-to-earth Americans in his award winning collection of poetry of witness, Turner displays personas critical of the war in his poems and adopts a humanistic approach to the Iraqi people as well as to the Americans. His poetry presents him as a human being with an approach that transcends the boundaries of one's country.

[120] See also Smith (2013), Olson (2006), Lewandowski (2007), Brownfield (2010), King (2006), Benderman and Benderman (2007), Anthony (2009), Snively (2010), McAllester (2004), Garren and Carleton (2005) and Crawford (2005).

. . . .

how can you pull the trigger
seeing how they flinch at the bullet's report
how they rock and pray in the dirt/as you work your way down the row
shooting men you may have smiled or waved at
when you were just a boy sitting in the bed
of your granfather's truck, men who climbed
date palms and sang old love songs, saying *Ma tkuli ya hilu min wen Allah jibec*
as they cut each sweet and sticky bunch of fruit
("Tell me, Beautiful One, Where Did the Lord Bring You?")

As the examples demonstrate, the authors either humanize or dehumanize the Iraqi people and not every author is aware of their dehumanizing attitude. Out of the thirty five works which deal with defining the Iraqi people, only ten works are critical of the negative depictions and derogatory name-calling, which means that soldiers have really internalized the term "hajji" and are prejudiced toward these people due to the political and military discourse of the war. Many times, the insults address the civilian as well as the enemy, the individual insurgent as well as the al-Qaeda militant, the Middle Eastern as well as the Muslims in general, which makes it evident that the line between the enemy and the people to be "saved" has already been blurred.

## 3.3. FACTORS COMPLICATING THE DEFINITIONS OF INDIVIDUAL IDENTITIES

### 3.3.1. "Compassionate Conservatism"

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* the word "compassionate" is characterized by "fellow-feeling;. . . the emotion. . .when a person is moved by the suffering or distress of another, and by the desire to relieve it," while the word "conservative" refers to those who are "characterized by a desire to preserve or keep intact or unchanged," one dedicated to "the maintenance of existing institutions." From the sixties through the nineties, the word "compassion" was used by liberals. Conservatives, were therefore, the "cold-hearted and, by definition, uncaring" (Olansky par. 2). In his first presidential campaign, George W. Bush attempted at distinguishing himself from the conservatives who received negative reactions from American people. In order to arouse a national purpose other than material wealth, he turned to a "new" conservative agenda

"applicable to and popular in today's world" in order to "demonstrate that conservatives do care about the poor and less fortunate" and in order to "help restore faith in a civil society and moral leadership" (Kuypers et. al. 6). During a 2002 speech in San Jose, California, Bush declared his political philosophy and approach as "compassionate conservatism." For him, it is compassionate to "actively help . . . citizens in need" and to increase international aid, while it is conservative to insist on responsibility to "acquire the hard reforms that lead to prosperity and independence" ("Fact Sheet: Compassionate Conservatism"). This philosophy, the administration suggests, asks the citizen to "become" citizens and not spectators. With this approach the government took on "greater responsibility" to help developing nations—a 50% increase "spent on nations that root out corruption, open their markets, respect human rights, and adhere to the rule of law" ("Fact Sheet).

According to Marvin Olansky, who coined the word "compassionate conservatism" for the first time and whose book Bush wrote an introduction for, Americans' need to "tear down the wall that sometimes has separated our minds from our hearts!" to have "[w]arm hearts and tough minds," since "working in unison, can transform America (Par.1). Although Olansky's words may sound like a form of moderate conservatism, compassionate conservatism is "quintessential" conservatism (Kuypers et. al 21), with the rhetorical themes "Justice and Fairness, Entrepreneurship, Universal Opportunity, Freedom of Choice, Responsibility, Character, Tolerance and Inclusion, Faith, Moral Leadership, American Idealism" (Kuypers et.al. 7-18). The "new" approach provided the administration "a rhetorical landscape in which sharp distinctions are absent and major differences between the parties are routinely blurred" (Kuypers et. al. 27). The approach provided Bush the grounds for shifting between the president who wants those responsible for the attacks "dead or alive" and the president who asks for "empathy" and "protective care" for the Iraqis (Kord and Krimmer 134). In other words, while he favors "little armies of compassion" at home made up of civilians to help those in need, he promotes for "big armies of compassion" to save the Iraqi people from the "monsterously evil" tyrant. The American he defines is both the tough and no-pain soldier ordered to kill the evil enemy, and those who fight for the "hearts and minds" of the Iraq population.

The complicated mission determined by the compassionate conservative point of view ends up with complicated identities, making life even more difficult for Iraq War service members. Jason Hartley talks about this situation in his 2005 memoir *Just Another Soldier*. He defines himself as a man who is neither a pacifist nor a conscientious objector but someone who believes "there must be a way to be an infantryman and still be able to preserve a sense of compassion" (229). Yet, he confesses that, he indeed has an "instinctual desire to fight and commit violence" (229). He is aware that his driving forces are "diametrically opposed forces" (229). Still, if "the closest to a tangible contribution [he] can make right now is to live by example," which he thinks means "fostering" compassion, he resolves to cultivate that feeling (229). According to Koopman, as long as the soldiers get shot and killed it is impossible for them to "come out of those experiences with any sort of goodwill" ("Hearts and Minds"). Like Hartley and Koopman, there are other authors who find it impossible to be both the tough warrior and the compassionate soldier at the same time.[121] Boudreau, the author of *Packing Inferno* (2008), finds it hypocritical to attempt to gain the hearts and minds because Americans would want to see Iraqis have the American heart and mind ("An American Dream"). His interpretations suggest that real compassion cannot exist, now that Americans do not respect and/or try to understand the Iraqi "heart and minds." Some other soldiers blame the shifting language of the war and the changing policy towards the "hearts and minds" approach when the insurgency gets more powerful. Colby Buzzell's *My War: Killing Time in Iraq* (2005) harbors such a commentary. Buzzell thinks the way "search and destroy missions" are called "movement to contact" and the enemy is called "anti-Iraqi forces" is nothing but a "pussification" of the Army. He complains that the authorities would soon label the war as "operations" and the soldiers as who knows what ("Movement to Contact"). The mentality also causes abuse, when soldiers steal beer and call it "confiscating" products (Crawford, "The Third of July"). As Benjamin Busch puts it in his 2012 memoir *Dust to Dust*, in this way, the "purity of service" is "corrupted by the moral ambiguity of political language," making the language "the first causualty of the war" ("Ash").

[121] See also Conklin (2010) and Johnson and Tarr (2013).

### 3.3.2. American Military Culture

From the viewpoint of structural symbolic interactionism, which views social life in small local or institutional circles, society is made up of "organized systems of interactions and role relationships and as complex mosaics of differentiated groups, communities, and institutions, cross-cut by a variety of demarcations based on class, age, gender, ethnicity, religion, etc." (Stryker 19). The military is a perfect example to this type of institutional circle. According to the symbolic interactionist approach of Erving Goffman, the definition of a certain situation determines the identities of the members of the group. Each member, in order to be part of the group, accepts the definitions provided and agree to behave accordingly (64). In the case of the writers the situation defined is the war itself and the narrators, regardless of their attitude toward the war, try to fit in the role the group determines for them. They engage in "joint actions" that are "repetitive and stable" (Blumer 17). The identities adopted are often valid in a specific place, which is the Iraq warfront. The members have to behave in certain terms within the confines of this place, unless ordered otherwise. At the end of this process, individuals internalize the characteristics attributed to the members of the group. Identities are mutually decided upon once roles are adopted (Stryker 20). As symbolic interactionism based on Goffman's theatrical model suggests, a team is a set of individuals who agree upon a group of definitions (Goffman 64). Every member of the group knows that their fellows do not originally have the required qualities. Yet, they assume that everyone actually "possess" these qualities (10). The group accepts even the "rate-buster," of the factory (Goffman 51) or the pathetic shooter as a result of an informal silent agreement. At some point, performers themselves also consider their fostered behaviors as real, becoming both performers and the audience of their behaviors (Goffman 49). The titles received by the members suggest that the qualities are naturally possessed (Mead 57).

During the Iraq War, service members knew what was expected of them even if they did not know the details of the military action. Therefore, all they could do was to fulfill the roles attributed to them (Stachyra 108). Yet, some soldiers do not perform the roles

expected from them and are thus labeled unfit, as the other, or the outcast. As the members of the group, their punishments are informally practiced and their performative failure is not acknowledged by those outside the group, so as not to shatter the image of the group, which is an entity in consensus. Aidan Delgado, a Buddhist soldier who fought during the Iraq War narrates a smiliar experience in his 2007 memoir *The Sutras of Abu Ghraib: Notes from a Conscientous Objector*.[122] Witnessing American soldiers threatening the innocent Iraqis with their guns for no valid reason, Delgado tells them to stop and he suddenly becomes the "coward" or the "sympathizer." He says, "Five minutes ago I looked around and saw friends," but after his remarks he has become the "stranger" because he "stood up for 'them.'" His fellow soldiers accuse him of being a Muslim and observe his behavior ("Etemennigur").

A similar tension between soldiers and the military institution appears in journalist Jack W. Lynch's 2009 memoir *The Majestic Twelve: The True Story of the Most Feared Combat Escort Unit in Baghdad*. This time a soldier is being criticized for doing more than required. Lynch confesses that he and his unit kill many people with joy. Upon hearing about the unit, the military labels them as "bloodthirsty animals," "lynch mob" and "lynch militia" and want them "dead" instead (114). Lynch, however, explains their reason for being there in Iraq as "hunt[ing] down and kill[ing]" their enemies (114). They are instead expected to "wear an eternal look of sadness that matched the invisible scars of war that killing left on them" (115). Yet, Lynch knows that those who criticize are not less innocent. He recalls watching a combat video with those who criticize and observing their enthusiasm in "watching a man blow apart thirty unarmed men" and finding it "motivating." Lynch knows people think they are "barbarians" because they "killed face to face." For him, these people are hypocritical because they enjoy death from "afar" and view close killings as "sickness" (180). Disturbed by the fact that his own people do not appreciate his efforts, he does not sign up for another tour.

James Harley draws attention to another aspect of tension experienced with the military. In his *The Trouble in Iraq: A Diary of A National Guardsman* (2005), he points out to the ethnic discrimination he witnesses during the war. He tells how members of the

[122] See also Benderman and Benderman (2007).

military hate one another and points out the injustices and dishonest behavior. Since such circumstances exist within the group, it is difficult for them to bring justice to another nation (17). He also mentions the prejudice towards the national guardsmen who are not considered to be soldiers by the rest of the group because of their "inadequate" training. Whether or not their claim is true, they are not "want[ed] around" by the rest of the team (50). Harley's work is one example in which discrimination is observed. Other soldiers also complain that reservists, grunts, snipers, women and gays are alienated due to similar cases of discrimination. Finally, some soldiers are not happy with the institution of the military itself. They complain about their leaders, their fellow soldiers, the illegal and unjust practices that they experience during the war.

Jason Christopher Hartley's 2005 work *Just Another Soldier* sums the negative aspects of the life under the tenets of the military. For Hartley, military life is "to live in a world of shit" where "[y]ou're constantly surrounded by assholes; you have to endure an unending amount of bullshit from your leadership, military regulations and paperwork, and stupid training missions" and cannot even receive your pay and benefits on a regular basis or in determined amounts (Hartley 256). Kayla Williams, on the other hand, think American military system is "communist" in the negative sense since she could get whatever she wants "without doing anything at all" (269). As the examples above reveal, the military does not always satisfy the service members' expectations. Whether it is the military or individual members that complain about the practices of one another, the member of the group is expected to adhere to the informal rules. Otherwise, s/he is exposed to negative labeling and/or some form of banishment.

### 3.3.3. Diminished Human Agency

The boot camp experience is just a beginning for service members to adapt to the formal and informal rules and regulations of being a service member. The rest of the education is received through experience in the war zone. During the war, service members' vision about their diminishing human agency is clearer than their vision of it in the boot camp. They come to realize that in spite of the heroic images attributed to them, they do not have control over their own lives. Feeling incapable and weak, they turn to narrating

their experiences. Bronson Lemer's 2011 work *The Last Deployment: How a Gay, Hammer-Swinging Twentysomething Survived a Year in Iraq*, reveals his existence as a gay man in the military. He feels "stuck" in the military that "strip him of control."[123] He believes that the contract he has signed has handed his fate over to the army. For him the uniform he wears "steals" his individuality while it demotes him to a name, "another pair of hands able to hold a weapon and march into another country, ready to fight" ("Snow Bullets"). As a "simple soldier," he does not have the power to influence anything, but to fulfill the orders given. He wishes he had the power to change the situation:

> I lean on the mop and look down the hall at the line of tracks leading to the back door. Swinging the mop left, then right, I make the footprints disappear, wishing everything was this easy to erase. I wish with a flick of my wrist I could wipe away war, conflict, poverty, get rid of all the muddy footprint in the world. Like playing general during Risk, where I'm about to send troops into battler by moving them forward, I wish I had the power to play such a God-like role. ("Last Supper")

Donovan Campbell's 2009 memoir *Joker One*[124] displays what a soldier does in order to feel better about the situation Lemer describes. Campbell is unhappy of the control over him and how soldiers' lives are considered to be worthless in the eyes of the authorities. He believes that the prayer provides "some comfort that God was in control, that their lives had worth and meaning stemming from an absolute source" (Twenty One). However, when he has negative thoughts, religion does not offer consolation and he considers himself dead and tries to perceive each day "a precious gift that [he] didn't deserve" (Twenty Seven).

Service members also have a lack of control over their actions. As Peter van Buren[125] in his 2011 memoir *We Meant Well: How I Helped Lose the Battle for the Hearts and Minds of the Iraqi Peopl*e suggests[126] that they have a say on "not where or how they slept, not what or when they ate, or when they got shot at, and so almost everything was worth complaining about" ("The Day After A Day at the Embassy"). Michael

[123] See also Hartley (2005).

[124] Campbell's memoir describes Americans as good-willed. He is confused with his two-fold job of saving lives and taking them. Although he questions the ideology of compassionate conservatism, Campbell is still a supporter of the war and defines himself as an American.

[125] Highly critical of the war and the interpellated Americannesss, van Buren finds his people arrogant and ignorant.

[126] See also Kopelman and Roth (2007), Benderman and Benderman (2007) and Williams (2005).

Anthony's experience as a medic in his 2009 memoir *Mass Casualties: A Young Medic's True Story of Death, Deception, and Dishonor in Iraq* proves van Buren right. He tells how the army forced the soldiers to have an anthrax shot which is known to cause side effects, pains and even death. The shots had almost passed their expiration dates (156). Anthony, like the rest of the service members learns that they cannot refuse the shot because if they do "the U.S. Army can do whatever they want to [them]" since they have signed a contract giving up their rights. Service members can be "dishonorably-discharged" (162), fined, jailed because of disobeying the orders and "lose all [their] benefits" (163). Their desperate situation makes Anthony very angry with himself "for not being able to do anything." He feels "powerless," "weak," "not a man," but a "sprocket in the machine of the Army, an easily replaceable sprocket" (51).

Soldiers begin to realize that they shoot "automatically" without even thinking (Bellavia and Bruning, Prologue). Even the sayings in the army display the lack of authority soldiers are supposed to live with. An officer quotes: "If the Army wanted you to have a wife, it would issue you one" (Mansoor 13). The military makes the rules and the opinion of service members do not count. As John Koopman's 2004 work *McCoy's Marines: Darkside to Baghdad* displays, service members are not even "allowed to speak in the first person or the second person," calling themselves "the private" in third person, since they are not considered "human enough" ("Growing Up"). Similar experiences make Kevin Benderman[127] a conscientious objector who would not be let out of the Army although laws permit it.[128] He is falsely charged with disobedience and jailed for being disloyal to the institution. Similar to Benderman, Christopher Brownfield's *My Nuclear Family: A Coming-of-Age in America's 21st Century Military* (2010) narrates his experience of being threatened with military exile. He offers his officers to start an energy-saving project in Iraq but is told to stay "eyes open mouth shot" instead (174). Upon being underestimated, he wants a transfer, but an officer threatens to transfer him to Abu Ghraib prison notorious for prisoner abuse (179). His project eventually becomes very successful. After all he has seen, he calls upon "the

[127] Benderman is a conscientious objector of the Iraq War, but he is silenced by American military authorities in Iraq. His narrative reveals the mistreatment and the injustice he faces and the negative labeling he is exposed to as a result of his decision. He criticizes America's hypocrisy for killing for peace and claiming democracy and labels himself as a human being.

[128] See also Smithson (2009).

men of silent service to break their silence (278). Likewise, James Harley, the author of *The Trouble in Iraq* (2005), is bothered with the fact that their free speech is being limited and questions whether the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights do not cover the service members (108). He thinks the silencing in the military resembles to the silencing of the black America (111), and the Patriot Act will aid the government in disregarding the constitution (133).

### 3.3.4. Tension between Service Members and American Civilians

According to Goffman, individuals show different sides of themselves to different groups of people (31). People behave differently to their children, their club companions, their customers, the laborers they employ, their employers, and their intimate friends (James 128-129). Illario Pantano's 2011 memoir *Warlord: Broken by War, Saved by Grace*, draws attention to his wartime self and his wish to keep it a secret, since the pillars of the civilian life—"parents, religious leaders, teachers and government officials"—always preach against killing. Moreover, he perceives the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," to be the "basic" tenet of American society (167). He obviously feels guilty and does not want his family to know his actions during the war. He does not want his children "to learn about bloodlust and fear and shit and killing," as there was "nothing good in it" (294). Seth W. B. Folsom[129] narrates the same experience in his 2006 work *The Highway War: A Marine Company Commander in Iraq*:

> How would I ever be able to communicate these things to my wife? My family? My children? With the water from the tiny showernozzle cascading down over my head I felt my perception of life as I knew it changing, evolving. One hope filled my heart: that I wouldn't take the burden of my experiences home with me ("Stabilizing Tikrit").

Folsom's wishful thinking proves to be unrealistic when the experiences narrated in Iraq War memoirs are taken into consideration. The behaviors that make service members heroes in the setting of the war make them monsters in the civilian life. Service

[129] Agreeing with Abraham Lincoln that there is no honorable way to kill, Officer Folsom describes Iraq as hell. Still, he feels uncomfortable when people question or criticize the war back home and finds himself defending it. Parallel to his efforts to remain neutral about the war, he prefers to describe himself not as a soldier but as a student and a researcher at the end of his narrative.

members experience difficulty in choosing their identities and leaving identities behind in each setting. They experience a tension with the American civilians also because they realize that not all of them feel thankful for what they have done. Ryan Smithson, in his 2009 memoir *Ghosts of War* complains about this. Reading random letters his unit received from American schoolchildren, he notices how easy it is for children to say "thank you" and how difficult this is for the adults. He thinks the child's courage makes him thank the soldiers (Smithson 137), a comment implicitly stating that adults also appreciate them but, since the war seems to be politically incorrect, they cannot voice their opinions. In other cases, the civilians thank, but the soldier does not appreciate the gesture. In Matt Gallagher's 2011 work, *Kaboom: Embracing the Suck in a Savage Little War,*[130] Gallagher defines the thanks as "empty words from empty people" who do not really care. "Agree or disagree with the war, I don't care," he says "just give a fuck" ("Embrace the Suck"). Gallagher's reproach[131] seems to be the result of being left alone during the war due to the lack of concern and support.

Other authors experience tension with Americans back home due to their critical approach towards the war. In his *Not in the Wind, Earthquake or Fire* (2012), Philip Sharp asks why everyone thanks him for his service to his country. He wonders whether they think he is a "monster" or "some unthinking machine that needs appeasement" ("Just Plain Harra"). According to van Winkle's *Soft Spots* (2009), it is American people's fault that they did not "[open] their mouths a few months before we were staged and ready to go" if they did not want the war (8). He is not "sure if [he] want[s] to take sides anymore," instead he just wants to blend in somewhere (12). Craig T. Olson's *So This Is War: A 3rd U.S. Cavalry Intelligence Officer's Memoirs of the Triumphs, Sorrows, Laughter, and Tears During a Year in Iraq* (2007) harbors criticism for the Americans at home. He cannot understand how people cannot see the difference they are making in Iraq and that they still think dying in war is "in vain." He complains that dying in a car crash is not considered dying in vain but "a soldier who volunteers to do whatever his country asks of him is killed before he hits a ripe old age" is considered

[130] Gallagher's narrative defines the Americans in realistic terms, portraying them both critically and in an appreciative manner. His definitions of the war, thus, remain neutral. He defines himself as a soldier who hates "hajjis" and who loves Internet porn and Emo music. He is the blog-guy who finds America very capitalistic and very democratic at the same time.

[131] See also Kittleson (2005), Mansoor (2008) and Yon (2008).

have died in vain ("The Assault on Tal Afar"). A similar criticism comes from Paul Rieckhoff. He thinks blaming the soldiers for the war instead of the decision-makers, is not much different from "protesting the cows if you don't like McDonalds" (303). Obviously, the soldiers find the civilians' treatment unfair and illogical, which makes them perceive their own people as antagonists. Yet, some soldiers experience tension with their nationals without any valid reason. Fred Minnick, the journalist/author of *Camera Boy: An Army Journalist's War in Iraq* (2007) demonstrates exemplary experiences for this situation. He says he is "distrusted with the public and how uninformed they [are]" about the war. He also feels "irritated" with his family, "for no other reason that [he] fe[els] he [doesn't] belong" and that the world "owed" him something for his year "wasted" in Iraq ("Leave").

As the selections from the life narratives reveal, service members' experiences with the political approach of compassionate conservatism, the limitations and pressure of American military culture, the diminished human agency, as well as the tension between the service members and the civilians cause an already difficult process of wartime identity making to be more complicated. As the war unfolds, the experiences they go through would materialize into new self definitions which would, in the long run, influence their understanding of American national identity.

## 3.4. EMERGING SELF-DEFINITIONS DURING THE WAR

### 3.4.1. Self-Definitions Based on A Failure of Expectations

Soldiers often build their expectations of war on the war stories they have heard or watched and their wartime identities on the war heroes they know. Eager soldiers tend to see themselves in a positive light especially in the beginning of the war.[132] They wish to fight and hope to enjoy killing. Jack Coughlin's 2005 memoir *Shooter* presents its narrator as Gabriel, the angel who blows the trumpet signaling the judgment day. He says his radio call sign is Gabriel because they have "a lot in common." He thinks he does what Gabriel does with his rifle. All he wants is to "hunt down and kill every

[132] Conklin (2010), Blair (2011), Middleton (2009), Rieckhoff (2007), Odom (2008), Gallagher (2011) and Popaditch and Steere (2008).

terrorist [he] could find, to make them pay tenfold for what they had done, so they would think twice before trying it again" ("Touch of an Angel"). David Rozelle similarly thinks he naturally resembles a mythological hero. His 2005 memoir *Back in Action: An American Soldier's Story of Courage, Faith, and Fortitude* depicts his "birth and upbringing" to that of a mythological hero as he is adopted by birth (31). He has been named after a warrior named John Rozelle (32). He boasts about his Texan family line going back to the 1800s, as people who have "a hard time walking away from a fight" (32). As the war unfolds, soldiers' expectations from the war begin to fall short. Donovan Campbell's 2009 memoir *Joker One* has an overall emphasis on its narrator's desire to kill but not having an occasion for it. He wants to live up to his expectations of war so much so that he does not "really care what it [is] that [he] kill[s]" (Twenty Six). Richard C. Meyer's 2005 memoir also displays what Campbell experiences. In his *Four in the Corps: From Boot Camp to Baghdad—One Grunt's Enlistment,* Meyer tells how he tries to compensate for his lack of war experience by thinking about scenes in *Star Wars*:

> Princess Leia's blockade runner is about to be boarded by stormtroopers. Her guards take up battle stations in the hallway as they watch the stormtroopers cut a hole into their ship. That scene had a lot of resonance for me as a child because, after watching it a few times, I realized that those soldiers *knew* they would die, yet they still fought. It was the first time I considered the concept of bravery. ("War")

Yet, real life proves to be different for Meyer. He spends his days in Iraq "lying on [his] cot, staring up at the tent roof as it whipped in the wind." He thinks about stealing other people's MREs,[133] and fantasizes about "destroying other human beings. . . graphically" ("War"). Like Meyer, many soldiers find war so boring that they liken their lives to that of Bill Murray starring in a 1993 film, *Groundhog Day*.[134] The character Murray plays in the film lives the same day over and over again with no change of scenery and events. Matthew D. Wojtecki's memoir *Every Other Four* (2010) blames God for all that does not happen. He asks whether they are there "for someone's sick amusement," and whether God is "punishing him" and punishing "them" (12). He is bored and becomes "lonely, hateful and bitter towards everyone" (12). Clint van Winkle describes the same feeling in different words. He names the bullets "his drugs" and defines himself to be

[133] The abbreviation "MRE" refers to Meal Ready to Eat.
[134] See Mansoor (2008), Rieckhoff (2007), Coppola (2005), Sheehan (2012), Hnida (2010) and Smith (2013).

"desperately" in need of "a fix" (4). Colby Buzzell's definition of the war sums up the experience of disappointment. He thinks it is "possibly the dullest, most anti-climactic experience" they have ever had in their lives, which increases their lust for fight ("To Be Continued").

The nature and the results of the boredom the authors suffer from are explained in Tyler Boudreau's 2008 work *Packing Inferno*. Boudreau describes the Marines as service members who "craved," "lusted for" battle and "smacking [their] lips for the taste of blood" ("The Lustful"). For Boudreau, when there is no one to fight, boredom makes Marines "fight each other," as fighting is the "the buttress of their existence" ("Institutional Violence"). Unlike the bored soldiers who feel disappointed and have a wish for fighting them, those who experience the unexpected and bitter side of the war resort to professionalism to get rid of the responsibility.[135] In his 2005 memoir *Just Another Soldier* Jason Christopher Hartley's explanation for why he does what he does is brief and clear: "After I enlist, it's my job" (263). A similar explanation comes from Illario Pantano's 2011 book *Warlord*: "Killing my country's enemies was my job and I was not apologizing about it to anyone." Different from Hartley, Pantano is okay with the idea that he is "a necessary evil" (485). Jane Blair's *Hesitation Kills* (2011), views professionalism in a different light. For her, the world is in danger and they are there to protect it. She confesses that they have to fight even if they do not believe in the cause, since their professional aim is to keep fellow Marines alive ("Home and A Country"). These "professional" soldiers tend to perceive themselves as not being responsible for what is wrong with the war and focus on doing their jobs only. Their explanations, however, imply that if the war was supported wholeheartedly back home, they would be more willing to own the cause.

### 3.4.2. Self-Definitions Based on the Disillusionment with the War

Some authors go through disillusioning experiences during the war and these experiences lead them to become "vulnerable" soldiers. They feel "crippled," "vulnerable" and terrorized (Blair, "Uncertainty and Human Factors"); they express their desire to go back home, suffer from "outbursts," become "hermit[s]," cry to sleep

[135] See Popaditch and Steere (2008) and Coughlin and Davis (2005).

(Cox 34, 197, 200); feel "worn out" and "tired of the war" (Koopman "Baghdad"); and being "scared shitless" (Hnida 50). They are psychologically vulnerable (Kraft, Prologue) and "misery" gives them "their identity" (Bellavia and Bruning "A Soldier's Prayer"). Befitting the Iraq War soldiers' slogan, "Embrace the Suck!," Hartley, thinks a soldier has,

> . . . an encyclopedic number of ways to suffer. The suffering is physical, psychological, and emotional. It can also be financial, legal, marital, and any other word you can give the *-al* suffix to. There is nowhere you can go to avoid suffering. There is no reprieve, no solace. It is unavoidable and inevitable. You can either cry about it, or you can just learn how to suck it up. (247)

Authors, who depict their vulnerable selves, do not expect to have experiences that would lead them to such a state of emotions in the beginning of the war. War brings disillusionment and makes them lose their enthusiasm and become homesick. The same experiences make some service members question their assumed identities. These questioning soldiers are obviously not happy with what they think they have become. One of these authors, Aidan Delgado, reports feeling "numb" and "dead," as his emotions "are gone as swiftly and completely as if a switch had been flicked off." Seeing his friends taking photographs with Iraqi skulls by the mass graves Saddam Hussein ordered, he is,

> . . .consumed with self-doubt, self-loathing, about being where I am. . . . I feel intensely hypocritical. . . . Every day that I stay in the military I feel more a traitor to my beliefs. The Army that I imagined, the mythological Army that captures my imagination as a boy, has proved illusory. I've come to see the Army in the worst form, a distortion of itself: violence, threats, dogma, and hatred. . . . my friends and comrades. . . have changed; something in them has gone black. I have changed too. . . . I have no desire to fight anyone, even those I am supposed to call my enemy. ("Ettemennigur")

Shannon Meehan, in his 2009 memoir *Beyond Duty: Life on the Frontline in Iraq*, expresses similar emotions. He comes to realize that war is not a force that "simply rip[s] away [their] lives, but rip[s] away who [they] were or who [they] might have become" (7). His orders have caused the death of an innocent family of eight people most of whom are children which makes him confused (21). He begins to feel "something growing inside of [him]. It felt like a disease, palpable and invasive, and [he] felt it reaching throughout [him] and pulling [him] inward, away from the world and the war and toward something dark, and deep, and lonely" (21). He does not feel as

a "hero" or "a great American" (26). Tyler Boudreau's experiences with the "hierarchy," "exploitation," "manipulation," "desperation," "racism," "clash of morality and immorality," "the constant awareness of survival" and "hatred" makes him feel, in Martin Luther King's terms "the passive acceptor and cooperator of evil" ("Foyer to Hell"). A similar dissatisfaction is observed in Dan Sheehan's 2012 memoir *After Action: The True Story of a Cobra Pilot's Journey*. Sheehan complains that his life depends on binary oppositions such as "black and white," "enemy or friendly," "to be killed" or "to be protected" (2). He cannot help feeling guilty about what he does and tries to get rid of the feelings of guilt by saying "*it's war, they lost. Get over it*" (6). He begins to question his identity and whether he is "right" to kill since he does not feel "victorious or proud" as he is supposed to be, but "dirty" instead (14). Rob Smith,[136] in his 2003 book *Closets, Combat and Coming Out: Coming of Age as a Gay Man in the "Don't Ask Don't Tell Army*," feels that the black color of his skin makes him a traitor. He realizes that he cannot be himself during the war and his experiences have turned him into a "monster" ("Rabbit Hole"). Christopher Brownfield (2010), similarly, feels like an "executioner," now that he is no longer in the "video game world" (271). As the examples reveal service members' war experiences become a burden they cannot overcome. They do not feel powerful, heroic or "clean," but weak, vulnerable and lonely.

In the narratives, soldiers, who have emotional responses, keep their feelings to themselves as they experience the war. In some works, being emotional is interpreted as a normal and necessary behavior. Similar to the veterans' feelings after the war, many service members feel lonely, hateful, bitter, helpless, powerless, self-hating, guilty, confused and embarrassed during the war and try to keep their emotions under control. Many narratives cover authors' attempts at coping with their feelings. Although some of them try to ignore their feelings and think about "just facts" to prevent emotions from "hurt[ing]" them, they cannot help but feel "hypocritical" (Delgado "Etemennigur"). All they do is to "make it impersonal and tell [themselves they] didn't give a shit one way or another, even though [they] really did" (van Winkle 4).

[136] A critic of the Iraq War, Smith narrates the difficulties of being a gay soldier in the military and his experience with the enemy. His difficulties and the mistreatment he witnesses make him a gender activist upon his return home.

Philip Sharp continuously interrupts his narrative to tell how much he misses his wife and how much he needs her (2012), while Ryan A. Conklin mentions each and every day how he wishes to be home and how he misses it (2010). Eric J. Cox, likewise, worries so much over what her mother and girlfriend will think about him that he cannot concentrate on what he is doing and cannot overcome his depressive mood during his service in Iraq (2009). John Crawford does not hide his emotional reaction although he does not talk about it out loud. He defines his wartime self as a "a Valium and Prozac type guy" ("Southern Boys") and openly expresses that he wants to "be a little boy again," meaning he does not care about becoming a "man" any longer ("What Happens When War Happens"). For Jesse Odom, the author of *Through Our Eyes* (2008), weeping is not something to be ashamed of although they have now become "men" who fight for "patriotic and noble reasons." He no longer thinks that showing emotions would make them less heroic (Chapter 16). Heidi Kraft,[137] a clinical psychologist who wrote *Rule Number Two: Lessons I Learned in A Combat Hospital* (2007), says it is possible to come across vulnerable ones even among "extraordinary" people who display courage and sacrifice. For her, they just "need" to cry (Prologue). According to a sniper, Jack C. Coughlin, although they are "supposed to be coldhearted and must be able to control [themselves] no matter what is going on," they are "still human" and it is their "feelings and emotions" that distinguish them from "psychotic killers" ("A Call Home"). Sheri Snively's[138] 2010 book *Heaven in the Midst of Hell: A Quaker Chaplain's View of the War in Iraq*, speaks from a similar vantage point. She thinks people should not be "afraid of emotions," because emotions make them "human" and motivate them (83). The representations of the emotional soldiers demonstrate realistic depictions of American soldiers. Such a display of feelings were thought to be non-existent among soldiers once. The war experience makes them understand that being

[137] As a clinical psychologist who served in Iraq, Kraft treats the war in neutral terms and canalizes her attention to the human sufferings in relation to the war. She depicts the Americans as vulnerable soldiers who are human beings rather than superheroes. Her remaining identity at the end of her experience of war is her professional identity.

[138] Snively's memoir narrates her experiences as a Quaker chaplain who encourages the service members to express their emotions, despite the forbidding masculine code of the American military. She believes that emotions make soldiers human. Although, her service to Americans from a variety of unexpected religious preferences causes her to receive negative criticism, she does what she believes to be right and views herself and the Americans at the warfront primarily as human beings.

emotional is all right, yet, they still hide their emotions from others in Iraq and back in America.[139]

### 3.4.3. "Transformed" Identities

3.5.3.1. Personal Transformations

Many narratives prove to have narrators who transform as a result of their wartime experiences. The authors of these narratives go through personal, professional, political, gender and psychological transformations. James E. Lewandowski's *Road Hunter in the Land between the Rivers* (2007) covers his transformation at a personal level and reports that the war has changed soldiers from cheerful men to angry, frustrated, disgusted, bitter, impatient, hateful men ("Dangerous Highway"). John Crawford, the author of *The Last True Story I'll Ever Tell* (2005), thinks he and his fellow soldiers "de-evolved into animals" during the war ("Sharks in the Tigris"). Colby Buzzell's *My War: Killing Time in Iraq* (2005) narrates that he has become "the bad guy" as a result of his experiences with Iraqi civilians ("To Be Continued"). Aidan Delgado's *The Sutras of Abu Ghraib* (2007) narrates Delgado's experiences which lead him to become a conscientious objector and a "real" Buddhist, while Christopher Brownfield, the author of an 2012 memoir titled *My Nuclear Family*, finds out during the war that his "childhood hero" John McCain (223) and the republicans, in general, worry more over catching up with appearances than justice, "without respecting inalienable human rights" (220). At the end of his narrative Brownfield declares that he has become a supporter of the Democratic Party and that he has been offered a position in it (280). As the war unfolds, Chris Kyle, the author of *American Sniper* (2012), who introduced himself as "The Devil of Ramadi" ("The Punishers"), "the most prolific American sniper of all time" ("Man Down"), the "real cowboy" ("Bustin' Broncs"), and the hunter ("Takedowns") decides to leave the army and be a father to his son. He feels someone else can take his place in the army but no one can take his place at home ("Hard Times"). Brian Castner, the author of *The Long Walk: Story of War and the Life that*

[139] Bellavia and Bruning (2007), Rieckhoff (2007), Boudreau (2008), Benderman and Benderman (2007), Lemer (2011), Lutrell (2012), Jadick and Hayden (2007), Williams (2005), Kyle et.al. (2012) and Middleton (2009).

*Follows* (2013), narrates that his war experiences killed the "old [him]" in Iraq. He "left for Iraq and never came home." The "husband" of his wife, the "father" of his children disappears. The old "him" playing the guitar, laughing at dumb movies, who "love[s] to read" died "from a thousand blasts," "covered in children's blood"[140] ("The Science and the Chakras"). As all these examples illustrate, the war changes their lives in a way that cannot be undone.

3.5.3.2. Professional Transformations

Some authors experience transformation on professional levels. Although they join the service or are assigned to it as doctors, journalists, firefighters or chaplains, they consciously or unconsciously adopt soldier identities during the war. These service members take the roles of the performer and the audience at the same time, since they are there to support the troops even if it is not their job to take active part in combat and policy. The complicated role of these service members makes them both members and non-members of the group. Goffman names such members as "nonpersons" who are "expected to be present in the front region," yet these are people "who [aren't] there" (Goffman 95). These actors "select, check, suspend, regroup, and transform the meanings in the light of the situation in which [they are] placed and the direction of [their] action" (Blumer 5). As a result of their interactions and formative process, they adopt patterns of behaviour which determine their identities. According to Blumer, "[a] tree will be a different object to a botanist, a lumberman, a poet, and a home gardener" (11). Similarly, the Iraqi people—civilian or insurgent—are perceived differently by these "nonpersons," now that their identity is no longer limited to being the doctor, journalist, chaplain or firefighter.

After the Vietnam War quagmire, the military "hated the press." During the Gulf War, reporters could not cover the war properly due to problems of transportation and physical danger. Journalists who reported the war in Afghanistan could not come up with "comprehensive" work. Yet, the situation changed during the war in Iraq. The Arab media was covering the war, presenting American forces as brutal. The lack of

[140] See also Meehan and Thompson (2009), Boudreau (2008), Sheehan (2012) and Minnick (2009).

American journalists made it impossible to prove otherwise. Therefore, American journalists were embedded in the battlefield (Koopman "Journalism"). Anthony Feinstein thinks the Iraq War experience with over two thousand journalists resembles being "in bed with the military" (155). Journalists wear military helmets, flack-jackets, nuclear, biological, chemical suits and receive military training. This does not only put journalists in physical danger by making them targets, but it also "confuses the role" of the journalist (Adie 44). They are physically embedded, yet, professionally "unilateral" and naturally have a "complicated relationships with the military" (Feinstein 171). National identity is sometimes a burden in performing objective journalism (Allan and Zelizer 4) and, in some cases, the military interferes with the work of the journalists to keep the news under control. Moreover, journalists who patrol and actively work in the combat zone begin to show symptoms of PTSD (Feinstein171).

The experience of journalists in Iraq, which is briefly described above, is not much different from the experiences of doctors, chaplains or other support members in Iraq. They all wear combat uniforms; they spend most of their days with soldiers and officers; they eat together; sleep together and feel themselves as part of the group. It is observed that, this common experience is projected on the war narratives, often in the form of using the pronoun "we" to refer to the group made up of the doctor/journalist/chaplain-self and the soldiers. As a result of such experiences, some service members define themselves with the military success and failures of the combat members, considering themselves to be part of the combat forces, attempting to take the role of the soldiers consciously or unconsciously and leaving their previous identities behind.

Richard Jadick's 2007 memoir *On Call in Hell: A Doctor's Iraq War Story* serves as an example to the depiction of such an identity transformation. Going "literally everywhere that Marines do" (7), Jadick adopts the Marine ways. He idolizes the American Marine and finds the Marine's prayer written on a piece of paper and believes that the prayer is meant for him:

> Give me the will to do the work of a Marine and to accept my share of responsibilities with vigor and enthusiasm. Grant me the courage to be proficient in my daily performance. Keep me loyal and faithful to my superiors and to the duties my Country and the Marine Corps have entrusted to me. Make me considerate of

> those committed to my leadership. Help me to wear my uniform with dignity, and let it remind me daily of the traditions which I must uphold. If I'm inclined to doubt, steady my faith; if I am tempted, make me strong to resist; if I should miss the mark, give me courage to try again. (242)

He frequently talks about the character and job of the Marines, their values and heroism. "[W]e're all part of the same team," he says. He defines Marines as service members who are "going about their duties in a very calm, businesslike way," and "that's what [he] want[s]—being calm, under control, and unemotional" (33). He thinks as a doctor he "needs" to "follow the fight into the city" and "to get closer" (160). He admits that he wants to be there in the fight and that he "deserve[s] to be there," since he "hadn't lived the life [he]'d lived up until that point just to sit back and sip tea with old ladies over the far side of the horizon" (186).

Carey H. Cash, a Baptist chaplain serving in Iraq, confesses that he would use his weapon, if a Marine or sailor is in danger. He loves the military ("For Such a Time As This") and uses the pronoun "we" to refer to the corps and names the marine motto "Make Peace or Die!" as "their" motto. He reports having "been given a mission to tear down and destroy, to go into the teeth of enemy territory and wage war." He reports that he follows the example of "their" first sergeants, since "they" are in the corps for at least fifteen years and have "witnessed every possible 'knuckleheaded' mistake a young Marine can make" ("An Unexpected Feast"). Moreover, he is without doubt in "excellent physical fitness and wears one of the most striking uniforms in the battalion" ("K.I.A."). The first sergeants obviously serve as an example for Cash himself. His perception of the Iraqi people as lacking civilization and living in the wilderness resembles the perception of the eager soldiers and is visibly different from the perception of the all-embracing attitude of the chaplain-authors of other works ("Fiery Furnace"). As a chaplain, Cash believes that "God has the heart of an infantryman" ("Assa-lamu-alay-Kum") and he likens the American to King David in the Bible who fights "cruel, unrelenting enemies bent on his destruction" (Preface). He feels God is watching them and is on their side. Cash unexpectedly steps out of his role as a chaplain and becomes a supporter of the war and the promoter of the American soldier, whom he manages like the way a first sergeant would do.

A 2009 memoir, *Camera Boy, by Fred Minnick* also employs the pronoun "we."[141] As a cameraman embedded within the Army, he says: "'We' tried to Americanize" the Iraqi people and adds: "to teach them how to brush their teeth, wash their hands and use American toilets" ("Intangible Casualties"). Being alone in the tower one day, he suspects an Iraqi and wants to point his gun at him to kill him. He names himself as a "soldier" and begins to hate the Iraqis. He wonders "the emotions Vietnam vets went through when some of them committed illegal war acts, and [whether] this [is] what the soldiers at Abu Ghraib thought." Eventually he decides not to kill the man by saying that "I am an American soldier, not a killer. I'm a defender of peace. I'm not a barbarian" ("WhenTime Stood Still").

Thomas A. Middleton, the author of *Saber's Edge: A Combat Medic in Ramadi, Iraq* (2009), expresses his desire for "a piece of action," and "desire for revenge" "Mobilization"). Despite being a combat medic and a firefighter at the same time, he goes on patrols with the soldiers and "they" search houses for enemies ("Taking the Fight to the Enemy"). He concludes that the enemy "needs" to die ("Faith and the Just War"). His rage does not fit in his professional identity as a doctor who is supposed to save lives rather than take them:

> I want to kill these despicable cowards. I want to kill a lot of them, in the most violent manner possible. They are constantly trying to kill us, and I am tired of being on the defensive. I want to go to their homes, yank them out of the beds made safe by the ultimate sacrifices of my brothers, drag them out into the cold dark streets by their hair, and end their lives with vengeance and malice. I want to desecrate their bodies in humiliation, and leave them for the dogs. ("Midnight Raid on al-Qaeda")

He realizes that he has turned "from medic to soldier in an instant" and he promises that he will never "let [his] guys down, and [he would fight] viciously right behind them." Not going to the combat zone with the troops is "incredibly emasculating" for him ("Target: Irhabee"). He defines his crew as a "strange" one made up of "a medical officer driving, a chaplain riding shotgun, and [him]—a combat medic—as a roof gunner ("The Battle of OP 2"). At one point he begins to refer to himself solely as a soldier. His self-definion shifts from "a team player" ("Fight to the Enemy") to a "warrior; from a Catholic Eucharist" ("The streets of Tameem") to a "medic; and from

[141] See also Koopman (2014).

"a willing stalker of evil" to a warrior, who adopts the Marine motto "No better friend no worse enemy" ("My Last Battle"). The fact that service members who haven't been in active combat cannot earn medals and awards and more importantly they are not called heroes or appreciated as much as active combat members attract support forces to adopt the soldier identity. The soldier identity is already dominant in the war zone. The experiences of living in the military culture, receiving basic military training and looking like the soldiers with their uniforms and equipments, the doctors, the chaplains, and the journalists cannot help being influenced by the soldier identities which might lead to identity transformations as the examples above reveal.

### 3.5.3.3. Gender Transformations

Some authors have to hide and suppress their actual gender performances to fit into the male-dominated military world. Success, for them, is only possible through giving up certain behaviors and they are willing to give them up. Throughout the process of adaptation, however, they are conscious about what they have lost by giving up their gender identities. Unlike the exemplified previous transformations, gender transformations among female and gay service members are part of a survival strategy.

Bronson Lemer's *The Last Deployment: How a Gay, Hammer-Swinging Twentysomething Survived a Year in Iraq* (2011) presents the transformation of a gay man into an "army man" with a mustache pretending to be "manly" ("Mustache Race"), owning a topless woman calendar ("Last Supper"), behaving "violent and greedy" ("Even Pawns Have Legs") and wishing to be like the movie character Charles Bronson, who is a war hero, when "bad guys" attack ("If Charles Bronson Was Here"). He is aware of his transformation and expresses his reluctance to be "one of them" but he cannot help it. The "camouflaged mask—a disguise" turns him into "a different person" ("Even Pawns Have Legs"). He has to keep his queerness as a secret in the "Don't Ask Don't Tell Army" which causes his transformation from the "chaser" to the "chased" ("Olympic Hopefuls"). Although he finds this transformation negative, once he is back home, he finds the courage to come out as a gay man who can live as he wishes since he has survived the war ("Out Came A Spider").

Kimberley Olson, the author of *Iraq and Back: Inside the War to Win the Peace* (2007), on the other hand, seems to know what choices she has to pick from to get what she wants in the "male-dominated world of the Air Force or the larger domain of foreign policy, and national security" (11). She would either be a woman who "keeps her head down, draws no attention," "causes no waves" and "does little to improve the institution" or one who "works within the system, find the right men as mentors, and changes the system from within" (11). As a woman who wants to be a pilot and rise in the military rank, he chooses to be the second type, accepting to exist under male authority and guidance. Although she depicts herself to be the "wrong girl to say no to" (67), she confesses having learned "at a ripe old age of twenty-two," to keep her "natural female emotions in check," since "caring, compassion, and crying were liabilities, weaknesses" (85). "[C]ruel comment[s,]," "critical looks[s]," "rejection by peers" or "simply loneliness at being the only woman" makes her construct her "emotional fortress" which she believes would provide her a shelter for survival (85). She is known to be the "Ice Queen," "hard, cold and not very compassionate." She never has an option to enjoy the "middle ground." She is either a "prowl" when she accepts to date someone, or a "lesbian" when she rejects to. She chooses to be the tough one who goes around saying: "I am so good I could fly your ass and out again, and you wouldn't even know it." Her confessions reveal that she has been trying to be "just one of the boys." She would drink with them, "curse like a sailor," and "brag about [her] flying exploits" in order to "fit in." Yet, her "tough persona mask[s] a real need to be accepted, loved, and appreciated" (85). She thinks from time to time whether she would be happier if she gave up her career and "stayed at home with her children" (88). She thinks women have to "shatter invisible glass ceilings" in the male-dominant career fields" and implies that she is afraid to take independent action because then the glass might smash and "rain down" on her (99). Her choice determines the rest of her career and only her memoir reveals her feelings about having an identity based on her job.

As the examples reveal, the emerging service member identities during the war are mainly shaped by the failure of expectations from the government and the military (leading to eager, bored and professional soldiers), by the disillusionment with the war (leading to vulnerable soldier, questioning soldier and emotional soldier identities), and through the transformations (personal, professional and gender transformations) authors

go through. All these emerging identities except for the professional transformations cause authors develop critical approaches towards American national identity.

## 3.5. CRITICAL APPROACHES TO AMERICAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

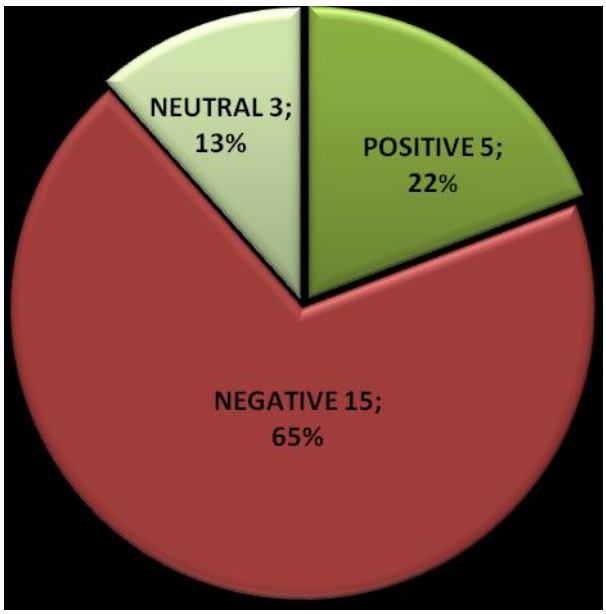


Fig. 10. Perception of national identity (Out of twenty three definitions available)

In parallel to the results of the statistics about authors' remaining identities in the end of their narratives, the definitions of American identity the authors provide during the war indicate a descent in the popularity of traditional positive definitions of American identity. Among the twenty three definitions available, only five works employ positive definitions (twenty two %), while sixteen definitions are critical (sixty five %) and the remaining three definitions are neutral (thirteen %).

The authors who perceive the American identity in positive terms define America as "a reluctant Superpower with a conscience" (Hughes Chapter 5) having a population of "good folks" (Chapter 10); a "brave" (Wojtecki 17) "world power" (2); a country with "highly-spirited, knowledgeable, and cohesive" but "vulnerable" people, "willing to offer a helping hand when [they] perceived a need" (Ruff and Roper "Gearing up for War"). According to Donovan Campbell's *Joker One* (2009), Americans are "decent

people who truly did desire the best for others, even if [they] didn't always know how to go about providing it" (Chapter 10). For Campbell, a decent American would "do [his/her] small part to fight to keep [his/her] country great." Moreover, s/he does not have to be in the service to serve the country. Selfless service is a matter of a lifetime ("Afterword"). Carey H. Cash's *A Table in the Presence* (2004) likens Americans to biblical warriors such as "Samson against the Philistines, Gideon against the Midianites, Elijah against the pagans on Mount Carmel, King David against the Amalekites." Americans are "chosen by God to lead God's people," "animated by the Spirit of God to wage war for the cause of truth and righteousness." They are "powerful in spiritual and physical strength, singular in purpose and unswerving in this mission to eradicate evil and injustice" ("Assa-lamu-alay-Kum").

Those who perceive the American identity in negative terms, on the other hand, describe Americans as "legatees of war," who are hypocritical for opposing the fight for oil but demanding "the lifestyle it affords" (Boudreau, "Perseverance"). For Charles Glass, America is the "empire" and "has what it wants: many servants and no allies (Tuesday 1, April 2003). Van Buren agrees with the idea that America has become an empire ("Help Wanted No Experience Necessary") and thinks Americans have "suffered" from their "arrogance" and "embraced ignorance," being "disresponsible" which, he says, means being "a step beyond irresponsible" ("Exhaling: Leaving Iraq"). James Harley defines Americans as invaders disguising their original intents "in the name of democracy" (14). He also thinks that Americans suffer from "arrogance[142] and [their] superiority complex" (161). Bronson Lemer, in his 2011 memoir, *The Last Deployment*, describes Americans as people who want "the feeling of power that people get when residing over littler things":

> We wanted to feel that power as we stared at the fox or skunk or cat trapped at the bottom of our hole. What we didn't think about was what would happen after we caught our fox or skunk or cat. Would we simply keep it trapped while we took weekly trips down to the whole to admire our catch and give each other high fives? How would we release the animal? Or would we release the animal? How would we feel if, one day, after a few weeks of admiring our fox/skunk/cat, we walked to the hole and found the animal dead? What would we do then? (Prologue)

[142] See also Kyle et.al. (2012).

For Ferner,[143] on the other hand, the real American heroes are not the Americans who fight the war but Americans who "tried to stop this war before it began" (Dedication). For James Stephenson, Americans do not have to be "the world's policeman" ("Epilogue"). Benjamin Busch thinks Americans have a tendency toward violence. He believes "typical American boys" like "destruction, violence, guns and blowing things up. . . getting dirty, playing dirty, and pretending to go to war" ("Water"). For Colby Buzzell, this stems from the fact that Americans "love the sting of the battle" ("Punish the Deserving"). For Benderman, war is "glamorized entirely too much" by the Americans and perceived as a "way to become a man" (vxx). Like Benderman, Alan Feuer[144] also criticizes the importance of manhood for the Americans. The American nation, for him, "is in the hands of cowboys now, roughs, toughs, bugle-blowers, acolytes of the aggressive pose," who have "never been through combat" or experienced the "nullities of war" (25). America as well as the American has become a "commodity" and a "myth" Arab people yearn for but cannot reach, since the myth's existence "is a fantasy" and the commodity "a come-on" (101). Robert Earle[145] thinks Americans are "forces of *dis*order" (41; my emphasis). For Christopher Hartley, Americans are "really good at fostering individual development" (258). In truth, they are leading materialistic lives victimized by capitalism (Hartley 258-259). Hartley thinks the way Americans think they are special makes them resemble the children in kindergarten, each of whom are made to believe they are special and unique (260). His definition of American and the American is bitterly critical:

> . . . we knew if we didn't go buy some shit, the terrorists would win. Nothing is more American than the Gap, so we purchased tastefully boring clothing at affordable prices. Then we had lunch at Hooters, where we ordered food from a predictable menu and drank light beer served from a plastic pitcher. We had horrible service from a semi-hot girl. This is what America is all about. This is what we fought for, right. (320)

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[143] As a journalist critical of the war, Ferner's American heroes are those who "tried to stop the war before it began." His major source of identity is that of a human being.

[144] Feuer is a self-conscious middle-class Midwestern Jew. His obsession with the notion of manliness and the idea of working for *The New York Times* combined with his satirical attitude towards George W. Bush makes his narrative a fun read.

[145] Having served as an American strategist in Iraq, Earle defines American forces as forces of disorder instead of forces of order and likens Americans to Napoleon in Russia. He openly criticizes the war and displays the identity of a constructive patriot.

The negative definitions of the American, like Hartley's, do not necessarily have negative influence on American people. Instead, they could help Americans see the war and the American from alternative perspectives which are more realistic at their worst when compared to the perspective of those who adopt the ideal/mythic American identity. This chapter exposes how negative wartime experiences, military-civilian tension, diminishing human agency and the impasse nation's foreign policy led to, make authors question and/or give up internalizing interpellation. The exclusionary rhetoric of the politicians as well as the repressive nature of the military institution deepens contradictions between certain American values (individualism, democracy and equality) and what is expected from those who are interpellated as the ideal/mythic Americans. As authors question and refute the identities attributed to them, they come up with their own self-definitions. The change in the sources of their identity proves that the ideal/mythic American identity has lost its credibility for the service members during the course of the Iraq War.

No longer being subjects of interpellation, authors regain their previously diminished human agency and are liberated from enforced group loyalty. Their alternative definitions for the war and the American weaken the collective meanings, which could cause dysfunction of the ideology that makes the implementation of the war possible. In other words, these works are politically capable of influencing America's understanding of the American national identity which would in the long run determine whether politicians would be able to wage other wars.

## 3.6. CLOSE READING: PAUL RIECKHOFF'S *CHASING GHOSTS*

Paul Rieckhoff is an activist who founded Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, as well as the author of the Iraq War memoir *Chasing Ghosts: Failure and Facades in Iraq, A Soldier's Perspective* (2006). In his memoir, he writes about his experience of leading an infantry platoon in Baghdad in the early days of the occupation. His narration aims at making his critical voice heard by "the generation of politicians" who "failed America's veterans—and the American people—in 2004," refusing to "hear [veterans] and treat[ing] [them] as outsiders" (307). Now that the Iraq War is over, he names his

"new mission" as "fight[ing] for America back home" (309). His work is culturally and historically significant in that it answers the question why American national identity declines in popularity and points to alternative views on the war and who Americans have become. The narrative also deals with the negative-labeling of Iraqi people as well as the enemy, the elements that complicate self-definitions of the veterans and the emerging self-definitions during the Iraq War. It can be labeled as a counter-narrative of the war, revealing the changing definitions of the words "enemy," "hero," "terrorist," "American," "un-American," "patriot," "good guy" and "bad guy" during the war. Chuck Palahniuk thinks "[n]o book since Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* has depicted this gruesome subject so compellingly" and that Rieckhoff "should make room on his mantel for the Pulitzer Prize" (Lappé).

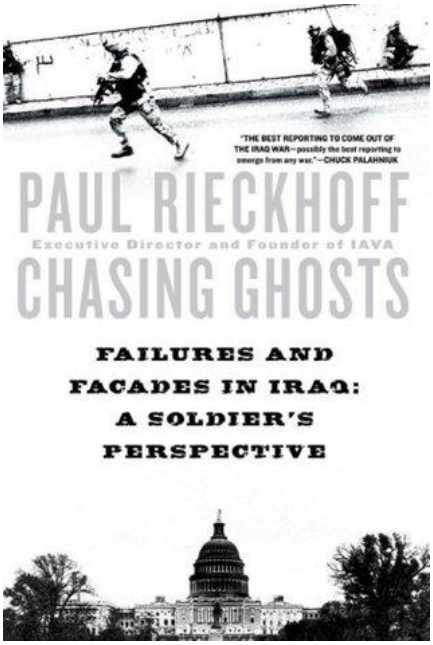


Fig. 11. The cover of Paul Rieckhoff's 2006 memoir *Chasing Ghosts: Failures and Facades in Iraq, A Soldier's Perspective*.

Rieckhoff's memoir is made up of twenty seven chapters including epitextual insertions of a glossary for military terms, a guide for American military ranks and titles and the timeline of the Iraq War. The first three chapters deal with the journey to Iraq, the following seventeen chapters deal with the time Rieckhoff experiences the war first hand, while the last seven chapters deal with the post-war experiences of him including his finding a voice. The tone of the work shifts from harshly critical to humanitarian.

Besides being a war memoir, and an act of witnessing, Rieckhoff's work is also an example of a conversion narrative, revealing its narrator's shifting point of view towards the notion of war after experiencing it.

Rieckhoff names himself as "part of a generation of soldiers who assumed war would be just like in the movies" and he thinks this participation causes him to view "everything cinematically" (4). Combat is "etched in the heads [of the members of his generation] as a series of slow-motion scenes featuring brave men firing guns and screaming triumphantly, with "adagio for Strings" swirling around them" (4-5). For Rieckhoff, having watched American combat classics like *Platoon, Full Metal Jacket, The Deer Hunter,* and *Saving Private Ryan* and "[v]iolent and inspiring underdog stories" like *Glory, Gladiator*, and *Braveheart,* makes American soldiers think that they would be "heroes" (5). He also joins the United States Armed Forces because he wants to be "a hero," "a noble warrior," and "the ultimate American badass" (5). He wants to "fight the good fight" like Jed Eckert of the movie *Red Dawn* (1984). In the movie, Eckert is the "ordinary, straight-talking American kid, until the morning the Soviets invade America and enemy paratroopers drop into his Midwestern town" (5). The film's tagline is "*The invading armies planned everything—except for eight kids called 'The Wolverines*.'" The film depicts the struggle of Eckert (Patrick Swayze), his little brother Matt (Charlie Sheen) and "a ragtag bunch of high school kids in a daring escape to the mountains," so as to "courageously take on the evil army of occupiers" (5). They fight on horseback with unconventional tactics against the enemy who has a "superior military force and incredible odds," (5). Their rebellion inspires others and a nationwide emergency breaks out, making Eckert and his guerilla team win the fight (5). During his first watch, Rieckhoff imagines doing what Eckert does with his brother, friends and dog if occupiers invaded his hometown Peekskill, Arden Drive (6). The film enters the Guinness World Records for "having the most acts of violence of any film up to that time" and it was, for Rieckhoff, "the greatest thing [he has] ever seen" (5).

Apart from his desire to be like Jed Eckert, Rieckhoff chooses to serve in Iraq because he feels he would "never be able to look at [himself] in the mirror or be a good father to [his] future children," unless America goes to war and he "didn't do [his] part" (8). In addition, he wants to "test [his] mettle," and thinks Iraq War experience is suitable for

this purpose since war is “the oldest, and the ultimate, extreme sport” (8). He also mentions his “hunger for combat” despite his “distrust for the president” and his lack of belief in the cause of the war (18). Rieckhoff does not think many people of his generation serve for patriotic reasons, and neither does he, as the student of a “liberal collegiate” in the “well-heeled part of Western Massachusetts” (7). Although, his grandfather has been to Philippines; his father has been to Vietnam; and he himself has been to Iraq, his reason for going to war is far from fulfilling a family tradition. For him, the deal is simple: “If you were American and working-class, you served in the military” (13). Perceiving military service as a “job” fulfilled by those who need money, Rieckhoff thinks the average American naturally does not care about the American soldiers in Iraq during the war. Like many service members, Rieckhoff also experiences a tension with American civilians because he realizes that not all of them care for what American soldiers are doing in Iraq. He thinks civilians do not care about the war “unless they had someone serving in it” (33). Employing statistics to show how few Americans have experienced the Iraq War (%1), he claims that this situation makes empathy impossible among American soldiers and civilians. Rieckhoff believes that the lower rate of joining the service during the Iraq War is caused by indifference. For him, “New York doesn’t stop to think about anyone or anything,” which he both “love[s] and hate[s] about home” (33). Seeing that American lives are “uninterrupted” with a “threat of the draft,” “increase in taxes,” and “sacrifice” of any sort and realizing that war meant “all benefits” and “no risks” to the Americans, he cannot help but “hate them all,” naming their patriotism “Patriotism Lite” (266).

Beside the tension with American civilians, Rieckhoff is also bothered by his diminishing human agency due to the lack of information about the war. He feels he cannot take meaningful action or have control over his actions. He thinks many American soldiers feel similarly because they are “missing the key facts,” partly due to the lowness of their ranks (36). “Dwelling in misery,” soldiers try to fill in the information gaps by using their imagination, which at some point turns them all into “paranoids” (36). He quotes William S. Burroughs to describe the paranoia he talks about. For Burroughs, a paranoid is “someone who knows little of what’s going on.” Rieckhoff’s paranoid attitude stems from the fact that information was purposefully kept from the service members in order “to preserve the relation between the superhero

and his community as harmonious" (Stachyra 108). In this way, soldiers would know the roles attributed to them and would be content with the idea of doing something good for the nation (109). Yet, knowing little about the war makes Rieckhoff feel so unsafe that he even imagines that the daily call for prayer in Arabic is referring to:

> Praise Allah! Allah is the most high! Praise Allah! Give thanks to the most high!" Or maybe it was: "Kill all the Americans! Kill that big fucker in Third Platoon who pissed me off last week and arrested Mr. Hassan down on Haifa Street! Blow him up, and all his friends! Send those infidel bastards back to their commercialized morally devoid wasteland! Do it tomorrow at six AAAAAMMMMM! (62)

As his imaginary translation reveals, Rieckhoff is seriously troubled with "the absence of information" and "compounded by the enormity of war" (36). He finds his situation to be "maddening" and causing the Iraq War soldier to be "jumpy, edgy, and chomping at the bit" (36). For him, military members suffer from this problem whether they are "a four-star General" or a "Private First Class" (36). Yet, "the lower his rank, the more he dwells in mystery, and the more he struggles to connect the dots," which Rieckhoff thinks is the reason behind the "nastiness and hostility" of the war zone, since it contributed to the "frustration level" of the service member" (36).

Rieckhoff's personal responses to certain events clash with assumed responses of the members of the military. He is also bothered about the failure of his expectations and how he would be transformed. He is not only disillusioned about American politicians, but also about American soldiers and civilians as a result of his unexpected and bitter war experiences. Eventually, he feels completely disappointed with the war. He reports that, apart from the frustration soldiers generally suffer from, he has a hard time "compartmentalizing" his negative emotions "deep in the back of [his] mind" to prevent them from "bubbling up" and "exposing weakness" which would leave him "vulnerable" (259). He describes the general emotional condition of the American soldier as "angry" and even "pissed" due to the "heat, the shooting, the outdated flak jackets, the lack of information, the shitty chow, the IEDs (Improvised Explosive Device, aka roadside bombs), the sight of [their] wounded buddies, the lack of sex, the holidays missed, the boredom, the uncertainty, the complete and total lack of control over [their] own lives" (98). He adds that the "only group of people to take it out on" is the Iraqis (98). The "virulent hatred" simply serves for them an "antidote to fear and

anxiety" (Burke 139). Being harsh on the Iraqi people is described to be always easy since American leaders already call them "savages," a word British people used to refer to Americans "when the Americans used guerilla tactics in the Revolutionary War" (Rieckhof 102). However, he does not perceive Iraqi people inferior to the Americans. On the contrary, he thinks that "the fate of Iraqi civilians and American soldiers [are] intimately intertwined" during the war (155).

Rieckhoff provides an alternative definition for the Iraqi people, in response to the abstract Iraqi image provided by the politicians and the "demonised, feminised and dehumanised" image widely represented in the media (Khalid 27-28) which make fighting Iraqi people possible (Holmes 361). In his fourteenth chapter, he quotes Che Guevara's definition of guerrilla warfare without mentioning its relationship to the struggle of the Iraqis. However, his intention to associate Che Guevara's definition with the struggle of the Iraqi people is obvious:

> It is important to emphasize that guerilla warfare is a war of the masses, a war of the people. The guerilla band is an armed nucleus, the fighting vanguard of the people. It draws its great force from the masses of the people themselves. The guerilla band is not to be considered inferior to the army against which it fights simply because it is inferior in firepower. Guerilla warfare is used by the side which is supported by a majority but which possesses a much smaller number of arms for use in defense against oppression. . . . [T]he guerilla fighter is a social reformer, that he takes up arms responding to the angry protests of the people against oppressors, and that he fights in order to change the social system that keeps all his unarmed brothers in ignominy and misery. (165)

The definition Rieckhoff quotes perfectly fits in the movie *Red Dawn*, which he initially grounds his ideal American soldier identity on. Still, the roles, as he himself openly states, change during the war. Rieckhoff thinks the Iraq War "sounded too much like Vietnam War" as it "had all the same flaws at its foundation: an unclear foundation, a guerilla enemy that was virtually distinguishable from civilians, a culture [American forces] didn't understand at all, and tenuous public support" (14). His definition of the war reveals that, he almost finds Iraqi resistance heroic. He calls Americans the "Ali Baba," a derogatory name some Americans give Iraqi people (214), which helps Jed Eckert's story be taken as an allegorical story for the Iraq War, yet one that is turned upside down for the Americans. The positive Iraqi identity offered in the memoir is radical in reconstructing the American national identity. In other words, the national

identity offered in Rieckhoff's text proves to be the opposite of the works which promote the ideal/mythic American identity presented in the first chapter of this study.

Since myths, help people deal with the unknown, accept situations beyond their control, support and protect the social order, teach how to live under certain circumstances (Stachyra 28), and fixate certain beliefs and behaviors as appropriate (29), the mythic American identity offered by American leaders serve their policies and keep American soldiers ignorant which makes it possible to lead and guide them. Rieckhoff's definition of American soldiers are different. The identity he offers contradicts with the identities of the heroic defenders of the American nation promoted through American movies. The identities celebrated in these movies contribute to politicians' interpellation. Reducing the image of the American soldier to a mere symbol, these identities directly influence the social process of "symbolic interactionism," forcing Americans into fitting in the roles attributed to them. When Rieckhoff goes to Iraq, he sees that the role he has previously tailored for himself, fighting against the occupying forces, is not a realistic one. He begins to see American forces as the occupiers and the Iraqi guerilla forces as Jed Eckerts who try to protect their country: "Now, with the roles reversed, I was on my way to invade and occupy someone else's country. America could soon create thousands of Iraqi Jed Eckerts in places like Mosul and Baghdad" (6).

Another mythic identity, which is especially appointed for the war in Iraq is the one stemming from the ideology of "compassionate conservatism." According to the idea of compasionate conservatism, American soldiers should do whatever is necessary to fulfill American foreign policy and treat people compassionately. For Rieckhoff, the two opposed forces—toughness and being compassionate—can hardly come together in real life, since "the best-trained soldiers are not designed to be humanitarians" (97). In addition, he thinks that the United States Army has been trying to make its soldiers "more deadly," and thus "more effective" especially after the World War II (198). As his words indicate, Rieckhoff thinks, American soldiers are just "trained to succeed on the battlefield with incredible proficiency" and are not "designed to be buffers" (Rieckhoff 97).

Rieckhoff is not regulating his behaviors (Schwartz 158) or "taking the role of generalized others" (Mead 82) in the face of interpellation. Instead, he composes his

own definition for the symbols collectively created in the form of myths and defies interpellation. His narrated "I," like the narrated "I"s of the other works closely analyzed in this study, deals with other people's perception of his behaviors, does "less unexpected things in society" and sticks with "joint actions" during the war (Ames 51-52), yet thanks to his nonconformist narrating "I," who narrates his thoughts against the war in retrospect, Rieckhoff engages in a reinvention of his and American soldiers' identity, which would, at the same time, mean redefining the meaning of the United States' foreign policy. In other words, he rejects being a subject to interpellation and comes up with his own definitions for the self and the national group he associates himself with.

For Rieckhoff, Americans are arrogant and naïve, if not hypocritical, to assume that the Iraqi problem between the Sunni and the Shia will be solved quickly. Pointing out to the fact that slavery formally ended in America in 1865 but the problem of racism is still a matter of discussion today (108), Rieckhoff thinks Americans should be "either sheltered and deluded" not to see what lies behind "incidents like Rodney King beating and Hurricane Katrina fallout" (109). His self-definition presents the American soldier as "an angry Infantryman stuck in a sand storm shit hole. Overcharged and undersexed" (5). It does not point to a heroic American, but to a pathetic one. Even if American soldiers in Iraq are volunteers (6), recruiters in America "work like used-car salesman" paying no respect to or giving no heroic value to the American soldier (7). He attracts readers' attention to American soldiers who portray non-ideal identity traits and presents American soldiers as human beings. He narrates a quiz night in Kuwait before his platoon sets foot on Iraqi soil, just to depict how American soldiers are unaware of what's going on around them. Sixty percent of all attendants gets a wrong answer for the question "Who is the vice president of the United States?" Among some answers are Joe Lieberman, Donald Rumsfeld and George Bush. Another question asks where the capital of New York is and only five percent gave the right answer to the question. For the question where the capital of Kuwait is, one soldier's answer is reported to be Iraq. Rieckhoff depicts these soldiers as young Americans who have no idea about the war they are fighting and who are simply "on a plane to kill another country's sons and fathers where they lived. In their own houses" (20).

The identity Rieckhoff offers for the American soldier is obviously the antithesis of the collective national identity adopted by American people. As symbolic interactionism based on Goffman's theatrical model suggests, a team of individuals agree upon a group of definitions (Goffman 64). Every member of the group knows that their fellows do not originally have the required qualities. Yet, they assume that everyone actually "possess" these qualities (10). This is what Rieckhoff challenges. For him, it is not wise to accept every member of the group as ideal Americans.

Rieckhoff's memoir deals with the identity-making process of his narrating "I," because he feels the need to create identities for himself and his nationals, to discard unwanted identities and to convince readers that the identity claimed by the writer is true. He does not romanticize the war, the nation and the American. Instead, he approaches them in critical terms. Taking into consideration his claimed mission of "fight[ing] for America back home" (309), it would be proper to call him a "constructive patriot" who is devoted to her/his nation with a "critical loyalty," questioning its policies and deeds with "a desire for positive change" (Schatz, et.al.153). The choice of the author to disown blindfold nationalism suggests a break from the identities politicians promote, even though dealing with its consequences is not always easy.

Rieckhoff's narration presents his version of the war which provides alternative definitions, for those who fight it and for those who decide it. The narration provides an alternative point of view and contributes to the "democratization of the past" (Gillis 71). Through the textual identities it creates, *Chasing Ghosts* "create new activities, new worlds, and new ways of being" (Holland et.al. 3). It is not politically innocent or neutral, but politically conscious, assertive and, thus, more authentic. It demonstrates the decline in American nationalism because of the distrust to the politicians as a result of the intelligence and policy failures in the Iraq War as well as the decline of trust in militarism due to the weakening human agency it engenders. The way he defines himself and his fellow soldiers not only provoke questions about American national identity but also about the war itself which is symbolically constructed "into a worldview" (Altheide 292). He avoids the national identity politicians used during the process of interpellation as his primary source of identity due to the contradictions between what he is offered and what he believes in. After the war, he is condemned by

the military (284), as well as politicians for his offensive tone of targeting the American state apparatus and its repressive military institution (295). Senator McCain wanted the media not to give voice to service members like him, since there is a "clear line between civilian and military in America as far as the politics is concerned" (295). This alone shows that Rieckhoff's views were perceived as a threat to American foreign policy which could only be eliminated through a successful interpellation of Americans as heroic members of the nation. Liberation from the myth provides authors a chance to change their lives and to pave the way for altering American foreign policy. This is the reason why Rieckhoff's memoir does more than expressing one single person's experiences about the war. With his narrative, he presents alternative realities concerning the war and his counterparts—a political statement strong enough to cause changes in American foreign policy.

# CONCLUSION

The beheading videos of two American journalists on August 19, 2014 placed a terrorist organization known as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) or ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, which covers a larger area to include Lebanon, Palestine, Israel and Jordan), in the middle of American foreign policy related to the Middle East. Upon the spread of the news, Obama declared that America does not have a strategy for the threat of the Islamic State yet (Cohen, "Obama's 'No Strategy Yet' Comment"), a statement which he repeated a year later in June 2015 (Parkinson). Up to now, American foreign policy actions provided by Obama has not gone beyond campaigning for airstrikes against the Islamic State, supporting the forces fighting it, preventing its attacks and providing humanitarian assistance to those who are victimized by it.

Parallel to his attitude of increasing the number of troops during the Iraq War, by November 2014, Obama doubled the American presence in Iraq. Yet, the troops sent were "advise[d]" not to take part in combat ("Obama: I will Send Troops") and defined as "American advisers" who would shoot only if they were shot at by the "enemy" (Timm "Obama is doubling down on Isis"). As the rhetoric of Iraq policy in 2014 displays, even if the Islamic State was viewed as a threat to the United States, Obama avoided calling his preoccupation with it a war and the troops sent soldiers. He called the forthcoming period "a new phase" in which he would "never gonna say never" (Timm), but he was still criticized by some for having "a 'half-hearted,' 'Goldilocks' approach" towards fighting the Islamic State" (LoGiurato).

In November 2015, in the G20 summit in Antalya, Turkey, Obama denied having acted "blind and unresponsive to the threat posed by Islamic State," and defended himself by acknowledging that a possible military action would cause "enormous sacrifices" and that they have been pursuing the "right" strategy (Alexander "Barack Obama"). He believes the United States is capable of retaking territory and holding it, yet that would not "solve the underlying problem of eliminating the dynamics that are producing these

kinds of violent extremist groups." For him, success in eliminating these dynamics is possible only if France and Turkey and other countries unite their powers (Alexander).

Obama has been trying to distinguish the fight against the Islamic State from the "War on Terror." The cautious language he uses, the ambiguity of his plans about America's future existence in the Middle East and his ally-seeking approach show that Obama is well aware of the changing attitude of American people towards the notion of war after the war in Iraq. The Americanness he has interpellated recently favors American people, who view war only as their last resort. The change in the national identity definition of post-Iraq War Obama administration proves the potential of critical attitudes towards the Iraq War and how American identity is altered depending on the American foreign policy. The Iraq War narratives have the same potential with the alternative definitions they offer for the war, the American identity and the American foreign policy.

This dissertation evaluates the current status of American national identity for Iraq War veterans through the works of life writing they compose. The war narratives are observed to discern the cultural meanings of the political action of identity-making before, during and after the Iraq War. In other words, the works of life writing written by Iraq War veterans are treated as historical, cultural, political as well as literary texts. These works are textual constructions of personal as well as collective identity, that is capable of dominating personal identity at the Iraqi warfront. Treating the American national identity from two points of view, those who interpellate Americanness and those who are being interpellated, the influence of the Iraq War experience on the identities constructed or reclaimed are analyzed in the war narratives.

The introduction covers the information on the war, American life writing, identity formation processes in life writing practices and symbolic interactionism. The approach of symbolic interactionism provides the necessary grounds to understand authors' identity formation processes under the pressure of being interpellated as ideal/mythic American service members (including the American military officer, soldier, doctor, medic, nurse, embedded or free-lance journalist, human shield, army lawyer, photographer, and chaplain who served in Iraq during the war) and the risk of being

excluded and/or labeled unfit or disloyal when the narrators' behaviors do not meet the ideal and mythic standards. With its humanistic sociological approach, symbolic interactionism attaches importance not only to individuals' social needs but also to their emotions such as pride and shame in analyzing their behaviors. Such an approach is rare in the field of sociology and useful in investigating national identity in the works of life writing.

After providing a historical overview of the ideal/mythic American and a background on the foreign policies of the wartime administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama, the first chapter explores the politicians' efforts of defining the Americans in their narratives. Despite their seemingly different approaches of foreign policy, authors from both administrations promote a similar mythic American in their narratives. Bush administration favors an American who fights evil; ends tyranny; brings civilization; bears light into the dark; and takes risks. S/he is privileged and honored to be a soldier and citizen. Being patriotic, selfless, courageous, self-taught, heroic and cheerful in the face of pain, s/he is a good Christian and the chosen agent of God. Obama administration's American, on the other hand, learns from her/his mistakes. Not afraid of the war and aware of being "the last best hope on earth," the American Obama administration favors, is innately good and self-sufficient. S/he is conscious of the service s/he owes to the country and conforms to the rules even if s/he does not agree with them. The characteristics attributed to American people by the two administrations complement each other and reduce the image of the American soldier to a mere symbol which is evoked for the sake of enabling politicians' their foreign policy goals.

The second and third chapters are dedicated to exploring the reactions of American veteran writers to the interpellated Americanness by the American state and its apparatuses—the politicians, the military institution, the family and religious authorities. With the intention of observing the identities American service members claim to have before the war, the first part of the second chapter focuses on authors' pre-war self-definitions, reasons for joining service and boot camp experiences. Reactions of service members vary from being enthusiastic, regretful, anxious or dissatisfied. Depending upon their life experience they report being lonely, being a "social misfit," being unemployed, not having a good job and/or money, being

dependent on their parents, having broken families, having experienced sexual assault, having used drugs, being Mormon, being gay, being underestimated, being a "tomboy," being "sinful," being the "weakest link of the family," having a weak body and soul, having small lives, having a lack of control over their lives, having "self-disgust," having served in prison, having the need to leave one's hometown or having the need to make people forget about a disappointing past deed. Such self-definitions of pre-war service members obviously fail to meet politicians' assumptions about them.

The reasons service members suggest for joining service include receiving college funds, following the family tradition, challenging oneself or taking a challenge, having adventure, doing what their fictional heroes do, testing themselves, becoming a man, proving themselves, experiencing camaraderie, having a better job/life, supporting the troops, adopting a purpose in life and having the pride of serving. Only twelve members out of forty-two, who acknowledge their reasons for joining the military or choosing to go to Iraq, mention patriotic reasons. Moreover, only five out of these twelve works, mention patriotism as the only reason for joining, which brings to mind that the members might be referring to patriotism for the sake of being accepted. The reasons the service members provide for joining the military are far from the patriotic reasons defined by the politicians. This part also deals with the "diminished human agency," service members suffer from due to a feeling of not being in control of their actions in the boot camp, having left their personal ideals and wishes aside and having adopted the meanings and behaviors acceptable to the group.

The second part of the second chapter concentrates on the perceptions of American identity after the war. Out of forty two works which include post-war experiences, twenty six works report the difficulties service members experience upon their return. Among these twenty-six members who claim to have difficulties, only six of them are critical of the cause and/or the implementation of the war, a fact that proves both supporters and opponents of the war are negatively influenced. Service members acknowledge finding home different from how they remembered it, which is due to the change they have gone through as a result of their experience of the war. They come to discover that the labels of "liberator," "invader," "bringer of the civilization" "violent/tough guy" which were favorable back in Iraq are no longer favorable at home.

The civilian and military cultures, which appear to have different value judgments, confuse the authors and force them to question their loyalty and personality. The tension between American civilians and service members also contribute to the feelings of estrangement. In their case, embracing one culture requires detaching oneself from the other, which puts soldiers in a difficult situation. The chapter also displays the identities service members claim for their post-war lives. Out of the seventy-nine authors, only ten of them favor being an American as their primary source of identity. Others prefer transnational identities such as being a civilian or a professional[146] or a family member or a specific-gendered or a believer in a specific religion or merely a human being, which shows that American national identity has already lost its charm on the service members by the time of their return.

The final chapter focuses on the reasons of the declining popularity of the American national identity. The chapter observes the narrators' changing beliefs about the war and who they are individually as well as collectively. Out of forty five authors, who define American service member identity, thirty four authors provide definitions that do not fit their interpellated identity which is not contingent upon their approaches to the war and American identity. When it comes to the perceptions of the Iraqi identity, only ten authors out of thirty-five who define Iraqi people are critical of the negative depictions and derogatory name-calling. The statistics are enough to reflect the internalized prejudice due to the political and military discourse of the war.

As the service members question their identities in the course of the war, some factors complicate their self-definitions. One of these factors is the political approach of "compassionate conservatism" adopted by the Bush administration which is responsible for the contradicting roles of "punisher of the deserved" and "winner of the hearts and minds" attributed to the American service members. The approach forces military members either to pick one over the other or to struggle to balance them, which they often find to be impossible. Another factor complicating the process of identity formation is the nature of the military culture. As members' complaints reveal, the

[146] Only 37% of the authors who claim professional identities are soldiers. The rest of the group is made up of chaplains, doctors, medics, journalists etc. who are already expected to keep their professional identities.

military culture makes the lives of the service members difficult with its threats of labeling, exclusion, punishment, corrupt leaders, illegal and unjust practices, and efforts to diminish their human agency. The diminishing human agency, which soldiers experience for the first time in the boot camp, stand out in their wartime experiences and often causes dissatisfaction and paranoia. The tension between American civilians and service members also complicates the identity formation. The tension is experienced by the service members only, because they cannot express the atrocities they have engaged in during the war and, thus, they are silenced in the presence of their family members, friends and colleagues. Plus, the civilians "are not thankful" for what service members did for them and "do not care" what happens to them.

Service member behaviors shaped by the failure of expectations from the war are observed either in the form of boredom or in the form of desire for combat due to a lack of it. Some soldiers seek consolation in calling themselves professional soldiers who do what they are told to even if they do not support the cause or the implementation of the war. Their behaviors, shaped by the disillusionment with the war, are reflected in their self-depictions as vulnerable and emotional soldiers who question their identity. The chapter also demonstrates personal transformations from cheerful soldiers-to-be to angry, frustrated, disgusted, bitter or hateful soldiers; from doctors, photographers, firefighters and chaplains to the soldiers; and finally from female and gay service members to male-identity-performing service members. Each of these transformations shows the dominance of male and soldier identities in the warfront. The chapter exposes the statistics related to the service members' final definitions of national identity. Out of the twenty three definitions available, fifteen present an all negative opinion and three embody a neutral opinion while only five of the definitions are made up of all positive opinions about the American national identity.

"All war narratives—even the most immediate forms, the diaries and journals and letters" according to Samuel Hynes, are "epilogues to the wars they record" (279). They have a function of "democratization of the past," since they present alternative histories to those written in the textbooks (Gillis 71). The Iraq War narratives additionally, have the power to change American national narrative with the identities they refute and construct and with their potential to make readers question their misconceptions about

American national identity in general and the Iraq War in particular. The narrators question whether their decision to join the service was right, whether the war was a just one and whether life would ever be the same for them as it was before the war. The answers they find to these questions determine the identity they define for themselves and for their nationals and explain the contradictions between the narrating "I"s and the narrated "I"s in the narratives. The never-ending effort in these narratives to define and refute identities stem from the fact that the identity adopted by the individual through the interpellation process makes the foreign policy concerning the Iraq War practicable. Therefore, the authors, who employ a critical approach towards the interpellated ideal/mythic American identity, threaten the practice and success of politicans' Iraq policy. This very fact renders these works of life writing as "political acts."

According to William Berry, finding tolerance "without sacrificing conviction, loyalty, belief in self and any sense of moral authority" has always been "a central challenge" to Americans and the tension between "group loyalty" and "individual aspiration" has been a "major theme" of American autobiography (n.p.). The critical attitudes of the life writers of the war narratives and their rejection of the interpellated Americanness confirm that the narrators choose "individual aspiration" over "group loyalty" not because of necessity but because of preference. Once they rid themselves of the pressure of the state and the military, service members are able to regain their autonomy. Through their narratives, they gradually become free individuals instead of subjects to an ideology. With their stand against interpellation and their adoption of identities of their own choice in the end of their works, American service members consciously or unconsciously reclaim their diminished human agency.

The works under discussion also have a political capability to bring positive changes to the nation's foreign policy. In these works of life writing, service members' perception of American identity changes mainly due to their first-hand experience of the war and their declining trust in the politicians as a result of the realities they witness during the war, the intelligence failure, lack of effective war-planning, exclusion of questioning service members and the responsibility of the military institution for their diminished human agency. According to Blumer, the fate of institutions are "set by [the] process of interpretation" of their "diverse set of participants" (19). Written by a diverse set of

authors from different social, political, economic, ethnic, religious, educational backgrounds, the war narratives of American service members this dissertation analyzes have the power to "change" the fate of institutions. Such narratives might trigger changes in American foreign policy in relation to the Iraq War, providing politicians with the necessary tolerance and attention to alternative points of view, as in the case of Obama's Islamic State policy. These works challenge the credibility of the war as well as the ideal/mythic national identity and have the potential to change the ideology on which politics rest, now that it begins to lose the subjects its existence depends on.

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# APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX 1: LIST OF IRAQ WAR NARRATIVES


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# APPENDIX 2: ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM

**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY**
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**
**ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM FOR THESIS WORK**

**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY**
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**
**AMERICAN CULTURE AND LITERATURE TO THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENCY**

Date: 21/12/2015

Thesis Title / Topic: Identities under Construction: Iraq War, Life Writing and American National Identity

My thesis work related to the title/topic above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on animals or people.
2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).
3. Does not involve any interference of the body's integrity.
4. Is not based on observational and descriptive research (survey, measures/scales, data scanning, system-model development).

I declare, I have carefully read Hacettepe University's Ethics Regulations and the Commission's Guidelines, and in order to proceed with my thesis according to these regulations I do not have to get permission from the Ethics Board for anything; in any infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility and I declare that all the information I have provided is true.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

21.12.2015

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| **Name Surname:** | Merve Öznan Kaya |
| **Student No:** | N09148Z06 |
| **Department:** | American Culture and Literature |
| **Program:** | American Culture and Literature |
| **Status:** | ☐ Masters ☒ Ph.D. ☐ Integrated Ph.D. |

**ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. S. Bilge Mutlay Çetintaş

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# APPENDIX 3: ETİK KURUL İZİN MUAFİYETİ FORMU

**HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ**
**SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ**
**TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ETİK KURUL İZİN MUAFİYETİ FORMU**

**HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ**
**SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ**
**AMERİKAN KÜLTÜRÜ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA**

Tarih: 21/12/2015

Tez Başlığı / Konusu: Yapım Aşamasında Kimlik: Irak Savaşı, Yaşam Yazını ve Amerikan Milli Kimliği

Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmam:

1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır,
2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılmasını gerektirmemektedir.
3. Beden bütünlüğüne müdahale içermemektedir.
4. Gözlemsel ve betimsel araştırma (anket, ölçek/skala çalışmaları, dosya taramaları, veri kaynakları taraması, sistem-model geliştirme çalışmaları) niteliğinde değildir.

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurullar ve Komisyonlarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre tez çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kuruldan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

21.12.2015

**Adı Soyadı:** Merve Özman Kaya
**Öğrenci No:** N09148206
**Anabilim Dalı:** Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı
**Programı:** Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı
**Statüsü:** ☐ Y.Lisans ☒ Doktora ☐ Bütünleşik Dr.

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# APPENDIX 4: ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
THESIS/DISSERTATION ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN CULTURE AND LITERATURE

Date: 14/01/2016

Thesis Title / Topic: Identities under Construction: Iraq War, Life Writing and american National Identity

According to the originality report obtained by myself/my thesis advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options stated below on 13/01/2016 for the total of 186 pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my thesis entitled as above, the similarity index of my thesis is 8 %.

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I declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Thesis Originality Reports; that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my thesis does not include any form of plagiarism; that in any future detection of possible infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility; and that all the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

14.01.2016

| | |
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| **Name Surname:** | Merve Özman Kaya |
| **Student No:** | N09148206 |
| **Department:** | American Culture and Literature |
| **Program:** | American Culture and Literature |
| **Status:** | ☐ Masters ☒ Ph.D. ☐ Integrated Ph.D. |

**ADVISOR APPROVAL**

APPROVED.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. S. Bilge Mutluay Çetintaş

# APPENDIX 5: ORJiNALLİK RAPORU

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
YÜKSEK LİSANS/DOKTORA TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ORJİNALLİK RAPORU

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
AMERİKAN KÜLTÜRÜ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA

Tarih: 14.01.2016

Tez Başlığı / Konusu: Yapım Aşamasında Kimlik: Irak Savaşı, Yaşam Yazını ve Amerikan Milli Kimliği

Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmamın a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 186 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 13/01/2016 tarihinde şahsım/tez danışmanım tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda belirtilen filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezimin benzerlik oranı % 8' dir.

Uygulanan filtrelemeler:

1- Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç,
2- Kaynakça hariç
3- Alıntılar hariç
4- 5 kelimeden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orjinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tez çalışmamın herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

14. 01. 2016

**Adı Soyadı:** Merve Özman Kaya
**Öğrenci No:** N09148206
**Anabilim Dalı:** Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Bölümü
**Programı:**
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**DANIŞMAN ONAYI**

UYGUNDUR.

Doç. Dr. S. Bilge Mutluay Çetintaş