

Eastern Illinois University  
**The Keep**

---

Faculty Research and Creative Activity

Communication Studies

---

January 2007

# GENDER (IN)VISIBILITY AT ABU GHRAIB

Marita Gronnvoll

*Eastern Illinois University*, [mgronnvoll@eiu.edu](mailto:mgronnvoll@eiu.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://thekeep.eiu.edu/commstudies\\_fac](http://thekeep.eiu.edu/commstudies_fac)



Part of the [Communication Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Gronnvoll, Marita, "GENDER (IN)VISIBILITY AT ABU GHRAIB" (2007). *Faculty Research and Creative Activity*. 2.  
[http://thekeep.eiu.edu/commstudies\\_fac/2](http://thekeep.eiu.edu/commstudies_fac/2)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Communication Studies at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Research and Creative Activity by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact [tabruns@eiu.edu](mailto:tabruns@eiu.edu).

# GENDER (IN)VISIBILITY AT ABU GHRAIB

MARITA GRONNVOLL

*This essay explores the gender discourse surrounding the women soldiers implicated in the Abu Ghraib abuse scandal, and the gender silence surrounding their male counterparts. The analysis suggests that the women soldiers in the abuse case, particularly Lynndie England, are held to gendered standards, while the male soldiers are discussed in terms that are nongendered. Further, analysis of the widely disseminated photographs suggests that where the Iraqi male prisoners are excessively gendered and homosexualized, the male soldiers have their presumed heterosexuality preserved. Examination of the Abu Ghraib case suggests implications for rhetorical scholars interested in gender, as well as larger cultural implications regarding the policy debates that arose as a result of the case.*

The image of that female guard, smoking away as she joins gleefully in the disgraceful melee like one of the guys, is a cultural outgrowth of a feminist culture which encourages female barbarians.

George Neumayr

The images shock and shame those of us who have always believed that women in the military would rise to the challenge, not sink into depravity excused by a few as “soldiering” because war is hell.

Myriam Marquez

**W**hen the story of the prisoner abuses<sup>1</sup> at Abu Ghraib broke in late April 2004, for a few days media reports focused on the undifferentiated acts of deviant soldiers that had perhaps forever knocked the United States from the moral high ground it claimed as justification for the invasion of Iraq. It did not take long for attention to be turned to particular acts performed by spe-

*Marita Gronnvoll is a PhD candidate in the Department of Speech Communication at the University of Georgia in Athens. The author thanks Bonnie Dow, Celeste Condit, and Martin Medhurst for their assistance in the preparation of this essay.*

cific soldiers caught on film. Very quickly, Private First Class Lynndie England and her then boyfriend, Corporal Charles Graner, took center stage as the main players in the scandal. England soon took solo charge of the spotlight and became a synecdoche of the outrageous abuses to which the world was now witness.

The photographs, released first on April 28, 2004, on the CBS program *Sixty Minutes II*, shocked and repulsed commentators reporting in Western and Eastern media outlets. The images of naked Iraqi men being abused and sexually humiliated by smiling American soldiers, some of whom were women, was considered a major setback in American military operations in Iraq and prompted public apologies from both President George W. Bush and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. Bush reported feeling “deep disgust”<sup>2</sup> over the treatment the prisoners received, while Rumsfeld “took responsibility for the mistreatment, apologized and warned that more pictures of sadistic abuse could still come to light.”<sup>3</sup> Reportedly, both Bush and Rumsfeld were informed of the abuse allegations several months before the photographs became public, but neither spoke out publicly until the media airing of the images.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Taguba Report, which reported the findings of the military investigation into abuse allegations, only mentions the women of Abu Ghraib briefly and focuses its attention on the failings higher up the chain of command, media reports focus almost entirely on those whose images were caught in the photographs. Chief among these is Lynndie England. A distant second in terms of media coverage, even though he received the longest prison sentence, is Charles Graner. These two are followed by other disgraced soldiers, especially Specialist Sabrina Harman and Staff Sergeant Ivan “Chip” Frederick. To date, ten soldiers have been court-martialed for their part in the abuse of detainees, and of these three are women. With three years, England received the longest prison sentence of the women, followed by Harman at six months. The third woman, Specialist Megan Ambuhl, took a number of the photographs but did not appear in any. Ambuhl received no prison time.

The purpose of this essay is to explore the ways in which gender and sex are discussed and *not discussed* in the media reports regarding the women and men implicated in the Abu Ghraib abuse scandal. Although I am very interested in how the women in the photographs, particularly England, come to embody gender and sexuality, and come to represent all women in the military, I am particularly interested in exploring the gender silence in the discourse about the abusive male soldiers.

Discussion of gender too often seems to focus exclusively on women as if the words “woman” and “gender” are synonymous and men are without

gender. This is not a new observation. As Simone de Beauvoir observed over 50 years ago in the introduction of her pivotal feminist text, *The Second Sex*, “A man would never get the notion of writing a book on the peculiar situation of the human male. But if I wish to define myself, I must first of all say: ‘I am a woman’; on this truth must be based all further discussion.”<sup>5</sup> Women are always uniquely gendered, Beauvoir argues, whereas men can think of themselves apart from their gender. I would take this argument a step further and suggest that it seems to be exceptionally difficult to discuss men and their actions in terms of gender. The mass media discussion of England’s behavior at Abu Ghraib, for example, focuses on her gendered being, as if to separate England from her gender is unthinkable. The discussion of the men, however, is *genderless*, as if it is impossible to think of the male soldiers in terms of their gender.

The lack of male gender visibility is widespread in Western culture and glaringly apparent upon examination of military culture. There, membership of women is tolerated, sometimes even encouraged, at the same time as it is viewed as highly suspect and a source of pollution. Carol Burke notes that women in the military are viewed as “a dangerous distraction. Critics argue that men fight better without women around and that when the fighting stops, the sexualization of women so dominates male thinking that men can never develop professional relationships with them.”<sup>6</sup> Burke adds: “The notion of women as polluted enjoys a rich history in soldier lore.”<sup>7</sup> Even though almost all military units have been integrated, and women enjoy more opportunities for advancement than ever before, military tradition seems to depend upon the continued view of women as a polluted Other. From basic training on, soldiers in training are taught that to be warriors is to reject all that is feminine. In fact, Burke argues, the word “warrior” is “a term of identity that excludes women. There are few words left that so desperately retain their gender-rigid fix.”<sup>8</sup> And if the goal of military tradition is to create masculine warriors, women must remain anathema. But it is not only military culture that views women as a suspicious source of pollution. As I will argue, this view is shared by the mass media as part of its reflection of dominant cultural norms.<sup>9</sup> If it was not, I argue, there would not have been so much media attention given to the women abusers at Abu Ghraib who, while certainly culpable for their actions, comprised a minority of those charged with abuse.

This essay will discuss four areas of contradiction in media reports of gender and sexuality in the case of Abu Ghraib.<sup>10</sup> First, I will explore the stark visibility of gender in media reports of England and Harman, and contrast that visibility to the invisibility of gender markers in the male soldiers also charged with abuse. Second, I will extend the discussion of gender markers into the

discourse surrounding the sexual behavior of England and Graner. Much disapproval is expressed regarding England's behavior, but very little regarding her partner's. The focus on England's aberrant sexuality seems to reduce her to a sexual body in ways that her partners are not. Third, I will contrast the construction of the women of Abu Ghraib as representing all women soldiers with the media silence on the possibility of Graner and Frederick representing men or any other identity category that they shared. Finally, through an analysis of the released photographs, I will contrast the complete lack of gender markers regarding the male soldiers at Abu Ghraib with the excess of gender markers assigned to the Iraqi prisoners in the photographs. I conclude with a discussion of the implications of gender visibility and invisibility in cultural discourse, arguing that gender is an issue that must continue to be given attention by rhetorical critics.

### GENDER MARKERS—VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE

In the introduction to *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir poses the perplexing question, "What is a woman?" She goes on to demonstrate that this is not a question easily answered, but she muses about why it is even necessary to ask the question at all. As noted above, Beauvoir suggests that a man would not find it necessary to preface his remarks with a discussion of his gendered position. Women are defined in gendered terms, but men are simply defined as universal humans. "He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other."<sup>11</sup> Or as Judith Butler added in her discussion of Beauvoir's position and the positions of those who followed her, "only the feminine gender is marked . . . the universal person and the masculine gender are conflated, thereby defining women in terms of their sex and extolling men as the bearers of a body-transcendent universal personhood."<sup>12</sup>

Michael S. Kimmel, whose groundbreaking work on masculine studies is widely referenced by gender scholars, echoes both Beauvoir and Butler when he writes of manhood being "endowed with a transcendental, almost mythic set of properties that still keep it invisible."<sup>13</sup> Sandra Bem discusses the positioning of men as "the universal person" as "androcentrism." This term locates "males at the center of the universe looking out at reality from behind their own eyes and describing what they see from an egocentric—or androcentric—point of view."<sup>14</sup> This view results in the "othering" of women to which Beauvoir refers. With widespread cultural acceptance of men as the Subject and women as the Other, it is not only male media representatives who see the abuses at Abu Ghraib through an androcentric lens. Indeed, this view seems to have been unquestioningly adopted by nearly all who reported on the case.

An analysis of the news coverage surrounding the release of the Abu Ghraib photographs suggests that things have not changed much since



Figure 1. England holding prisoner on a dog leash.\*

Beauvoir penned her feminist text. Although only two women appear in the photographs, much attention is given to them as women, whereas press coverage is meted out to the male soldiers as soldiers rather than as men. Lynndie England, in particular, went on to become the poster child for bad behavior and a cautionary tale for thousands of women soldiers on active duty. Sabrina Harman achieved neither the notoriety nor the longer prison sentence of England, but she did not escape scrutiny as a woman.

In the photos of England and Harman from Abu Ghraib, they are wearing standard, military-issue clothing. Both wear loose camouflage pants, khaki T-shirts, and lace-up boots. There is no suggestion of bodily secondary sex characteristics. Neither breasts nor hips are visible in these photographs. In the now infamous leash photograph of England, her appearance is androgynous (Figure 1). The photograph shows England standing with her body squared to the camera. In her left hand she loosely holds what appears to be a dog leash. Her impassive gaze is directed toward the naked, prone prisoner at the end of the leash. The man appears to be battered and in pain, but England's expression contains no trace of compassion for this unfortunate man. England's appearance is so unisex that if we did not already know that this was Lynndie

---

\* The images in this article are considered to be in the public domain as a result of *American Civil Liberties Union v. U.S. Department of Defense*. For more information, see: <http://www.rcfp.org/news/mag/30-2/foi-abughrai.html> and [http://www.aclu.org/images/torture/asset\\_upload\\_file447\\_24786.pdf](http://www.aclu.org/images/torture/asset_upload_file447_24786.pdf).

England, a female soldier, there is little about the photograph that would mark her as female. Despite the lack of explicit gender markers in the leash photograph or in the others, news reports of the women remark on their appearance—especially England’s appearance. She is repeatedly referred to as small, “tomboyish,”<sup>15</sup> and “perky,” with a “pixie haircut.”<sup>16</sup> A columnist for a Spokane, Washington, newspaper commented on England’s tomboyishness, and added: “She has short-cropped hair, a tight, muscular body and that don’t-mess-with-me-expression.”<sup>17</sup> This description of England’s expression seems to contain some editorial license. In the several widely circulated photographs of England, she is smiling at the camera, and has what might be described as a bored expression only in the leash photograph. The description of her expression as “don’t-mess-with-me” serves the purpose of categorizing England as tough and unfeminine.

In her book, *Female Masculinity*,<sup>18</sup> Judith Halberstam argues that masculine women particularly trouble masculinity because they detach it from biological men and demonstrate masculinity to be a construct maintained with effort. Sherrie A. Inness makes a similar point in her book *Tough Girls* when she argues that masculine women also trouble femininity. Many people find tough, masculine women so disturbing because they reveal “the artificiality of femininity as the ‘normal’ state of women.”<sup>19</sup> The media interpretation of England as “tough” served to portray her in masculine terms and to emphasize her abnormality as a woman.

In contrast to Harman, who is described as having an “angel’s face,”<sup>20</sup> England is referred to as unattractive. As one writer put it, “you can see it—can’t you?—what no one will testify to: She’s homely—and that matters for a woman in America.”<sup>21</sup> Another journalist, in an offhanded reference to the Lederer and Burdick 1958 bestseller, referred to England as “an ugly American abusing hapless Iraqi men.”<sup>22</sup> Attention is called to those things that mark England and Harman as women or as contrary to feminine gender expectations. The newspaper and newsmagazine articles that covered the Abu Ghraib story contain no physical description of the male soldiers indicted in the scandal. In contrast to England and Harman, who are consistently referred to as “female” reservists and “women” soldiers, the men implicated in the abuse are simply referred to as ungendered soldiers. For example, in a sample of four articles that told Charles Graner’s story, none of the headlines refer to his biological sex. He is referred to as a “guard,”<sup>23</sup> a “suspect,”<sup>24</sup> and by his rank of “Spc.”<sup>25</sup> (Specialist). It is clear from the articles that England and Harman’s status as women is newsworthy, whereas the men implicated in the scandal are invisible as men. According to cultural scholar Suzanne E. Hatty, this separation of men from their embodiedness *as men* is a common social phenomenon. She notes,

Men are frequently depicted in the public arena as “talking heads” divorced from their physicality. In these representations, corporeality is de-emphasized in the pursuit of political or social credibility. It is almost as if the public acknowledgment of embodiment is, for men, a liability.<sup>26</sup>

This sustained silence about the sex or gender roles of the male soldiers at Abu Ghraib is conspicuous when compared to the plethora of articles that focus on Harman, and especially on England, as women.

In his discussion of media coverage of the murder of Brandon Teena, John Sloop examines the inclination of media to explain those who violate gender norms. “If gender operates according to iterated norms,” Sloop explains, “all cases of transgression must be explained.”<sup>27</sup> When he discusses the media disciplining of Janet Reno’s gender transgressions, Sloop draws upon Kate Bornstein’s work in *Gender Outlaw* to point out the societal expectation of behavior within a bigendered system. As Sloop explains, “this binary gender system leads us to expect as normal particular behaviors from men and particular behaviors from women.”<sup>28</sup> Not surprisingly then, the media coverage of England’s behavior at Abu Ghraib focuses on her failure to behave as a woman should, whereas the media coverage of Graner’s behavior focuses on his failure to behave as an honorable soldier should.

An article in the *Boston Globe* explores the gender issues raised by the Abu Ghraib abuse scandal. Here, a retired Army general, Evelyn “Pat” Foote, is quoted as being “horrified” that three women were involved in the abuse of prisoners. The article notes that “she is disappointed that [the women soldiers] did not heed her advice, that to be successful in the military, a woman should act more like a woman than a man.”<sup>29</sup> According to General Foote, success in acting “more like a woman than a man” includes avoiding “romping, stomping, spitting, cussing, and swearing.” The theme of the *Boston Globe* article, as well as General Foote’s comments, seems to be that women in the military have a special responsibility to maintain their gendered essence in an environment that will make assaults against it.

Discourse regarding Graner’s behavior, however, contains no such decrying of his or the other male soldiers’ failure to uphold some elevated standard of masculinity. Indeed, Graner’s description as a “rogue” soldier in one article is very much in keeping with the overall media narrative about him.<sup>30</sup> “The men have become symbols,” acknowledges the *Ventura County Star*. They have become symbols of “rogue soldiers on the one hand and lackadaisical leadership on the other.”<sup>31</sup> Graner and his male colleagues did not fail to meet some unspecified standard as men; they are not symbols of failed masculinity. They failed as soldiers.



In their 2006 article, John W. Howard III and Laura C. Prividera examine the soldier archetypes and the lay public's perception of military personae. They explain that the soldier archetypes promote an expectation of a "warrior hero": "The warrior hero is described as independent, disciplined, strong willed, physically imposing, and above all masculine."<sup>32</sup> The authors go on to explain that the feminine is the antithesis of the warrior hero, as being feminine is seen automatically as faltering. Given these views of women as essentially gendered and men as universally human, we might expect the explanation of England's behavior to focus on her as a failed woman, and the explanation of Graner's behavior to focus on him as a failed soldier. These themes can be found in media coverage of Abu Ghraib.

As two of the most visible soldiers in the photographs, and the most talked about for their off-camera behavior, both England and Graner are subjected to scrutiny by media coverage to determine the cause of their criminal acts. But there is a distinct difference in the way they are explained. Whereas Graner is investigated for his failure to follow procedure, England is investigated for her pathology as a woman. Media reports offer two portrayals of England that are antagonistic to each other. In one she is an amoral nymphomaniac who was willing to bare her body on camera, engaging in sex with several different men including Graner. This same woman gleefully participated in the sexual humiliation of Iraqi prisoners and did not hesitate to break other rules along the way. A second portrayal is that of a not very bright (borderline retarded, by some accounts) young woman who was seduced (as women traditionally are) by an older, wiler, and superior paramour. The first account explains England as an anomaly that must be rare for women in general—but perhaps not for women who choose to join the military. The second explains her as typical of those in her class and gender.

Her portrayal in the photographs and in press accounts as an S&M dominatrix so troubles traditional views of feminine gender that some kind of explanation is necessary. Bolstering the first portrayal, England is described as a wanton woman who repeatedly disobeyed orders to stay out of Graner's bed and in her own. As a "paper-pusher" not assigned to the "hard-site" where Graner worked as an MP, press accounts reiterate that she had no business being around the prisoners at all. The only explanation for her behavior is that she was over-sexed, rebellious, and not at all inclined to behave as a woman should. As the *Toronto Star* commented:

Getting naked, it now appears, was not a shy pursuit for the 21-year-old England. Included in the not-yet-released Abu Ghraib archive . . . were videos and still photos of England. Said one senator: "She was having sex with numerous partners. It appeared to be consensual."<sup>33</sup>

A report in a North Carolina newspaper opens by informing the reader that England “ignored three orders to stop sleeping in a fellow soldier’s bed.”<sup>34</sup> The article does not mention until later that the “fellow soldier” was Graner, her fiancé. We are also told that England appeared “in sexually explicit pictures with other soldiers” and was known to have engaged in “raunchy behavior before and after [her] company journeyed to Iraq.”<sup>35</sup> England’s refusal to stay out of Graner’s bed impacted her ability to do the job she had been assigned in the Iraqi prison; the *New York Post* reports that “she showed up late, left early and did a sloppy job because of her late-night assignations.”<sup>36</sup> She is also reported to have “provided lewd commentary as guards forced two Iraqi prisoners to engage in a sex act.”<sup>37</sup> Apparently, England’s commentary is more newsworthy than the actions of the anonymous soldiers forcing the prisoners to engage in sex.

England’s sexual behavior is used as evidence of her deviance. The fact that all of her alleged sexual partners except for Graner go unnamed and uncondemned suggests that her sex life is newsworthy. Her willingness to “get naked” and her eagerness to engage in a forbidden sexual relationship with her boyfriend is reported as if it is confirmation of her portrayal as a sexual outlaw. Her sexual activity, combined with her propensity to break other rules, serve to represent England as a problem in so many ways that she can only be a rare anomaly—rare for universal soldiers, though, if not necessarily for women soldiers.

Bolstering the second portrayal, which draws upon England’s gender and class background to interpret her behavior, media reports explain England as the product of a low-educational background, from a tiny town with no opportunities, married and divorced as a teen, and only too willing to do anything to be with her boyfriend, Graner. Referring to her class background, a writer for the *Washington Post* noted: “She is that rare genuine article, the cliché, the stereotype that turns out upon investigation to be true.”<sup>38</sup> Her defense team explains her to the press as someone who suffered from childhood challenges such as a learning disability, and who possessed certain physical features that resulted in her being teased as a child. It was not only that she was eager to please Graner because she loved him; she is pathologized as having an overly compliant personality in general and being unusually docile to authority figures—such as that represented by her older and higher-ranked boyfriend. Or, as a *Rolling Stone* writer put it using much harsher language,

Lynndie’s whole trial strategy had centered around mock-retard Method acting of the *Sling Blade* or *My Left Foot* school—with the defendant staring off into space like a coma patient while her overmatched young military counsel tried to sell the five-member military jury on the idea that Lynndie was an “overly

compliant personality” with “extraordinary deficits” who was not completely responsible for her actions in Iraq.<sup>39</sup>

This portrayal of the inappropriate fit of femininity within the military context is reinforced by portrayals of Harman as also inappropriately feminine. She is explained in a way that makes her seem pathological from childhood. We learn in the *New York Post*, for example, that Harman has “always had a fascination with stomach-churning photography. Growing up, her homicide detective dad and forensic science buff mom constantly shared with their daughter grisly crime-scene photos.”<sup>40</sup> Indeed, her father explained Harman’s fascination with forensic photography as something that she’d had since she was a child. The overall tone of the article is clearly that Harman’s fascination is deviant, perhaps especially for a woman who had always been “a kind and gentle girl.”<sup>41</sup> In this same article Harman, like England, is also explained as being overly compliant, and ultimately a victim of peer pressure.

The explanations offered for Graner’s behavior differ dramatically from those of England and Harman. He was a good student and citizen growing up. But then the idealistic young man fell in love, married, and was soon shipped off to serve in the first Gulf War. According to the *Washington Post*’s interviews of Graner’s close friends, Graner returned from the Gulf a changed man. Certain his new wife had been cheating on him while he was away—a concern not without some basis, we are informed—Graner grew to be jealous and distrustful of his wife. His friends paint the portrait of a devoted family man who was changed “not only by the experience of being in a war but also by the unanswered phone calls home.”<sup>42</sup> Graner’s wife is implicitly held responsible for some of the negative changes he displayed. At the very least, she was not supportive enough of her soldier husband, and at worst she may have been guilty of infidelity while he was off doing his duty.

Adding to his domestic concerns, Graner was posted to a notoriously dangerous prison in Saudi Arabia and was serving as a prison guard when a violent riot broke out. It was an event, the reader is told, that scarred all who served. The *Washington Post* reports:

Months of such experiences changed every one of the reservists by the time they left Saudi Arabia, [a friend of Graner] and others say—some in positive ways, some not. There have been a high number of divorces and two suicides, including the suicide of one of Graner’s closest friends.<sup>43</sup>

The explanation of Graner suggests that he is a damaged Gulf War veteran, indelibly changed by the horrors of war not because he is a man, but because he is a soldier and war is a hell that not all soldiers can survive intact. His

experience in the Gulf and his disillusionment with his possibly unfaithful wife tacitly explain his return to civilian life as a documented spousal abuser and as a civilian prison guard who was repeatedly reprimanded for failure to follow orders and who was also investigated for prisoner abuse.

One consequence of attempts to explain England, Harman, and Graner is that the cause for the women's behavior is positioned within them, as something essential to them as women, or as the result of their failure to perform properly as women. The cause of Graner's behavior, on the other hand, is exterior to him and not connected to his unmarked gender. He is a victim of circumstances and, perhaps, a treacherous woman. England and Harman are portrayed as pathological, and England, especially, is depicted as a woman who victimizes with sex. The media portraits of the behavior of the women of Abu Ghraib as being deviant for women, or perhaps being deviant because they are women, both emphasize women embodying sex in a way that men do not. Whether they are sexual renegades or simply seducible, the women soldiers represent temptation and a stumbling block for masculine warriors.

### THE SEXUALIZED BODY OF LYNNDIE ENGLAND

Perhaps because women have been historically tied inextricably to their gendered bodies, they have also been understood in many cultures that are otherwise vastly different to embody their sexuality in a way that men do not. In fact, one of the most common arguments given for keeping women out of the military is that their sexual presence will break down unit cohesion. As the logic goes, men desire women and are in competition with each other for their attention. This breaks down unit cohesion and explains why Elaine Donnelly of the conservative *Center for Military Readiness* refers to women soldiers as a "distraction."<sup>44</sup>

Sexual assault has been a pervasive problem in military academies and units since they were integrated, but it is not difficult to find those who excuse male soldiers who sexually assault their female counterparts. Carol Burke notes that these are

reactionaries, who blame neither the system nor the perpetrators but the women themselves. Calling for separate but equal training programs, these people maintain that it is "natural" or "inevitable" for such situations to occur when men and women are placed in close quarters.<sup>45</sup>

The assumption being that it is "natural" or "inevitable" for men to sexually assault women, and the solution is to remove women from the military environment.

In anthropologist Gayle Rubin's work on the politics of sexuality, she notes that "because sexuality is a nexus of the relationships between genders, much of the oppression of women is borne by, mediated through, and constituted within, sexuality."<sup>46</sup> Later in her essay, she posits one reason for this gendered oppression: "Part of the modern ideology of sex is that lust is the province of men, purity that of women."<sup>47</sup> Unsurprisingly given these prevalent views, media discourse surrounding the soldiers who abused prisoners at Abu Ghraib focuses on England's sexual indiscretions, both in front of and away from the camera, while offering very little commentary regarding her consensual sexual partners, all of whom were men. Although one of the charges brought against Graner in his court-martial was adultery,<sup>48</sup> no media attention is focused on him for his sexual dalliances with England. Rather, England is the one who would not stay in her own bed and who is seen in unreleased videos engaging in sexual behavior with a number of soldiers including Graner. Graner's sexual behavior goes uncondemned in media reports and remains largely invisible, seemingly because, as a man, he was just doing what men do. As a woman, England's behavior is wanton and inappropriate. She is described as "brazen"<sup>49</sup> and "undisciplined and promiscuous."<sup>50</sup>

A story in the *New York Post* breathlessly announces that "shocking shots of sexcapades involving Pfc. Lynndie England were among the hundreds of X-rated photos and videos from the Abu Ghraib prison scandal" that lawmakers viewed in a "top-secret Capitol Hill conference room."<sup>51</sup> Although other soldiers appeared in sexually explicit photos and videos from Abu Ghraib, the *New York Post* reports that it was England who was engaged in a "porno performance."<sup>52</sup> And even though some of the unreleased photographs showed soldiers engaging in sex acts, simulated and otherwise, with dead animals and posing with dead Iraqi prisoners, the "most jarring," according to the *Washington Post*, were "the raw sex shots of England and Graner doing things to each other, and of England doing things to herself."<sup>53</sup> The peculiar reduction of England to her sexualized body is not the only consequence of her abusive actions at Abu Ghraib. Nearly every printed source used for this essay reports on England's pregnancy by Graner as if it is news, and as if it somehow explains her behavior. "Who can ignore the pregnancy?" rhetorically asks one article. "Getting pregnant in combat theater is forbidden."<sup>54</sup> England's pregnant body is tacitly touted as one more sign of her out-of-control sexuality. It is also England's body that gets press attention in more than one report of nude photographs for which she posed while on vacation in Virginia Beach with her boyfriend, Graner.<sup>55</sup>

As if England's rumored off-camera and on-camera behavior were not enough to bring condemnation, certain media accounts embellish the evidence that is available to reinforce her sexual excesses. As one Los Angeles

columnist describes the photographs: “She points a seductive finger at their exposed genitals, holds a grown man at the end of a leash and grins the most gleeful grin all the while.”<sup>56</sup> Leaving aside the problematic description of England’s finger as “seductive,” only the most imaginative viewer could describe her expression in the leash photograph as a “gleeful grin.” One thing that makes this photograph so difficult to look at is that England’s expression suggests boredom—as if this were an everyday duty that had lost its thrill. There are undoubtedly disturbing sexual connotations to the photograph, but England’s facial expression neither adds to nor subtracts from those connotations, and they would be there regardless of who held the leash—woman *or man*. The fact that it is a woman with a reputation for not using much discernment in choosing her sexual partners only adds fuel to the notion that women do not merely *have sex*, they *are sex*.

The women in the Abu Ghraib photographs were indicted by military justice for their crimes against helpless detainees at the prison and further indicted by the press and public for their failure to behave as proper women. Unlike their male counterparts, the women of Abu Ghraib bore the burden of representing all women soldiers, and all women soldiers were tacitly indicted along with England, Harman, and Ambuhl.

### *“Thelma and Louise in Iraq”*

As Beauvoir notes, men are the One, accepted as subjects, and women are the Other, defined in opposition to men, who require no definition. Men are rarely described in popular media as part of a gendered category; whereas women rarely escape the assignation. Kimmel adds, “We continue to treat our male military, political, scientific, or literary figures as if their gender, their masculinity, had nothing to do with their military exploits, policy decisions, scientific experiments, or writing styles and subjects.”<sup>57</sup> This inability of society to see men as men while being simultaneously unable to see women as anything but women may explain how Lynndie England, Sabrina Harman, and to a far lesser extent, photographer Megan Ambuhl, although three of the ten soldiers investigated for the Abu Ghraib abuses, are seen by some aspects of the media as standing in for all women soldiers. Indeed their behavior, although anomalous by most accounts, reignited the debate over women in the military. As the conservative journal *American Spectator* commented in a we-told-you-so tone, “Conservatives were shouted down when they warned that placing women in combat would not only expose them to abuse but could turn them into abusers.”<sup>58</sup> The article suggests that feminists are ultimately to blame, noting: “Had Thelma and Louise gone off to Iraq—and sexually humiliated some of Saddam Hussein’s soldiers as payback for

abuse to Jessica Lynch a few cities back—the radical feminists could make a sequel.”<sup>59</sup> The *National Review* added, “This collapse of traditional roles has something to do with the involvement of women soldiers in disgraceful behavior.”<sup>60</sup> According to Linda Chavez, president of the Center for Equal Opportunity—an organization that opposes affirmative action and women in the military—“the presence of women in the military police unit may have even encouraged the obscene misbehavior that the photos reveal.”<sup>61</sup> Chavez goes on to ask if it is “good for civilization and society to try to turn women into men and put them in the traditional role of the male warrior. You have to train people to kill. I think we have to have the debate about whether this is a desirable thing for women.”<sup>62</sup> Apparently for Chavez and those who oppose women in the military, there is no debate about whether it is desirable to train men to kill.

It is not only conservative journals that moved to place the Abu Ghraib women in a position of representation for all women soldiers. A writer for the *Chicago Sun-Times* comments regarding England: “One can’t imagine a worse poster child for women in the military.”<sup>63</sup> The comment is made seemingly without awareness that the men implicated are not considered to be representatives of men in the military. The *Tulsa World* noted that the abuse photographs were a taint on all soldiers, but especially women. The reporter noted, “Those pictures . . . unfairly smear all of the women and men who are doing the job right. Already there are some talking heads dredging up the old canard that women soldiers can only harm morale and order.”<sup>64</sup> Although this writer clearly does not support the idea that the Abu Ghraib women are representative of all women soldiers, she references the women in the military debate without pointing out that there is not a debate about men in the military. This lack of comment seems to naturalize the debate even though the writer refers to it as a “canard.” Another columnist, writing in almost mournful, personal tones of her regret over these women’s actions, wrote, “Men have been implicated in this scandal, too, but it’s the women I feel so disappointed in. I expected more of them.” Why? “I believe *we* are peacemakers rather than warriors. *We* nurture rather than harm. And *we* use *our* refined instincts to expose and stop brutality”<sup>65</sup> (emphasis added). According to this columnist, the women of Abu Ghraib represent not only all women soldiers but all womankind, and for that reason their behavior is a particular affront to women everywhere.

It is noteworthy that none of these articles suggest that the men of Abu Ghraib represent all men, nor take those men *as men* to task for their violent behavior. As Howard and Prividera note, the tacit cultural expectation of the warrior soldier is that he is male to the point where the words “warrior” and “woman” are seen as antithetical. In her exploration of military culture, Burke

finds that, in spite of integrated training and facilities in the military and growing opportunities for women, basic training naturalizes aggressive and violent behavior as masculine and is set in opposition to what is feminine. Burke notes:

Training that sets its sights not only on instilling discipline, teamwork, and the knowledge of military skills but also on sculpting ineffable “manhood” must set itself in opposition to all that is not “manly.” What boys are trained to cast away as despised is called female. The feminine names traits to be loathed, ridiculed, and exorcised.<sup>66</sup>

Perpetrating violence is justified in military training through instilled hatred of the enemy. Burke writes: “Moral justification, palliative comparison, euphemistic labeling, displacement of responsibility, and diffusion of responsibility offer ways in which repugnant conduct is transformed into sanctioned behavior. The soldier executes violence not as the aggressor but simply as the justified moral agent.”<sup>67</sup> This is all part of the transformation of the recruit from civilian to warrior—one that requires “him” to suppress as feminine any squeamishness “he” may feel in the face of violence. This “warrior code” in fact, as one writer put it, naturalizes violence as part of the tradition of American men.<sup>68</sup>

The persistent cultural fantasy that soldiers must be men and men are naturally violent may explain why the backgrounds of prominent male soldiers at Abu Ghraib are not interrogated by the media for violent histories that might give insight into their violent actions. Charles Graner, as previously mentioned, has a well-documented record of domestic abuse. His ex-wife filed three protection-from-abuse orders against him because of his violent behavior toward her and their two children.<sup>69</sup> Early media accounts of the story make no suggestion that a man with Graner’s background had no business being in a position of oversight of essentially helpless prisoners. Nor are there any media pundits pointing an accusatory finger at the men at Abu Ghraib as examples of testosterone-driven male violence. But if military training has as its goal the making of violent warriors, perhaps Graner’s history and unspoken gender was an asset to his duties in Iraq.

Another oddity is that the two men who were ultimately held to be the most culpable for the abuses at Abu Ghraib, Graner and Frederick, were both prison guards in civilian life. There is no doubt that the behavior of England and Harman in the photographs is abhorrent, but neither woman is shown physically hurting the prisoners. The same cannot be said for Graner and Frederick. In one photo, Graner is shown aiming a fist at the head of a prisoner he has subdued on the floor. Eyewitness reports confirm that after the photo was taken, Graner hit the prisoner so hard that he was rendered



unconscious, necessitating a call for a medic.<sup>70</sup> In another photo, Frederick is shown sitting on a prisoner who is laying face down pinned between two stretchers. The prisoner is clearly in discomfort, but Frederick sits casually on the man like a big game hunter on a trophy. Graner is also seen with the same prisoner, kneeling beside him with a hand on the hapless man's back. The image of a big game hunter with his trophy is called to mind here as well.

Despite these egregious cases of physical abuse from experienced civilian prison guards, no journalists, editorialists, or military experts are recorded as suggesting that civilian prison guards should be more carefully vetted before they are allowed to have oversight in military prisons—even though Graner is reported as having a violent history as a civilian corrections officer. The silence on this issue seems to suggest that it is not the men's violence that is culpable, but their failure to meet the expectations of honor of the warrior code as it is understood in popular culture: while it is certainly expected that a soldier would have occasion to resort to violence, tormenting helpless prisoners would be seen as the base behavior of a bully, not the noble action of a warrior hero. At any rate, Graner and Frederick's behavior is not used as an excuse to instigate a debate about violent men in the military. Neither man comes to represent all male soldiers in any universalizing sense.

### **(WHITE) MEN HAVE NO GENDER**

I began this essay with the claim that “the story of the prisoner abuses at Abu Ghraib broke in late April 2004.” That claim is a bit disingenuous as the international press was informed as early as January 2004 that a military investigation was in progress regarding abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib.<sup>71</sup> Although the investigation was made public in January, and soldiers were charged in March,<sup>72</sup> Abu Ghraib did not become a “story” in the United States until the photographs were made public. This sequence of events supports visual scholars' assertions of the power of photographs to define public consciousness, especially in times of war. Photographs capture a “truth” and immediacy not available with words alone. As Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites note, photographs of war atrocity create “a searing eventfulness that breaks away from any official narrative justifying the war.”<sup>73</sup> Indeed, the dissemination of the Abu Ghraib photographs demanded specific official response and apology, and not rationalizations: even though the Bush administration proclaimed its disgust and assured the world press that the contents of the photographs were the work of a “few bad apples”<sup>74</sup> and not representative of the American military, the response was not enough for members of the press and public. There were many calls for Bush to make an explicit apology. And when he did finally

apologize, he was condemned in the media for not apologizing specifically to Iraqis.<sup>75</sup> Interestingly, none of these calls for an apology were issued before the release of the photographs. In the spirit of “seeing is believing,” until the sight of prisoner abuse became public knowledge, it did not exist as an exigence demanding a response.<sup>76</sup>

The photographs from Abu Ghraib tell a story of the abuse of power that has visible gender, racial, and cultural implications. Thinking in terms of who had power at Abu Ghraib and who did not, the male and female soldiers are equal opportunity abusers. Both have complete control over their naked and helpless prisoners. Although all of those who were court-martialed argued that they were simply following orders and essentially helpless themselves, the photographs tell the story of soldiers abusing the authority they had been granted and, often smiling, seeming to enjoy it. The Iraqi prisoners, on the other hand, are usually shown stripped of clothing and of any suggestion of real or symbolic phallic power—and this is undoubtedly an important part of their humiliation. They are usually hooded and bound, often hand and foot, and thoroughly subdued. Contrary to their male captors, the maleness of these prisoners is profoundly marked both in the photographs and in the press accounts of the abuse.

In all but a few photographs, the prisoners are naked. Many of the news outlets that published the photographs redacted the genitals and the faces of those who were unhooded, reportedly out of respect for the serious breach of Muslim cultural mandates that had been forced upon these men. I argue, however, that the very act of blurring the genitals draws the viewers’ attention to them and aids in reducing the prisoners to their penises.<sup>77</sup> As viewers, we are intensely aware of these prisoners’ gender, not only because media reports call our attention to the violation of Muslim codes of conduct, but also because the photographs draw our attention to the unmistakably male part of their anatomy. Their nudity makes them seem starkly vulnerable in a way that their captors are not. This latter point is also made by Hariman and Lucaites in their discussion of the iconic “Accidental Napalm” photograph from the Vietnam era. In referring to nine-year-old Kim Phuc’s nudity in the photograph, Hariman and Lucaites note, “The uniformed soldier [in the photograph] has an identity; the naked body has been stripped of conventional patterns of recognition, deference, and dismissal.”<sup>78</sup> Like the naked and injured girl in “Accidental Napalm,” the prisoners in the Abu Ghraib photographs have been stripped of all identifying features except for their gender and ethnicity. Their bodies become the *tabula rasa* upon which the story of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib is written. For, as Christine Harold and Kevin Michael DeLuca point out, the dissemination and reception of images “of the human body in peril . . . illustrates the rhetorical and political force of images in general and of the body specifically.”<sup>79</sup>



Figure 2. England and Graner with prisoners.

The lack of vulnerability on the part of the American soldiers in the photographs, particularly the male soldiers, is worthy of comment. Of all of the photographs that have been released to the public, only a handful were posed or staged. Others were candid shots of life at Abu Ghraib. Interestingly, in the posed photographs those involved seemed to make an effort to protect the male soldiers from any hint of homoeroticism. When the male soldiers are seen with naked prisoners, either they are at a safe distance or they pose with women. For example, Graner appears in two of the infamous pyramid photographs, but he is seen with England in one and Harman in the other. In the photograph with England, the two are standing at the heads of the Iraqis, Graner has his arm around England, and both are giving thumbs up (Figure 2). Graner is looking into the camera and not at the pile of naked men in front of him. In the photograph with Harman, the two stand behind the pyramid (Figure 3). Graner is further back, with his arms crossed, staring into the



Figure 3. Harman and Graner with prisoners.

camera, whereas Harman is crouched down behind the prisoners, between Graner and the pyramid, and seems close enough to touch them. The presence of a woman in both of these shots, I argue, serves to hold Graner's heterosexuality in place. Had he willingly posed alone and in close contact with naked men, he would not have been able to avoid the homoerotic implications that are antithetical to the American warrior.

In the only photograph where Graner is seen physically handling the prisoners, the raised fist picture, all of the prisoners are clothed. In fact, they are so covered up, and all are wearing hoods, that all we see is a jumble of limbs and the only nudity is hands and feet. Graner is not seen touching or cavorting with naked men, and he thus escapes the "taint" of homosexuality that is imposed upon the prisoners in the staged photographs.

The sexual humiliation visited upon these prisoners shocked the world, particularly the Muslim world, where such crimes know no forgiveness—certainly not for perpetrators and often not for victims either. Yet according to Burke's exploration of gendering in the U.S. military, the mode of humiliation chosen is part and parcel of military culture. From the moment basic training begins, new soldiers learn that the ultimate humiliation is to be feminine. Burke notes, "Conventionally, male initiation in warrior cultures begins with infantilization and feminization and proceeds to practices designed to rid the adolescent of all traces of the female."<sup>80</sup> Burke gives examples of many of the methods used to defeminize recruits, including sexually humiliating initiation rites with strong homoerotic currents and referring to soldiers as "ladies" or

“girls” when they do not perform as expected, thus building up an aversion to all things feminine.

The abuse the prisoners at Abu Ghraib experienced shows a marked attempt on the part of their captors to humiliate the men by feminizing them. In several photographs, we see prisoners forced to simulate sex with each other—a severe violation of Muslim culture and a clear attempt to feminize the prisoners through simulated homosexual sex. Several prisoners are seen with women’s underwear on their faces, and according to England’s deposition prior to her court-martial, sometimes the guards used maxi pads instead of underwear to maximize the prisoners’ humiliation.<sup>81</sup> Of course, the photographs that received the most attention are those where women soldiers are in the presence of naked prisoners. Thus when a woman, England, points at and seems to mock the genitals of an Iraqi man who is being forced to masturbate, the ultimate infraction has been committed. England has all the power and the Iraqi prisoner is weak, helpless, and worst of all, feminine.

Without doubt, the modesty between the sexes that is required in Muslim culture contributed greatly to the abusive choices the soldiers made. But the military tradition of humiliating men by disparagingly forcing feminine gender markers upon them worked hand-in-hand with Muslim cultural taboos. England and Harman, who received the same basic training as their male counterparts, were complicit in reinforcing the view that the worst thing that can be done to a man is to make him a woman. Press accounts of the sexual abuse at Abu Ghraib often cite Arab culture as the reason Harman and especially England’s actions were so repugnant.<sup>82</sup> Not as much discourse is available concerning those photographs where neither woman is present and where the prisoners are clearly being forced to perform sex acts, simulated or otherwise, by their male captors.

The photographs of performed and simulated sex have received much attention for their pornographic potential, and rightly so. Three in particular have received wide circulation in the popular press and have stirred outrage in both Eastern and Western cultures. In one, a naked, hooded man stands at an angle to the camera (Figure 4). Kneeling between his spread legs is another naked and hooded man. The standing man has his hands on the kneeling man’s head as they simulate the position of fellatio. The shot is framed perfectly by the photographer. In the background, another naked and hooded man is visibly masturbating, while another holds his own head in what can only be described as a gesture of despair. While mainstream press pixelated all visible genitalia in this shot, there is no reducing the impact of this photograph. Were it not for the man holding his head in despair, the shot could be read as a standard pornography scene where two people have sex, while a voyeur looks on and masturbates. Whether the man holding his head is simply adjusting his hood or is on the verge of emotional breakdown, his posture



Figure 4. Abu Ghraib prisoners.

of hopelessness and helplessness takes this photograph from pornography to something that is heartbreaking in its frankness. It is a reminder to the viewer, in case we have forgotten, that what we are seeing is not fun and games at Abu Ghraib, but torture in every sense of the word.

A second sexually explicit photo shows two naked and hooded men, their hands linked behind their heads, facing the camera (Figure 5). They are half-sitting on the upper backs of two other naked men seated on the floor behind them. Although the men facing the camera are not interacting with each other, their genitalia are perfectly centered in the shot. This is an example of what I noted earlier, namely, that the act of blurring the genitalia, even if the motive was to show some respect for men who were experiencing egregious sexual assault, only serves to reduce these men to their penises.

A third shot isolates one of the two men in the second shot, again centering his penis in the photograph for emphasis. In another photograph, Lynndie



Figure 5. Abu Ghraib prisoners.

England appears to point at this man's genitalia and smile at the camera. The photographer manages to capture both this anonymous man's humiliation and England's glee.

The photographs of the Iraqi men, seen with or without soldiers, are clear evidence of their captors' attempts to humiliate and feminize them. Although the male soldiers carefully preserve their own heterosexuality and unmarked gender in the posed photos, much effort seems to have been made to impose gender excess on the prisoners. Graner and Frederick were reported to have routinely called the prisoners names, such as "gays," and asking them "do they like to make love to guys."<sup>83</sup> All of the convicted abusers defended their actions by claiming that they were just following orders and that part of their job was to "soften" prisoners for military intelligence personnel. The argument has failed to gain any sympathy for the accused, but considering the military tradition of using feminization techniques to humiliate and ultimately harden new recruits, the convicted soldiers' claims may have some merit. Regardless, no media commentary urges a review of military training that extols the masculine by demonizing the feminine. Rather, the photographs are used to discipline the American women for their lack of femininity, and the American men for their lack of good soldiering. While much anguished sympathy is expressed regarding the detainees, the overall relegation of events at Abu Ghraib as an anomaly serves only to pathologize the abusers, rather than use those events as an opportunity to overhaul a clearly flawed military organization.

## CONCLUSION

The story of Abu Ghraib denotes a dark era for the U.S. military. It suggests that, despite the political posturing that would portray the military engagement in Iraq as a liberating effort, imperialism may well have reared its ugly head. Abu Ghraib has become a household word in America, but has not quite risen to the level of a scandal, although the word is constantly used to describe it. The issue was barely raised during the 2004 presidential campaign, and George W. Bush won reelection in November 2004 despite the many unsettled questions about his promoting policies that implicitly endorse torture as an interrogation method. As disturbing as the story is as a statement of American foreign policy, and as disgusting as the photographs are to look at as a demonstration of military tactics or structure, the media reports about the story focus largely on the gender violations committed by the American women involved. In this, perhaps the media is only guilty of giving the public what it wants, namely, an explanation for how women could do such a thing. As Hatty points out regarding the ambivalence many feel when confronted with a woman warrior:

Access by women to the hallowed role of warrior arguably increases women's status; at the same time, it disturbs and unsettles men's confidence in their superior status. The disappearance of *difference*, implied by gender integration strategies, may provoke a defensive and hostile attack.<sup>84</sup>

Public and media response to the actions of the women of Abu Ghraib can accurately be described as hostile. Were it only that the chorus of disapproval was an expression of moral outrage over what human beings will do to each other, it would be understandable. But holding England, Harman, and Ambuhl to a standard to which their male counterparts are not held is a demonstration of Inness's argument: "The more a woman adopts signifiers of masculinity, the more she disturbs mainstream society. Our culture likes its girls to be girls and its boys to be boys."<sup>85</sup>

The story of Abu Ghraib represents a moment when cultural choices were made as to which debates the case would bring to public consciousness. It was a moment ripe for critiquing military culture and procedures, and for asking questions about the legitimacy of U.S. involvement in Iraq. And although these issues were brought up, they were mere whispers compared to the overwhelming press and public outcry regarding the gender violations committed by the women soldiers. Instead of questions about the lack of discipline, training, and experience of all of the soldiers implicated in the abuses at Abu



Ghraib, we have commentary on Lynndie England's tomboyishness, sexually free lifestyle, and overall gender outlaw behavior. Instead of a debate that focused on the flawed procedures that allowed a man with a history of violence to be entrusted with the welfare of helpless prisoners, we received a *non sequitur* about the wisdom of women in the military. Instead of reinvigorating the debate regarding the class of soldiers doing most of the bleeding and dying in Iraq, some of whom are now taking the fall for Abu Ghraib, we are given England, pathologized as part of that class. Finally, instead of using the photographs to initiate a debate about faulty and antiquated military training that elevates all that is stereotypically masculine by debasing feminine markers in all their forms, the photographs are offered as evidence of the deviance of a few rogue soldiers.

The discourse surrounding Abu Ghraib suggests that gender is not an issue that rhetorical critics can overlook, and that at least as much attention must be given to what is *not* said as to what is said. Evidence suggests that, as abhorrent as the actions of the soldiers were, the women involved were held to a standard to which their male counterparts were not held. While the women soldiers are disciplined for their lack of femininity, the male soldiers remain invisible as representatives of men. Mass media discourse seems to accept and further the cultural notion of women's presence in the military as problematic: Rather than England and Harman being held up as examples of bad soldiers, they are classified as bad girls. Rather than the media using England's apparently low IQ to draw attention to the questionable standards of military recruitment, her low sexual morality is highlighted. Gender, coded both in the language describing the story and in the photographs capturing the abuse, is disciplined and reinscribed every step of the way.

Since the original photographs were released, much more has been learned about the events at Abu Ghraib. The military investigation has continued, and more indictments are expected.<sup>86</sup> In addition, many more photographs have been released. A fruitful area for further study would be analysis of the photographs for gender absences and excesses, as well as an analysis of the continuing media reporting of the case. Reams of official documentation have also been made public and would be a productive area of study for rhetoricians. Abu Ghraib shows us that gender norms are reified and regulated in all facets of cultural life. With military service holding out opportunities for women that were never before available, scrutiny into the ways it circumscribes behavior despite these advances will yield useful results for scholars and activists alike.

## NOTES

1. I use the word “abuse” instead of “torture” in referring to the events at Abu Ghraib with full acknowledgement of this problematic descriptor. Media and official reports used “abuse,” and the soldiers were charged with “abuse,” so I use this term simply to avoid confusion while I am sensitive to its potential to minimize the actions of the soldiers. See Susan Sontag, “Regarding the Torture of Others,” *New York Times*, May 23, 2004, 25.
2. Farah Stockman, “Bush Voices Disgust over Abuse Photos; Threat Is Seen to Iraq Mission,” *Boston Globe*, May 1, 2004, A1.
3. Richard W. Stevenson, “Abuse Scandal: The Aftershocks,” *New York Times*, May 9, 2004, 2.
4. Seymour M. Hersh, *Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 26.
5. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), xxi.
6. Carol Burke, *Camp All-American, Hanoi Jane, and the High-and-Tight: Gender, Folklore, and Changing Military Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 56.
7. Burke, *Camp All-American*, 57.
8. Burke, *Camp All-American*, 142-43.
9. It is not my assumption, as I make my arguments, that the media is solely responsible for setting ideological and cultural standards. Rather, my underlying assumption is that mass media both reflects and reifies the dominant culture of which it is a part. In taking this position, I agree with media scholar Pippa Norris who writes: “The frame for the mainstream U.S. media can be expected to reflect and reinforce the dominant frame in U.S. culture.” Pippa Norris, “News of the World,” in *Politics and the Press: The News Media and Their Influences*, ed. Pippa Norris (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), 277.
10. To achieve geographical diversity in resources, I have focused on print sources by region, specifically mainstream newspaper and news magazine articles, as they are available on the Lexis-Nexis database. I searched regional sources in the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, and the West coast using the names of the soldiers and keywords such as “gender,” “women,” and “Abu Ghraib.” My analysis does not cover the courts-martial of the soldiers or the photographs that were released long after the story broke.
11. Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, xxii.
12. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Tenth Anniversary ed. (New York: Routledge, 1999), 13.
13. Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3.
14. Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender: Transforming the Debate on Sexual Inequality* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 42.
15. Matthew Sweeney, Bridget Harrison, and Marsha Kranes, “Leasher Gal Lashed with Abuse Rap as Kin Dig in for Court Battle,” *New York Post*, May 8, 2004, 4.
16. Maki Becker, Corky Siemaszko, and Paul H. B. Shin, “The Face Behind a Nation’s Shame,” *Daily News*, May 7, 2004, 5.
17. Rebecca Nappi, “Photos Shatter Assumptions About Women,” *The Spokesman Review*, May 8, 2004, B1.
18. Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998).

19. Sherrie A. Inness, *Tough Girls: Women Warriors and Wonder Women in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 21.
20. Joe Eaton, "Sabrina Harman," *Roanoke Times*, May 26, 2005, A1.
21. Richard Cohen, "Victimizer and Victim," *Washington Post*, May 6, 2005, A23.
22. Neva Chonin, "The Lynndie Hop," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 29, 2004, 20.
23. David Finkel and Christian Davenport, "Records Paint Dark Portrait of Guard," *Washington Post*, June 5, 2004, A01. Paul von Zielbauer and James Dao, "Guard Left Troubled Life for Duty in Iraq," *New York Times*, May 14, 2004, 9.
24. Michael A. Fuoco, Ed Blazina, and Cindi Lash, "Suspect in Prisoner Abuse Has a History of Troubles," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 8, 2004, A1.
25. Judy Lin, "Trouble at Home, Abroad for Spc. Charles Graner Jr.," *Associated Press State & Local Wire*, May 11, 2004, online at Lexis-Nexis Academic (accessed March 29, 2006).
26. Suzanne E. Hatty, *Masculinities, Violence, and Culture* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2000), 119-20.
27. John M. Sloop, *Disciplining Gender: Rhetorics of Sex Identity in Contemporary US Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 78.
28. Sloop, *Disciplining Gender*, 121.
29. Mary Leonard, "Abuse Raises Gender Issues," *Boston Globe*, May 16, 2004, A17.
30. Stephen J. Hedges, "Two Take Brunt of Blame in Prison Scandal," *Ventura County Star*, May 16, 2004, 14.
31. Hedges, "Two Take Brunt," 14.
32. John W. Howard III and Laura C. Prividera, "Gendered Nationalism: A Critical Analysis of Militarism, Patriarchy, and the Ideal Soldier," *Texas Speech Communication Journal* 30, no. 2 (2006): 137.
33. Jennifer Wells, "Sex, Vileness and Videotape: It's Made for TV," *Toronto Star*, May 16, 2004, A02.
34. Jay Price, "Abuse Suspect Flouted Orders," *News and Observer*, August 5, 2004, A1.
35. Price, "Abuse Suspect," A1.
36. Andy Geller, "'Get Lucky' Lynndie—Caught in Sex Acts at Abu Ghraib," *New York Post*, August 5, 2004, 23.
37. Geller, "'Get Lucky' Lynndie," 23.
38. Cohen, "Victimizer and Victim," A23.
39. Matt Taibbi, "Ms. America," *Rolling Stone*, October 20, 2005, 47.
40. Aly Sujo, "The Ghoul Next Door Was Jail Abuse Fotog," *New York Post*, May 9, 2004, 4.
41. Eaton, "Sabrina Harman," A1.
42. Finkel and Davenport, "Records Paint Dark Portrait," A01.
43. Finkel and Davenport, "Records Paint Dark Portrait," A01.
44. Elaine Donnelly, "Army Betraying Its Women . . . and Men," *Center for Military Readiness*, <http://www.cmrlink.org/WomenInCombat.asp?docID=243> (accessed May 28, 2007).
45. Burke, *Camp All-American*, 21.
46. Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993), 28.

47. Rubin, "Thinking Sex," 33.
48. Graner was separated from his wife when he and England began their relationship. They later divorced. After the birth of his child by England, Graner married another convicted Abu Ghraib abuser, Megan Ambuhl.
49. Geller, "'Get Lucky' Lynndie," 23.
50. Estes Thompson, "Iraqi Detainees Identified Pfc. Lynndie England as Abuser," *Associated Press*, August 5, 2004, online at Lexis-Nexis Academic (accessed April 26, 2006).
51. Vincent Morris and Deborah Orin, "Leash Gal's Sex Pix," *New York Post*, May 13, 2004, 8.
52. Morris and Orin, "Leash Gal's Sex Pix," 8.
53. Lynne Duke, "A Woman Apart: For Fellow Soldiers, Lynndie England's Role at Abu Ghraib Is Best Viewed from a Distance," *Washington Post*, September 19, 2004, D01.
54. Duke, "A Woman Apart," D01.
55. Price, "Abuse Suspect," A1.
56. The World According to Peaches, "We All Share the Guilt with Lynndie England," *Daily News of Los Angeles*, September 30, 2004, U3.
57. Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 2.
58. George Neumayr, "Thelma and Louise in Iraq," in *American Spectator Online*, May 5, 2004, online at Lexis-Nexis Academic (accessed April 26, 2006).
59. Neumayr, "Thelma and Louise in Iraq."
60. Ann Marlowe, "Shameless," *National Review Online*, May 21, 2004, online at Lexis-Nexis Academic (accessed April 26, 2006).
61. Leonard, "Abuse Raises Gender Issues," A17.
62. Leonard, "Abuse Raises Gender Issues," A17.
63. Richard Roeper, "The News Is Different When Women Are Involved," *Chicago Sun-Times*, May 12, 2004, 11.
64. Myriam Marquez, "Abuse Photos Smear Soldiers, Especially Women," *Tulsa World*, May 12, 2004, A17.
65. Nappi, "Photos Shatter Assumptions," B1.
66. Burke, *Camp All-American*, 50.
67. Burke, *Camp All-American*, 48.
68. T. Walter Herbert, *Sexual Violence and American Manhood* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 60.
69. Finkel and Davenport, "Records Paint Dark Portrait," A01.
70. These same eyewitnesses report that when the medic, a woman, arrived and treated the unconscious prisoner, Graner asked her if she wanted to stay and join in on the "fun." The medic declined. See Duke, "A Woman Apart," D01.
71. Eric Schmitt, "Inquiry Ordered into Reports of Prisoner Abuse," *New York Times*, January 17, 2004, 7.
72. Ann Scott Tyson, "U.S. Soldiers Face Charges of Prisoner Abuse," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 26, 2004, 2.
73. Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, "Public Identity and Collective Memory in U.S. Iconic Photography: The Image of 'Accidental Napalm,'" *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20 (2003): 41.

74. "Mr. Rumsfeld's Defense," editorial, *New York Times*, May 8, 2004, 16.
75. See Richard Ronconi, "Bush's Apology Needed to Be Made to Iraqis," *Times Union*, May 14, 2004, A8. See also, Jonathan Curiel, "Bush Defends U.S. On Arab TV," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 6, 2004, A1.
76. For more on the power of photography in wartime, see Barbie Zelizer, "When War Is Reduced to a Photograph," in *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime*, ed. Stuart Allan and Barbie Zelizer (New York: Taylor & Francis Inc., 2004), 115–35.
77. In early 2006, Salon.com released previously unavailable photographs from Abu Ghraib. These photographs are not redacted, and I would argue do not draw the viewer's eye to the penis the way the redacted photographs do.
78. Hariman and Lucaites, "Public Identity and Collective Memory," 42.
79. Christine Harold and Kevin Michael DeLuca, "Behold the Corpse: Violent Images and the Case of Emmett Till," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 2 (2005): 266.
80. Burke, *Camp All-American*, 20.
81. Michael A. Fuoco, "England Gives Her Side," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 23, 2004, A1.
82. See Hedges, "Two Take Brunt," 14. See also Dana Milbank, "U.S. Tries to Calm Furor Caused by Photos," *Washington Post*, May 1, 2004, A01.
83. Fuoco, Blazina, and Lash, "Suspect in Prisoner Abuse," A1.
84. Hatty, *Masculinities, Violence and Culture*, 130.
85. Inness, *Tough Girls*, 21.
86. Eric Schmitt, "Abuse Charge Set for a US Colonel," *New York Times*, April 26, 2006, 1.