

I WANT YOU: PRONOUNS AND THE MILITARY

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

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ABSTRACT

I Want You: Pronouns and the Military. (May 2014)

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This project involves analyzing the various ways in which the second-person pronoun “you” changes aspects of witnessing when discussing war. The goal is to examine various uses of the pronoun “you,” dissecting both the author’s intentions in using this particular pronoun and the effect it has on the reader in regards to their position outside or inside the story being told. This has been done by applying theories of pronoun use, witnessing, and recognition to a sample of war memoirs, war novels, war reports, and interviews with war veterans. Through an in-depth examination of the specific functions of various instances of the pronoun “you,” this research seeks to propose a theory for how the second-person pronoun may be used to facilitate or hinder the act of witnessing.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The art of story-telling predates the existence of written narratives, and many of the ancient epics we now deem classics, such as *Beowulf* and *The Odyssey*, began as oral narratives. With the advent of written history, such stories began to take the form of stable, portable media, able to be recorded, transcribed, and shared over various regions of the world. Since the beginning of human communication, story-telling has been our most effective way of sharing experiences—recounting events, feelings, and sensations in such a way that another person may come to understand something outside his or her scope of experience.

The act of story-telling traditionally involves the collaboration of two parts: the storyteller and the audience. While people tend to view the storyteller as the active party relating ideas and weaving a narrative while the audience passively listens, the art of story-telling is better described as an interactive process. The audience plays as dynamic and important a role as the storyteller. If the intent of the story is to share experiences—to cultivate an understanding or a connection between the person speaking and the persons listening—then the job of the audience is to actively step into the story, taking on an alien perspective. If the audience is unwilling or unable to react and respond to the story, then the entire effort has been lost.

But not all storytellers ask this level of involvement of their audiences, and not all experiences can be passed from one person to the next like a costume to be slipped on and off at will. Some experiences, in fact, can never be understood by anyone but the speaker. Holocaust narratives,

stories of abuse, experiences of war—these things can never be truly understood by those who lack first-hand experience. They invite a certain amount of empathy—seek to relate experiences and provoke thought—but they recognize that only those who have first-hand experience of such things can truly own these stories. To take this concept even further, some stories are told with the distinct purpose of alienating the audience—of making audience members aware of how dissimilar they are from the speaker.

And so the difficulty of the listener is to discern exactly what part he or she plays in the narrative—what is the speaker asking of him or her? The question is one of ownership, and listeners must ask themselves how far they are allowed to *own* the experiences of the speaker. How far are they expected to step out of their own identities and into that of the speaker?

In a reversal, sometimes the *storyteller* must confront this question. To what extent does he or she *own* the story? Is it even his or hers to tell? A Holocaust survivor speaking about the horrors of a concentration camp owns that particular narrative of survival to an extent that a 20-year old historian from America ever could.

All of these questions can be ethically concerning for the act of story-telling, and the way in which speaker and listeners define their relationship with each other, as well as with the story itself, can drastically change the meaning of the experience. Thus, defining these relationships—understanding the complex dynamics between author, audience, and story—can be of great importance.

One way in which this dynamic is established is through the use of the pronoun “you.” In this thesis, I would like to explore the various ways in which second-person pronouns, when used in discussing war narratives from the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, can alter and adjust the dynamic between narrator, audience, and narrative. In particular, I would like to discuss the effect such a changing dynamic has on the witnessing process.

CHAPTER II

“You” Forms

In 2011, Lesley Stirling and Lenore Manderson conducted a linguistic study of the pronoun *you*, in which they analyzed testimonials of mastectomy survivors in order to understand the ways in which second-person perspective appears in the narration of traumatic experiences. They noted that, most often, interviewees used the pronoun *you* at particularly emotional moments in their interviews, with some of the most important and personal revelations concerning their experiences with breast cancer revealed through a second-person perspective (Stirling). While this particular positioning choice seems counterintuitive—highly personal experiences might reasonably be expected to occur in conjunction with the “I” of first person narration—second-person narration actually proves a common phenomenon throughout the literature of testimony. This use of second-person narration to describe personal experiences has complex and interesting implications for the listeners and the extent to which they are asked to inhabit the narrative. To begin my examination of the pronoun “you” in conjunction with the war narrative, I would like to conduct an analysis similar to that of Stirling and Manderson, in which I dissect the various uses and effects of second-person pronouns in interviews with war veterans.

Stirling and Manderson note that, during their mastectomy interviews, three specific types of *you* repeatedly occurred. These three types are defined by Patricia O’Connor as the self-indexing you, the generic you, and the involving you. All three of these ‘you’ forms can also be explored and explained through the analysis of veteran interviews (Stirling).

In a series of interviews with war veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, conducted by Colonel Michael Gibler and Dr. Marian Eide, a soldier named Marcus Puente spoke about his experiences trying to establish himself within the military. Recounting the experience of “pick[ing] up rank,” he says:

They have the marine of the quarter...**you** stand before a panel and **you** go against people within the battalion and **you** do general knowledge, **your** general PFT scores and stuff [emphasis added].

Though the experience of standing before military panels and being assessed belongs to Marcus himself, he chooses to describe it from a second-person perspective. This use of ‘you’ is an example of Patricia O’Connor’s self-indexing *you*, which works as a way of interpolating a personal experience and applying it to a wider sub-group of people, embedding the speaker and his experiences into a broader context or class of people who share similar circumstances. When a speaker invokes this self-indexing ‘you,’ he or she is claiming that the experience in question is representative of the experiences of a particular group of people, called a membership category. Stirling and Manderson define membership categories as “the way in which conversational interactants use social classifications to describe and provide an abbreviated form of reference for the social actors they invoke” (Stirling). In Marcus’s case, he is claiming the membership category of every soldier who has ever stood before a military panel of judges hoping to pick up rank. When he says, “**you** stand before a panel,” what he is effectively saying is “every soldier who has ever attempted to pick up rank” stands before a panel and faces certain tasks—in short, he is painting his experience of picking up rank as representative of the process in general, all through the use of the second-person. Though this snippet of Marcus’s interview stands as the most straight-forward example of O’Connor’s self-indexing ‘you,’ Marcus peppered his

interview with another, more complicated form of self-indexing. This mode appeared in his frequent use of the phrase “you know.”

While this stock phrase is often used almost involuntarily—as a vocal filler to take up air while a speaker thinks of what he or she will say next—studying the context in which it is most often used proves relevant to our discussion of the self-indexing ‘you’. Specifically, Marcus packed his speech with the interjection of “you know” in instances where he was discussing a more stereotypical aspect of the military. For example, when asked why he joined the military, Marcus answered:

Uh, just after, **you know**, I was up there for 9/11 and was impacted by that greatly and, to be honest, I kinda felt like I was wasting my life here, I wasn’t dedicated to school, I was just getting by, **you know**, a C student. And, uh, **you know** one day I just felt I just needed...more direction in my life [emphasis added].

Or when asked to describe an ordinary day on patrol highway security:

So we were a four vehicle platoon and so we would travel, **you know**, eight hours away from our camp at a time and, **you know**, we would sweep the highways whether it’s getting out and walking the highways and kicking tires or, **you know**, reacting to a bomb strike that a convoy experienced or, **you know**, sniper fire, **you know**, a typical day was four to five hour patrols then come back, sleep, get up again, **you know** [emphasis added].

Though Marcus used “you know” several other times throughout his hour-long interview, the above instances are the only times he stacked the phrase so clearly—interjecting it several times over the course of a single narrative description. In both instances, Marcus refers to images or

ideas that can be thought of as fairly stereotypical of the military—he is recounting personal stories that the audience (in this case Dr. Eide and Colonel Gibler) might reasonably have heard before from other soldiers or possibly seen through the media. A soldier joining the military because he/she is not excelling at school and feels like his/her life is being wasted is not a rare occurrence, and is a reason his audience has likely heard before. Marcus’s “you know,” then, might literally be his way of saying to his audience “You know this. You have heard this or seen this before.” In this way he is claiming his experiences as *so* representational—*so* stereotypical of a soldier enlisting in the Army—that they might be understood as stock images the general population may be expected to have in their mind’s eye. Thus this use of “you know” becomes an interesting example of O’Connor’s self-indexing ‘you,’ projecting Marcus’s personal experiences onto an entire subgroup. The same analysis may apply to his description of his work on patrol—the images he describes, of “sweeping the highways...walking the highways and kicking tires,” are likely stock images that his audience may already have stored up from scenes of military on the news or portrayals of soldiers in the media. Once again, he may invoke the use of “you know” to suggest that his audience has a previous understanding of his experiences. Working as a self-indexing form of *you* it serves to place Marcus in the broader subgroup of soldiers with experience on Quick React Force in a Light Armored Vehicle. His personal experiences on patrol then reflect and define the experiences of the entire subgroup of soldiers.

The second ‘you’ defined by O’Connor—the generic *you*—can be found in an interview Dr. Eide and Colonel Gibler conducted with a soldier named Phillip. In describing the difficulties of coming back from war and re-establishing relationships with his family, he states:

And then **you**'ve got **your** kids that, **your** mind says **you** outrank them, but there's not a rank structure. They're not **your** troops. **You** don't order them around. It's now *stomps foot* "Get out of bed, Zachary!" **You** know, **you** don't come in and bang the trashcan at them and pull drill sergeant stuff on them. **You** can't. **You**'re not supposed to do that.

Stirling and Manderson state that the generic *you* seeks to turn a personal experience into a "general moral reflection" for all of humanity by universalizing an experience; it is similar to the use of the pronoun "one" (Stirling). In the instance from Phillip's interview, he is turning a personal experience—learning how to become a father again once returning from war—into a more general truth about how children should be treated. Thus, "**you** can't do that," becomes "people in general can't do that" to children, and the experience placed in a more broad position. It should be noted, however, that the generic 'you' may often overlap with the self-indexing 'you,' and the lines separating these various second-person pronouns are often blurry or permeable. For instance, the above example could very easily be described as self-indexing 'you,' with the membership category being claimed as "fathers returning home from war." Looking at the example through the lens of the self-indexing 'you,' the struggles Phillip faces re-integrating into his children's lives becomes representative of the struggles faced by father-soldiers in general. Either way, this use of second-person serves to project Phillip's experiences onto a larger subgroup.

The last form of 'you' defined by Patricia O'Connor, the involving *you*, is used to speak of experiences unique to the *speaker* and foreign to the *addressee*, with "the speaker us[ing] *you*, not I" to describe the experience (O'Connor). This form of 'you' is considered to be inclusive, and the goal is to draw the audience into the narrator's perspective as much as possible, by

actually placing the audience into the body of narrator. To further explain the purpose of the involving ‘you, I would like to point to an experiment conducted at Tufts University by Tad T. Brunyé, Tali Ditman, et al., in which forty-eight students were asked to describe a series of simple events using first-person, second-person, and third-person pronouns. The experiment revealed that only the descriptions using second-person pronouns resulted in “embodied language comprehension,” displaying what Brunyé refers to as “internal performing,” or placing the narrative point within the subjective view of the person *performing* the task being described rather than as an outside viewer. As such, the “results suggest that to imagine oneself in ‘someone else’s shoes’ during narrative comprehension, the reader must be directly addressed as the subject of the sentence”—addressed as *you* (Brunyé 5). In a reflection of this experiment, when asked to describe a typical day in his second deployment, Marcus’s response included several instances of involving *you*.

You know **you** could be in a tower—**you** could be what they call a greeter—**you** were the first person to walk out to a vehicle because they had a lot of vehicles...**you’re** the greeter, Wal-Mart greeter and, basically **you** were there to ask everyone to get out of the vehicle. **You** would search them and their vehicle before anyone entered the check point [emphasis added].

The audience members cannot be expected to have the experience of working at a checkpoint in Iraq themselves, so the use of the involving *you* acts as a way for Marcus to temporarily lend his experiences to audience members—to allow them an internal performing view of his narrative. Marcus’s goal, in this portion of the interview, is to make his audience understand the reality of his deployment—the concrete actions and motions associated with his time in the military.

Another example of this involving *you* occurs when Marcus answers the question, “When you mention that you have been deployed in Iraq...how do people respond?”

You know that they may look at **you** differently and not treat **you** like a person or they may look down on **you**, may try and glorify **you** [emphasis added].

Once again, this second-person usage may create a feeling of empathy between Marcus and his audience, allowing them an active glimpse into his reality. It may also, it should be noted, be considered a use of self-indexing *you*, placing his experience coming home and speaking to civilians as typical of most soldiers and representative of the broader subgroup. Once again, we see how the lines between O’Connor’s three ‘you’ forms may be blurred and melded.

In fact, Marcus’s interview offers another interesting instance of second-person pronoun use that exhibits this blurring and melding—that can be opened to various angles of analysis. When asked to specifically describe his experiences in combat—the kinetic narrative of fighting in Iraq—Marcus spoke in second-person. Analyzing this choice reveals the myriad complexities that may be associated with analyzing the exact purpose or effect of second-person pronoun use:

What I felt was in, you know, looking back I don’t know if it was wrong or right to feel this way or if it’s what they train **you** to feel, I felt—**you** felt—adrenaline, but at the same time **you** felt more excitement than fear, and **you** felt...I was excited yet calm...**you** didn’t know what was going to happen...**you** could hear better, **you** could see farther, **you** just felt, **you** know...**you** would say it’s part of the training, but **you** looked, obviously couldn’t see, but **you** looked for the bullets, **you** wanted to go towards the action...**you** looked for the action [emphasis added].

On one hand, this repeated use of second-person in describing a personal experience may be read as involving *you*—giving the audience concrete details and lending it the ability to see through his eyes (“you looked, obviously you couldn’t see, but you looked for bullets”) and feel the physicality of combat through his body (“you felt adrenaline”). In another analysis, several instances of this *you* might be viewed as self-indexing. For instance, when Marcus wonders if the adrenaline felt during combat is “the way they train you to feel.” The way they train *who* to feel? Not the audience—not Dr. Eide or the civilians listening to or reading his account. This “you” refers to purely military—only those who have been trained for combat. This use of second-person places Marcus within a larger subgroup. When this use of involving and self-indexing *you* overlap, analysis becomes even more interesting. If the self-indexing *you* allows Marcus to place his personal experiences as representative of the entire subgroup, while the involving *you* allows the audience to temporarily own Marcus’s point of view, then the conjunction of both together serves to completely break down the walls between civilian reader and military personnel. By allowing his audience to take on his perspective, then placing his perspective within the larger subgroup of the military, Marcus is effectively moving his audience members from their own subjectivities and placing them—through their involvement in *his* subjective position—into the military subgroup as a whole. The lines between civilian and military subgroups, then, are broken down and the audience allowed access to the military membership category through Marcus. This works as an effective way to allow an audience more complete access to a world and an experience completely foreign to it.

The various uses of “you” that we have examined so far—those defined by Patricia O’Connor—have predominantly built toward one purpose: connecting the reader to the narrative and the

narrator in new ways. Involving, self-indexing, and generalizing ‘you’ forms all work to form connections that either place the narrative into a broader context or deeply involve the reader in the story. Either way, these “you” forms actively serve to make the narrative more relatable and, therefore, more easily understood. However, when used in certain ways, the second-person may act as a distancing mechanism; it may point out the differences between the narrator and the reader.

Another soldier interviewed by Dr. Eide and Colonel Gibler, Taylor Sessions, offers several examples of this distancing ‘you’. When discussing the struggles many veterans face returning back to civilian life, particularly concerning the stigma of PTSD, he said:

“It's--it's hard to fight that stereotype when that's all **you** hear about. **You** don't hear about the guys who deal with it on a daily basis, and we don't do anything.”

Unlike in previous instances, in which the second person pronoun “you” was manipulated to refer to the speaker himself, humanity in general, or a particular subculture, this form of “you” actually refers to the audience. Sessions is drawing a clear line between the audience, who only hears about the sensationalized, stereotypical war veteran suffering from PTSD, and the men and women (himself included) who suffer from PTSD every. Instead of working to draw the audience into his point of view, Sessions is actively distancing the audience—emphasizing the fundamental difference between himself (as a soldier) and the civilian population. This has the exact opposite effect as O’Connor’s involving “you”—rather than lending the reader a specific experience, Sessions asks him or her to become aware of the chasm of experience and knowledge that separates them. To even further delineate these two positions, Taylor uses the pronoun “we” to describe himself and his fellow soldiers. As a plural, first-person noun, this

“we” only includes men and women of the military, and very clearly excludes Dr. Eide (as a civilian) and the rest of his audience without military experience. In another instance, when asked what he missed about life in Iraq, he responded that he missed the sense of purpose he felt within theater, saying “It’s all that other stuff **you** just don’t--**you** don’t get here at home.” Here, Sessions is pointing out a significant difference between himself as a soldier and the (presumably civilian) audience: he’s describing a sense of accomplishment and a feeling of purpose that, he explicitly states, nobody at home in America could ever feel without going to Iraq themselves. Adding even more depth to this particular use of ‘you,’ one could also understand this second-person pronoun as including Taylor, to some extent, now that he is a civilian again. Once again thrust into the identity of a civilian—removed from the theater of war—Taylor himself becomes a part of that ‘you’ lacking a sense of purpose here at home.

As we have seen, sometimes the second-person may distance the audience from the narrator—pointing out differences that exist in these foreign perspectives. However, the distancing power of the pronoun ‘you’ may also serve to disconnect the narrator himself from his own narrative. Returning to Marcus’s description of combat, we can see this specific form of distancing accomplished:

What I felt was in, you know, looking back I don’t know if it was wrong or right to feel this way or if it’s what they train **you** to feel, I felt—**you** felt—adrenaline, but at the same time **you** felt more excitement than fear, and **you** felt...I was excited yet calm...**you** didn’t know what was going to happen [emphasis added].

At one point, he switches perspective mid-sentence: “I felt—you felt—adrenaline,” then later stating “I was excited yet calm...you didn’t know...” This is a clear, deliberate change from

one point of view to another, a move which places some distance between Marcus and his narrative. Were he to continue his description in first person, stating “I could hear better, I would see farther” his narrative would become more closed off to the audience—merely a man recounting his own time in combat—rather than an invitation to empathize and borrow his perspective. In switching to second-person, Marcus opens up the involving ‘you’ to his audience. As such, this switch allows him to disown his own experiences for a moment and lend them to the audience, creating distance between himself and his narrative.

Another instance of second-person pronoun use not discussed in Stirling and Manderson’s mastectomy study occurred several times over the course of Sessions’s interview, in which he used the second person as a way of bridging the gap between himself as a soldier, and the insurgents attacking him. Frequently, Taylor engaged in simulated dialogue throughout his narrative, in which he mimicked conversations he had with other people. Mostly, these pieces of auto-inclusive conversation were told from Taylor’s own perspective—allowing the audience to glimpse his side of the conversation with other soldiers, family members, or civilians. In one instance, however, Taylor’s simulated dialogue actually placed him into the body of an insurgent in Iraq, with the addressee of the dialogue being Taylor (or American soldiers in general). When describing the mentality behind the influx of attacks that occurred on the base on national holidays, he said (speaking from the point of view of an insurgent): “We're gonna make you feel bad that you're not there," with “there” being at home in America.

This shows an attempt made on Taylor’s part to understand the mind of his enemy—to enter into another subjectivity (as he understands it)—and try to see himself from a different point of view.

In stepping into the mind of an insurgent (at least what he perceives to be the mind of an insurgent), Taylor must view himself as enemy—see himself not as subject, but as object. In doing so, he does not invoke the second-person pronoun to forge a connection with the audience, but to shed some light on the thought processes of Iraqi insurgents as he understands them to be.

In another interview from Dr. Eide and Colonel Gibler, Peter Meijer, who served in Baghdad, creates a similar connection with the insurgents. In describing an insurgent attack on the base, he states, “**You** wanted to hit the helicopters coming in...and if you can damage a multimillion dollar piece of equipment...maybe you can get an RPG.” When asked to clarify who “you” represented in this situation, he replied, “the insurgents.” This is a particularly interesting instance of self-indexing “you”. This “you” seems to apply to the subgroup of insurgents as a whole, saying *all* insurgents “wanted to hit the helicopters” or damage U.S. military property. Yet Peter is not an insurgent—Peter is not painting his own personal experiences as typical of the insurgent subgroup, because he himself has never been an insurgent. Instead, what he is doing is what he describes in his interview as “flip[ping] the roles” between himself and the enemy. He is attempting to understand the insurgents; he is placing himself into the mind of an insurgent—as far as he feels he can understand the motives and movements of the insurgents—in order to think as an insurgent might think. From this point, he is self-indexing the experiences of the hypothetical insurgent within the subgroup of insurgents as a whole—projecting the mental space of his imagined insurgent on the group overall.

As we have seen, the second-person pronoun ‘you,’ when wielded by soldiers in order to discuss their experiences of war, may take on a myriad of meanings and accomplish many complex

shifts in identity. Depending on the way in which it is used, as well as viewed by the audience, the pronoun ‘you’ may act as a distancing mechanism to draw attention to the inherent differences between narrator and audience, or may work to actively engage the audience with the narrative. In both ways, ‘you’ serves to manipulate the dynamic of the story-telling process—to define how far the narrator is asking the audience to step into his or her story. Is the audience being invited to take on the narrator’s identity through the involving ‘you,’ or is it being pushed away from the narrative with a more distancing ‘you’? Such questions resonate with ethical importance, and help to define the purpose of the audience in relation to the narrative itself.

CHAPTER III

Self-Witnessing

These important questions concerning the story-telling dynamic and the ethics of narrative become even more complicated when the narrator himself has a more complex relationship to the narrative. So far we have only discussed ownership of the narrative in relation to the audience, examining how far the audience is asked to own the narrative. In some cases, however, ownership of the narrative can be complicated for the narrator as well. While there is no question that soldiers who experience war first-hand may claim ownership over their experiences, how do we approach the question of reporters? When a journalist writes about the war in Iraq, does he or she have the right to claim the story—to share the story—to the same extent as a soldier? To examine this question of narrator ownership, I would like to focus specifically on the problem of the embedded reporter, who claims the most multi-faceted, and therefore intriguing, relationship to the narrative of war.

The term “embedded journalism” was first used by popular media during the 2003 invasion of Iraq as a way of referring to news reporters who were attached, via government connection, to military units involved in armed conflict. The movement toward embedded journalism began in America as a governmental response to pressure from the news media, who were disappointed by the level of access granted them during the 1991 Gulf War and the 2001 U.S invasion of Afghanistan. Journalists who embed in the military acquire a certain “moral capital” that comes along with actually experiencing the combat about which they write, giving their accounts a level

of first-hand authority unilateral journalists lack (Dawes 66). However, embedded journalism also brings about several ethical issues.

One of the most prominent ethical questions journalists face involves the principle of objectivity. The Encyclopedia of American Journalism defines objectivity as “freedom from bias and taint,” and notes that the practice of objectivity “is indispensable to good journalism” (Vaughn). Pure and unadulterated objectivity, however, remains impossible in practice. Deciding what is newsworthy, selecting what to report, and choosing which quotations are included in a story are all subjective choices inherent in journalism. For embedded journalists, the matter of objectivity appears even more troublesome. Embeddedness, by definition, requires involvement—this involvement, while allowing embedded journalists to claim first-hand authority over the subject of war, tests the principle of objectivity. By actually embedding within the military, journalists become partial participants in war rather than objective observers. It is this level of participation that raises troubling questions for journalists: from whose position are they telling the story of war? Are they writing about their experiences as an outside observer with some claim to objectivity, or as an active participant of war with first-hand experience? Is there any way to blend these two perspectives in order to retain objectivity while also claiming the authority of participation? These questions make perspectival positioning a particularly interesting issue to consider when reading the works of embedded journalists, and I would like to analyze one specific example of embedded journalism, the book *War*, in order to explore the issue.

In *War*, Sebastian Junger recounts his time in the Korengal Valley embedded among American soldiers. His account often switches perspective forms—moving between first-person singular, second-person, and first-person plural—an example of deictic confusion that mirrors the

complexity of his position within the unit as both observer and participant. As both a member of the unit, and distinctly separate from the unit, Junger utilizes different pronouns to help define his perspectival position within the military. Of particular effect, of course, is his use of the pronoun “you.”

Junger’s position as an embedded reporter forces him to juggle a complex mixture of membership categories, as he is both a reporter and a quasi-soldier. Neither wholly objective reporter nor wholly soldier, he exists in the overlapping area of a Venn-diagram of the two, so to speak. As such, he acts as a witness both to the experiences of the soldiers going to war, as well as the experiences of a reporter going to war. Analyzing his use of both the self-indexing and involving you gives insight into this multi-dimensional act of witnessing, highlighting his different claims of membership categories and the implications they hold:

You can’t write objectively about people you’re close to, but you can’t write objectively about people who are shooting at you either. Pure objectivity—difficult enough while covering a city council meeting—isn’t remotely possible in war; bonding with the men around you is the least of your problems [emphasis added] (Junger 26).

In the above paragraph, Junger discusses a problem he faces as a reporter in the Korengal Valley (the issue of remaining objective in reporting), but uses the pronoun ‘you’ in order to discuss the issue. This use of ‘you’ works in two ways.

First, it cultivates in the reader a certain empathy toward Junger—an example of O’Connor’s involving you, which was briefly discussed earlier in relation to the interviews conducted by Dr. Eide and Colonel Gibler. Now, however, I would like to conduct a more in-depth study of

exactly how the involving ‘you’ works. The act of entering into another person’s perspective and position, accomplished by the involving ‘you,’ is a key tenant of the act of witnessing, which Kelly Oliver defines as the social interchange (usually through story-telling) by which “subjectivity and humanity” are created (Oliver 90). This creation of subjectivity will be discussed in greater depth in a later section, but is relevant to the current line of analysis. In order to witness to the experiences of another person—and thus recognize their subjectivity and humanity—one must be able to empathize with said person. One way of creating such empathy may be accomplished through the use of certain pronouns. In his study of the philosophy of pronouns, Charles S. Peirce states that “THOU is an IT in which there is another I” (Peirce 45). In other words, every use of the pronoun you forces the speaker (who inherently embodies the position of their own ‘I’) to recognize the existence of another subjective ‘I’ living within the third-person ‘IT’ being addressed. Junger’s use of you in the above scenario acts in much the same way: it forces upon the reader awareness of another ‘I’ outside of his or herself. This particular use of you, however, travels a step beyond Peirce’s theory by taking on some of the aspects of O’Connor’s involving you as well. Instead of simply invoking the second-person to compel the reader to recognize the existence of another ‘I,’ Junger forces the reader to actually embody that other ‘I’—to become the ‘IT’ (which is Junger himself) and metaphorically discover the ‘I’ within the ‘IT’.

The process by which this is accomplished is rather complicated and multi-leveled. First, we must recognize that Junger (who is speaking as narrator in this text) and the reader are two separate entities, working from two separate perspectives. As a reporter embedded in the military, Junger is the one who struggles with objectivity, and the section from *War* enumerates

his personal conflicts. To the reader, Junger is merely an ‘IT’—a body identified as a third-person and “negatively defined” as being non-I; therefore, his struggles are distant and unrelated to the reader (Peirce 45). In trying to evoke empathy through the involving you, Junger’s first task is to make the reader aware of an ‘I’ outside of his or her own existence—to make the reader aware of Junger’s ‘I’ and thus turn him from an ‘IT’ into a subjective ‘I’. Addressing the reader as you, Junger accomplishes exactly what Peirce describes—he reaches out to the reader and recognizes the existence of a subjective ‘I’ within the reader. Conversely, this makes the reader aware of the subjective ‘I’ within Junger—the subjective ‘I’ that is addressing the reader as you. Once these two subjective ‘I’s are established (the ‘I’ of the reader and the ‘I’ of Junger), Junger places the reader within his ‘I’ by invoking the second-person you. He attributes to the reader his personal knowledge and experiences: “you can’t write objectively about people who are shooting at you” (Junger 26). You, Junger is saying to the reader, are now the temporary owner of my experiences; You are now the temporary owner of my ‘I’. In doing so, he “implicates the addressee as at least a potential” experiencer of his struggles as an embedded reporter (Stirling). By metaphorically lending the reader his experiences, Junger opens the reader to the possibility that his or her ‘I’ could somehow expand to the point of embodying and personalizing experiences not their own. This expanding and embodying of a personal ‘I’ is the very essence of recognition in witnessing. According to Oliver, witnessing to the experiences of another and recognizing within the other a separate subjectivity “requires the assimilation of difference into something familiar” (Oliver 9). The only way to fully empathize with an unfamiliar—and unknowable—reality is to assimilate that reality into something familiar. The act of embodying experiences that are not his or her own—Junger’s experiences as a journalist—creates within the reader a forced familiarity with those experiences. Forcing the reader to take his perspective and

experience the issues to which he is privy, Junger combats the issue of solipsism—or the belief that only one’s own mind is sure to exist. He turns the reader into a witness of his experiences as a reporter in the Korengal. Placing the reader directly into Junger’s shoes—into a situation in which he struggles—forces the reader to take on his point of view and feel from his perspective, thus invoking empathy.

Secondly, this use of second-person you (re-stated again below) acts as a self-indexing you, giving Junger claims to a certain membership category—that of embedded reporters:

You can’t write objectively about people you’re close to, but you can’t write objectively about people who are shooting at you either. Pure objectivity—difficult enough while covering a city council meeting—isn’t remotely possible in war; bonding with the men around you is the least of your problems (Junger 26).

The use of you may refer to the membership category of embedded reporters; all embedded reporters struggle with objectivity, not just Junger. Though the issue of objectively describing any experience is universal, and therefore may signal the membership group of ‘all humans,’ Junger’s reference to “writing about” experiences and “covering a city council meeting” makes it apparent that the membership group he is invoking is, in fact, journalists. Using O’Connor’s self-indexing you, Junger interpolates his personal experience as an embedded reporter, projecting it onto the larger subgroup of embedded journalists in general. He is claiming that his experiences are representative of the experiences of the group as a whole—that you, so long as you are a member of the group of embedded reporters, may experience a situation similar to his own. By invoking this membership category and the “knowledge entitlement that goes with it,” Junger is

displaying his “authority as a member of this group” and thus attributing to himself the credibility necessary to witness to the struggles of embedded journalists (Stirling).

Junger’s use of both the involving and the self-indexing you, which we have analyzed in-depth above, becomes even more interesting when applied to situations specific to soldiers:

(Why appeal to God when you can call in Apaches?) You don’t haul your cook up there just so that he can be in his first firefight unless you’re pretty confident it’s going to end well... The platoon was the faith, a greater cause that, if you focused on it entirely, made your fears go away. It was an anesthetic that left you aware of what was happening but strangely fatalistic about the outcome. As a soldier, the thing you were most scared of was failing your brothers when they needed you. [emphasis added] (Junger 210)

This use of you, much like the previous use, works on more than one level. It, too, engages the reader in such a way as to create empathy, but this time, rather than empathizing with the experiences of an embedded journalist, Junger asks the reader to empathize with the soldiers. He removes the reader from his or her own perspective and places the reader directly into the position of a soldier: “the thing you were most scared of was failing your brothers” (Junger 210). The phrase “as a soldier,” establishes “a soldier” as the anchor reference of the pronoun “you”. This involving you is then utilized to raise the reader’s awareness of the existence of another ‘I’—the ‘I’ of the soldiers. Once again, Junger invokes the second-person to help the reader realize that just because he or she is not a soldier does not exclude him or her from understanding the emotions and motives of soldiers. Thus, the reader becomes a witness to the struggles of a soldier—restoring “subjectivity and humanity” to a subgroup formerly only viewed as “other” (Oliver 90).

One interesting difference between this example of involving you and the previous one, however, must be noted. In the first example discussed from War, Junger invoked the pronoun you in order to place the reader directly into his 'I' and allow the reader to understand his struggles as a reporter. This use of the involving you worked because the experiences that Junger was lending the reader were his own. Junger has ownership over his experiences as an embedded journalist, and therefore he has the authority to 'lend' his experiences and perspective to the reader. In the second example, however, Junger appears to invoke the involving you NOT to invite the reader into his perspective, but to invite the reader into the perspective of a soldier. How can he do this? How can Junger invoke the involving you and place the reader into a perspective that is, apparently, not his own? We may easily accept that Junger has claim to the experiences of an embedded reporter, but does he have enough claim to the experiences of a soldier that he may effectively 'lend' these experiences to the reader? In order to accept Junger's above use of the involving you, we must accept that the experiences Junger is trying to lend to his reader are, in fact, his to lend.

This perspectival problem may be explained by Barbara Dancygier's theory of blending and compression. According to Dancygier, identity is a blended construct of multiple situational selves—our 'I', as we view it, is actually an amalgamation of all the different facets of our person, each facet with its own 'I'. In certain situations, one may decompress this blended identity in order to isolate one particular facet (Dancygier). As an embedded reporter, Junger may lay claim not only to his identity as a reporter, but may also profess a facet of identity that feels as a soldier feels and experiences war as a soldier experiences war. I would posit that in the

above example, Junger is decompressing his identity and isolating the ‘I’ within himself that feels as soldiers feel—the ‘I’ that experiences combat and knows the impact of mortar on desert sand. Junger can then claim authority over all the experiences of his decompressed soldier ‘I’. This allows him to use the involving you and place the reader into the perspective of this decompressed ‘I’.

This theory of decompression forms an interesting connection between O’Connor’s involving you and the self-indexing you. By decompressing his soldier ‘I’, Junger gains enough authority over combat experiences to ‘lend’ them to the reader, but does this authority extend to the membership group of soldiers as a whole? We may accept that Junger’s soldier ‘I’ has enough authority over combat to invoke the use of the involving you, but does his soldier ‘I’ have enough authority to invoke the use of the self-indexing you? If we accept Junger’s use of you as an example of O’Connor’s self-indexing you, then we are accepting the idea that Junger has enough authority within the soldier membership category that he may accurately cast the shadow of his experiences upon the subgroup as a whole. But Junger is not a soldier, and decompressing his identity does not change this fact. Though he isolates his soldier ‘I’ to discuss combat experiences, we must recognize that this soldier ‘I’ is still only a facet of Junger—and therefore, still an outside observer with incomplete knowledge of combat. No level of isolation or decompression can completely divorce Junger’s soldier ‘I’ from his identity as a whole; no matter how closely Junger tries to align himself with the soldier subgroup, he remains an outsider attempting to narrate experiences he can never fully understand.

This pervasive “outsider-ness” is perhaps one of the most interesting issues for embedded reporters, and it returns us back to a question raised earlier—from whose position are they really telling the story of war? Throughout *War*, Junger appears to witness to the experiences of soldiers in combat. He seeks to tell their story and make their experiences understood through the use of his soldier ‘I’, which connects his readers to the perspective of a soldier. But his decompressed soldier ‘I’ can only extend to a certain point of understanding; beyond that point, Junger must abandon his soldier ‘I’ and admit that he is an outsider lacking a full, comprehensive understanding of combat. It is when he finally abandons his soldier ‘I’ that the question of perspective and positioning becomes blurry. Without the authority of his soldier ‘I’, Junger loses the right to comment on his time in the Korengal Valley as a soldier, and must confine his understanding of combat and war to his identity as a reporter. The lens through which he views his surroundings, his experiences, and his feelings then switches from ‘soldier’ to ‘reporter.’ For example, when describing the platoon’s ritual of “blood in, blood out” (in which soldiers beat each other up as a sign of endearment and brotherhood), Junger’s writing becomes almost anthropologic. Because “blood in, blood out” is such a selective, in-group ritual, to which even his soldier ‘I’ cannot enter, Junger is forced to “[take] cover behind some trees” and describe the scene of a platoon beating as a passive observer (Junger 23). In such an instance, Junger is no longer illuminating the perspective of a soldier in the Korengal, but is offering insight into the position of being a reporter in the Korengal Valley. His experience as a reporter, hiding behind a tree as soldiers engage in a rock fight, become the focus of his witnessing, rather than the experiences of the soldiers themselves. Just as in the first example from *War* in which he discusses his struggle with objectivity, Junger’s writing serves to illuminate the undertaking of war reporting, rather than the war itself.

Using the self-indexing and involving you forms to present the issues of soldiers in some situations, and embedded reporters in other situations, highlights Junger's perspective within the military. As a participant-observer, certain instances allow him to witness to the war as a participant with first-hand knowledge of combat and an authoritative soldier 'I'. Other instances, however, necessitate the switch from participant to observer.

This kind of multi-level witnessing ties back into the issue of objectivity. The very act of taking on a participatory soldier 'I' ruins for Junger any pretense of objectivity. To claim the authority of a particular decompressed identity, one must deny all other facets of their identity until their existence is solely defined by the decompression. In denying his reporter 'I' and becoming his soldier 'I', Junger loses all sense of objectivity. By becoming the subject about which they are writing (in the case of war reporting, this means becoming a soldier), journalists can no longer view their subject through an objective, detached lens. Conversely, when reporters are forced to abandon their soldier 'I' and recognize that they are inherently non-participants in war, they lose authority over the soldier subgroup and must forsake the soldier membership category.

Embedded reporting, then, becomes an identity-balancing act. On one hand, embedded journalists must cling to the sense of objectivity that comes with being an observer, while the other hand offers the credibility of a participant. Studying the uses of second-person perspective in war narratives can help define important points of perspectival switching.

Examining the use of second-person pronouns in *War* offers insight into the unique way in which an embedded reporter may bear witness to combat. In *War*, as we have seen, Junger utilizes

second-person narration as he witnesses both to his own experiences in the Korengal as a reporter and those of the soldiers actually engaging in combat. I would now like to focus solely on the instances in which second-person pronouns are used to witness to personal experiences—in which a narrator relates occurrences that directly affected his or her sense of identity. For example, the following excerpt in which Junger describes riding in the back of a Humvee as part of a convoy into the Korengal Valley, only moments before an IED hits:

I concentrate on running the camera. That is the easiest way to avoid thinking about the fact that what you're filming could kill you. "Alright, you stay in there," Captain Thyng tells the gunner. "We're going to pull up around that corner—"

And that's as far as he gets. (Junger 139 emphasis added)

This particular story recounts an experience of which Junger has first-hand knowledge and understanding, rather than simply witnessing to the experiences of others. One important aspect often found in such personal accounts is the conjunction of second-person pronouns and present-tense narration in recounting an event. The above excerpt utilizes present-tense narration in order to place the reader, or as I would posit the narrator himself, directly into a past situation, making the occurrence as real and present as possible. This act of referring to a past event as though it were currently occurring is quite common in personal narratives. Kenneth Eastridge, a soldier interviewed by David Phillips for the book *Lethal Warriors*, for example, describes the feeling of returning home after fighting overseas as follows:

You've got to have a gun, because you think everybody that looks at you on the street is out to get you...it feels like everyone is the enemy. The people that were in Iraq with you are the only ones you can trust" (Phillips 97).

Due to their personal nature, these two excerpts, unlike some of the examples from War discussed in the previous section in which Junger recounts experiences that are not technically his own, contain an added layer of witnessing. The combination of second-person pronouns and present-tense appears to be symptomatic of this dimension of witnessing. In this section, I would like to argue that the specific joining of present-tense narration and second-person point of view, by blurring the temporal lines between past and present, allows the narrator to attempt a certain kind of self-witnessing.

In order to understand the act of self-witnessing to which I am referring, a comprehensive overview of the theory of witnessing itself is necessary. Before I begin my analysis, I would like to walk through some terms associated with witnessing theory and define these terms for the specific context of my analysis. Though I briefly touched on Kelly Oliver's theory of witnessing and recognition in the previous section, I would now like to revisit some of her theories in greater depth. As stated previously, witnessing is defined by Oliver as the social interchange by which "subjectivity and humanity" are created (Oliver 90). Subjectivity, or the act of "see[ing] oneself as a subject," is partially defined by the ability "to imagine oneself as self-sovereign" (Oliver 3). To have subjectivity, in other words, is to feel empowered—to feel a sense of ownership over oneself and one's identity. In stark contrast to this idea is the notion of objectivity. In some ways related to the idea of journalistic objectivity, the philosophical idea of objectivity connotes the loss of one's subjectivity, by which a person becomes an object lacking a strong sense of self and identity.

A more traditional understanding of subjectivity and objectivity, as Oliver notes, describes the loss of subjectivity as solely the symptom of “being othered, oppressed, subordinated, or tortured” (Oliver 7). Such terms invoke images of Holocaust survivors and hostages of war—people who have experienced physical, mental, and emotional torture at the hands of an outside force. While such trauma does indeed account for much of our understanding of what it means to lose a sense of self, the transition from subject to object is, in its simplest terms, a result of “traumas directed at...identit[y] and sense of [self]” (Oliver 8). All images of torture and physical abuse aside, people lose their subjectivity when they feel they are no longer able to connect with portions of their identity—or even that they lack an identity altogether. Even events that may be considered positive or, at the very least, neutral, may affect a person’s subjectivity by skewing his/her understanding of his/herself, thereby causing a disconnect between person and identity. For the purpose of my analysis, we will divorce the idea of objectivity from the idea of trauma as much as possible, instead viewing a loss of subjectivity as a fundamental change in identity that makes one unknowable to oneself.

The means by which lost subjectivity is restored remains the act of witnessing; the key to witnessing lies in the act of dialogue. As Oliver states, “we come to recognize ourselves as subjects or active agents through recognition from others” (Oliver 4). The aspect of recognition I would like to detail for the purpose of analyzing the passages from *War* and *Lethal Warriors* is the idea that recognition is dialogic. “Subjectivity,” as Oliver claims, “is necessarily intersubjective and dialogic,” and requires a dialogue between the objectified person or peoples and a subjective agent, so that the subjective agent may confer recognition upon the object (Oliver 5). There is much discussion and debate over the exact nature of dialogic recognition,

and scholars from Franz Fanon to Judith Butler point out that the very act of recognition itself is oppressive—by seeking the recognition of a subjective authority, the othered object allows an outside force to “define” its identity. As Judith Butler states, “[the subject] can never produce itself autonomously,” but instead depends on outside definition for the creation of subjectivity (Butler). The oppressive condition this theory of witnessing describes is combated partially by the idea of self-witnessing, which will be key to my analysis of *War and Lethal Warriors*. The idea of self-witnessing allows an oppressed party to “be the agent of his own recognition” and take part in “active meaning making and self-creation,” thus having some say in the creation of his or her subjectivity (Oliver 29). There are three basic aspects of self-witnessing necessary for the process to work: the objectified other, the internal witness, and the external witness. The internal witness is the witnessing agent within the objectified other—a “subjective” identity within the objectified party that allows for a level of internal witnessing to occur. When an external witness confers recognition upon an objectified other, this internal witness “operates as a negotiating voice between subject position and subjectivity,” which “enable[s] and empower[s] a subject position” to be created within the objectified other (Oliver 87). This subject position (the internal witness) can then witness to his/herself and confer recognition upon the othered, objective portion of his/her identity. In other words, the existence of an internal witness allows for the process of witnessing to be writ on an internal level. Though there is still some debate over how exactly self-witnessing works, I would like to suggest that, whether or not the act of self-witnessing is fully and philosophically accepted, the joining of present-tense narration and second-person ‘you’ that I have proposed is, at the very least, symptomatic of an attempt at self-witnessing and the creation of an internal witness. With this in mind, I would like to focus my analysis of the passages from *War and Lethal Warriors* not on whether or not

successful self-witnessing can be accomplished, but rather how a narrator may attempt to create an internal witness and engage in dialogic self-witnessing.

If the passages from *War* and *Lethal Warriors* do indeed exhibit an attempt at self-witnessing, as I have claimed, then there must be a component of dialogue somewhere in the excerpts. More than that, I must be able to prove that the passages also contain some form of subjective agent witnessing to the story of an objectified other; in the case of self-witnessing, Junger and Eastridge, respectively, must comprise both roles as objective other and subjective internal witness. The process of analyzing and breaking down the phenomenon of self-witnessing is rather complex, and I would like to focus specifically on the example of Junger in *War* to walk through the process.

Recall Dancygier's theory of decompression and multiple-selves: according to this mode, by decompressing himself into a subjective, internal witness and an objective-self, Junger may create within himself the two components necessary for dialogic recognition: a self to share his experiences and a self to act as a recognizing witness. The very act of decompressing one's identity into differing multiple-selves occurs when "changes in [a] person's understanding of his/her own self are too important to allow the blended image to be maintained" (Dancygier). In Junger's case, his time spent in the Korengal Valley (his experience being attacked by an IED in particular) stands as such an identity-altering event that the Junger who existed before the assignment to Iraq and the Junger of the present—now narrating the events of *War*—conceptualize such different formulations of self that they can no longer remain blended into one comprehensive identity. The decompressed Junger of the past acts as the objected other of

traditional witnessing, as he represents an identity no longer recognized or understood by the current Junger; it is the Junger of the past—the Junger of the Korengal Valley—who has suffered the identity trauma that caused the fracturing or decompressing of his identity. With this in mind, the Junger of the present—the Junger narrating the events of War—acts as the subjective internal witness. I would argue that Junger as narrator may claim a subjective internal witness role on two conditions. First if subjectivity is understood to be “the impression that [one] has agency and that [one] can act in the world” (Oliver 3), then the very act of narrating War and re-telling the story of the Korengal Valley gives narrator-Junger a sense of agency and awareness of self, affording him the subjective role. Secondly, if the audience of War (the readers) are viewed as external witnesses conferring recognition upon Junger by reading his story, then narrator Junger can gain the subject position and become the internal witness to a past, objectified Junger. Having established the two Jungers necessary for the dialogic relationship of witnessing and recognition, we can view Junger’s use of the second-person pronoun in a new light. When he writes, “I concentrate on running the camera. That is the easiest way to avoid thinking about the fact that what you’re filming could kill you” (Junger 139), we can now view the invocation of the second-person pronoun as narrator-Junger directly addressing past-Junger. With his identity now decompressed into a subjective-self and an objective-self, the goal of witnessing becomes the re-blending of the two selves. In order to do so, narrator-Junger must come to understand and re-assimilate the actions and experiences of past-Junger into a single, solidified identity. To do so, narrator-Junger must address past-Junger and establish dialogic relations, an act which we see occurring through the use of second-person ‘you’.

With decompressed past and present-selves ready to establish dialogue through the use of the second-person, we must now take into consideration the effect of present-tense narration. Proper dialogic communication must contain a component of response-ability; when one agent addresses another agent, the addressee must have the capability to respond, thus becoming an addresser. In order to have response-ability, however, the two agents interacting must share a temporal and spatial environment—they must be metaphorically face-to-face. In order to establish such dialogic relations in *War*, Junger's past-self must be able to directly communicate with his present-self, despite the fact that his past-self inhabits the temporal space of the Korengal Valley while his present-self exists in the narrative moment. The feat of bringing together Junger's two selves is accomplished by adopting the use of present-tense to convey a sense of immediacy to past actions. Dancygier touches briefly on this kind of temporal blending, which allows "two original input spaces...[to] blend into one." Setting up this "blended space... gives rise to an emergent structure of debate-like interaction" that allows for dialogic exchange to occur (Dancygier). Uri Margolin calls this particular act of addressing a past experience as though it were presently occurring "the historical present." He also asserts that such a form of narration "stem[s] from and reflect[s] a cognitive and experiential displacement," and acts as a way to help re-assimilate past experiences into one's present understanding of his/her self (Margolin).

Applying this idea to the example from *War*, Junger begins the exchange by writing about his past experiences in the present-tense—"I concentrate on running the camera"—a narrative choice that forces present-Junger (Junger's subjective-self) to re-inhabit the mental and temporal space of his time in the Korengal, and thus share an environment with his past-self (Junger 139).

He successfully blends together the input space of himself as narrator and the input space of himself as past-Junger, creating a new, blended space in which he can allow his two selves to address each other directly. Thus, when narrator-Junger addresses past/objective-Junger using second-person, saying “that is the easiest way to avoid thinking about the fact that what you’re filming could kill you,” he is able to do so in a newly-blended temporal space that allows for a kind of face-to-face interaction (Junger 139).

The same basic process detailed extensively above, in respect to War and Junger as narrator, may be applied to the example from Lethal Warriors. When Kenneth Eastridge says, “You’ve got to have a gun, because you think everybody that looks at you on the street is out to get you,” we can understand it as present, narrator Eastridge (playing the part of a subjective, internal witness) engaging in dialogue with the past Eastridge, or the Eastridge that is familiar with the paranoia and unease of returning home after deployment. As with the Junger example, the use of present tense blends the temporal space such that past-Kenneth and present-Kenneth may experience responsible dialogue. One difference between the Lethal Warriors example and the example from War, however, is the question of the external witness. In War, as mentioned earlier, the external witness is the reader. The reader, by the act of reading Junger’s account, acknowledges narrator-Junger as a subjective agent that may, in turn, witness to past-Junger. In Lethal Warriors, however, the external witness is David Phillips. Kenneth Eastridge originally told his story to David Phillips, who compiled Lethal Warriors. David Phillips heard Eastridge’s story, conferring recognition and subjectivity onto Eastridge’s internal witness. In War, the audience plays an important part in the witnessing process, acting as an external witness, but in Lethal Warriors, the audience plays a less-active part in the creation of Eastridge’s subjectivity. This

difference is due to the existence of David Phillips acting as the mediator between the person telling the story (Eastridge) and the audience themselves.

Another difference between the example from *War* and the example from *Lethal Warriors* is the fact that one story describes a kinetic experience while the other does not. Junger narrates the story of a specific physical occurrence, describing it in present-tense terms—filming the scenery of the Korengal in the back of a Humvee. Eastridge, on the other hand, describes a general, emotional experience--the feeling of paranoia. While Junger returns to a physical moment in order to accomplish his act of self-witnessing, Eastridge simply returns to a mental or emotional state in the past. The use of the historical present, in conjunction with kinetic events, serves an additional purpose to the act of self-witnessing that is largely absent from non-kinetic witnessing. Besides simply allowing for proper, response-able dialogue to occur, the use of the historical present with reference to a kinetic story has implications for the Freudian process of “working through.” Paraphrasing an idea of Shosana Laub and Dori Felman, Oliver states that “because witnessing is a process of re-inventing experience, of making experience what it is, through witnessing the structure of the logic of repetition driving the psyche, particularly the psyche of victimization, is transformed” (Oliver 93). In other words, it is the specific act of re-living one’s experiences and working through the events of the past, through the process of witnessing, that truly brings about transformation and allows for the regaining of subjectivity. The use of historical present narration has a unique way of allowing the narrator to “work through” a past situation. Uri Margolin describes one aspect of the historical present as follows:

It further replaces any overall integrated view of [the event being narrated], its outcome, its place and significance in the larger chain of events with partial snapshots, so that what

has in fact already been accomplished and concluded at speech time is now seen as a situation in the making with uncertain outcome and value. (Margolin).

The historical present takes an event with a known, secure outcome, and removes it from its broader context such that it once again becomes an unfolding situation with an unknowable outcome. Thus, when a narrator invokes the use of the historical present, he or she has to abandon all present knowledge of how the situation unfolds, and truly work through the past event without the benefit of knowing how it all concludes. Rather than simply recounting a past event, with the knowledge of how it ends always in mind, the narrator must return to the moment of uncertainty and anxiety, working through the event as though it were a present crisis. If bearing witnessing is a “process of re-inventing experience,” as Oliver states, then historical present narration allows for the most complete act of re-living and re-inventing available. In the example from *War*, Junger is trying to work through the fact that “what [he’s] filming could kill [him],” and how he must cope with that knowledge (Junger 139). Addressing his past self—the self that is in the midst of a life-or-death situation—Junger is able to open up a dialogue with the past of himself facing death, and re-assimilate that experience into his current understanding of his identity. By removing this experience from his broader understanding and reliving the moments leading up to the IED detonation, Junger gains a level of “working through.”

In contrast to such kinetic working-through, an instance of witnessing to a more internal experience may be found in Anthony Swofford’s *Jarhead*—a memoir recounting his time in Saudi Arabia as a Marine. In the following example, Swofford describes the feeling of being turned into a hero back home while absent on deployment in the Middle East, writing:

You say wise, brave things that your family and friends read and they become even more proud of you, and girls not your girlfriend read about you, the ones you almost had, and they become sorry for having said no, because now you are brave and wise and your words and photo are in the newspaper (Swofford 13).

Though Swofford describes a personal experience with second-person pronouns and present-tense narration, the component of working-through found in kinetic instances of witnessing is missing. There is no specific moment or physical act that Swofford must re-live—no IED explosions or fire-fights to which he might mentally return and re-experience. Instead, he witnesses to an emotional phenomenon—to his internal reaction to being made a hero by his folks at home. Instead of using present-tense to return to a physical moment in the past, he uses present-tense to return to an emotional and mental state in the past.

In order to further illuminate the ways in which second-person narration and present-tense can join together for the purpose of self-witnessing, I would like to examine a few excerpts from another war memoir. *Shadow of the Sword*, by Navy Cross recipient Staff Sergeant Jeremiah Workman, contains several striking examples of the combination of historical present and second-person, dialogic narration. Workman's memoir, released in 2009, frequently switches temporal planes, sometimes narrating Workman's present life in Ohio after his deployment and sometimes narrating his time spent in Fallujah, Iraq. It is his time in Fallujah, trapped in a house surrounded by Iraqi insurgents and under heavy fire, which I would like to examine as a kinetic instance. The fire fight, which lasted several hours in reality, is drawn out over a dozen or so

chapters and examined in great detail by Workman. In his examination of the event, Workman italicizes, internal dialogue to allow his present, narrating self to address his past, witnessed self: That's it. Keep going. Another ten seconds and you'll catch up to the rest of the squad. Breathing hard no, gasping really. Keep it up. Don't slow down. Don't give in to your body. (Workman 144).

Like the passage from War, the above excerpt from Shadow of the Sword seeks to restore subjectivity to a past, othered, objective version of its narrator in a specific physical instance, once again, using the second-person 'you'. The Jeremiah Workman of the present, through the very act of narrating his story and examining his past, takes on the active role of subjective internal witness. Jeremiah of the past—the Jeremiah being addressed in the above excerpt—is, of course, the objectified other. So when Workman writes “don't give up on your body,” he is blending temporal planes in order to address his past self, pleading with his past self to endure. In doing so, he re-asserts himself into the moment of exertion, allowing for a complete working-through of the situation that, hopefully, allows for a re-blending or re-assimilation of his multiple-selves.

This act of re-assimilation may be understood more clearly in the passages from Shadow of the Sword that also invoke first-person plural:

Okay. No more spraying and praying. Make the shots count. Let's get up here this time. (Workman 147).

And our child. Boy or girl, I don't care. I just want to be a good father to a healthy kid. (Workman 177).

I would like to briefly note that the first instance is a kinetic example, while the second example describes internal, emotional dialogue without referring to a physical situation. Both excerpts, which utilize first-person plural (our, let's), either directly follow or lead into instances in which Workman uses italicized text as internal dialogue between past-Jeremiah and narrating-Jeremiah. As such, we understand the first-person plural to refer to a conjunction of the two—to the joining and merging of the past and the present within the narrator. When Workman refers to “our child,” he is blending together past-Workman and present-Workman into a first-person, plural position. Such a merging illustrates the entire purpose of these instances of self-witnessing: to reblend the decompressed identity into a single, coherent self. What was once fractured must now be mended. In discussing Dominik La Capra and his adaptation of Freud’s theory of transference as it relates to the act of working-through trauma, Oliver briefly touches in this idea of re-assimilating decompressed multi-selves into one identity:

transformation is based in acknowledging transference and retrieving what has been repressed...working-through requires interpretation born out of self-critical reflection and dialogue. (Oliver 81).

Just as “witnessing enables the subject to reconstitute the experience of objectification in ways that allow her to reinsert subjectivity,” the self-witnessing that we have examined utilizes the act of working-through to allow for subjectivity to be re-inserted into a past trauma.

Many of the excerpts discussed in regards to the combination of second-person narration and present-tense may also be defined by Patricia O’Connor’s three “you” forms. In fact, several of the examples mentioned contain elements of self-indexing and involving “you.” Similarly, the earlier excerpt from *War* in which Junger discusses the issues concerning objectivity inherent in

working as an embedded journalist--“you can’t write objectively about people you’re close to, but you can’t write objectively about people who are shooting at you either”—may be viewed as an example of self-witnessing due to the present-tense narration (Junger 26). The two theories of “you”—that which Patricia O’Connor has detailed and the theory of self-witnessing I outlined—are not mutually exclusive and overlap on several occasions. Examples in which past-tense is used with second-person narration, however, may only be viewed through the lens of Patricia O’Connor’s “you” theory. For example, the following excerpt from *Lethal Warriors*, in which an unnamed soldier described fellow Marine Anthony Marquez :

“He would do anything you wanted him to do, but you needed to keep him on a short leash because he would also do what you didn’t want him to do” (Phillips 72).

Due to the use of past-tense narration, the element of Margolin’s historical present is lacking and therefore the dialogic element necessary for self-witnessing is not present. The soldier is neither attempting to re-insert himself into a kinetic situation for the benefit of working-through, nor is he re-living an emotional experience or accessing a past mental state. His use of “you” most closely resembles O’Connor’s involving “you.” On a related note, when a person uses second-person pronouns and present-tense to witness to an event that is not their own, then the self-witnessing element is again absent. For example, the excerpt from *War* in which Junger describes the mental landscape of a soldier, saying “you don’t haul your cook up there just so that he can be in his first firefight unless you’re pretty confident it’s going to end well,” lacks a self-witnessing element (Junger 210). Though both present-tense address and second-person narration are invoked, the fact that the mental experience described is not Junger’s own, the act of re-inserting oneself into a past experience is unavailable to him. He cannot revisit a mental sphere that is fundamentally unknowable to him.

The act of witnessing requires many ethical considerations, and readers should think critically about where they are being positioned in relation to the narrative to which they are witnessing. Narrators, as well, must occupy a perspective appropriate to their ownership of the story. By examining the use of the second-person pronouns in personal narratives, the story-telling dynamic can be established and understood.

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