

The Reality of Women Soldiers' Violence in Peter Morris's *Guardians*

واقع عنف المجنديات في مسرحية بيتر موريس "الاوصياء"

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Abstract

This paper examines the reality of women soldiers' violence in Peter Morris's play, *Guardians*, because the societies look at woman as vulnerable to many kinds of violence including sexual harassment, abuse and assault. Brutality is solely ascribed to men due to the binary narrative of gender which renders woman as the weaker whereas man as the powerful. Thus, the possibility of woman's acting violence is excluded from any consideration in most of the past written literature. Therefore the current paper aims to examine the reality of women soldiers' violence to demystify the binary narrative of gender in light of Judith Butler's theory *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity and its concept of Performativity* (1999). Accordingly, the present study argues that women soldiers can be perpetrators as men can be according to their repeated actions and performance. The behaviors of the female soldier in the play are out of the binary narrative of gender then out

of the social construction of violence. This paper approves the de-gendered nature of violence, in other words, a de-construction of the binary system of gender and in turn violence in the military. It concludes that gender is a matter of acting, and performance decides the individual's identity not his/her sex. Moreover, the present paper finds that women soldiers' behaviors are affected by their cultural and social environment. The righteousness of Butler's statement that gender is socially and culturally constructed is proved throughout the present study. Accordingly, the binary system of understanding violence fuels the inequalities between male and female.

Keywords: Soldier women, violence, Peter Morris's *Guardians*, Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, Performativity.

الخلاصة:

تبث هذه الورقة في واقع عنف المجنادت في مسرحية بيتر موريس *Guardians* ، لأن المجتمعات تنظر إلى المرأة على أنها عرضة لأنواع كثيرة من العنف بما في ذلك التحرش الجنسي والإساءة والاعتداء. تُنسب الوحشية إلى الرجال فقط بسبب الفكر الثاني للجنس الذي يجعل المرأة أضعف بينما الرجل كقوة. وبالتالي ، فإن إمكانية ممارسة المرأة للعنف مستبعدة من أي اعتبار في معظم الأدب المكتوب السابقة. لذلك تهدف الورقة الحالية إلى فحص واقع عنف المجنادت لإزالة الغموض عن الفكر الثاني للجنس في ضوء نظرية جوديث بتلر "مشاكلة الجنس: النسوية وتدمير الهوية ومفهومها عن الأداء" (1999). وبناءً على ذلك ، تجادل الدراسة الحالية في أن المجنادت يمكن أن يصبحن جانبيات مثل الرجال وفقاً لأفعالهن وأدائهن المتكرر. إن سلوكيات المجندة في المسرحية خارجة عن الفكر الثاني للجندر ثم خارج البناء الاجتماعي للعنف. توافق هذه الورقة على طبيعة العنف غير المجنسة ، وبعبارة أخرى ، إلغاء بناء النظام الثاني للجندر وبالتالي العنف في الجيش. ويخلص إلى أن الجنس هو مسألة تمثيل ، وأن الأداء هو الذي يقرر هوية الفرد وليس جنسه. علاوة على ذلك ، تستنتج هذه الورقة أن سلوكيات المجنادت تتأثر ببيئتهن الثقافية والاجتماعية. وتم إثبات صحة رأي بتلر بأن الجنس *gender* مبني اجتماعياً وثقافياً خلال هذه الدراسة. وعليه ، فإن النظام الثاني لفهم العنف يغذي عدم المساواة بين الذكر والأنثى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المجنادت ، العنف ، بيتر موريس"الأوصياء" ، مشاكلة الجنس لجوديث بتلر، الأداء.

1. Introduction

Integration of women in military started since the beginning of the establishment of the army. Formally, women succeeded to participate in the military in 1901 as nurses. It was proclaimed that women started joining armed troops of American military in 1948; yet till 1967 2% of women were allowed to join military force and 10% were allowed to be officers. Patten & Parker (2011) states that after the US military ended compulsory service in 1973, the number of women enlisted in the military began to increase in various positions. Though the number of soldier women enlisted in United States Army has significantly increased, they are not allowed to participate in direct and ground combat. (Yeung, et al ,2017)

Also, more and more countries have begun to expand the role of women in their armies, but their role in medical services such as nursing remains the most prominent, so the debate is still ongoing. It is though the common dominating culture of all the societies around the world that women physically are not qualified to be soldiers or to participate in real combat and they are only eligible to serve food for men soldiers as well as healing and treating wounded soldiers. Noticeably, nowadays women take part in military service, they even participate in battlefields.

Concerning military combat, some countries allow women to serve in some combat locations. Other countries exclude them for various reasons, including physical standards and privacy policies. Countries without conscription, notably the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, have had the highest levels of female military presence. Canada is particularly distinguished by its liberalization due to its early implementation

of gender equality practices. Increased advocacy for equal opportunity, coupled with a decrease in the number of strong men willing to take part in military service, convinces states to reform policies regarding female integration into service. With the opening of the submarine service in 2000, women were free to participate in any type of military service (Cawkill, 2009).

The ongoing debate about the inclusion of women in military combat continues to this day. According to Ables (2019), the main points in the debate about women's participation in military combat focus on the physical inadequacy of women, psychological causes, habits and gender discrimination, and the formative defects. With regard to physical insufficiency, most of the reasons include that men are physically fit compared to women and that the average woman is weaker than the average man, so when she faces a man as enemy in front of her, that will be a defect. Physiologically speaking, woman's skeleton is more likely to fracture because it is less dense compared to men. As for psychological reasons, the presence of women affects the morale of war. And in fact; many soldiers, too, do not trust women in the important jobs that must be done on the front lines. It is also clear that the romantic rapprochement that will occur between male and female soldiers will affect the strength of the combat unit. The other reason is that the inclusion of women soldiers in the war leads to the possibility that they will be tortured when they are taken as hostages, or even subjected to sexual exploitation. Although male soldiers may be subjected to physical torture when they are taken as captives in war, they rarely face the problem of sexual assault.

As for talking about customs and gender discrimination, keeping women away from the army is the last bulwark of sexual discrimination

(Davis, et al. ,2020). According to some of the afore-mentioned scholars, the army, whose policy is not to accept women, this can be due to the binary traditional thinking. However, there are many examples in history that demonstrate the achievements that can be made by women in the military field. Finally, as far as the formative defects are concerned, the army that has women soldiers among its ranks prevents the presence of women in the front ranks, because it is not possible to prevent the male soldiers from seeking to help the wounded woman soldier, leaving their duties treating and providing them protection innately.

It is worth mentioning here Peter Morris' play *Guardians* as one of the few plays that have been studied, which represents the interest of the current study. Thus, the present paper is one of the rare studies conducted on soldier women. Regarding *Guardians*, Morris presents the scenes of the torture that Iraqi prisoners are subjected to in Abu Ghraib prison by a female soldier and her boyfriend. Morris's play gives a clear image about the reasons behind committing these heinous acts by female soldier against the Iraqi prisoners (Morris, 2007). Based on the above, the importance of studying the role of female soldiers in the army in American theater becomes clear, and for this, the researcher addresses the reality of women soldiers' violence in Morris's play. This study will be done based on Feminist Theory: Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble and its concept of Performativity* (1999).

2. Theoretical Framework

The present study intends to examine the reality of female soldiers' characters in Peter Morris' *Guardians*, one of the contemporary plays which tackles the subject of soldiers women in the army, from a feminist perspective. The study applies Judith Butler's theory (1999) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* and the concept of Performativity to

identify the depiction of women soldiers in military institution. The dominating concept that looks at women as only victims while men are perpetrators necessitates the current study. As the previous studies tackle the violence committed by men against women at the same time, past studies present men as tough and tend to be violent at the same time these studies present women as innocent creatures and vulnerable to harm. So, the current study aims to show the reality of violence's perpetrator in the light of *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1999).

Butler's feminist theory *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1999) supports the concept of *performativity* which mainly prescribes gender as a matter of performance and action. Hence, Butler states that:

the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed. (Butler, 1990, p. 33).

According to the *Performative* concept the behaviors of male and female are not the product of nature, but are their performances. Morgenroth

& Ryan (2018) declare that individuals' acts determine their sex whether man or woman. The above mentioned paragraph shed lights on the importance of performativity in showing the social, cultural and psychological factors in shaping female's violent acts. According to Morgenroth & Ryan (2018) "Butler's notion of performativity echoes a range of social psychological approaches to gender and gender difference". Thus, victimization and perpetration of violence will be examined through the performativity concept which is part of Judith Butler's feminist theory. Butler (1999) herself states that "performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body" (p. xv).

Depending on Butler's feminist theory, Wolf (2014) declares that woman's behavior is impacted by "racial, ethnic, sexual and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities" (p. 114). The study hypothesizes that female soldiers are capable of perpetrating violence. The violence that can be committed by women includes sexual harassment, psychological harm, sexual assault, torturing and all kinds of abuse. So, assuming that women can perpetrate violence against men refutes the binary view of gender that ascribes brutalization to man as the only perpetrator of violence while ascribing purity and goodness to women as the only victims. In illustrating the misunderstanding of the binary view of gender in the light of Butler's theory, Morgenroth & Ryan state that Butler disrupts the:

binary view of sex, gender, and sexuality.

She argued that gender, rather than being an essential quality following from biological sex, or an inherent identity, is an act which grows out of, reinforces, and is reinforced

by, societal norms and creates the illusion of binary sex. (2018)

Indeed, Butler herself in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1999), refutes the binary narrative of gender declaring that:

As a strategy to denaturalize and resignify bodily categories, I describe and propose a set of parodic practices based in a performative theory of gender acts that disrupt the categories of the body, sex, gender, and sexuality and occasion their subversive resignification and proliferation beyond the binary frame (1999, p. xxxi).

Thus, the current study aims to demystify the binary narrative of gender in the light of Judith Butler's theory *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* in order to prove that violence is not gendered and to prove that female soldiers can be perpetrators of violence in contemporary military plays.

Butler's Gender Trouble theory argues that the act of violence is not limited to men. In fact, women are like men in committing violent actions. It is the standard norms of societies that look at man as a perpetrator of violence. Therefore, Butler's theory presents the perspective of similarity between male and female in committing brutal actions. For this reason, Fallwell & Williams (2016) pose and raise the following questions related to violence committed by women: "what happens when women are the

perpetrators of violent or harmful behavior? How do we define evil? What makes evil men seem different from evil women? When women commit acts of violence or harmful behavior, how are they represented differently from men? How do perceptions of class, race, and age influence these representations?" Butler in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* argues that women are able to commit violence against men or against other women. The physical power is not the motive behind violence. Butler states that "women now wage violence against men, nor a simple internalization of masculine norms such that women now wage violence against themselves" (p. 161). Thus, the aim of this current study is to explore the inevitable stereotyping of violence in the light of Judith Butler's theory *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* in order to correct the prevailing idea among the societies which claims that male soldiers are the only perpetrators of violence. This objective will be achieved through refuting the wrong justifications that marginalize and ignore female soldiers' ability to commit violence.

3. De-gendering and Re-gendering Violence in Peter Morris's *Guardians*

In order to explore the reality of women soldiers' violence, the study starts with examining the brutality of female soldiers in Morris's text *Guardians*, how women soldiers can be perpetrators of violence against men. The text analysis will be accomplished with the help of Judith Butler's theory *Gender Trouble* and *Performativity*. Butler declares that behaviors and dispositions of a person determine his/her gender (1999). From this point, it should be understood that blaming others for all the violent actions that

female soldiers commit is just an excuse to justify their mistakes and improving the image of women and making them appear as victims of circumstances and victims of people who are surrounding them. At the beginning of the play the American Girl attempts to show herself as an oppressed girl by her family, she complains that, at the night of shipping out, her family does not care about her leave, her father and brother are drinking, her mother cares about the things that she didn't do yet, she says that her mother were "shouting at me for the things that I ain't done yet she tole me to do before goin." (*Guardians*, Scene II, 17). This is only an attempt to eventually justify the acts of violence she carries out against the Iraqi prisoners at the end of the play.

The American Girl knows that working as a prison guard is a dirty job as she states that working as a prison guard represents the "Scum of the earth" (S.IV. 23). She herself narrates that her cousin who is called Skeeter Dunkle is working at "state facility" (*Guardians*. Scene IV, 24), his job "was mainly helping people on the inside the break the low more, takin twenny dollars here, twenny dollars there, arrange for them to get breaks, smugglin a bag a weed and what-all." (*Guardians*. Scene IV, 24). She believes it is better than working as traffic police "I guess I'm lucky I'm not directin a traffic. That's what was most of us doing" (*Guardians*. Scene.IV, 23). In order to assert her character and breaks the cultural and social restrictions that render her weak and feminine, she accepts this mannish job. She tries to deconstruct the binary narrative. So, the American Girl is aware of the heinousness in working as a prison's guard, even her boyfriend keeps telling her "Who Will Guard The Guardians Themselves." (*Guardians*.Scene.IV, 25). In fact, her boyfriend's words imply the reality of the woman's placement in a world dominated by men. It is a binary world in which men are rendered the more powerful whereas women are the weaker. So, how it is expected from a

woman who is the weaker in the binary social fabric and needs protection, to guard male prisoner who is the stronger in this fabric. It is obvious that the American Girl responds to the social and cultural conditions, as Butlers declares in her book *Gender Trouble* that "gender is culturally constructed" (Butler, 1999, p. 6). She also declared that "gender is socially constructed" (p. 9). In the case of the American girl, according to what is mentioned in the paragraphs above it seems that the American Girl is also affected by the cultural and social conditions that surround her and wants to revolt against them.

Normally, people express their anger when they are subjected to any kind of violence. However, in the case of the American Girl; she expresses her joy with all the physical pain Charlie causes to her. She is even proud of all the contusions in her body she gets during her relation with Charlie. This is so obvious when she asks Abby (one of her colleagues who work at the same prison Abu Gharib), she asks her "Abs, is it normal for a girl, y'know, is it normal to get, uh, bruises on your titties from sex?" (*Guardians*.Scene.VI. 34). The thing is that the American Girl knows that Abby is lesbian which means that she is not familiar with the sexual relation with men as indicated by the playwright at the same time the American girl knows the answer very well as she states "And y'know, I knew it wasn't normal. That's why I'm telling Abby that, maybe you won't believe it but it's the God's honest truth: I was bragging." (*Guardians*.Scene.VI. 35). Here, as well, more evidence that the dispositions and behaviors of someone constitute his/her gender, then it assures Butler's idea that claim there is no difference between gender and sex. It is only their acts and behaviors determine their gender as in the case of the American Girl who tends to heterosexuality and her colleague Abby who is lesbian, Butler supposes that "to have a gender means to have entered already into a heterosexual

relationship of subordination" (p. xiii). Concerning gender and sex Butler (1999) explained in details that:

If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way. Taken to its logical limit, the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of "men" will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that "women" will interpret only female bodies. (Butler, 1999,p. 9)

As it is shown up, the American Girl wants to show herself as strong woman. That is also one more reason that pushes her to try these kinds of violence with Charlie. So, she says

American Girl: Prove I can take it, prove I'm stronger. Like I'm sayin to this big dumb man- 'cause he is dumb, he thinks he's smart but he's really dumb- I'm sayin: c'mon and see what I'm made of. 'Cause aint gonna split me in half no matter how hard ya come (S.VI. 35).

The American Girl repeats her wrong acts which go with Butler's notion that gender is "socially constructed" and she affirms "gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts". By acting violently and repeating these acts, she

wants to get another role and attains a stronger gender than that is ascribed to her by society and its culture. She longs to break the rule and be more powerful by performing violent acts against men who are supposed to be the strongest. Moreover, Ton (2018) emphasizes that "What is important in performativity is not in the first place the act that is performed, but mostly the fact that the act is being done repeatedly" (p. 8). In addition to that the American Girl feels the sexual pleasure when Charlie is hitting her on her breasts. The American Girl affirms this truth when she says "but that's the point. They think they're stronger 'cause they hit ya. But they just don't know what it means to be so strong you can lie there and take it" (Guardians.Scene.VI, 36). According to her anti-gendered perception, being stronger is not hitting but accepting and receiving them. So, her idea of supremacy is out of the normal and away from the binary construction of violence. She tries to encounter her sexual abuse by repeated submission and repeated feeling of pleasure. Hence, it is so clear that the American Girl accepts all what Charlie does for her willingly; actually it is her choice for she gives him the permission for the deeds he does to her.

The desire of the American Girl to do violent acts to men appears clearly when she admits that she likes to defeat and torture men. She expresses her desire to abuse men in a strange and different way, so she says "Well. Fat chance you're gonna be the one who sticks your dick in the other guy, 'cause by and large, you ain't got a dick". (Guardians.Scene.VIII, 45). The American Girl's desire to have male genitalia supports Butler's idea that:

the power regimes of heterosexism and phallogocentrism seek to augment themselves through a constant repetition of their logic, their metaphysic, and their naturalized ontologies

does not imply that repetition itself ought to be stopped—as if it could be. If repetition is bound to persist as the mechanism of the cultural reproduction of identities, then the crucial question emerges: What kind of subversive repetition might call into question the regulatory practice of identity itself? (Butler 1999, p. 44)

Further, the American Girl claims that she got "open mind" (*Guardians.Scene.VIII*, 46), so she does all these deeds at a time she is aware of what she is doing. The sexual violent acts have a significant negative impact on the personality disorder of the individual, Butler states that "sexual practice has the power to destabilize gender" (p. xi). The desire of the American Girl to torture men sexually includes a sign to the difference between gender and sex which is clarified by Ton (2018) when he states that "The distinction between gender and sex is used to make a separation between the sexed body on one hand and the gendered behaviour of people on the other hand" (p. 7). For the American Girl sexual practices help her to change her role and alters her relation with men.

The most violent and heinous acts start when the American Girl admits that she is not innocent and pure person but she is pretending to be, hence she declares "And people are lookin back up at you too, so ya better smile and look purity" (*Guardians.Scene.VIII*, 47). Unquestionably, the gruesome and nefarious character of the American Girl appears when she accepts to torture Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison, physically and psychologically, without hesitation. After her boyfriend suggested that to her, and she simply justifies that it is her job. The American Girl states that she understands what her friends wants her to do which is as follows:

AMERICAN GIRL: Then may I suggest you do what I'm gonna do.

You take those problems, and you take 'em out, take 'em all out on this brown person's ass, the ass that's sittin on the floor in front a you, smeared with it's own shit, dogs barkin at it- and in fact? I think this brown person's talkin out his ass now, screaming and cryin and beggin his God to do something about the sitchyation, and saved that ass. Well. I don't know what he can do, girl. But I know what you can do...." (Scene VIII, 47).

So, the American Girl is taking the male role, to be out of the gendered terrain that society expects her to be in and bounds her with its confinements.

Even more strange is the American girl's persistence in her violence, which is her attempt to prevent the public from paying attention to the tragic situation that the Iraqi prisoners are exposed to at Abu Ghraib prison. Therefore, she tries very hard to prevent others from taking care of the issue of torturing the Iraqi prisoners, justifying this as follows:

A.G.: Oh, but you care. Well, lemme tell y'all: it's easier to care if you aint there hearin it. It's easier when you're sittin comfy at home in that fuckin Barcalounger, feet up watchin cable TV, never at risk a been blowed up in a bomb car, gettin shot. By enemies, by friendly fire, or gettin shot by the shots the gummint gives ya, protect against chemical warfare and leave ya fucked for good. You're never at risk a having your body flyed

back from half a world away, in a Ziploc fuckin freezer baggie- take- me- home- country- road. (S.VIII .48).

Then, according to the American Girl, the others should not think that she is guilty. The American Girl keeps repeating her acts of violence though these evil acts vary every time according to the situation. The repetition of the acts construct the gendered identity of the American Girl according to the performativity concept of Butler (1999). The American Girl wants the effect of her violence reaches people's feelings, since normal human nature sympathizes and supports the oppressed persons regardless of their origin and gender. In this case, the male Iraqi prisoners are the oppressed not the female, the soldier, therefore selfishly says:

A.G.: Which means it's easier for you to care about that dumb Eye-raqi sumbitch than it is to care about me and my fellow soldiers. 'Cause what we do, what I do, what I get made to do, makes y'all feel guilty. Makes ya feel bad. (S. VIII.48).

The American girl makes an unfair comparison between herself and the Iraqi prisoners when she says "But how I see it? Me and that brown person on the floor, we're the same, almost" (Guardians.Scene.VIII, 49). The word 'same' here shows that being a soldier woman, warden, she behaves in the same way the men soldiers do. She is practicing brutal acts against the prisoners who are men. Thus, her gender becomes equal to them. She is like men by her repeated behaviors as Butler propose in her gender trouble's theory. Accordingly, she is shaking the stereotyped gender roles, in the sense that she becomes masculine like them. The American girl's comparison is out of the binary narrative of gender, in which the woman is taking the

masculine role whereas, the prisoners are feminized in the different aspects, first the American Girl is a warden while the persons in the prison are prisoners which means she is free and the prisoners are under the rule and grip of the warden. The second aspect is that the American Girl is an invader, occupier and usurper of the prisoners' land while the prisoners are either defending their land and defend themselves or they might have been arrested by mistake. The third aspect is that the prisoners should be treated according to the prisoners' rights according to the international conventions. In spite of all the above mentioned reasons, the American girl is still committing violent actions against the Iraqi prisoners in Abu Gharib Prison which means that she is considered a perpetrator.

The causes of violence and the nefarious character of the American Girl gradually unfold, as it appears that she does all these outrageous acts for the sake of fame as she declares "It takes a lot for somebody like me to became famous, lemme tell ya. It's like lightening striking or something. Crazy weather". (Guardians.Scene.X, 54), although she knows very well that her fame came in an immoral way as she herself described it as "But it's not good famous". (Guardians.Scene.X. 54), then she repeatedly mentions the same justification which is "All 'cause I did my job. Followed the chain a command." (Guardians.Scene.X,54). Here a clear contradiction appears, as she admits that she is looking for fame and then returns to claim that this is her job and that she is following orders, by claiming this is her job. She assumes a gender and role different of her as a woman. She tries to do what is ascribed for men not for women. Being a guard in a prison and torturing the Iraqi prisoners physically and sexually, means she behaves like men. Thus, she is trying to empower herself by doing such a job. In other words, she is shaking the binary narrative of violence by her actions in the prison. Indeed, here appears her similarity with the English Boy (the second main

character in the play who posts fake pictures to become a columnist in the newspaper of Guardians) as both of them seek fame in outrageous ways. So, Butler states that gender and sex are the same which means sex is a gender if socially constructed. Thus, male and female are determined performatively according to their acts, this stands against the binary concepts that suppose, as Butler (1999) clarified "The strategic displacement of that binary relation and the metaphysics of substance on which it relies presuppose that the categories of female and male, woman and man, are similarly produced within the binary frame" (p.31). One more similarity between the English Boy and the American Girl which is their claim that they are both doing their job. This also proves the reality of women soldiers and the misconception of the binary view to male and female.

As it is mentioned previously the heinous character and acts of the American Girls gradually unfold. For again, she admits that her deeds may seem good for herself from outside, but actually they are disgusting from inside, she likens her deeds to hot dogs:

A.G.: And my job was kinda like hot dogs. You kin
only enjoy 'em long as you don't see what goes
into 'em. If they took pictures at the factory,
dumpin in a big barrel full a pig lips and assholes
to make that wiener, you'd go get yourself an
apple instead. (Guardians.S. X. 55).

The repetition of the justification indicates her attempts to deceive others and hide the violence in her personality. Therefore, she repeatedly attributes these violent actions to her commanders. Indeed, when female be perpetrator still the bad deeds are attributed to male, as Ton (2018) clarified that violence "commonly attributed to a specific gender" which is male (p.

3). It is not easy to change a dominating concept or perspective and uproot it from society, it is very common in most cultures that man is perpetrator while woman is vulnerable. Studying the character of the American Girl confirms that both man and women can be perpetrators or victims. So, it is not important whether it is male or female who tortures the Iraqi prisoners, in this aspect Kaufman-Osborn (2005) states the following:

It concludes by arguing that what is important about these photographs is neither whether the perpetrators of the exploitation they depict are male or female, nor whether the deeds they portray somehow compromise the feminist quest for gender equality. Rather, what is important are the multiple ways in which specifically gendered practices, which can be detached from the bodies they conventionally regulate, are deployed as elements within a more comprehensive network of technologies aimed at disciplining prisoners and so confirming their status as abject subjects of U.S. military power. (p. 597)

The American Girl attributes her mistakes to others because she knows that her deeds are bad. Thus, she states the following:

A.G. 'Cause look. Everybody in the world seen me doing what I did wrong. Which- here's the funny part- it only proves that really. I'm nobody. 'Cause the powerful people? The folks I was takin orders from? They're invisible.(Guardians.S.X. 55)

From the point of the American girl's view, she compares herself to the president; the president of American is like her, in the sense that both are following orders. Hence, she feels pity for the president for he smiles in front of the cameras as she does. While he differs from her as nobody sees his infamous deeds. Comparing her actions to the American president represents another evidence of the importance and validity of the Butlerian concept, which adheres to the concept that the repeated acts of a person determines his/ her gender which is known as performativity according to Butler. And here the American girl frequently repeats comparisons and justifications, and this does not benefit her as the negative impact of violence is not limited on the victims but also infect the other people. The American Girl expresses the similarity and difference between her and the president as follows:

A.G. But try it now. Do what I did. Follow that chain a command. All the way up to the preznit. 'Cause ya know, I almost feel bad for the preznit a little. I think he's a fuckin disgrace, but I feel a little bad. 'Cause **ya** look at him and ya know he's like me. He's in over his head, no fukin clue, but there he's- still smilin for the cameras.

And ya look at him smilin, the poor dump bastard. Like Howdy Doody. 'Cause he's a GD marionette. He's takin orders from above. Just like me. (Scene.X. 55).

What makes it worse is that the American Girl does not expect her friends and her family to hate her for all the bad behaviours and after all these outrageous deeds she causes to the Iraqi prisoners at Abu Gharib prison. She is hated because she does what is out of the normal...out of the binary construction of gender and violence she is hated by her society and

even her family. She is considered an outcast for her challenge. On this basis the American Girl expresses the following:

A.G. So that's why you all seen these photos of me. To give you something new to hate. And it works. Now Charlie hates me. My momma hates me. My whole family, everybody I ever known. Ain't even comin to the trail.

But fuckit. I don't wanna sound like, y'know, ohh let's have a pity-party for me. 'Cause actually, the only one who counts'll be there. My granddaddy. (Guardians.S.X. 56).

The American Girl wants her guards to be polite to her "My, uh, prison guards. Same ones walk me back me to my cell, after and they call me really mean things" (Guardians. S.I, 5). The American Girl is upset just for the guards call her bad words, she forgets that she is acting all kinds of violence to the Iraqi prisoners at Abu Gharib prison including verbal abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. Once again, the American Girl is trying to win people's sympathy, after the amount of violence she causes to the Iraqi prisoners is revealed, by claiming that she was raped:

A.G. How I been screwed.

How I ain't never even seen the faces of the men that screwed me.

Although I kin pretty sure they're men.

And you'll understand how that is what men do.(Scene.X. 57)

While in fact she is having sex with Charlie willingly and she is saying that she enjoys it, as it is shown previously. Then she continues to try to win the sympathy of others by talking that she will give birth to a child out of sex, but in her point of view the baby can only come out of the sexual relationship she never thinks about love and marriage relationships, therefore she states the following:

A.G: And maybe I'm just thinking about this just 'cause-

I'm gonna have baby now. Sucks, right? You only got one person ever did the sex to ya, and most a the time he's stickin it places that you ain't gonna get a baby unless God Hissself miracles one down on ya-and somehow, I draw the short straw. Lightening striking again. But like I said: some men wanna fuck you so you stayed fucked. And that's called having a baby. (Scene.X. 57).

In fact, the American girl till now does not admit that she is a perpetrator, in the sense that she has committed violence acts against the Iraqi prisoners. She does not show the "inner truth of female desire" (Butler, 1999, p. xxxi). The American Girl does not wish to expose the fact because it is undoubtedly considered a great injustice to the Iraqi prisoners. Butler explains that when "the taken for grantedness of those truths is, indeed, oppressive" (1999: xix).

Looking closely at the American girl, it is clear that she wants things that she herself could not give to others. She wants to see the picture of innocence and purity, which is represented in the picture of the child which she asked her mother to send to her in prison. She thinks that "if I'm not allowed to see that baby, then I'll tell her: 'Be sure and send some pictures to

me, y'hear?" (*Guardians*.Scene.X. 57), while indeed, she sends pictures of all kinds of violence from inside the prison to all people. But ultimately, the American Girl partially admits that it is a mistake and for this she confesses that "I'm servin time for a mistake" (*Guardians*.Scene.X. 58), though she still justifies that it is not her big mistake as she clarifies that "'cause of a whole not her bigger mistake" (*Guardians*.Scene.X. 58). Indeed, she thinks that the judge is not fair with her "But nobody ever went to prison for that one. And that ain't fair. That's ain't right. (*Guardians*.Scene.X. 58). Butler's concept of performativity is fit to the American Girl character for the repetition of her acts proves. Thus, her gender is determined according to her acts which are full of violent actions, she keeps repeating the heinous deeds, keeps justifying her outrageous deeds repeatedly.

Conclusion

Exploring and examining violence of female soldiers against men in Morris' play depending on Judith Butler's theory Gender trouble shows the reality of women soldiers' de-gendered identity which is determined through their repeated actions. In other words, according to Butler's concept 'Performativity' the violence of women soldiers is not naturally ascribed, but the repetition of violent acts of women soldiers, for they perform these acts repeatedly. To demystify the binary narrative of gender, the main focus in analyzing this play is to show that women as men can be perpetrators of violence and violence is not restricted only for men, through discovering the reality of violent acts of the American Girl in Morris's play *Guardians*. Thus, the current study examines and approves the de-gendered nature of violence; in other words, a de-construction of the binary system of gender and in turn violence. It is also concluded that male and female behaviors are affected by their cultural and social environment. The righteousness of Butler's

statement that gender is socially and culturally constructed is proved throughout the present study. Accordingly, the binary system of understanding violence fuels the inequalities between male and female. Furthermore, the current study demonstrates and proves the re-gendering of violence in the military; thus, a re-construction of gender and then violence.

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