

Senior Capstone Research Project

**What's A Man? Gender Discourse and Fort Ord Newspapers During the
Viet Nam War**

Capstone Chair: Dr. Gerald Shenk

Capstone Advisor: Dr. Angie Tran

Capstone Facilitator: Dr. Cecilia O'Leary

By John Klein

May 12, 2000

California State University Monterey Bay

Introduction

A Selective Service System registration pamphlet that I picked up recently in a California State University Monterey Bay administrative building proclaims loudly on its cover "It's What A Man's Got To Do." Although the slogan on this brochure is stingy on the four letter words, it is meaningful for several reasons. Its' very presence in a campus building where students frequent gives a clue as to the target audience of this publication--namely, 18- to 25-year olds. Young adults, perhaps those most interested in becoming "men," are those most likely to pick up, flip through, and compare manhoods with the shorn male on the cover of the pamphlet. Not coincidentally, it is young men of this age that are most desired by Armed Forces recruiters for their malleability. The wording on the pamphlet suggests that registering for a future draft, that is, the chance to become a soldier, is a "manly" thing to do. It is interesting to note that becoming a man in the context of this pamphlet requires action. Becoming a man is presented as occurring *after* you register, rather than having manhood be a quality present in all males. By playing off fears and perceived shortcomings, this slogan can instill a desire in readers that was not there before reading the pamphlet. This creation of desire is reminiscent of consumerism, in that products are peddled to fulfill needs created by advertising. "Come to Marlboro Country," much like "It's What A Man's Got To Do" presents an inadequacy to be filled presumably by smoking the right kind of cigarettes or by registering for the Selective Service System. In either case, observers are invited to fulfill a sequence presented as incomplete. The accepted reactions available to observers are indications of dominant discourses concerning the subject. For example, many young men, upon turning eighteen or seeing a Selective Service System pamphlet, register immediately and without hesitation. This accepted reaction to a discourse of registration as duty, comes at the expense of other reactions. What is interesting to note, then, is how discourses of manhood are intertwined in this case with discourses of duty. That certain organizations with the capacity to publish flyers and disseminate a version of reality that best serves them is a testament to the power of the organization.

Two reasons, then, make the Selective Service System pamphlet meaningful. First, the attempt made to define the qualities of manhood stated in the brochure shows that what you or I may think constitutes a man may differs from what the Selective Service System may think. Registering then, validates a discourse of manhood that includes the possibility of military service. This means that even objects as mundane as registration pamphlets become areas where meaning is contested, in this case, the meaning of manhood. Secondly, this brochure is a textual representation of a gender discourse that benefits the United States military. This is especially interesting in light of the fact that Fort Ord was a major military complex for over 70 years before its closure in 1994. Far from being an isolated incident, military gender discourse has historically existed as a pillar of support for policy and diplomacy. During wartime, when manpower needs are greatest, it is unsurprising that that the manipulation of manhood is used as a tactic to further military goals. The war in Viet Nam was no different, as this study will explore using Fort Ord as its focus.

Fort Ord was home to GIs who were leaving for and returning from Viet Nam. The discourses of gender that these men and their families interacted with were often those that validated and affirmed military objectives. What distinguishes the Viet Nam War from other conflicts was the vast anti-war movement that was protesting the war in Indochina. One of the tactics used by the anti-war movement on Fort Ord was a redefinition of manhood that contradicted military goals and objectives. This contestation over what exactly a "man" was required the use of language, that is, which texts with which meanings could represent and be represented by the concept of "manhood." Language is subjective by nature, having varying significance to people in different contexts. This paper is an inquiry into how language was used on Fort Ord during the Viet Nam War to construct a non-biological definition of manhood. In order to investigate the meaning of gender in this context, I will be using a method of investigation called discourse analysis.

I will be using authorized and underground newspapers that were published on and around Fort Ord to construct my argument that gender was a source of conflict during the Viet Nam war. These papers were published by groups that had vastly different political goals. The military had great interest in incorporating military service into a discourse of manhood, while the anti-war movement thought that the two could exist independently of each other. Newspapers were way to disseminate information during this time, some of which exist today. These historical texts remain as evidences of conflicting gender discourse that was present nearly thirty years ago.

Foucault and Poststructuralism

To support my assertion that multiple meanings of gender exist, I will be using a poststructuralist perspective. Poststructuralism views language as the creation point of identity, rather than a perspective that would see language as the source of expression for an essentially unchanging core. In other words, our gender identity is created and changed in every social interaction that we engage in, the language available to us, and the language that we choose to use. The struggle to define gender is thus never over, but present in communication, architecture, literature, and the media. Thus the construction of gender becomes in effect a dialogue between evidences of history and individuals out of which identities are claimed and contested. Foucault agreed with Antonio Gramsci in that they both view power, including the power of gendering as "...produced and reproduced in the interstices of everyday life..."¹ These interstices are integral to an understanding of Foucault's work, as he rejects a linear interpretation of history in favor of one that recognizes halts and jerks (discontinuities). These interstices require social interaction between agents. These agents are institutions and individuals that construct identities in relation to one another. The need to define gender in the first place requires a power relation insistent on boundaries; that is, the creation of "haves" and "have nots." It cannot be expected that those left with the short end of the stick will be content with the lot that these boundaries assign. A struggle therefore emerges in which roles are contested within the framework of the institution, generally a struggle not to overthrow it, but to become the entity to which interests serve.

The struggle present in these newspapers is one prevalent of this time period in history, that is, who has the authority to assign meaning to gender? The relationship between power and accepted ways of knowing has been studied by Michel Foucault, who analyzed the origins of prisons, insane asylums, and sexuality in light of changing power relations. His work questioned the objectivity of history and of people, instead showing institutions in light of the power relations that supported and resisted them. One of Foucault's interests was "...the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives."² Newspapers are a part of the everyday lives of millions. The biases of newspapers would be a dissertation in themselves, suffice it to say that they are far from objective, and construct definitions for the world in ways that support the institutions that allow them to exist. This analysis will show that constructions of gender are representative of "the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals."

This, nor any other form of power cannot be exercised without resistance. An analogy to physics, which might state that every action has an equal and opposite reaction, can help explain the concept of power. Power differs from physics in the degree of the reaction, which can be measured not only in opposite reaction but compliance. In fact,

¹ Holub, Renate. 1992. Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism. New York, NY: Routledge.

² Foucault, Michel. 1980. Power/Knowledge. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Foucault thought that the use of violence was evidence of a lack of power, his reasoning being that truly powerful entities exercised power in ways which masked themselves to their constituents. For the purposes of this analysis, evidence of resistance is found in anti-war newspapers. I will show that they attempt to construct a hybrid meaning of gender in conjunction and opposition to a definition demanded by the United States military.

I am interested in the political implications of discourses of gender. In other words, how being a man supports dominant power structures, as well as how subordinate groups are empowered by alternate discourses of gender. The nature of this inquiry accepts that there is no agreed upon meaning, as will be demonstrated below. This rejection of fixed meanings is an aspect of poststructuralism that distinguishes it from structuralism. It is also a feature that draws criticism from other disciplines for its focus on the subjectivity of language.

Discourse and Truth

A discourse, as I use the word in this study, refers to the unspoken baggage that a text carries with it. More specifically, I am interested in the political nature of a discourse; that is, how statements are considered true and at what cost. This baggage must be recognized by the reader if sense is to be made from the passage. The baggage and the unpacking(interaction) it requires can be a way of conceptualizing discourse. As Vivien Burr says, "A discourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events."³ This definition of discourse lends itself to history well, but in addition to events, discourses help to forge identities and institutions. Consider the Volunteer Army that was enacted with the end of the draft in 1973. The Volunteer Army can be represented by at least three different discourses. The 'Volunteer Army as equity' discourse implies that it is an equitable solution to the controversial draft. Within this discourse, those that do not wish to perform military service can choose not to do so. The Volunteer Army is just that-an occupation that is open to those who consciously make a choice to enlist. This was an issue that stirred heated debate, and continues to do so. Contradictory to this discourse may be 'Volunteer Army as inequity' which sees the burden of fighting placed on the poorest segment of the population to which the military serves as one of the few opportunities for access to power, privilege, and prestige.` Another discourse of the Volunteer Army could be the 'Volunteer Army as soft.' Within this discourse, distinctions are made between pre- and post- volunteer basic training. Basic training is seen as lenient and incomplete due to relaxed restrictions and increased privileges. These changes from a drafted army can be seen as lowering the experience of the soldier and weakening the fighting force.

In the example given above, both discourses on the Volunteer Army can be considered "true." Each discourse has a perspective that it considers to be correct. Contradictory discourses are not mutually exclusive, they simply reflect the subjective nature of reality. It is these interpretations of gender that I will pinpoint through my analysis.

Discourse analysis is a way of approaching social research that is interested in looking at language in a way that describes the structures supporting the text. This reading between the lines does not focus as much on the text per se as on the meanings of bodies of similar texts. This trait distinguishes it from traditional linguistic inquiry which focuses attention on internal sentence structure. Discourse analysis is a way to examine the biases and assumptions present during the creation of a text, as well as a reader's relationship with the text. This process of interaction is never finished-that is, even if you are mentioning a discourse that you encountered in the past, you are further modifying the body of concepts and ideas that a discourse entails.

³ Burr, Vivien. 1995. An Introduction to Social Constructionism. New York, NY: Routledge.

The use of discourse analysis has been criticized by practitioners of the scientific method who find fault with its dependence on the subjective interpretation of the researcher. I find this same quality to be an advantage, in that the researcher openly admits her subjectivity, instead of trying to hide it with a barrage of samples and claims of randomness. This trait lies at the root of the analysis of discourse: exposing claims that masquerade as truth and the assumptions that support them.

There are a variety of approaches that one can use when examining discourse. I have chosen a technique called deconstruction with which to conduct my analysis. Deconstruction aims at examining portions of the text and how that text can be claimed to be “true.” I have chosen this method for its ontological implications. Truth requires power in order to be sanctioned, and so power relations are inherent in claims of truth. These same power relations necessarily require resistance, and it is this back-and-forth that I wish to study in relation to the notion of gender as portrayed in Viet Nam era publications. Thus, deconstruction attempts to recognize what is not explicitly stated in the text but necessary for comprehension.

‘Zines and Veterans

The newspapers that I will be examining consist of underground newspapers and authorized publications. Ranging from 1968 to 1972, these papers were all published on Fort Ord or in the surrounding communities. I have located three separate underground anti-war newspapers through my research, produced “by and for GIs.” I located these newspapers from out of state sources from Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Wisconsin. This is interesting in itself, in that history desired can be selectively saved, recorded, or edited geographically in order for a desired version to shine through. The names of the underground papers are *As You Were*, *Every GI is a P.O.W.*, and *Shrapnel*. Coming from Temple University Library, the Wisconsin State Historical Society, and the University of Connecticut Library, these were not procured easily.

The *Fort Ord Panorama*, however, was available nearly in its entirety from the Presidio of Monterey Command Historian’s Office. A virtually complete run of the *Panorama*, dating from the first 10-page issue released September 20, 1940, until the closure of Fort Ord, is bound by the year. Only a handful of entries are missing from this collection, making it a valuable resource. This paper was “...an authorized unofficial weekly publication of the Ft. Ord Information Section Command Information Branch, Building 2853.” It is interesting to note that although the paper is not official, it is authorized. This nebulous wording means that it was recognized by base command (the commanding general’s name appears on the credits), and not necessarily by the Department of the Army. Not only was this the authorized paper of Fort Ord during the time it was published, but it has become an accepted and available version of history. The fact that an approved version of history becomes available for research while alternate accounts dwindle and disappear is far from coincidence. It is rather evidence of a phenomenon in which the approved account of history becomes one sanctioned by the proverbial “victor.” Michel Foucault, a French theorist and historian concerned with among other things the relationship between power and knowledge, would say that “The history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language: relations of power, not relations of meaning⁴.” This means that when one history is deemed accurate, other histories are excluded. The war that Foucault mentions is the ongoing relationship between dominant and oppressed groups out of which individuals and institutions are constituted. The victor of the “war” calls the tune. The availability of anti-war newspapers in a location heavily dependent on the military is representative of a power that is attempting to mold the truth of

⁴ Foucault, Michel. 1980. Power/Knowledge. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

historic events by exclusion of events deemed worthless or harmful to a desired outcome. In this case, that outcome is a history that includes the official and excludes the unofficial.

These newspapers could not have been created and interpreted without people to author, distribute, and assign meaning to them. We must remember that as these documents did not exist autonomously of individuals, they became an area where the meaning of gender was contested. I have chosen as representatives of individuals with whom the text had meaning Brian Willson and Frank Bardacke, both of whom were involved in organizing against the Viet Nam war. Frank Bardacke moved to Seaside from Berkeley in order to work in a coffeehouse serving Fort Ord GIs. This coffeehouse served as a place for GI's to rap about orders, court martials and article 15s, conscientious objector status, and other problems that the men were facing. Although he was a civilian, Frank was involved in GI organizing on Fort Ord. On the other hand, Brian Willson was in the Air Force and stationed in Vietnam. After seeing atrocities firsthand, he became disillusioned with American involvement in Indochina. After returning state-side, Brian spoke out publicly against the war while still serving his last year in Louisiana. He continues to be an activist and is currently head of the Monterey Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans for Peace. These perspectives provide an invaluable resource for my paper in that human consequences not discernible from books are provided.

PFC Craig Nelson

The Army will treat us like men if we accept their discipline, if we continue to fight in Indochina, if we continue to consume Bud Antle lettuce. However, if we understand the nature of the Army and how we're used as pawns to smash oppressed people and begin to organize against the Brass, they will soon drop their benevolent facade and try to smash us.

(Every GI is a P.O.W., March 1971)

The Honorable George S. Gadsby, mayor of Salinas, presented the Spirit of Honor Medal, the highest award given a trainee, to Private First Class Craig Nelson of H-3-3.

(Fort Ord Panorama, Friday, March 19, 1971)

The first quote above, taken from an anti-war newspaper, claims that acceptance of the Army and its policies are the only way to succeed in the military. The second quote, taken from the *Fort Ord Panorama*, recognizes the outstanding achievement of PFC Craig Nelson, who seems to be on the right track for a successful military career. No doubt that this soldier was filled with pride upon his presentation of the Spirit Medal of Honor Medal by an institution that was riddled with controversy during this time in American history. It is doubtful if PFC Nelson was among the thousands of Viet Nam veterans who, in the month following the publication of the articles above, gathered on the west steps of the capitol in Washington DC and threw their medals over a chicken wire fence erected by park police. How could these government issued medals simultaneously represent the courage and upward mobility of soldiers while being "...drenched in the blood of the innocent...drenched in the lies of Congress...?"⁵

The example above shows that medals did not have a static meaning for their recipients. Similarly, virtually all aspects of the war in Viet Nam were open to interpretation, from tangible symbols of bravery to abstract concepts such as "the enemy." The force that was required to fight this threat consisted of enlisted, drafted, and commissioned American

⁵ Willson, Brian, Former Vietnam Veteran Against the War and Current Veteran for Peace. Personal Interview. February 28, 2000.

and Vietnamese men and women. At the same time, the anti-war movement in America was urging men not to fight what Air Force pilot and instructor Dale Noyd considered an “unjust, immoral” war.⁶ The unpopularity of this war caused heartache for policy makers, GIs, protesters, and their families. The question that becomes apparent is one that was popular during the anti-war movement that was echoed by Brian Willson in March of 1989: “What if the government called men to fight in a war and the men refused to fight?”

Who are these elusive men that have the power to make or break a war? They were draftees and volunteers, draft dodgers and protesters of the Viet Nam war. They claimed the identity of men while President Richard Nixon called them “bums blowing up campuses.” Were members of the armed forces men or babykillers? Depictions of what it meant to be a man during this tumultuous time are available today in the forms of literature, architecture, media, and narratives. These institutions do not exist in a vacuum. They are reflective and productive of attitudes, biases, and assumptions of both the past and the present. Evidence of meaning as demonstrated through these institutions are produced by discourse. This analysis will show that multiple discourses of gender existed and interacted with men and women of this time period through newspapers that were published and distributed on and around Fort Ord during the Viet Nam war.

Panoramas and Prisoners of War

Consider this short newspaper article taken from the *Fort Ord Panorama*, March 19, 1971:

A mighty happy young man Specialist 5 William G. Armer, a clerk-typist at the Ft. Ord Army Hospital. Captain George H. Coughlin, company commander of Hospital Company re-enlisted the specialist while Mrs. Armer looked on. Specialist Armer re-enlisted for six years and a tour of duty in Japan and, incidentally, collected (sic) a bonus of \$6000. No doubt, Mrs. Armer is happy too.

This article appeared under a photograph of a young man and his company commander with their hands in the air with a young woman looking on. This caption is virtually an article unto itself, for it does not correspond with any of the other front page articles surrounding it. From this article we can see that re-enlistment brings happiness. Re-enlistment for 6 years brings the additional reward (for Mr. Armer, at least) of \$6000. In 1971, this amount was more than enough to buy a car. Notice that Mr. Armer is headed for a tour of duty in Japan. This re-enlistment could seem appealing for several reasons. 1) Spec 5 Armer was heading to Japan, where there was less chance of seeing combat than if he were heading to Viet Nam, 2) Spec 5 Armer was likely to be assigned to a Hospital Company, which in theory would see less combat than the infantry, and 3) Spec 5 Armer’s wife (representative of family) is shown to be happy with the re-enlistment. The first two reasons assume that Spec 5 Armer wished to avoid combat duty. It really doesn’t matter whether or not he wished to avoid combat duty in Viet Nam, his choice served as a model for others who perhaps did not wish to go.

At this point, it is helpful to remember that this article was published in a newspaper whose primary readership consisted of military personnel, many of whom were enlisted. As such, this article does more than just describe an exemplary man, it turns him into a model of what enlisted men should do and how they should behave. They should re-enlist for 6 years (!). They should accept tours of duty overseas. They should please their families by accepting the large checks that the military is happy to give them as re-enlistment incentives. In fact, from this article, we can begin to see what a man should be: obedient and loyal. In

⁶ Noyd, Dale. 1990. “An Unjust and Immoral War.” *In War and Peace*. Ed. Edward K. Eckert. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

this same *Panorama*, there is no mention of the hundreds of men that were discharged or simply left the military because their enlistment was up. Spec 5 Armer's behavior was publicized and published in order to show the behavior of an ideal man. The fact that Spec 5 Armer was headed for a country other than Viet Nam could have been an attractive proposition to those facing the ground war in Indochina.

Mrs. Armer is representative of what an army wife should be. She is happy that her husband will be enlisted for another six years. She is happily anticipating the separation from her husband that his tour will require. No doubt she will happily spend the money that her husband received as a bonus. Mrs. Armer serves as a role model for other army wives for the support she gives her husband and the military. This is what good army families do. If you're male, you re-enlist, and if you are female, you encourage your husband to enlist and support him when he does. This promulgation of gender discourse is by no means unique to the *Panorama*.

Consider the following portion of an article from *Every GI is a Prisoner of War* (P.O.W.), March 1971:

Also, despite the propaganda over the Volunteer Army, our lives are still controlled by the Brass and the Rich of this country. We're only pawns. If we fight well against Asian peasants or black rebels in the U.S., the Army will treat us like "men". If we organize against this oppression, the Brass will treat us no better than the Asian peasant.

This article came from a decidedly anti-war newspaper "...put out monthly by and for GI's at Ft Ord. We see the P.O.W. as being an important first step in building a GI movement which will get the Brass off our backs forever." It seems that the *P.O.W.* is attempting to consolidate the oppressed group in order to list grievances and devise a plan of action. From this article we are able to approach a discourse on gender that is different from the discourses present in the article concerning Spec 5 Armer.

The author of this article sees the lives of the soldiers as controlled by "Brass and the Rich" of America. The brass is a colloquialism for military officers, generally the first ceiling that enlisted men would encounter. The brass, also called "pigs" or "lifers" in reference to their military careers, were frequent targets of frustration and anger from their men. In fact, the Department of Defense reported 209 cases of violence against officers, called "fraggings," in 1970 alone. The "Rich" who control the GI's are referenced in a different article which says "U.S. industrialists are getting rich supplying guns, ammunition, food, supplies, trucks, tires, gas for engines and a million other necessities. They get rich at the risk of you getting killed. The rich get richer while the poor die⁷." It seems that some enlisted men saw themselves victimized and taken advantage of by capitalist institutions-namely industry and the military.

It is for perhaps this reason, to combat the social injustice that capitalism requires, that the GI movement attempted to achieve solidarity with other social movements of the time. In these newspapers are requests to align with the Black Panthers, the United Farmworkers Union, and the Association of Vietnamese Patriots in Canada. In fact, the quote at the beginning of this paper refers to "Bud Antle lettuce." Bud Antle was a Salinas Valley grower who was refused to give his workers a contract for a living wage, decent working conditions, and control over the use of pesticides. The Pentagon was a major buyer of this lettuce, and the GI movement at Fort Ord attempted to bring the boycott home. As stated in the March issue of *P.O.W.*, "We are all up against the common enemy--the military and we think it is important that as G.I.'s we see this common bond of brotherhood. The same pigs who send us to Vietnam to kill peasants and crush their fight for freedom, also exploit and control the farmworkers." Soldiers against the war in

⁷ *Every GI is a Prisoner of War*. Fort Ord, CA: March 1971

Vietnam recognized the power of collective bargaining of individual movements. These newspapers reflect an attempt at increasing the collective by supporting and relying on other movements of the time.

This tactic has been well utilized by the Army, with a different goal in mind. Whereas the anti-war movement was trying to break down barriers to increase resistance, military indoctrination de-emphasizes the individual in order to break down barriers of individuality. Arkin and Dobrofsky, in an article on military socialization and masculinity, say that “The objective of basic training is to shape the total person into being a disciplined cog within the military machine.”⁸ From the moment new recruits fall off the bus, efforts are made to mentally and physically separate the men from civilian life and train them to be interchangeable parts of a machine. How can the men be united for purposes of training yet divided by the concept of rank? Rank serves an exceedingly important purpose of providing a means for advancement and identification. It provides a framework of comparison that unites all personnel in the military. Women, commissioned officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted men are given a rank and an understanding of rank that allows them to function in a system that relies on the chain of command. Thus, it serves to provide for clear methods of advancement while separating the civilian and the military.

The claim that the GI’s were only “pawns” can be seen as a metaphor for a game of chess—the pawns being expendable, nearly worthless, and dependent on an entity for orders. This phrasing signifies displeasure at being treated less than a “man.” This begs the question, then, what is less than a man? In this situation, the author sees the “Asian peasant” as an example of what it means to be treated “less of a man.” A man appears to be a goal to be achieved rather than a standard to be taken for granted. It almost seems that the saying, “if you’re not with us, you’re against us” is the military standard for what being a man requires: a strict dichotomy with prescribed behaviors to be carried out for membership. This definition of what it takes to be a man is therefore held as an incentive for enlisted men.

It is important to remember that the identity of “men” was not solely a quality that the Army sought for its men. The opportunity to prove that one was a man was frequently a desire that inspired young men to enlist. Jess Jessop, for example, after killing a Viet Cong gunner, “...had proven his manhood, all right, with an act that had no honor attached to it and for which he would always try to atone⁹.” Jessop was a homosexual marine searching for an opportunity to become a man, and who was uncomfortable with that identity once he fulfilled its requirements. The article introducing this analysis states that “fighting well” is a precursor to being treated like a man. This served only to confuse those, like Jess Jessop, who were uncomfortable with themselves after fighting well; after becoming men. Angry GI’s saw the military as an obstacle that was using manhood as an incentive to play by its rules. As we will see in the article below, to the Army, manhood was a standard to be lived up to, not a fundamental right of those born male.

SILVER STAR, 3 OTHER AWARDS PRESENTED TO CDCEC NCO

A CDEC NCO has received the Silver Star for his actions in Vietnam along with 2 other award and a commendation from his former division commander.

Staff Sergeant James L. Ard, now a member of CDCEC’s Experimentation Battalion’s Company D, 41st Infantry, was presented the awards by Brigadier General Elmer R. Ochs, CDCEC commander.

⁸ Arkin, William and Lynne R. Dobrofsky. “Military Socialization and Masculinity.” Journal of Social Issues Vol. 34, Number 1, 1978.

⁹ Shilts, Randy. 1993. Conduct Unbecoming: Lesbians and Gays in the U.S. Military. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.

An eight year veteran, SSGT. Ard earned the nation's third highest award for valor in November of last year while a platoon leader of an aerorifle platoon in Troop C, 2nd Squadron (Airmobile), 17th Cavalry which was then on operations in Thua Thien Province. The 17th Cavalry is part of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile).

After reaching a beleaguered Ranger Team, Ssgt. Ard established a defensive perimeter and prepared the wounded for medical evacuation. When the rescue action was nearly completed his position came under intense rocket-propelled grenade and automatic weapons fire.

Although wounded during the initial contact, Ssgt. Ard refused to be evacuated, while initiating a counter-attack on the enemy position. Subjecting himself to the enemy fire, he maneuvered from position to position, directing the fire of his men until the enemy was routed.

In addition to the Silver Star, Ssgt. Ard was presented the Bronze Star for outstanding meritorious service and the Air Medal for his Vietnam service.

The Brave Eagle Coin was also presented to Ssgt. Ard by BrigGen. Ochs along with a letter of commendation from Major General John J. Hennessey, his former division commander.

The Brave Eagle Coin was given to Ssgt. Ard acknowledging his courage in action and the letter congratulated him on adding another lustrous page to the history of valor and accomplishment of the unit.

The first thing that I notice about this article is its near illegibility due to the acronyms and abbreviations contained within. This is tantamount to a language unto itself; a hierarchy of communication familiar only to Army personnel and studied historians. To understand this Army speak, a person must be familiar with the military. The intended readership of the *Panorama* was indeed those people serving at Fort Ord, those who would have the interpretation skills to make meaning out of CDCEC (Combat Developments Command Experimentation Command) and NCO (Non-Commissioned Officer) held in the title alone.

This article is rife with rank. From Ssgt. Ard to BrigGen. Ochs, rank is present for identification and as an example to the readership of the *Panorama*. This is what officers *do*, this article proclaims, and when you act in a valorous and honorable fashion, you are rewarded with Brave Eagle Coins and Silver Stars. The Army is in effect modeling Ssgt. Ard's actions in combat as an example of how a soldier should act if they aspire to become a man. Ssgt. Ard "established a defensive perimeter," "prepared the wounded," "refused to be evacuated while initiating a counter-attack," subjected himself to "enemy fire" while "directing the fire of his men." That this article was on the front page of the base newspaper only emphasizes the importance of relaying Ssgt. Ard's exemplary behavior to the Army community at large.

Ssgt. Ard's unit, with a history of valor and accomplishment, was glorified by his heroic actions. He not only earned recognition for himself, but for the larger unit which he was a part of. The absence of cowardly action, court martials, and disobedience in the *Panorama* makes it apparent that rewarding and modeling soldier behavior was of greater advantage than was reporting events perceived as contrary to the fulfillment of military objectives.

The "enemy" that Ssgt. Ard and his men routed are the Asian peasants referred to in *P.O.W.* That the Vietnamese are thought of as the enemy by the military and as peasants by members of the anti-war movement demonstrates the need to construct a people in different ways according to the goals of the institution. The Vietnamese are represented by two distinct discourses. 'Vietnamese as enemy' refuses to acknowledge the humanity of the Vietnamese as a people. They are sometimes commies, sometimes gooks, but never Thieu Dinh Ranh and Phu Lam Dong. This was an important role of the *Panorama*, dehumanizing the enemy through references that support the military's objectives in

Indochina. The military therefore selectively defined what a man was-assigning that title to domestic soldiers while denying it to members of the opposition. There are a limited number of military options available when dealing with an enemy, normally one that must be killed or “pacified.” Killing the enemy is rewarded with medals, promotions, and nightmares.

A different discourse of the Vietnamese could be ‘Vietnamese as victims.’ Within this discourse, the Vietnamese are victims of foreign meddling. That these people are popularly viewed as peasants further identifies their goal by pitting a peasant’s hoe against American B-52’s. One article states that “Our brothers and sisters in Viet Nam are not our enemies, they do not want this genocidal war any more than we do.”¹⁰ There is a rational plea to take a look at what is going on in Viet Nam and decide what is right on the basis of human rights. This discourse significantly assigns an identity to the Vietnamese, highlighting their humanity rather than their political affiliation, and referencing them in terms that Americans can understand-brothers and sisters.

Women

Mrs. Armer serves as an appropriate introduction to the role of the female in the Army of the early 1970s. Mrs. Armer’s encouraging presence during the presentation of the award to her husband shows how the wife of a private should behave. In fact, marriage was encouraged by the military and sold to the men as an opportunity to leave the barracks and “...ration separately, which means eating and sleeping at home nearby¹¹.” From this it seems that the role of a wife was to raise the morale of her soldier husband. Mrs. Armer was not the only representative of a female discourse that centered on the husband and his role in the military. Consider the article below from the *Fort Ord Panorama* from March 19, 1971:

Ann (Mrs. Richard) McDivitt receives a silver tray as a memento for being named “Mrs. Lieutenant” at Ft. Ord. The nominee of Medical Activities Wives Club, she was chosen as representing the ideal wife for a young Army officer.

Mrs. McDivitt was the recipient of an award defining the discursal elements of what the wife of an officer should be. The presenters of this award had a real interest in bestowing this honor on the young wife of Lieutenant McDivitt. This sanctioned honor served as a beacon of what it meant to be the wife of an officer. The actual qualities that lend themselves to this position is subject to conjecture, but it is certain that they align themselves with military objectives. That is, acknowledging the wives of the officers legitimized the position that other women in similar positions held. This position was largely based on the relationship that the wives had with the military through their husbands. There were separate organizations for the officers’ wives and the enlisted men’s wives. Their membership in these organizations largely depended on the status of the husband. This relationship with the husband is only clarified by the following example from the same issue of the *Panorama*:

The new officers of the Ft. Ord Officers Wives Club are (from left) Mrs. Richard F. Ayres, Jr., corresponding secretary; Mrs. Franklin D. Luksik, second vice-president; Mrs. James F. Fulton, president; Mrs. Louis A. Caraplis, vice-president; Mrs. Richard J. Morgan, recording secretary; and Mrs. Richard L. Murningham, treasurer.

¹⁰ Every GI is a Prisoner of War. Fort Ord, CA: May 1971.

¹¹ Levy, Alan, Bernard Krishner, and James Cox. 1966. Draftee’s Confidential Guide. Signet Books

That wives adopt the surname of their husbands is a common expression of an accepted discourse on marriage present in Western “civilization.” What is intriguing is the adoption of the entire name of the husband, if even only for identification purposes. Identified by the nomenclature of their husbands, belonging to an organization dependent on the husband and his role in the military, it seems that wives relied on their husbands for their identity.

Discourses are meaningful not only for what they include, but for what they exclude, as well. A discourse on marriage that represents heterosexuality as something to be rewarded speaks volumes about what is to be punished: namely, behaviors that are seen foreign to the norm. There are no mentions of celebratory homosexual couples or Fort Ord Officers Life-Partner Clubs. This is a significant indication of rewards and punishments as dictated by dominant discourses that these characters interacted with on a daily basis. In fact, this case is by no means solely a historical phenomenon—just look at Proposition 22, the anti-gay initiative that recently passed in California.

During the early 1970s, women’s liberation was a social movement that, among other things, “...demanded that men change—that men cease abusing, raping, and battering women, that men begin to share in the daily chores around the household, and that they accept that women were working right alongside them.”¹² At protests, some women could be found burning bras and tossing make-up and other feminine products into trash cans. This struggle found slight recognition in anti-war newspapers of the time. In the April 1971 issue of *Prisoner of War*, in an article called “Drill Sergeant, Tell Me I’m a Man,” it is written that:

In the face of sexually-stereotyped behavior, the services play a game of bluffing. The picture they convey to soldiers is that military life will make them he-men. The facts are that it usually makes them she-men. The company clerk is only a secretary to his boss, despite military trimmings on his uniform. The sailor’s main work is domestic, consisting of mopping, cooking, cleaning and other forms of housework, which on the outside is “womens’ work.”

Although this article explicitly disagrees with the military’s notion of what makes a man, it relies on a sexist argument to make it work. This again is a reminder that the underground newspapers and the *Panorama* were operating within the same framework—in this situation, a discourse on femininity that required a division of labor among what was considered “work” for men and women. This article’s anger was directed toward the fact that the military was taking advantage of the concept that “warriorhood is associated with manhood.” In order to nullify this argument, the author of this paper showed that the work the military was trying to pass off as “manly” was in fact work suitable for a woman. In the June 1971 issue of *P.O.W.*, however, it is stated that “Women R Not Chicks! Women are Our Sisters in the Struggle” The August 1971 issue of *P.O.W.* features an article by Angela Davis, writing from the Marin County Jail. In these contexts, a discourse on women appears that seems unsurprising coming from a predominantly male institution. This is a discourse of convenience, in that women’s issues are taken to widen the support for the anti-war movement whenever deemed suitable by the authors. In other words, when arguments can be made in way that reflects the contribution and struggle of women, they will. Alternately, when arguments require working within a discourse of women as sub-male, that will be acceptable, too.

Males and Amerika

¹² Kimmel, Michael. 1996. Manhood in America: A Cultural History. New York, NY: The Free Press.

For many GI's, the choice between fighting a ground war on the front lines or joining the anti-war movement was less than appealing. For someone seeking the identity of a "man," there were few options available free of the military. A mother wrote to her son who had recently deserted: "You really had us proud of you and now you ask to be referred to as a man. You must be kidding. A man is not a sniveling coward who has to run away from any form of authority of discipline just because it is temporarily inconvenient." This mother is speaking from and creating a discourse on gender exclusionary terms. Her son unfortunately falls short of membership in the "man" club; apparently it is based on merit rather than biology. This principle, in which one must earn the right to call himself a man, is central to the military concept of gender. "The idea is to shear the recruit of any personal identity except for remnants that can be refashioned toward making him an interchangeable component in a massive fighting machine," writes Randy Shilts, "This is a sensible and even necessary goal of introductory military training. The lessons on manhood, however, focus less on creating what the Army wanted than on defining what the Army did not want. This is why calling recruits faggots, sissies, pussies, and girls had been a time-honored stratagem for drill instructors throughout the armed forces. The context was clear: There was not much worse you could call a man¹³." If becoming a man truly required trial by fire, how could the disgruntled male authors of the anti-war movement call themselves men?

These advocates of social change conceptualized "male" in different terms than did their military counterparts. Instead of seeing man as a goal to be reached by a process, it was rather constructed as a platform that men inherently stand on. Processes could lead to a fall, so that only by conscious action did one give up their claim to manhood. For example, the men in the anti-war movement gleefully refer to officers and career military personnel as "pigs." This distinction is clearly less than human, a status achieved by deliberate involvement in an objectionable institution involved in an objectionable war. These "lifers" and "brass" are interestingly dehumanized just as they dehumanize the Vietnamese peasants with archaic references to the "enemy." It becomes apparent at this time that the institutionalized military and the anti-war movement were struggling through a give and take playing largely within the same framework. The same tactics and strategies used by both were therefore used with varying degrees of efficacy depending on the situation and the institution.

Both factions recognized the importance of barriers, which I have already explained. Conceptualizing the enemy is an important strategy used by both; creating pigs and enemies out of people. The important difference between the two movements is that the military had institutional power with which to offer incentives and jail sentences. The GI anti-war movement operated and resisted under the auspices of an institution that wielded authority and legitimacy. This was a power struggle that largely centered around truth: why was the United States involved in Viet Nam? What did being a man entail? What was the connection between the Indochina war and racism and poverty in "Amerika?" The anti-war movement was largely a struggle concerning language. Who had the power to define what is considered "true," as well as legitimizing the body of concepts and ideas that constituted such terms as "enemy," "man," and "woman." This is a struggle that continues today, largely fought on Mountain Dew drenched battlefields, that is, multi-national corporations attempting to introduce physical objects into dominant discourses.

Present Day Implications

The Fort Ord main gate was a popular site for protesters trying to shut down the military complex. Today, rather than a target for protesters, Fort Ord serves as a staging

¹³ Shilts, Randy. 1993. Conduct Unbecoming: Lesbians and Gays in the U.S. Military. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

point for demonstrations against the World Trade Organization in Seattle or the World Bank in San Francisco. Once a fort the size of San Francisco, today Ord has become a California State University. Although the function has changed from preparing men to go to war to preparing people for the 21st century, the basic function of indoctrination remains the same. The methods and justification have changed, but have discourses on gender? First of all, a discourse requires change, interpretation, and interaction. It is a function of language that is never permanent, and even this inquiry has slightly altered the nature of gender discourses of Fort Ord. The education (indoctrination) that present day students receive is different for all students, and thus the discourses that they interact with and manipulate vary infinitely. The discourses themselves are not specifically important, and the methods that we interact with them are a capstone research project in themselves. Suffice it to say, then, that Fort Ord has, does, and will impart discursive frameworks upon its population as much as a geographic location can. This is another connection that I would investigate further if I had the time, how geography and gender discourse are inter-related.

What has changed, then, over the years, are the media of communication and methods of learning that are used by dominant power structures to retain their behind-the-scenes influence. Praxis and service learning introduce students to alternate discourses of race, gender, and class that may be absent from MTV and www.winamilliondollars.com. Communication and methods of learning have been used to impart dominant discourses on actors long before the presence of the military on the Monterey peninsula. It is doubtful that discourses on gender deemed acceptable by mainstream society are any less dependent on the structure that supports them than they have ever been. But it is also important to remember that discourses do not exist in a vacuum—they require language, which requires social interaction. This interaction necessarily has a time and a place, both of which affect available and acceptable discourse. The struggle for truth that discourse requires is not a dated one. It is still present in our language and symbolic of the fact that resistance will exist in perpetuity, only the forms and goals which represent a resistance will be altered.

What it means to be a male has taken on a different struggle now, during a peacetime volunteer army, than it did in the 1970s during a war in Viet Nam while the draft was actively drafting and inducing men to enlist. Although alternate gender discourses exist, the way in which those gender struggles present and hide themselves in everyday life has not.

Gender Benders

Being male in the Viet Nam era military meant that you had earned that title. Whether that goal was reached through killing gooks, making it through basic training, accepting discipline, fighting in Indochina, or consuming Bud Antle lettuce, the discourse of manhood present in authorized military publications held this title to be something to be won and defended. Frequent articles in the *Panorama* detailing acts of valor and heroism further the notion that being a man is more what you do than who you are.

This made the ambitious recruit a candidate for advancement, as well as an opportunity for the Army to offer something generally accepted as true: that the Army would make you a man. Indeed, the recruiting slogan for the United States Marines during the early 1970s was quite simple: “The Marine Corps Builds Men.”

Femininity had little use to the military in and of itself. Women who did not serve in the Women’s Army Corp (WAC) served the Army indirectly by providing for the morale of the men. The discourse of females as companions values the qualities that make a “good” wife—Mrs. Armer’s encouragement and Mrs. McDivitt’s potential. Indeed, enlisted men were encouraged to be married and discouraged from participating in homosexual activities. There was therefore a clear set of options available for enlisted men regarding women: relationships with them or relationships with no one.

The dominant discourse of manhood present in the anti-war newspapers that I have analyzed is one of autonomy. Validation was not required from a sanctioned institution to

which they did not belong. Rather, the anti-war movement attempted to create a legitimate institution themselves, in order to perform gender in a way that did not serve the best interests of the military. For example, the April 1971 issue of *P.O.W.* features a press release explaining that official permission, in the form of an application submitted to the Fort Ord Provost Marshall's office, had been sought to distribute the paper on base. The official reply to this request was printed in the July 1971 issue of *P.O.W.* This reply denied the permission requested claiming that "...P.O.W. presents a clear danger to the loyalty, discipline, and morale of the troops at Fort Ord." As an officially unrecognized entity operating around Fort Ord, the anti-war movement nevertheless attempted to use its power to publicize a discourse on gender that disappeared when you drove in the main gate.

To be able to claim oneself as a man followed closer along biological lines than one of achievement. As one paper put it, "Actually, men are born and the notion of building them is fantasy."¹⁴ Within this discourse of maleness is seen as a right to be claimed rather than earned. There is anger at being refused the identity of man and the burdens and privileges that come with it. This anger is directed primarily at the military, primarily the brass/lifers/pigs that are most recruits' first and most abundant for of discipline. Men seeking a gender discourse of autonomy resent the Army's power to legitimize maleness and seek the right to have their claims acknowledged.

The dominant gender discourse on femaleness in these anti-war newspapers is one of utility. When women can be used to make a point, they are. This point may further the anti-war movement at the cost of women's liberation. This ambiguous stance on what constitutes a woman was prevalent in the anti-war movement. Some male GI dissenters felt that since they were facing jail, the least a woman involved in the movement could do was sleep with him.¹⁵ Not surprisingly, in a predominantly male institution fighting to end the war in Viet Nam, women's issues took a backseat to the harsh realities of serving in a wartime military.

This analysis focused primarily on gender discourses present in Viet Nam era publications serving Fort Ord and the surrounding communities. The data used is representative of publications with drastically different political origins. An inquiry into commercial newspapers would be forthcoming in a future analysis. This would include looking at the Monterey County Herald, the Californian, and other nearby newspapers. This would increase the generalizability of my findings by the inclusion of mainstream media in my analyses.

Gender is but one issue that was contested through the media at Fort Ord during the Viet Nam war. Although there were no correct accounts of what constituted "male" and "female," some accounts were more correct than others. Those sanctioned with institutional power were granted legitimacy over claims made by groups attempting to claim power for themselves. This give-and-take regarding meaning is an ongoing process that we engage in on a daily basis. From power and resistance and its relationship with language, to the study of gender discourse through Viet Nam era publications, is to study a phenomenon at the crossroads of controversy. As Foucault would say, "There are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised; resistance to power does not have to come from elsewhere to be real, nor is it inexorably frustrated through being the compatriot of power. It exists all the more by being in the same place as power; hence, like power, resistance is multiple and can be integrated in global strategies."¹⁶

The physical point where relations of power and resistances were exercised was Fort Ord, California in the early 1970s. The study of gender discourse as conveyed by language is an exercise in power relations. Through these power relations, identities were claimed,

¹⁴ Every GI is a Prisoner of War. Fort Ord, CA: April 1971.

¹⁵ Shenk, Gerald, CSUMB Professor and Former Anti-War Protestor. February 24, 2000. Building 82.

¹⁶ Foucault, Michel. 1980. Power/Knowledge. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

denied, and rebuilt for officers, soldiers, their wives and families, and protesters.

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