

## **SPRING 2014 DHA Newsletter**

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**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**  
**Penny L. Richards**



**WELCOME!**

A few weeks ago, there was a Civil Rights Summit at the LBJ Presidential Library in Austin TX, marking the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act. The four living presidents attended, which marks any event as major. Panels at the event considered the legacy of the civil rights movement, including in music, in sports, in gay marriage, in immigration, in education, in social justice. And until a few days before the event, there was no mention of disability rights as a civil rights movement. When this omission was pointed out, by the [National Council on Disability](#) among others, the program committee quickly added Lex Frieden to the social justice panel, and rightly so. But why didn't they think to include someone to talk about disability rights sooner?

Disability historians, when this sort of thing happens, we know there's plenty of work to be done. Especially as the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act approaches, remember that, even in civil rights circles, the story of disability rights is still too often unfamiliar or misunderstood.

**Have you renewed your DHA membership for 2014? Please consider doing that right now, while you're enjoying the newsletter, it won't take but a moment. And if you already have your membership, perhaps make a surprise gift to a colleague or student?**

<http://www.dishist.org/join.htm>

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **DHA Outstanding Book Award**

The Disability History Association promotes the relevance of disability to broader historical enquiry and facilitates research, conference travel, and publication for scholars engaged in any field of disability history.

The Disability History Association is excited to announce its 3rd Annual Outstanding Publication Award. The award alternates between books and peer-reviewed articles or book chapters. In 2014 the award committee will accept book submissions. The amount of the award is \$600.

The date for submissions has passed. Disability History Association board will announce the recipient of the DHA Outstanding Publication Award in September 2014.

*(Michael Rembis)*

### ***Disability Histories*: a new book series from the University of Illinois Press**

The University of Illinois Press is thrilled to announce the creation of *Disability Histories*. This new book series seeks scholarship that explores the lived experiences of individuals and groups from a broad range of societies, cultures, time periods, and geographic locations, who either identified as disabled or were considered by the dominant culture to be disabled. Co-editors Kim Nielsen and Michael Rembis eagerly invite submissions.

We conceive of disability and disabled experiences broadly and seek to include scholarship that spans a range of embodiments, including the emerging field of mad studies. We are especially interested in scholarship that not only employs innovative approaches to using disability—in constant interaction with systems of race, class, gender, and sexuality—as an analytical tool to deepen our understanding of larger power relations, ideologies, and institutions, but also engages in meaningful dialogue with other subdisciplines within history, such as legal and political histories, social histories, histories of technology, science, and medicine, histories of the body and sexuality, and histories of the development of capitalism and imperialism. Comparative, cross-cultural, and transnational submissions by both junior and more seasoned scholars are encouraged.

Interested scholars are invited to contact series co-editors Kim E. Nielsen ([kim.nielsen2@utoledo.edu](mailto:kim.nielsen2@utoledo.edu)) and Michael A. Rembis ([marembis@buffalo.edu](mailto:marembis@buffalo.edu)). Series submissions should include: a 2 page vita and a 5-10 page book synopsis that includes a brief chapter outline, a discussion of competing books and likely audiences, and a discussion of how the project advances the aims of the series.

*(Kim Nielsen)*

## **New Site on the History of Intellectual/Developmental/Learning Disability Launched**

<http://www.historyoflearningdisability.com>

This new site offers a range of resources as well as principles, e-texts and discussion forums on the often neglected area of the history of learning disability, intellectual disability or developmental disability. Site authors Chris Goodey, Patrick McDonagh, Lynn Rose, Murray Simpson and Tim Stainton are recognized pioneers in this small but growing area of research. While there is much for academics on the site, we are also committed to ensuring the lessons of history are applied in real world contexts and in support of furthering inclusion, ordinary lives and citizenship.

*(Christopher Goodey)*

## **VSA 40th and ADA 25th Anniversary Festivities (July 2015, Washington DC)**

In July 2015, the Smithsonian Institution and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts present a month-long series of collaborative events marking VSA's 40th Anniversary and the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA's 25th Anniversary is a significant milestone in the disability and civil rights movements. The VSA 40th Anniversary honors artists living with disabilities and the contributions of Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith. Combining these two anniversaries highlights America's disability experience. Programming will be announced at a later date.

## **National Library of Ireland and Little Museum of Dublin Acquire Christy Brown Archive**

A press release from the National Library of Ireland, from 19 March 2014:

<http://www.nli.ie/en/list/latest-news.aspx?article=d42b5d5b-dc65-4657-82ac-af310a763794>

The [National Library of Ireland \(NLI\)](#) has today acquired an archive of material relating to the work of the Irish writer and painter Christy Brown. The Library purchased the archive jointly with the [Little Museum of Dublin](#). The acquisition was made possible through financial support provided by an Irish company, Direct Medical.

Commenting today, Catherine Fahy, Acting Director of the NLI, said: "We are thrilled that this acquisition was made possible through collaboration with the Little Museum of Dublin and the generosity of Direct Medical. Christy Brown was one of the most extraordinary creative forces to emerge in Ireland during the 20th Century. This archive includes very significant correspondence and writings, as well as previously unseen sketches, paintings and unpublished poems."

Ms. Fahy said the National Library of Ireland would preserve and store the archive, and that elements of it would be incorporated into exhibitions at the Little Museum of Dublin.

Trevor White, Director of the Little Museum of Dublin, said: “We are very excited about this partnership with the National Library of Ireland, and very grateful to the Library and to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for recognising the importance of bringing this remarkable collection back home to Dublin.”

## **CFP: French and Francophone World Disability Studies**

Guest editors: Tammy Berberi and Christian Flaugh

With this special issue of the *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*, editors wish to explore both long-standing and contemporary contributions to disability studies in the humanities from French-language world regions. In essays spanning the French Enlightenment and colonial expansion to the present, this issue seeks to reevaluate the impact of French and Francophone world thought on disability studies and the influence that questions of bodily abilities have had on intellectual and philosophical transformations. It aspires to restore foundational disability studies texts to the cultural and theoretical contexts that gave rise to them as well as to explore new potential revealed by this remapping. This issue will provide a means for articulating the field of French and Francophone world disability studies as it situates it in a global geography and humanity of disability studies. It will also examine the transnational and trans-regional intersections between disability studies broadly conceived, continental French studies, and Francophone world studies.

Essays on any aspect of French and Francophone world disability studies will be considered, but might usefully explore:

- what it means to “be,” to live, or to write from a disabled perspective
- the role of disability in shaping its intellectual histories
- the ways these histories and cultural traditions have informed each other
- disability activism past and present
- notions of disability—or disability studies—and how these have brought about shifts in the modes and motivations of representation in aesthetics, literature, cinema, performance, or the arts
- the impact of disability in canonical texts written in French
- disabling patterns and practices of exploitation and how these intersect with disability
- emerging scholarship written in French
- new subjectivities and shifts in ethical paradigms brought about by disability activism and disability studies

JLCDS is an English-language journal. While initial abstracts are welcome in either

French or English, full submissions accepted for publication must be submitted in English.

Key dates:

June 1, 2014: prospective authors submit brief proposals (1-2 pp.) and a one-page curriculum vitae to guest editors

October 1, 2014: prospective authors notified of proposal status

April 1, 2015: final versions of selected essays due to editors

June 1, 2015: Decisions and revisions on submissions sent to finalists

August 1, 2015: Final essays due

Questions may be directed to guest editors: [berberit@morris.umn.edu](mailto:berberit@morris.umn.edu) and [cflaugh@buffalo.edu](mailto:cflaugh@buffalo.edu)

*(Michael Woods)*

## **Reading Blindness in the Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth-Century Archive**

The Birkbeck Forum for Nineteenth-Century Studies opened this year with a special roundtable event exploring the ways in which new technologies created new communities of blind and partially-sighted readers in nineteenth and early-twentieth century France and Britain. Through short position papers, panelists explored questions of representation and inclusion, considering how extensively blind peoples' changing experience of reading practices and materials in this period are documented in the archive. The panel also addressed the issue of accessibility, examining how the format of material relating to the history of blindness and literature might perpetuate a politics of exclusion for contemporary partially-sighted readers and researchers.

Audio of each panelist's presentation is available at this link:

[http://www.bbk.ac.uk/english/our-research/research\\_cnscs/our-events/past-events/birkbeck-forum-for-nineteenth-century-studies-past-events/birkbeck-forum-for-nineteenth-century-studies-event-reports-1/birkbeck-forum-for-nineteenth-century-studies-reading-blindness-tuesday-8-october-2013](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/english/our-research/research_cnscs/our-events/past-events/birkbeck-forum-for-nineteenth-century-studies-past-events/birkbeck-forum-for-nineteenth-century-studies-event-reports-1/birkbeck-forum-for-nineteenth-century-studies-reading-blindness-tuesday-8-october-2013)

### **Hannah Thompson (RHUL): 'Blindness, Representation, and Accessibility: a French Perspective'**

This paper discusses what the holdings of the bibliothèque patrimoniale Valentine Haüy and the musée Valentin Haüy in Paris tell us about nineteenth-century representations of blindness and the choices made about the subject-matter of embossed literature. Whilst the embossed books produced in Paris are mostly educational, instructional or scientific in nature, the print writings about the blind collected by Haüy are more religious or sentimental. Dr Thompson will use an overview of her work with these archives to explore questions of accessibility as well as addressing the reasons behind the differences between books produced for the blind and books produced for the sighted. [Dr Hannah Thompson](#) is Senior Lecturer in French at Royal Holloway, University of London. She is the author of the popular blog [Blind Spot](#) and is currently writing a book on representation of blindness in French literature.

**Heather Tilley (Birkbeck): 'Who is Harriet Curry? Locating the First Communities of Finger Readers in the Nineteenth Century'**

Inscribed in ink at the front of the Royal National Institute for Blind People's copy of an 1837 edition of St John's Gospel is the name 'Harriet Curry.' At the back, a further handwritten note details the circumstances of the presentation of this bible, embossed in Lucas type, to Harriet Curry. But who was Harriet Curry? How did she feel about the gift of this book; how easy was it for her to read Lucas's newly invented embossed system, based on shorthand symbols; and what pleasure or instruction did she gain from it? In this short paper, I use Harriet Curry's bible as a prompt to explore the difficulties of locating individual readers and reader responses from the archival record of the first communities of tactile readers in the nineteenth century. [Dr Heather Tilley](#) is a British Academy postdoctoral fellow in the Department of English and Humanities, Birkbeck. She is curator of the exhibition [Touching the Book: Embossed Literature for Blind People in the Nineteenth Century](#) and has recently finished the manuscript of her book *Blindness and Writing: Wordsworth to Gissing*.

**Matthew Rubery (QMUL): 'Talking Books and Speechless Readers'**

Britain's Talking Book Library opened on August 1, 1935. The service was established to provide gramophone recordings of printed books to blinded veterans of the First World War and other civilians with visual disabilities. Advocacy groups hailed the arrival of the talking books as the most important development for blind readers since the invention of braille. Drawing on archival material held by the Royal National Institute for Blind People and Blind Veterans UK, this presentation documents the talking book's impact on the first generation of readers to listen to recorded books in the 1930s and 1940s. [Dr Matthew Rubery](#) is Reader in Nineteenth-Century Literature at Queen Mary, University of London. Author of *The Novelty of Newspapers: Victorian Fiction after the Invention of the News* (Oxford, 2009), he is currently completing a monograph titled *The Untold Story of the Talking Book*, a history of recorded literature since Edison's invention of the phonograph in 1877.

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

23 May 2014

### **Historical Perspectives on Loss, Grief and Pain**

Edinburgh (UK)

An interdisciplinary workshop organised and funded by the School of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of Edinburgh; this one-day workshop aims to explore perspectives on emotions, taking as its starting point 'loss'—as an historical fact and emotional response— and exploring the perceptions, depictions and constructions of responses to it.

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/history-classics-archaeology/news-events/events/historical-perspectives-workshop>

11-14 June 2014

### **Society for Disability Studies**

Minneapolis, Minnesota

The theme for the 27th annual meeting of SDS is “Disability (and) Sustainability.” The Deadline for submissions has passed. For more information:

<http://www.disstudies.org>

24-25 July 2014

### **Sound, Memory, and the Senses**

Melbourne, Australia

This two-day conference will explore the possibilities and limits for the Senses as object of study. The deadline for submissions has passed. For more information:

<http://www.h-net.org/announce/show.cgi?ID=206238>

18-19 September 2014

### **Disability, Prostheses, and Patenting**

University of Leeds (UK)

“This two-day workshop will investigate patenting cultures with particular regard to disability & prostheses.”

Deadline for submissions has passed. For more information:

<http://www.rethinkingpatentcultures.com/>

18-19 September 2014

### **31st Annual American Association for the History of Nursing Conference**

Storrs & Hartford CT

Conference website: <http://www.aahn.org>

2-4 October 2014

### **Gloom Goes Global: Towards a Transcultural History of Melancholy since 1850**

University of Heidelberg, Germany

This interdisciplinary conference focuses on the study of melancholy as a historical-anthropological phenomenon and scientific medical concept from a transcultural perspective.

<http://historypsychiatry.com/2014/03/03/call-for-papers-gloom-goes-global-towards-a-transcultural-history-of-melancholy-since-1850/>

14-15 November 2014

### **The Legacy of World War I**

Philadelphia PA

Conference website: <http://www.chc.edu/worldwar1/>

DHA members who attend any of the above conferences are invited to write a report on the proceedings, for a future issue of this newsletter.



## **Conference Report: American Society for Legal History**

(November 7-10, 2013, Miami, Florida)

### **Lauren MacIvor Thompson**

Current disability scholarship is well aware of its close linkages with the law; my own work puts a twist on these connections by throwing in the problem of gender. Historically, women have been considered mentally and physically disabled by the very nature of their bodily make-up. The presumption of women's inherent mental disability undergirded early laws of coverture and property, but even after these laws changed in the late nineteenth century, the legal status of women continued to be subject to medical rationalizations for discrimination. Part of my dissertation project asks how medicine and eugenic theory interacted with ideas about women and the law of domestic relations – matters of marriage, divorce, child custody and involuntary commitment. I am immensely grateful to the Disability History Association for helping to fund my travel to the 2013 meeting of American Society for Legal History (which took place in Miami, FL November 7-10, 2013), to further explore these topics.

The Friday keynote address by the University of Michigan's Rebecca J. Scott formed an ideal foundation for my thinking on the relationship between women, legal disability and citizenship, especially if that relationship was complicated by the status of being a free black before the Civil War. In her talk, "Social Facts and Legal Fictions: Eulalie Oliveau and the Right of Property in Persons," Scott laid out for the audience the complex relationships between whites, free, and enslaved blacks in antebellum Louisiana. She told the story of Eulalie Oliveau, an enslaved woman who lived free for decades, having been given permission by her owners to marry and move in with her husband, away from the plantation where she was born. After her original owners died, their relatives tried to retake possession of Eulalie and her children and sell them, relying on the state's recognition of their permanent legal status as slaves, rather than the prescriptive right to freedom that Eulalie's public life would have otherwise given. Scott explained how Eulalie's civil unfreedom continued to exist, even before anybody exercised a property claim over her person. The talk made me think broadly about my own work and the implications for women in marriage, whose own legal fiction of "coverture" created a persistent status of non-citizenship for all women.

Wonderful panels throughout all three days of the conference enriched and complicated these implications further. Scholars Rena Lauer and Alison Lefkowitz in their panel, "Women, Law and Marital Crisis" presented a broad assessment – temporally, geographically, and thematically - of how women utilized the court system to gain redress for marital grievances, even as marriage and divorce laws changed radically. Lauer's paper examined Jewish women and marital lawsuits in Venetian Crete, focusing on how the politics and social structure present in the late medieval colony encouraged Jewish women to turn away from the rabbinical courts and utilize the secular courts to demand alimony, clothing allowances or adjudicate contractual battles. Lauer pointed out this system helped to make Jewish women active legal actors in ways that the rabbinic court system could not. Similarly, Lefkowitz's paper dealt with women and marriage but in a far different setting – in Illinois in the late 1960s and early 1970s. She argued that a virtual revolution in marriage took place during this period, ironically, not only driven by feminists but also by men's rights groups who protested the punishing nature of alimony in divorce settlements and the inherent unfairness of the "home-maker breadwinner model" that presumed all men worked while all women stayed at home. Lefkowitz proposed that this revolution was also in part carried about by legislatures and activist courts and judges, who replaced older alimony and divorce laws that had generally provided for more financial support of women, with "no-fault divorce" - a gender-neutral set of laws governing the distribution of

property and earnings at the end of the marriage. Lefkowitz exposed in her paper the complex outcomes of these transformations – by legally increasing ex-wives’ financial responsibility, it often forced homemakers to both work a job, and do the bulk of household labor. While housework began to have monetary value in divorce court settlements, wages for women’s work remained low across the board. Ironically, both feminists and men’s rights groups changed divorce laws in this period, destroying the “breadwinner-homemaker model” but whether gender equity was gained, as Lefkowitz concluded, was debatable. Both Lauer and Lefkowitz’s analyses consider the myriad ways in which the rules surrounding female legal personhood were consciously constructed and considered by the court system in different times and places. As these scholars show, the relationship between the law and property distribution was gendered in particular ways.

Presenter Allison Tait also addressed this last point in a fascinating paper entitled “Married Women Making Wills: The Right to Devise Separate Property in Early Modern England” on the panel “Inheritance Law and Legal Actors in England and America.” Speaking on the topic of how married women could avoid the strictures of coverture by creating separate estates before marriage – made for their “sole and separate use,” (and not available to their husbands or their husbands’ creditors!), Tait outlined how the traditional perception of these estates as a way to protect family wealth also helped to entrench women as capable legal actors, and marked a transformation in the way society viewed women in marriage – as individuals with separate legal and personal interests. She argued that the legal remedy of the separate estate was a marker for the division in gender roles that would characterize the transformation from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and that women identified themselves as part of the process of family wealth-gathering when utilizing these laws.

Yet the centrality of the institution of marriage continues to impact women’s legal status in multiple ways, even in the modern United States, as Kristin Collins, Rebecca Rix, and Serena Mayeri discussed on a panel titled “Entitling Marriage, Contesting the Family.” Even as women gained more legal rights and full citizenship status, marriage law continued to shape the courts response throughout the twentieth century to other issues including labor, immigration, federal entitlements and illegitimacy in ways that were harmful to women, children and non-white families. As panel chair Linda Kerber pointed out, the law’s responses reinforced the determination of the state to protect “the family” as they knew it.

Attending this conference was not only invaluable for expanding my understanding of the laws of coverture, marriage, divorce and alimony, but I also made connections with other scholars and graduate students that will prove to be useful for future collaborative projects. Many thanks again to the DHA for their financial help in facilitating this very productive trip to Miami.

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Lauren MacIvor Thompson is a Ph.D. Candidate at Georgia State University (Atlanta, Georgia).

## Casebooks, Photographs, and Institutional Intimacy

Stef Eastoe

I have recently been trawling through the mammoth, dusty, fragile patient casebooks of Caterham. I have numerous images of them saved on my pc, but missed having the dirt, the grime, and the feeling of the pages under my fingers. I also found that flipping through the pages physically allowed me to see what was contained within the casebooks beyond that of brief notes as to their health, qualitative information which is hidden, or less evident when I scroll through them on my computer screen.

So there I was, sat in the archive room looking at the casebooks, items that are so very familiar to me after several years of using them, physically and digitally. However, on this occasion I was being purposely unfamiliar with them, wanting to rediscover them, and look at them as physical objects, as cultural products, beyond them being institutional entities and forms of administrative activity.

I wanted to think about them as objects that were interacted with in a number of ways, that were receptacles of snippets of information of the patients, both administrative, qualitative and quantitative. I could imagine the overworked medical officer bent over the casebook, as I was, hastily writing his notes, as I was more laboriously noting his notes. This tactile interaction made me realize, more acutely than I sometime remember to do so, that the casebooks are my only connection with some of the people who in many cases remain voiceless and hidden. The casebooks remain, in many cases, the only record of the patient's life, an existence that is only recorded on the national registers, little more than an entry in the decennial census, or another name alongside the numerous others recorded in the Birth Deaths and Marriage lists.

These casebooks were dealt with regularly, possibly weekly or monthly, though judging by the Commissioners In Lunacy complaints that the patient documents were not very well kept at the asylum, it was not daily! Caterham had a medical team of three men, the Medical Superintendent and two Medical Assistants, to administer and care for 2,000 patients, a third of which at any one time were resident in the asylum's infirmaries. There was little change in the medical staff, and correspondingly little changes in the handwriting, which at times was easy to read, and towards the end of the century fell afoul of the doctors handwriting and the script becomes almost unintelligible.

Patient casebooks reveal a number of examples, insights, and illustrations of how patients were classified, diagnosed and treated within the asylum. However, wider and deeper reading of the casebooks can reveal how patients were regarded in the asylum by the staff themselves, as humans, as persons, as individuals. References to their character, their behaviour, and even descriptions of their death give rise to the emotional connections and aspects of the asylum. They also provide a hint at the relationship between the doctors and the patients, both of whom were to some degree long-stay residents of the asylum. Caterham's medical staff worked at the asylum for significantly lengthy periods, Dr Elliot joined the institution in 1870 as an assistant

medical officer, before succeeding Dr Adams, the first Medical Superintendent, in 1880. Dr Elliot remained in post for 20 years until his retirement in 1900. During both Dr Adams and Dr Elliot's time at the asylum they would have become familiar with patients, some of whom they were seeing daily or weekly, some of whom would have assisted in their offices, or within their homes, as maids and servants.

The intimacy that could develop between the staff and the patients is hinted at in the patient photographs that were pasted into the patient casebooks. Dr Adams requested that the Management Committee provide him funds to purchase photographic equipment in 1873. His request was granted, along with one for the purchase of meteorological observation equipment. In that year Dr Adams set up his photographic studio and processing room, as well as a mini weather station. Along with recording the weather, Dr Adams, and his replacements, visually recorded the patients in a variety of ways.

As with many nineteenth century institutions, there are few images of the internal world of the asylum. That is what makes the photographs contained within the patient casebooks so very interesting, and dare I say valuable on a number of levels. Firstly, the images were not for identification purposes, namely as not all patients were photographed, and not all casebook entries have a photograph attached.

Patients were photographed in a variety of poses, and in a variety of settings. Some were photographed inside the asylum, some were photographed outside the asylum building, in the vast asylum grounds. Some patients stare straight at the camera, others look away, some are sitting, others are leaning against a prop, some with a theatrical backdrop, some against a plain wall. There is no uniformity or universality to the images.

In one photograph a female patient, classified as chronic maniac, has a black and white cat perched on her lap. Both the patient and the cat look content, the patient is wearing the somewhat customary asylum shawl draped around her shoulders, the cat is reposed across her knees. In the numerous committee minutes, annual reports and official documents that make up the archive of Caterham I have never once found a reference to the cat.

It is the photograph of Emma Emmerson, one of the earlier admissions to the asylum that I found myself taken aback. Emma was 50 years old when she came to the asylum. The casebook within which I found her photograph begins in 1885, and the comments which circle and butt up to her photograph are dated 1892, so conceivably Emma was in her 70s when the image was taken. She sits in a chair, a large shawl is draped around her shoulders, and she has an elaborate cap upon her head. The quality of the image is poor, and due to age is faded, so it is difficult to tell if her eyes are open, or are heavy hooded. Emma appears to have a smile, or an attempt at a smile on her face, and what I found most arresting was the doll she was cradling in her arms.

The doll is dressed in a bonnet, and appears to be swaddled, but due to the quality of the image it is hard to tell. She also appears to have a small posy of flowers.

My reaction to the photograph then, and now reflecting on it, remains to be highly emotional. There are a number of emotional and intimate hints in the image, Emma's headwear firstly appears to be an attempt to make her look nice. This may have been done by the patient herself, or by the attendants and nurses. Clothing was highly regulated at the asylum, with the dress of the patients controlled by the asylum staff, and spare items were not left lying around, for fear of destruction, loss, or misuse. The photographs provide some insight and evidence of the agency of patients, namely that they were able to adapt, adjust and alter clothing to meet their tastes, choices, and desires, be it within tight constraints.

The fact that there was the opportunity for Emma to have a piece of head wear that was not a simple cloth cap gives rise to a number of interactions and activities that were taking place in the asylum, that are not always mentioned in the reports or casebook notes. In 1885 Emma collapsed, she recovered and no sign of paralysis, a major concern of the Medical Staff, was found. Emma was sent to the infirmary ward to recuperate, and the next case book note is revealing 'Much better, but [it is] strange for her [to be] inclined to be quiet in bed'. On her admission notes Emma was described as talking in a 'garrulous' manner, delusional and 'fancies we have sent for her to play the piano'. Emma soon recovered and her casenotes state that she was able to move about and do some light work.

The photograph and the brief notes about her quiet behaviour being 'strange for her' shed light on the staff and patient relations that fell outside of formal, or expected, interactions. That Emma was able to have her doll in the image suggests that the doll was a special object to her, and most probably an item that she carried about with her, for comfort or for security.

There were similar variances in the male casebooks. Some men were fully bearded, others clean shaven. Some were in three piece suits, others with a short cloth jacket and shirt. Some had neckerchiefs, others were had bare throats, unencumbered by scarfs or kerchiefs. One dapper young man had a hanky in the chest pocket of his jacket. Some stare straight at the camera, others looking away, down at their hands laid in their laps, some with arms defiantly crossed across the chest. Robert Campbell admitted in December 1890 has his hands lightly clasped across his stomach, and is grinning at the camera. A mirror placed behind him reflects the back of his head and torso.

For a significant period of time it would appear that a number of the male patients were photographed in such as manner, sat on a chair before a mirror, in what appears to be more formal and formulaic institutional images. That the images are not dated makes it difficult to draw comparisons, contrasts, and consistencies between the way that men and women were photographed. However in one of the male patient casebooks there were equally candid and familiar images, similar to Emma and her doll, and with similar differences and variances of patient dress.

Robert is wearing a light coloured corduroy jacket, and a spotted scarf is wrapped around his neck. As he was admitted in December, the image may well have been taken

some time after his admission, the heavy textiles suggesting it was the winter wear of the patients. I was struck by Robert's cheerful expression, his open appearance, which gave me the notion of a certain amount of trust, or of intimacy, between Robert and the person taking the photograph. It also alludes to a sense of ease, or intimacy, with the environment within which the photograph was being taken.

In some of the photographs the patients do not look at ease, nor do they look comfortable with their surroundings. In other photographs the patients face is blurred, suggesting they were either unable or unwilling to sit still.

In one photograph a patient, his face is turned three quarters to the camera, stares cautiously, his shoulders hunched, and his body language appears guarded. A large number of the images from the male case book which includes patients admitted between 1890 and 1891 are closely cropped, however it is possible to see what appears to be a landscape backdrop of plants, trees and flowers. The chair upon which the patients are seated is not restrictive; it was a simple armless curved back chair. Some institutional photographs, from lunatic asylums, have shown patients seated in high backed chairs, their heads held in clamps. I have come across no images like this at Caterham, which was an asylum built to provide long-term accommodation to incurable insane paupers. Thus the intention and working remit of Caterham differed significantly to the county and borough asylums that dominate the historiography. This is reflected in the photographs, and the other sources, of Caterham.

With Caterham being a long-stay asylum, the longevity of the staff in terms of service and employment and the patients' residency, in some cases being upwards of 30 years, gave ample opportunity for relationships, familiarity and intimacy to develop. The manner in which the patients were photographed provides visual evidence of this, which at times is hidden in the textual sources, despite them appearing alongside one another!

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This essay originally appeared at the author's blog, *The Other Asylum*, on 15 April 2014, and is reprinted here with the author's kind permission. To link to the original version (with all the images mentioned): <http://seastoe.wordpress.com/2014/04/15/casebooks-photographs-and-institutional-intimacy/>

Stef Eastoe is a PhD Student at Birkbeck, researching social history of 'idiocy' in the long nineteenth century.

## **Post-Modern American Heroism: Anti-War War Heroes, Survivor Heroes, and the Eclipse of Traditional Warrior Values**

**David A. Gerber**

Even a cursory examination of today's language of war in the United States reveals that the traditional formulation of *hero* has undergone a good deal of erosion in recent decades. The result is that the models represented by the real world Alvin Yorks and Audie Murphys of the distant past, and John Wayne characters in any number of Hollywood movies in which inspiring and influential fantasies of war erase its grim realities, are increasingly replaced by new representations of heroism that would have seemed strange, if not untenable, in the near-past. While battlefield performance, especially valor and sacrifice beyond the call of duty, were once at the center of the formulation of the hero, and the hero's claim to that status was greatly reinforced by Stephen Crane's epigrammatic "red badge of courage" after the battle and a lasting disability to be endured in consequence, a telling disruption of these connections has changed what many people mean when they use "hero."<sup>1</sup> As we shall see in this essay, "hero" is used today to characterize war survivors, war victims of cruel circumstances, and those soldiers who seek psychologically and politically to overcome disabilities sustained in combat by denouncing both the war that led to their injuries and war in general. These contemporary evolutions of the hero have implications not only for how we think about war, but ultimately, too, for how we think about disability.

What has happened to war and our understandings of war to create this disruption has not escaped both comment and lamentation in the recent past. From the perspective traditional ideas of the warrior, this transformation of understandings forms the basis for a long, passionate, and often angry essay by the London School of Economics International Relations specialist Christopher Coker, who mourns the passage to a new world of values and ideals in the West. Today, Coker maintains, warriors are seldom lauded, technology usurps the traditional battlefield heroics of individuals, and a therapeutic culture invites soldiers not to seek self-realization through risking their lives or to bring honor to war through a chivalric code, but rather to see their service as meaningless, wallow in trauma, identify themselves as hapless victims, and, in the constantly employed contemporary formulation, seek closure. Coker argues that while war will always be with us, the new meanings we bring to understanding and waging it are certain to deprive us in the future of the role it once played in assisting humanity to define human virtue. Minimally, though he doesn't address the matter directly, Coker, whose analysis is steeped in references to both classical and recent narratives of heroic combat, doubtless would feel that the word "hero" is not only overused today, but used utterly incorrectly. Coker's argument, which will come disturbingly close for many readers to endorsing war because it is good for the soul or at least some souls, is correct that changes in culture underlie significantly the shifting orientations toward military service and experience. While we will ultimately have to dig deeper than he does to understand the roots of what vexes him about these transformations, he is certainly not alone in noting them.<sup>2</sup>

On Veterans Day in 2003, *Wall Street Journal* reporter Jonathan Eig, in a cover story on "Soldiers' Stories," addressed what seemed on the surface at least to be a strange inversion in the way Americans thought about war, the people who they asked to fight wars in their behalf, and those they deem heroes. Americans were then saturated with stories about the young injured Army private, Jessica Lynch, whose serious injuries, nine days as a POW in an Iraqi hospital, dramatic rescue, and reports (ultimately proven false) of heroic behavior during an ambush of the 507<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Company on March 22 in the Iraqi city of An Nasiriyah, had been everywhere throughout the media. But, Eig claimed, few people outside Central Command had

any knowledge of Captain Harry Alexander Hornbuckle. The 29-year old staff officer had been awarded a Bronze Star, with a V for valor, for his battlefield performance on 7 April on the road to Baghdad. In what commanders called “Objective Curly,” 80 American troops under Hornbuckle’s command had faced 300 seasoned and well-armed Iraqi and Syrian fighters in an eight hour engagement that left 200 of the enemy dead. The Americans, who did not lose a man, remarkably had neither trained nor fought together prior to that engagement. Hornbuckle himself had never been in combat before, but his leadership proved essential to the fact that the Americans prevailed on that day. Hornbuckle went home later in the year to Tifton, Georgia, unheralded to the extent that his mother had to ask the owner of the local Holiday Inn to put his name up on the hotel marquee by way of a public welcome. That, noted Eig, was about all that had been done for Hornbuckle, who himself seemed relatively indifferent on the matter and anxious only to start his civilian life again. Jessica Lynch, on the other hand, came home to national fanfare and a massive local parade. Within months, she signed a million dollar book contract, was interviewed on primetime TV news programs, and saw a made-for-TV movie, *Saving Private Lynch* (homage to Stephen Spielberg’s popular epic *Saving Private Ryan*) broadcast telling a dramatic version of the story of her rescue.<sup>3</sup>

Even after it became clear that she had not been wounded fighting, but rather was injured in a vehicular accident (and, though the evidence is confused and contested, may have been raped and briefly beaten in the moments after her capture), and that she had spent the fierce firefight that resulted in her captivity and that of nine others in her company and the death of eleven other of her comrades with her head bent between her knees praying, many people persisted in calling her a war “hero.” They continue to do so throughout the decade. Years after her ordeal, in 2008 a *Newsweek* “Periscope” essay, named her the Iraq War’s “first hero.”<sup>4</sup> When interviewed in 2010 on “Aftermath with William Shatner,” Lynch, whose purpose in consenting to be interviewed seemed partly related to her continuing effort to set the record straight, found herself again the object of the language of heroism. Shatner closed the program, to Lynch’s evident but controlled discomfort, with a long, emotional statement speaking of Lynch’s bravery and heroism. She was, after all, said Shatner, then an innocent young girl of 19, who had never been away from home before, had survived a hellish experience, and was living with serious, lasting injuries to her body and mind. She was, as he and others observed, a survivor in a cruel and, for most Americans, hostile, unfathomable world.<sup>5</sup> Eig would agree that this seemed one measure of the new heroism. At the dawn of the war on terror, in a tentative suggestion in that *Wall Street Journal* article that will be examined in this essay, he explained Lynch’s acclaim and Hornbuckle’s obscurity as a product of the fact that Americans had come to valorize survivors rather than warriors. But why this should be, and why some individuals might come more than others among the many survivors to personify the new hero needs further inquiry.

Lynch herself has consistently disavowed heroism, explaining “That wasn’t me. I’m not going to take credit for something I didn’t do... I’m just a survivor.” She has staked her claims to public support and respect on other, distinctly post-warrior grounds, explaining in answer to those who charge she has profited from feats she didn’t perform, “I was captured, but then I was OK and I didn’t go down fighting. OK, so what? It was really hard to convince people that I didn’t have to do any of that. That I was injured, that I still needed comfort.”<sup>6</sup> Admirable woman though Lynch has proven herself for honesty about her combat role, from Coker’s perspective, as a symbol of contemporary heroism – the heroism of the survivor seeking “comfort” – Lynch seems proof that traditional warrior values often now seem reduced to travesty.

To be sure, across time American soldiers, even the Hornbuckles who deserve the title by their battlefield conduct, let alone the Lynches for whom it is dubious, have resisted seeing themselves as heroes of any type. *Hero* lies more in the public’s response to the individual – or the legend of that individual – than in the individual soldier’s self-characterization. This has been true even if some, in contrast to Hornbuckle, also have been unable to resist the psychic



and material rewards – the constant praise wrapped in patriotic rhetoric, and the medals, book contracts, movie rights, parades, gifts, and associations with celebrities bestowed on them by well-meaning, if often naïve civilians – that have come to those anointed hero. As veterans of the battlefield, who had experienced what Clausewitz so aptly called “the fog of war,” they know only too well that what often separates those who perform well on the battlefield from those who are killed within the first minutes of an engagement and die unheralded is often luck.

An example of resistance to assuming the identity of hero that is more or less typical comes from one of the iconic battlefield heroes of World War II, Private Al Schmid, who is now largely forgotten. Schmid was a twenty-two year old Philadelphia factory worker who was credited with killing 200 Japanese during a nighttime engagement at the “Hell’s Point” on the Tenaru River on Guadalcanal in August, 1942, while sustaining wounds that left him blinded for life. He won the Navy Cross for heroism in battle, and was the basis of a *Life* magazine story, a published wartime biography, and the movie *Pride of the Marines*, in which the Hollywood star John Garfield played Schmid.<sup>7</sup> Schmid told Roger Butterfield, the author of both the *Life* profile and the biography *Al Schmid, Marine*, that one of the conditions of his cooperation in the project, was that he was not to be called “hero.” “I can stand anything but I sure hate to be called a hero...” He preferred “Smitty” or “Machine Gun Smitty,” or even “Killer.” He didn’t like being separated from the unheralded majority, “the gophers of Guadalcanal,” as they called themselves. Butterfield wrote, “I told ...Schmid I would try to write his story without overworking the word ‘hero,’” and true to his word and Schmid’s wishes, “hero” is only used when quoting from citations and awards Schmid was given or from the characterizations of Schmid by other Marines and by a Red Cross worker who wrote personal letters in his behalf during his post-injury transit and hospitalization.<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps it was not that difficult for Butterfield to resist the temptation, because at the time, by consensus, the word was hardly used lightly. Don Wolfe was a literature professor at American University who just after the war taught creative writing to disabled veterans, eighteen of 53 of them Purple Heart winners who sustained injury in combat, being trained to be professional counselors of ex-servicemen and women like themselves. He edited a remarkable book of their writings, *The Purple Testament*, about both prewar and wartime experiences for publication.<sup>9</sup> A number of the veterans had had hellish combat experiences; ten of them had suffered amputations in consequence. The word “hero” appears not once in Wolfe’s “Introduction,” and only once thereafter in the writings of the men and women represented. Here the exception proves the rule: West Virginia ex-serviceman Richard Frazee, wounded in battle in North Africa in March 1943 as the result of which his arm was amputated, wrote of being embarrassed by the festivities and ceremonies organized to welcome him home, “I didn’t feel I deserved such a glorious reception – I wasn’t a hero.”<sup>10</sup> If we want to understand *hero*, it would seem that we need to understand the public and the civilian, not necessarily the combat veteran.

Frazee, Wolfe, Butterfield, and Schmid would probably be completely unprepared for another contemporary evolution of the hero – the disabled antiwar war hero, the second of the two contemporary formulations of the hero that this essay will analyze. American World War II representations of disabled veterans sought, within the muted heroic discourse of the time, to set them in the context of the righteousness of the cause for which they had made sacrificed their bodies, and to emphasize their courage to confront, beyond the battlefield, the second challenge of rehabilitation and social reintegration without self-pity or dependence on others beyond their families.<sup>11</sup> Two well known post-Vietnam films, *Born on the Fourth of July* (first a popular book and later a feature film) and *Coming Home*, began a reformulation of the second challenge. Now, the measure of the disabled veteran’s courage increasingly was turning against war with the most powerful statement those injured for life possessed, a disabling condition that might be used to form the embodied foundation of an antiwar political statement – and the more serious that condition, the more powerful the statement. Here we find a sharp contrast to

the more upbeat statements about living with and moving beyond disability raised by civilian activists of late twentieth century disability rights and independent living movements, and the hopeful reflections of disability as just one more barrier to be overcome, akin to beating the Germans and Japanese, in such post-World War II movies as *The Best Years of Our Lives*, *Pride of the Marines*, *Bright Victory*, and *The Men*. Now Disability becomes a lifelong emblem of sacrifice and a type of martyrdom in a senseless conflict that was a mistake from its inception.<sup>12</sup> Such is the contemporary case with the powerful, prize-winning 2007 documentary *Body of War*, Phil Donohue and Ellen Spiro's treatment of the post-injury study of the experience of Liberty City, Missouri Private Tomas Young, a paralyzed veteran of the Iraq War. A more graphic depiction of the difficulties of the trauma of paralysis for an adult male is difficult to imagine, but suffering is redeemed in this narrative by Young's emergence as an antiwar activist. The directors market the DVD as the story of an "antiwar hero," and the response of much of the public shows many Americans are eager to accept that formulation and to valorize those who are its embodiment.<sup>13</sup>

On the most general level of narrative organization, the logic by which Tomas Young's story unfolds in *Body of War* bears a strong resemblance to the narrative of mid-twentieth century America's iconic disabled antiwar war hero Ron Kovic. Kovic's explanation of his original purposes, as he described them in an introduction written for the 2005 republication of his memoir *Born on the Fourth of July*, could easily stand for those of Young, Donohue and Spiro. Kovic wrote, "I wanted people to understand. I wanted to share with them as nakedly and openly and intimately as possible what I had gone through, what I had endured. I wanted them to know what it really meant to be in a war – to be shot and wounded, to be fighting for my life on the intensive care ward – not the myth we had grown up believing. I wanted people to know about the hospitals and enema room, about why I had become opposed to the war, why I had grown more and more committed to peace and nonviolence..."<sup>14</sup> Like Kovic's narrative, *Body of War* traces in serial procession the story of Young's enlistment; his going off to war; his wounding and the severe injury he sustained which leads, as did Kovic's, to paralysis, the loss of use of his legs, and the compromising of much of the rest of his body; his suffering, pain, and persistent medical problems and problems in rehabilitation; his aimlessness, alienation, and bitterness in his early post-service period; his discovery of a purpose for his post-injury life in antiwar politics and activism through Iraq Veterans against the War; and his growing more articulate and gaining self-confidence by addressing audiences of sober, respectful, and supportive people who share his emerging antiwar politics.

It is no wonder that Kovic himself was so deeply moved in the stirring, extemporaneous remarks he made at the premier of *Body of War* in 2008, for as he said the film led him once more to consider the narrative of his own life and the purposes to which he had become dedicated in opposing first, the Vietnam War, and then subsequent American conflicts. While reviewing his own story for the audience, Kovic recalled that he had recently passed a significant milestone in his life ("I celebrated my fortieth anniversary of having been shot and wounded in Vietnam on January twentieth ...So it's been four decades that I've been in his wheelchair,"), and he spoke of the common purpose he shared with Young. He evoked Young as hero ("We're not going to be silent anymore in this country. Because of heroic people like Tomas Young. Tomas Young, a hero."), and denounced the price of the Iraqi engagement in the shattered bodies of young men and women, "We don't want any more paraplegics, we don't want anymore amputees; this war's not worth it; this war is immoral, deeply immoral."<sup>15</sup> Many people seem to agree. Ongoing postings about Young at a Kansas City blog site over a period of three years frequently evoked the word "hero," in response to new stories about the antiwar activities of this local young man as well as his many struggles with the consequences of his injury.<sup>16</sup>

Yet the differences in politics and in representation between Kovic's and Young's testimonies and the narratives formed out of them are just as striking as the similarities, and they suggest developments within the recent history of those four decades that constitute

significant changes in political attitudes and cultural understandings that bear directly on war, the body, gender, and American dissent. It is to these to which we must now turn to understand the differences between the mid-twentieth and late twentieth century antiwar war hero as a cultural icon and activist.

In a noteworthy analysis of attitudes toward war and the military in Western Europe since 1945, James Sheehan has traced the evolution of antiwar feeling and public policy curbing investment in the military throughout much of a continent exhausted by epic scale lethal violence twice within the space of a mere three decades.<sup>17</sup> In the wake of the collapse of European will to pursue militarism at home and imperial ambitions abroad, the United States came to take on Europe's role, first in the Cold War and after, in projecting power to reshape failed states, fill power vacuums, and combat terrorism. Stirring rhetoric of the kind that characterized John F. Kennedy's 1961 inaugural address aside, the enthusiasm of ordinary Americans "to pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and the success of liberty," has been steadily declining since the Vietnam War. Americans are suffering from a kind of power-fatigue, brought on by 65 years of mobilizing for war, fighting wars, and being asked to play the role of the world's policeman. Manipulation by successive presidential administrations to engage in conflicts that seem detached from American national security interests, in parts of the world about which Americans know and care little, combined with the enormous expenditures involved in a time of growing scarcity and straightened state fiscal conditions at every level of the American federal system, have increasingly sapped Americans enthusiasm for intervening in distant conflicts. Americans may well be experiencing their own version of Europe's exhaustion with militarism.

The conservative historian, Niall Ferguson is not far from wrong, though he frames his understandings as a lament where Ron Kovic would see evidence of enlightenment, that in spite of the imperial mission history has offered them, Americans don't care much about the rest of the world, don't have much affinity for the foreign or the exotic, don't like going native in the places where they project their power, and are content to remain a parochial people behind their ocean borders, even in the age when those oceans provide none of the security they did in distant times.<sup>18</sup> What Ferguson misses, however, in what he more or less frames as an indictment, is that behind the disengagement and seemingly lazy habits of thought, is a growing wholesale skepticism about this imperial mission that, while mostly too inarticulate or inchoate to be called a politics of neo-isolationism at this time, is nonetheless a real and evolving body of perceptions that may well soon become one.

Ron Kovic was raised on John Wayne war movies and in his memoir remembers long afternoons as a boy playing war, after movie images, in the woods near his Long Island home. War movies, with their powerful evocations of heroism, were an emotional foundation for the decision he made in 1964 to forego college and enlist in the Marines, in which he availed himself of the opportunity for advanced infantry and communications training. When he was wounded and paralyzed in 1968, he was in the midst of a second tour of duty in South Vietnam, for which he had reenlisted. To that point in time, Kovic bore a strong similarity to the idealistic, patriotic Cold War citizen Kennedy projected in his inaugural. Thereafter, however, as his antiwar politics evolved, Kovic and the other veterans, disabled and able-bodied alike, who formed the Vietnam Veterans against the War and staged a memorable protest at the 1972 Miami National Republican Convention that renominated Richard Nixon to his ultimately doomed second term, were denounced as traitors and communists who were indifferent to the welfare of comrades still serving in Southeast Asia. Kovic and others were frequently arrested, screamed at, and beaten by police, though eventually the consciousness grew that they were more right than wrong.<sup>19</sup> Kovic's partial vindication had to await the end of American involvement, but nonetheless it came relatively soon on one official level, in 1976, when he was allowed to address the Democratic National Convention, and he placed in nomination for vice-president an antiwar activist.<sup>20</sup>

The contrast between the 1970s and 2000s regarding the avidity for the pursuit of the imperial mission, the legitimacy of dissent and the willingness of the general public to listen to antiwar dissenters is telling, and forms an important departure between Kovic's and Young's stories. Tomas Young, too, watched and was influenced, by his own telling, by war movies (the 1986 hit *Top Gun*, which celebrated fighter pilots, and ironically starred Tom Cruise, who in a few years would be playing Kovic in Oliver Stone's cinematic version of Kovic's story), and like many Americans was mobilized after the country was attacked by terrorists on September 11, 2001 to enlist in the armed forces. But there the similarities end. Like many other Americans, Young could see no relationship between 9/11 and, in contrast to fighting in Afghanistan where Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda leadership was thought to be hiding, going to war in Iraq. The case was simply never really made, and it grew more tenuous, if not simply false, as the years passed, and Saddam's weapons of mass destruction, about which Americans were given dire warnings, were never found. Displaying the skepticism that has grown steadily since the Vietnam War about what presidents and political leaders say, Young reasoned, he informs us matter-of-factly and with a bemused tone, that though he was obligated to remain in the military through the term of his obligation, he could at least protect himself by staying out of harm's way. He became a clerk in the hope that would free him from a combat role in Iraq. On only his fourth day in the war, however, in April 2004, he was assigned to a convoy in Sadr City in northeastern Baghdad, where he was shot by a sniper. While in Kovic's narrative a bitter feeling of crushed and betrayed ideals suffuses the path to his political conversion, this cannot be the case with Young, for he was well on the way toward an antiwar position, even as he served. Those holding that position about the Iraq War did not have to struggle as did Kovic and his fellow antiwar war veterans to attain a widespread public and official valorization, because from its inception it joined existing antiwar feeling or at least skepticism about the mission, as it had been officially formulated, among large numbers of civilians. One consequence of these emerging understandings is that the veterans are increasingly separated in the public mind from the issue of the legitimacy of the wars they are asked to fight. In contrast to the Vietnam War, in which veterans came in for a share of the hostility visited upon those responsible for the war, veterans are now increasingly honored for their service and sacrifices, whatever the feeling may be about the politics of the conflict in which they were involved.

The respectability of his antiwar position is confirmed in the final, poignant sequence of *Body of War*. Young is filmed in discussion with West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd, then one of the most powerful and respected members of Congress, who led the Senate opposition to the resolution authorizing the war in Iraq presented by Bush administration supporters. The resolution received 77 votes from pro-war senators of both parties. His eyesight poor, his hands shaking, and his legs unsteady enough that he needs a cane, the elderly Byrd reviews with Young at his Senate office, the roster of those 23 Senators who voted against the resolution. Byrd tells Young his vote on the resolution was the most important vote of his fifty year career in the Senate, and he calls a number of his allies among the 23, "heroes," implicitly adding to Young's own claim to that status, just as Young tells the aged senator, "You're my hero." The film ends poignantly with the two warriors for peace, the feeble Byrd with his cane and Young in his wheelchair, making their way down a corridor of the Senate Office Building. In a poignant moment, and one of the only ones inflected by humor in the film, Young tells Byrd, "...We both have some mobility issues," as the film closes.

To be sure, Young's antiwar position has had its critics, but the criticisms come not nearly as often those encountered by Kovic. The anti-antiwar response is not likely ever to go away. But it is now mostly expressed in different arguments that speak to new, and more complicated ethical calculations than the black-white dichotomies of the Cold War. In contrast to the armed forces of Kovic's time, which depended on a military draft for the large majority of the men in uniform, today's American military is an all-volunteer force. Those like Young who volunteer, and are later seen to protest the consequences of acts of their own volition that put

them in harm's way and led to serious injury, open themselves to the now familiar complaints of contemporary cultural conservatives about the erosion of personal responsibility and the competition for the mantle of victimhood that is thought characteristic of late capitalist societies, with citizenry said to be pampered by the welfare state. A minority voice at another Kansas City blog site's commentary pages, for example, insistently makes this point. Recalling the service of her husband in the distant past and that of her own son in the present, "Pat" wrote in 2011, "I started watching [*Body of War*] and I turned it off. I'm sorry to say it disgusted me. Yes, I do support these troops who need our support [,] not us against them. This guy signed up after 9/11[;] he knew what he was getting into. My son signed up BEFORE 9/11 he served a year in Iraq and he is a full supporter still of his comrades. This movie would piss him off like it did me. I'm sorry what happened to Tomas Young but again I SUPPORT OUR TROOPS!!!!!!!!!!!!!! He is a disgrace to the rest of our veterans. You signed up for it. You weren't drafted like my husband was... You knew what you were getting yourself into!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" In this formulation, protesters are reduced to *whiners* in contrast to their once much more dangerous position as *traitors* to their country.<sup>21</sup> It is no longer clear to ordinary Americans who the country's enemies really are. The various inchoate, invisible bands of terrorists carry no flag and wear no uniform, and their motives and purposes beyond mayhem and murder (and sometimes suicide in the process of committing murder) remain for many obscure, weird, and perverse. Under these circumstances, even among those who dislike antiwar protestors, the protestors cannot easily be seen as helping the enemy achieve victory. But a disabled veteran like Young may be charged, however ungenerously it may seem, with being a self-appointed victim unable to confront his own culpability for what has happened to him.

Different, too, in the telling of Young's story is a new explicitness about the body, in which male bodies are not only subject to the same sort of inspection as female bodies have been in past, but inspected with a candor that would have been impossible just a few decades ago. We also are witness to an exposure of previously once thought feminizing, unmanly emotions that mark a culture deeply changed in the late twentieth century by feminism, male gender role transformations, and the sexual revolution.

To be sure, previous movies featuring paralyzed veterans challenged conventions about sexuality and the body in their own day. For the early post-World War II period, *The Men* contained explicit allusions to the limited or nonexistent possibilities for sexual intercourse of paralyzed men. But these suggestions were safely presented in a roundabout medicalized discourse that took the form of a medical doctor's talk at a hospital to the wives and girlfriends of paralyzed veterans. They are cautious, non-explicit, and clinical. This sequence of *The Men* looks and sounds like a documentary made for a postwar, undergraduate health science class. Moreover, it risks little that is culturally subversive to the extent the concern expressed is solely for the prospects of heterosexual relations and pregnancy in conventional marriage. Later, as Kovic implied in his reference to his personal goals for his memoir, *Born on the Fourth of July* sought to be daringly graphic in its revelations about the paralyzed body, and Oliver Stone's movie, which was realized in 1989 thirteen years after the book was published, was even more so, making suggestive references, though not visually representing, the catheterization necessary to drain the bladder of many paraplegics and the impossibility for many male paraplegics of attaining an erection through sexual stimulation. Both *Born on the Fourth of July* and the popular fictional treatment *Coming Home*(1978) do suggest that other experiences of sexual gratification are possible, but, of course, limits imposed by prevailing moral standards and the rating code system set boundaries for the explicitness with which sexuality might be addressed and depicted.

In *Body of War* Tomas Young's body is, relative to past representation, unrelentingly and frankly exposed, and his physical suffering and mental anguish at his condition are insistently, frequently and for the viewer painfully exposed. Able-bodied viewers cannot view *Body of War* without experiencing anxiety about the integrity of their own bodies, which surely

must have been one of the purposes of the filmmakers and of Young himself in seeking to use his story to inspire hostility to war. Almost at the beginning of the film, Young tells us explicitly that, bowel control problems caused him much anxiety as he anticipated his wedding ceremony. From that point forward, his medical problems form a frequent and elaborate thread working its way through every aspect of the film, and the full range of the problems he daily encounters in living comfortably and attempting to be healthy are described and often displayed. A partial nosology established in the film includes: muscle spasms, nerve and general body pain, nausea and vomiting, radical fluctuations of body temperature, depression, urinary tract infections, inability to cough and clear the lungs, highly labile blood pressure creating frequent spells of light-headedness, and elevated lead levels in the blood as a consequence of bullet fragments remaining in a knee. Evaluating the anger Young displays doctors diagnose post-traumatic stress disorder, though Young and his mother realistically counter that the anger they see in him is mostly a proper response to the problems he, like many other disabled American veterans, encounters when dealing with the badly under-resourced veterans' health care system.

In one scene, which certainly sets the mark for representational candor in a film intended for mass circulation, his mother inserts a catheter into his penis, while they are in his van in a parking lot. In addition, candid talk on two occasions, one of them extended and both in the company of his wife, about the sexual problems they face as a couple as the result of his failure to attain an erection, would probably have been deemed impossible in a documentary that seeks a mass audience in the not so distant past. Young deals with these sexual problems by resisting intimacy on terms he regards as compromised, and ultimately by resenting and dismissing his wife, who speaks about the situation in some detail, and is obviously deeply hurt by it. Sexual problems play a significant role in dooming their marriage, which ends painfully within the time period of the film.

If in the past limits were once established in a variety of ways about in the evocation of the intimate processes of the body and of sexuality, so, too, were there constraints on realistic depiction from another, complementary direction. From an early twenty-first century perspective, older representations are characterized by what seems a shallow, truncated depiction of male emotions. In the past anger and bitterness or a stoical stance seemed a much more an appropriate evocation of male emotions in disabled veterans' representation than tears, irony and sarcasm, and defuse hostility, which would have seemed unmanly in an older code of masculinity. In the late twentieth century, however, as gender roles have shifted in many modernized and modernizing cultures and the male role has come to experience elements of what in the past would have been seen as a demeaning feminization, males have been allowed a much broader expanse of emotional expression, and indeed they are praised for displaying once feminized emotions. The man who cries, for example, has been praised for being not simply sensitive, but self-confident and strong. As one commentator, a doctor from the Philippines wrote in a newspaper essay published in that country entitled "Only Real Men Cry," in 2008, "Yes, men do cry. Only real men do, those with the balls, the guts, the courage, and the confidence in their masculinity cry." Such thoughts could just as easily have been expressed in Western Europe or the United States at the present time. It is now manly to give free reign to once previously unmanly emotions.<sup>22</sup>

In the American context, the passage in this emotional evolution is neatly marked in presidential politics. When Senator Edmund Muskie shed tears during the 1972 presidential campaign in publicly reacting to a newspaper story which questioned his wife's emotional stability, his own emotional stability, and hence qualifications to be president, were questioned in ways that greatly weakened his campaign. Among the questioners was Senator Robert Dole, who himself would weep openly at Richard Nixon's funeral in 1994. When Dole ran for president in 1996, no one questioned his own emotional stability as a result of his display of emotions Nixon's funeral. By that time, the first New Age American chief executive, President Bill Clinton had already established new grounds for male emotional expression in office. A man known for

displaying emotions and being sensitive toward other's difficulties, Clinton appeared misty eyed in public on a number of occasions, and gained favor with such statements to individuals undergoing stress or tragedy as "I feel your pain." On the other hand, President George W. Bush was not known for his sensitivity, and he cultivated a much more macho image than Clinton, but he shed tears nonetheless in a well known, post-9/11 address at the Washington's National Cathedral.<sup>23</sup>

Tomas Young displays or speaks to a wide range of emotions that push the representation of the disabled male beyond anger, bitterness, and the old "grace under pressure" ethic toward this new masculinity. He does not shed tears in *Body of War*, but he speaks of shedding tears, when he says matter-of-factly that there are times when he cries uncontrollably out of jealousy of able-bodied people. Moreover, he is by turns cold, petulant, petty, and even mean, particularly in relationship to his wife. While psychologically explicable in the context of the profound difficulties they face in achieving a normalized marital relationship, Young's behavior toward her is nonetheless discomfiting to the viewer, and seems to do him little credit. After Young and his wife separate, when he puts their wedding pictures, along with his Purple Heart, away in a closet, the viewer cannot help but feel he is being dismissive of his young bride, who had displayed a great deal of dedication to assisting him, which for a time seems to have been her principal purpose in life. On the other hand, Young's narrative is about overcoming his self-hatred and bitterness, accepting himself as he has become, and having the self-confidence to move forward in both his new public role as an opponent of the Iraq War and as a single man, no longer depending on his wife for practical assistance and hoping to achieve strength through her moral support. The film traces Young's development to a point at which, after passing through a number of physical and emotional crises he seems somewhat more comfortable with himself. In the interests of realism, the narration of the process by which he reached that subjective position needs to depict the many difficulties in the path of that evolution. This new emotionality is the servant of larger, painful truths. It enables the filmmakers to make plausible the self-transformation by which Young came to assume the one public role in which he is comfortable in his post-injury life – the paraplegic veteran who becomes a hero by opposing the war that injured him.

While there is precedent in Vietnam representation for the emergence of the antiwar war hero, the same cannot be said for the second of the two models of post-modern heroism, the hero as survivor, the exemplar of which is Jessica Lynch. Like Young, Lynch entered the military before 9/11, and like Young we observe the same lack of wholehearted embrace of the aims pursued in the Iraq War. Like Young, Lynch appears to wander into the war with a noticeable lack of enthusiasm and sense of connection. She identifies with her comrades in arms much more as girl friends, than as part of a disciplined fighting force. Like Young, Lynch is no warrior, a role that seems completely foreign to her character, and she gives no evidence of ever wishing to be one. She seems more a naïf who wandered on to the stage of history, fell into and out of considerable misfortune, was used briefly by forces much more powerful than she could then imagine, and eventually tried to resume an ordinary existence, a wiser and more mature woman for her ordeal.

By now, the story of Lynch's brief moment of national acclaim is well known.<sup>24</sup> She was born and raised in a Palestine, West Virginia, a poor section of a poor state. The diminutive and demure Lynch, who was her county's Miss Congeniality shortly before she enlisted in the Army and is frequently described by family and friends as a "girlie-girl," was 18 when she became a soldier. The country was at peace, and her goals were to use the peacetime Army as a path to seeing the world beyond Wirt County (At the time she could daydream no further than Hawaii.), and getting money to continue her education, so that she could realize her ambition to be a teacher. Jobs, let alone careers, were few and far between for young people in Wirt County, and the Army offered her, as recruiters explained to her, the opportunity to get some of the resources she need to launch herself into adulthood. Her father is a long distance truck driver, and while

the family lives respectably, they lacked the money to send all three children to college. Her older brother also enlisted in the Army.

Those who knew her well, including her parents, wondered how she could possibly muster the toughness and determination to get through basic training. Bragg tells us that she had been the type of younger teenage girl who painted her toenails fuchsia and applied sparkles to them, frequently fussed with her hair and makeup, and still had her little child's stuffed animals in her bedroom. Her mother and others teased her about whether the Army would tolerate her dependence on her curling iron. But Lynch proved everyone wrong, displaying more strength and resolve during basic training than those around her thought possible. Up to this point, we have a narrative with elements that suggest classical populist Americana, which is the way Rick Bragg, the prize-winning journalist who worked with Lynch on her memoir, framed her story. The backcountry of the Appalachian upper South and the hard-pressed, but decent people who populate it, with their depthless capacity for endurance, Bragg framed as if to call to mind a Frank Capra film out of the 1930s that evoked the idealized qualities of small town American life. Mix in any number of war movies, in which everyday working class Americans such as Al Schmid or Alvin York, the World War I combat hero from nearby Tennessee, step up to their hour in history and acquit themselves bravely and patriotically.

But the traditional mythological elements quickly begin to dissolve after that point, and the story instead takes on the contemporary character we have observed in Young's narrative. Lynch hardly emerged from basic training with ambitions for battlefield heroics, let alone to be the sort of warrior that Coker holds up before us as an admirable work of existential self-fashioning. Lynch entered the 507<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Company out of Fort Bliss, Texas as a supply clerk, and along with others in her unit, offered herself reassurance after 9/11 that their job was truck repair or inventory and distribution – not fighting, but, as they joked among themselves, passing out toilet paper. Even after Lynch and the others in her unit were shipped out as the preparations for the invasion of Iraq were initiated, they believed they would remain a rear echelon unit, and that it was most unlikely they would ever leave the safe confines of the Kuwaiti desert, where they were bivouacked.

To be sure, they had weapons training, but Lynch probably believed she would never have to raise a rifle in combat. Unlike a number of countries in which women have been recruited for active combat roles, the American military officially designated women as “combat support” personnel, not as combatants, and said they might enter into combat only if fired upon. But they were not seen as likely to be in harm's way, an assumption that proved completely incorrect. In a non-traditional war without fixed fronts, in which combat was everywhere, all the time, the line between combat support personnel and combatant has constantly proven permeable. In this situation, significant numbers of women, whose stories have been told in compelling detail in Kristen Holmstedt's reports from Iraq, have actively assumed warrior roles, even if not recruited for combat. But that could hardly be said to have been Lynch's ambition.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, Lynch had a boyfriend, also a soldier in her unit, whom she had begun dating at Fort Bliss and was seeing in Kuwait, and to whom she was briefly engaged, and this helped pass the time. She also had close friends in her unit, principally her best friend Lori Piestewa, a Hopi Indian from Arizona who worked as a truck driver, and was her roommate at Fort Bliss and shared a tent with her in Kuwait, and Soshana Johnson, an Afro-Panamanian American who was a cook. While “girl talk” cemented this friendship, it is clear that the less worldly Lynch saw these older, self-confident women, both of them independent, single mothers rich in practical experience, as sources of stability, support and advice for the less experienced, younger woman. On the other hand, Lynch seems to have put both Johnson and Piestewa, both of whom had to grow up quickly to be effective mothers, back in touch with the girlhood each of them had lost.<sup>26</sup>



The story of how it was that Lynch became a prisoner of war and then was rescued is well known, and may be quickly summarized.<sup>27</sup> To the surprise of Lynch and her friends, the 507<sup>th</sup> was assigned to an 800-vehicle convoy charged with taking supplies out of Kuwait and bringing them to Baghdad in support of troops making an assault on the heart of Saddam Hussein's regime in the first weeks of the war. A number of vehicles in her unit got detached from the main body of the convoy, became lost, and drove into An Nasiriyah, where they were ambushed. Some escaped the city, but eleven, including Piestewa, were killed in a fire fight, and eight were taken prisoner, including Lynch, who remained separated from the other prisoners in an Iraqi hospital. Iraqi doctors treated her for serious and extensive injuries, which included a broken arm (said to be broken purposely by an Iraqi fighter soon after she was taken prisoner), broken thigh, dislocated ankle, slipped vertebra and fractured vertebrae that caused substantial nerve damage and lasting damage to her bowel and bladder, and a damaged bone in her right foot. Lynch seemed to her doctors at one point to be dying, and had it not been for her own resistance with what strength she could muster and perhaps the doctors' expectation that she would die anyway, she would have had a leg amputated. With the assistance of an Iraqi informant, Lynch would be rescued in an elaborate, well-publicized operation.<sup>28</sup> The other prisoners would be freed by American forces from what by that time, in contrast to the tense first weeks in which they were in a series of prisons in Baghdad, amounted to house arrest in a small town under the administration of some genial and generous Iraqi policeman, who seemed eager to get rid of them.<sup>29</sup>

Since there were other members of the 507<sup>th</sup> sharing the experience of the ambush, the fire fight, captivity, and rescue, including two others, Shoshana Johnson and Edgar Hernandez, who published books on their more or less similar experiences, the question remains why did Lynch achieve the acclaim she received and not such survivors as Johnson and Hernandez? To ask the question is ultimately to inquire into what is central to the phenomenon of the survivor hero, whom Lynch personifies, and why that role resonates with many Americans.

We may dismiss at the outset the brief legend of Lynch's battlefield heroism, which for a brief time separated her from Johnson, Hernandez, and others caught in the ambush. The legend was exploded soon after she was freed from captivity, and it was discovered that not only had she not fired a shot, but that her rifle had jammed, and she had spent the time of the engagement praying. The Bush administration and the military command in Iraq were accused at the time the truth became known of transforming the unlikely young woman into, as William Shatner later said, "Jane Wayne," and leaking mistaken reports of her heroism to the *Washington Post*, in which they formed the unattributed basis of a dramatic news story. Citing unnamed "government officials," reporters Susan Schmidt and Vernon Loeb spoke of Lynch "fighting to the death," and killing or wounding a number of Iraqis.<sup>30</sup> It did seem plausible at that moment in the war just after the invasion of Iraq, when the American effort seemed indecisive and disorganized, that some heroic story – similar to the classic staged, morale-boosting event, the raising of the flag on Mount Suribachi by Marines on Iwo Jima in February, 1945<sup>31</sup>— was highly desirable. The administration and military might have been willing to make up such a story as propaganda for the war effort. Lynch's rescue was, as Bragg notes, "the first good news of the war," perfect for mass consumption; so much better when complemented by the story of heroic performance in combat.<sup>32</sup>

But whoever leaked these details seems to have shared a general confusion about the facts of the firefight, and not possessed any conscious intention to deceive. There was enough in the story of the ambush to raise morale, as it turned out; it just had nothing to do with Lynch. As W. Joseph Campbell reports in a study of especially egregious errors in American journalism over the last century, the American military in Iraq would soon discover that an intercepted Iraqi communiqué describing the ambush in An Nasiriyah had reported that a blonde American had offered fierce resistance. The translator of the intercepted message apparently rendered the pronoun "he" used in the original as "she." The only blonde female in the 507<sup>th</sup> was Lynch.

Hence the error, and hence the failure to acknowledge the courage of Sergeant Donald Walters, the blonde father of three daughters and veteran of the Gulf War, who was a cook in the 507<sup>th</sup>, and who fought off the Iraqis from an isolated position, and received wounds which led to his death.<sup>33</sup> Only a few news outlets issued an explicit correction, and neither Schmidt and Loeb nor the *Washington Post* ever named the source of the mistaken story of Lynch's heroism or sought to pursue the facts. All Loeb would say was that "the Pentagon" was not involved, leaving open, of course, the possibility nonetheless of an anonymous individual source within the military. But the truth very soon emerged and circulated widely nonetheless, and it was clear that the 19-year old private was no warrior.<sup>34</sup> The heroic legend had dissolved even before Lynch received her Bronze Star for battlefield performance, and returned home to West Virginia to a parade that was probably the biggest organized activity in the history of Wirt County. Lynch was in the unfortunate position of living a lie, but not only was she too inexperienced and naïve to protest, she was still in the Army, and under orders, until she was discharged from the Army in August 2003. She could not refuse to play her part as it was written in the script her superiors were writing for her. Though she would express regret that any Americans at all had to serve in Iraq, she was and remained, at least in public, apolitical, and loath to challenge the powerful interests that sought to claim her. She has consistently since her discharge disclaimed any battlefield heroics.<sup>35</sup>

But if the narrative of the battle changed, for many members of the public the fact of Lynch's heroism by emerging contemporary standards had not, so the medal and the parade continued to be deemed appropriate. To be sure, Donald Walters' parents and the father of 507<sup>th</sup> Specialist James Kiehl, who also died in the ambush, did go on record expressing resentment about the attention given Lynch and the ways Lynch profited from the mistaken story.<sup>36</sup> Also, critics of the Bush administration and of the Iraq War delighted in the unraveling of the Lynch story, because it further revealed the efforts at manipulation of public opinion by the administration.<sup>37</sup> But Bragg comes closer to capturing the public response to Lynch at the time in stating, "It became clear that most Americans did not care if Jessi had emptied her magazine in a battle with the enemy or not – it was what Jessica had lived through that was important, not how many lives she took, or if she took a life at all." Local people in Wirt County, Bragg came to understand, felt that Lynch was "a hero because she survived....because she got in a truck and went to war, because people tried to kill her in the desert."<sup>38</sup> In short, being there in harm's way, getting injured, and coming home were enough to be deemed a hero.

In explaining this type of new heroism, it is useful to compare Lynch's story not with that of Sergeant Walters, but instead with other members of the 507<sup>th</sup> caught up in the same ambush, who behaved in combat more like Lynch than like Walters, were wounded, taken prisoner and were ultimately rescued. To do so, we are assisted by the narratives of two other members of the 507<sup>th</sup>, Johnson and Hernandez, both of whom might also claim the mantle of survivor hero, but have not become its symbol.

The authors of the brief, sketchy narrative of Hernandez's story subtitle their book, "An American Hero," and use "hero" to describe him off and on throughout the book, but it is clear it has nothing to do with combat behavior. In fact, they are quite candid about the fact that Hernandez did little during the firefight by way of resistance, (partly because his rifle also had jammed), though he did seek to help Soshana Johnson to seek shelter under a truck where he was lying to protect himself. The authors' narrative certainly establishes that Hernandez's behavior, their hero designation aside, was hardly that of a warrior. He was shot in the arm and took a shrapnel wound to his face, and in the midst of the fight had to be ordered by Sergeant James Riley to "Shut up!", when he persisted to the point apparently of distracting the hard-pressed, fighting Riley by speaking emotionally about the fact that he was certain he was going to die. A timid, sensitive, and inexperienced 21-year old, Hernandez had also enlisted before 9/11, and hoped he would never see combat. As a prisoner, he frequently had feelings of being overwhelmed ("I can't handle this."), believed he was going to be murdered, gave himself over to

crying, and greatly depended in the strength of others to get through the experience. On one occasion while in captivity, an Iraqi doctor felt compelled to try to comfort him when he dissolved in tears, and told Hernandez he would probably be going home soon. If Hernandez is a hero, it has to be on strength of his, too, having had a bad experience, which he survived, and nothing more. Yet few know his story, as they know Lynch's.<sup>39</sup>

Shoshana Johnson's book, written with the assistance of M.L. Doyle, an aspiring novelist, tells its story in a much more engaging, richly contextualized way, and is too thoughtful to casually drop the word "hero," let alone assume that status for its subject. (In her "Preface," however, Doyle does explicitly compare Johnson's personal qualities and her story to Lynch's to the detriment of the latter.)<sup>40</sup> Like Lynch and Hernandez, Johnson had personal, not political, goals influencing her enlistment. While a number of members of her family, including her father who had a long military career after immigrating to the United States from Panama, had or were serving in the Army, the Army was not a proud family tradition that inspired her. Enlistment was a fall-back position for Johnson when she signed-up prior to 9/11 at age 25. Her goals were to experience the world, earn some money and save some to go to college, use basic training to lose some weight, and ultimately find a husband and then spend her life uneventfully on a military post.

For Johnson then, the Army was in large measure a self-improvement project with romantic possibilities. Combat was hardly her purpose, and she chose to be a cook precisely because it seemed a safe job. As a single mother, with a very young daughter, she was also concerned about being around to fulfill her parental responsibilities in the future. She, too, was surprised when she was sent to Kuwait and then into Iraq. During the ambush, she fired one shot before giving her weapon over to Sergeant Riley. She was wounded seriously in the foot and from the same bullet in the other ankle, and operated on by the Iraqis while a prisoner and multiple times by American doctors after she was rescued. Her experience as a prisoner of war passed with considerable pain and discomfort, because of her wounds. But Johnson hardly comes across in her narrative as a vulnerable naïf in the same way that Hernandez and Lynch do. Solidly built, handsome rather than conventionally pretty or cute like Lynch, and strong-looking in appearance, she radiates mature self-possession. She is no less conventionally feminine than Lynch, and in fact, spends a great deal of time in her book discussing her Victoria's Secret purchases and the difficulties of caring for black hair in the Army and as a prisoner of war. But irony and wit are never far from the surface in such passages. She displays sufficient reserves of confidence, intelligence, and resilience that, though her voice is at times emotional, she is just as often dispassionate and analytical. Her strength of character is evident in her conduct while a prisoner of war. Though frightened much of the time, she did not surrender to despair, and often passed lonely hours in her cell singing "Amazing Grace."

As the facts of Johnson's ordeal became known, the question of why it was that Lynch became an instant figure for public adulation and hero worship, and Johnson did not were asked, particularly insistently to the extent that race seemed an obvious explanation for Lynch's plausibility and the relative neglect of Johnson. The question of race was raised even more insistently when Lynch was awarded an 80% disability pension rating and Johnson was not only told that in spite of memory loss, nightmares, bouts of intense anger, suicidal thoughts, and flashbacks, she did not have PTSD, but given a minimum (30%) pension rating.<sup>41</sup> In consequence, Lynch's disability pension was \$700 a month more than Johnson's. While Johnson herself does not accept the argument that race is central to the situation, and she continues in her book to profess friendship for Lynch and sympathy for her in the ordeal through which she passed, when combined with other characteristics that Lynch radiates, Lynch's whiteness is hardly irrelevant. It is not so much that Johnson is a black woman, and therefore unheralded and neglected in a society indifferent to black achievement and black suffering, but that she does not suggest, physically or emotionally, the vulnerability and need to be comforted that would make her attractive as a survivor hero. In contrast to the thin, blonde,

and child-woman Lynch was at 19, Johnson does not appear “a damsel in distress,” and, again in contrast to Lynch, who specifically speaks of her need to be comforted, would probably bristle at being assigned exclusively to that role. She is a less compelling symbol than Lynch for those millions of Americans, men and women alike, who feel themselves vulnerable and helpless in a time of national economic decline and international terrorism. Their country seems always to be at war, demanding sacrifices of ordinary people, who enlist or whose family members enlist in the armed forces in search of the opportunities that are few and far between in the civilian economy, and, against all of their hopes to remain safe, find themselves in combat.

In short, if one is looking for a survivor of difficulties beyond the individual’s control, Lynch has much that recommends her. This vulnerability and helplessness, dramatically displayed at the time of her rescue and captured in the NBC production of *Saving Jessica Lynch*, have a less consciously understood erotic dimension that draws many people to her, and enhances the potency of Lynch’s attractiveness as a damsel in distress and survivor hero. Indeed in Lynch we see the winding road our cultural representations not only of heroism but of military service itself might be destined to traverse in armed forces in which women like Lynch have become a vital part of those on the battlefield.

If as Nancy Etcoff has written in *Survival of the Prettiest*, a study of the biological and cultural bases of beauty, individual appearance is not only “a source of pleasure or shame, but...a source of information,” the path to the myth of Jessica Lynch may well be readily conceived as inscribed on her body.<sup>42</sup> This was no mystery, however superficially understood, at the time of Lynch’s notoriety. For example, in explaining how it was that his sister came to become the subject of adulation, Greg Lynch Jr., told Rick Bragg, “It had to happen. I mean look at that face. Who isn’t going to fall in love with that face?”<sup>43</sup>

Lynch does indeed conform to a widely admired type of female beauty, specifically American and yet also general: thin, small boned, blonde, green-eyed, baby-faced, and lightly freckled, but possessing aspects of what Etcoff refers to as the cross-cultural “universal beauty template” – “large widely spaced eyes, high cheekbones, small chin, and full lips.”<sup>44</sup> The descriptors of this beauty are constantly repeated in Bragg’s book, either as his characterizations or those of the individuals he interviews, and none of them more often than “blonde,” which has long been a source of fascination and admiration in America.<sup>45</sup>

Looks of this sort may not be common, but they are generic. Indeed, beauty pageant winners like Lynch, Etcoff writes, “...often appear generic looking – extremely attractive but not distinctive. The face is familiar, a better-looking, less irregular version of other faces we have seen. That may be part of their appeal.”<sup>46</sup> It is a familiar beauty that does not challenge us with anything exotic, but reinforces what we already think we know. One of the things we think we know, though only semi-consciously, is that such baby-faced good looks in a young woman suggest dependence, helplessness, and vulnerability, and evoke, especially among men, such as the Marines who rescued Lynch, a desire to nurture and to protect that is as much erotic as it is parental or comradely.<sup>47</sup> Her looks were reinforced by a personality, in Bragg’s description and that of those close to her, which tended toward the aloof rather the engaged. She is described as “a princess” – “prissy,” a “pouter,” wanting to be pampered, brooding, and a “girlie-girl,” qualities working toward a degree of coldness or remoteness that evoke yearning in many men for what can only be possessed, if at all, with great difficulty.<sup>48</sup> If we were to seek to find a representative “damsel in distress” for many Americans, Lynch would be an ideal candidate on the basis of her beauty and the ways in which she elected to carry it. The thought of such a young woman “broken, helpless” and “like a baby again,”<sup>49</sup> and yet surviving and struggling to overcome injury and disability, obviously resonates deeply and widely, and may well be more powerful as a story than traditional heroism might be. Such uses of conventional, traditional femininity are greatly contested today. Though many women might have identified with Lynch’s vulnerability and vicariously shared in their damsel role, it is hardly surprising that feminist

critics, such as Susan Faludi, have denounced the myth of Jessica Lynch as a sinister marriage of sexism and militarism, constructed by an opportunistic media eager for market shares and a propaganda driven military and presidential administration eager for public support for a war of doubtful legitimacy.<sup>50</sup> But this is to miss what may be especially essential about Lynch as a symbol. That symbol resonates because vulnerability and survival against the odds are more universally felt than the singular experience of one badly injured and disabled veteran of the Iraq War who was briefly used to make war propaganda.

Just as some feminists criticize the use of Lynch, once divorced from the Rambo-like legend of warrior conduct, as a symbol that reinforces traditional conceptions of the feminine that place artificial constraints on women, disability activists are not likely to feel enthusiastic with the uses of disability in representations of either the antiwar war hero or the survivor hero. In both, disability is to one extent or another a thoroughly negative state. It is something to be suffered through and an embodiment of vulnerability. It is not what in all likelihood will happen to many of us in the course of living, and hence a common human state of being. It is instead an aberration that is a sign of misfortune or misuse, and hence it is to be avoided and shunned at all costs in pursuit of what is assumed to be the normal body or mind. As such, whether in the past, when disabled veterans representation more often evoked pity or fear, or now, when it often suggests suffering and vulnerability, what disabled veterans are meant to represent can only be seen as an impediment to those who urge us to cease privileging the able-bodied body and the conventionally normal mind. It is understandable that after a lifetime of ordinary functioning, disabled veterans resist such understandings, especially when they have reason to believe they have been injured in causes that are dubious in purpose, if not illegitimate. But the gulf between them and disabled civilians will remain wide and abiding to the extent such vastly different understandings of disability continue to exist.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. On the evolving concept of “hero” in relation to warrior values and representations in Western societies, especially the United States, see S.L.A. Marshall, *Men against Fire* (New York: Morrow and Infantry Journal, 1947), pp. 76, 150-152, 160-161; Samuel Stouffer et al., *The American Soldier*, v. 2, *Combat and Its Aftermath* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), pp. 84, 131-132, 150-151, 23, 264-271; Gwynne Dyed, *War* (New York: Crown, 1985), pp. 104-122; John Keegan, *The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976); James McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Christopher Coker, *The Warrior Ethos: Military Culture and the War on Terror* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007); Bernard Bergonzi, *Hervés’ Twilight: A Study of the Literature of the Great War* (London: Carcanet, 1965); Shannon French, *The Code of the Warrior: Exploring Warrior Values Past and Present* (Boston: Rowm and Littlefield, 2003); Angela Hobbs, *Plato and the Hero: Courage, Manliness and Impersonal Good* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

2. Coker, *The Warrior Ethos: Military Culture and the War on Terror*.

3. Jonathan Eig, “Why You’ve Heard of Jessica Lynch, not Zan Hornbuckle,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 11, 2003. Evidence of Lynch’s instant notoriety is, Rick Bragg, *I Am a Soldier Too: The Jessica Lynch Story* (New York: Vintage, 2003), the million dollar book deal, and *Private Jessica Lynch: An American Story*, ABC News Special, November 1, 2003 (ABC News Productions, SO31111-51); Peter Markle, dir., *Saving Private Lynch* (Daniel L. Paulson Productions in association with NBC Studios, Inc., 2003).

4. Jesse Ellison, “Periscope: The War’s First Hero,” *Newsweek*, June 9, 2008, 13.

5. “Jessica Lynch,” *Aftermath with William Shatner*, The Biography Channel, August 23, 2010.

6. ["Former POW Jessica Lynch Recalls Her Captivity in Iraq," \*U.S. News and World Report\*, March 14, 2008.](#)
7. David A. Gerber, "In Search of Al Schmid: War Hero, Blinded Veteran, Everyman," in David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, editors, *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 111-133; Roger Butterfield, "Al Schmid, Hero: Newly Blinded while Killing 200 Japs, He Has Returned to the Girl Who Waited for Him," *Life*, March 22, 1943, 35, and *Al Schmid – Marine* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1944); *Pride of the Marines* (Warner Brothers, 1945, dir. Delmar Daves).
8. Butterfield, *Al Schmid – Marine*, pp. 17, 121, 140, 141.
9. Don M. Wolfe, editor, *The Purple Testament* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1947).
10. Richard H. Frazee, "Homecoming," in Wolfe, ed., *The Purple Testament*, p. 212.
11. Martin F. Norden, *The Cinema of Isolation: A History of Physical Disability in the Movies* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), pp. 145-183; and in this collection, Gerber, "Heroes and Misfits: The Troubled Social Reintegration of Disabled Veterans of World War II in *The Best Years of Our Lives*."
12. Norden, "Bitterness, Rage, and Redemption: Hollywood Constructs the Disabled Vietnam Veteran," in this collection, Ron Kovic, *Born on the Fourth of July* (New York: Pocket Books, 1977); Oliver Stone, dir., *Born on the Fourth of July* (Universal Studios, 1989); Hal Ashby, dir., *Coming Home* (United Artists, 1978). There is a second edition of *Born on the Fourth of July* (New York: Akashic Books, 2005) that contains a new "Introduction" by the author and a postscript.
13. Phil Donohue and Ellen Spiro, dirs., *Body of War* (Phil Donohue and Mobilus Media in association with The Film Sales Company, 2007).
14. Ron Kovic, "Introduction 2005," *Born on the Fourth of July* (second edition), p. 17.
15. Quoted in [Ellen Spiro, "Ron Kovic and Tomas Young," \*Huffpost Entertainment\*, November 10, 2008;](#) Kovic's remarks were made on April 25, 2008.
16. [http://www.smithmag.net/obsessions/2008/04/06/back-home-from-iraq-with-tomas-young.](http://www.smithmag.net/obsessions/2008/04/06/back-home-from-iraq-with-tomas-young)
17. James Sheehan, *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone: The Transformation of Modern Europe* (New York: Mariner Books, 2009).
18. Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2005).
19. Gerald Nicosia, *Home to War: A History of the Vietnam Veterans Movement* (New York: Crown, 2001). Kovic, *Born on the Fourth of July* (second edition), pp. 136-161, 169-181.
20. Kovic placed in nomination Fritz Efav, a draft resister who had spent the war years in Canada, but had returned to the United States; John Hagan, *Northern Passage: American Vietnam War Resisters in Canada* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 172-173. Also, see, Ron Fanucci, "It's All Coming Together for Ron Kovic," *San Francisco Examiner*, June 25, 1978.
21. Put in response to Carolyn Szczepanski, "anti-War Vet Tomas Young Hospitalized," [http://blogs.pitch.com/plob/2008/06/anti\\_war\\_vet\\_tomas\\_young\\_hospit.php](http://blogs.pitch.com/plob/2008/06/anti_war_vet_tomas_young_hospit.php)
22. Evidence of the change in political context between the immediate post-Vietnam era and the time in which *Body of War* was produced is the difficulty Oliver Stone had obtaining financing for the production of *Born on the Fourth of July*. Only four days before Stone was initially set to begin

filming Kovic's story in 1978, investors, who were apprehensive about Kovic's outspoken antiwar politics, withdrew their support. It took Stone eleven years to reassemble the resources needed to film the adaptation. Martin Norden to David Gerber, personal e-mail communication, March 17, 2011.

22. [Dr. Philip S. Chua, "Only Real Men Cry," \*Inquirer Global Nation\*, March 10, 2008.](#)

Acknowledging the new order in emotions, Kleenex for Men (appropriately enough) commissioned a large-scale study of male crying and attitudes toward it in the United Kingdom; Kate Fox, *The Kleenex for Men Crying Game Report: A Study of Men and Crying* (Oxford: The Social Issues Research Centre, 2004).

23. [Robert Fulford, "Male Crying: Now It's Mandatory." \*The National Post \(Toronto\)\*, May 7, 2002; unnamed, "Real Men Don't Cry," December 17, 2010; Audrey Nelson, "The Crying Game," \*Psychology Today\*, January 2, 2011.](#)

24. There is no better treatment of the remarkable notoriety surrounding Lynch in the months after her rescue than Bragg, *I Am a Soldier Too*, pp. 135-203.

25. A comprehensive and often powerfully told record, narrated through the stories of individuals, of women in the Iraq War American military is found in the two volume journalistic reports of Kirsten Holmstedt, *Band of Sisters: American Women at War in Iraq* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2008); and *The Girls Come Marching Home: Stories of Women Warriors Returning from the War in Iraq* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2009). On the roles of women on the battlefield and in a number of other armed forces, see, Lizette Alvarez, "Women at Arms: G.I. Jane Breaks the Combat Barrier," *New York Times*, August 16, 2009; Helena Carrieras, *Gender and the Military: Women in the Armed Forces of Western Democracies* (New York: Routledge, 2006). Among the nations in which women are recruited for and trained to assume some or unlimited combat operation roles are Canada, Israel, Serbia, Germany, France, New Zealand, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland, some of which, of course, are not involved in war and are not likely to be.

26. Bragg, *I Am a Soldier Too*, pp. 48-59; Shoshana with M. L. Doyle, *I'm Still Standing: From Captive U.S. Soldier to Free Citizen – My Journey Home* (New York: Touchstone 2010), pp. 38-39, 47-48, 251-252, 258-259, and passim.

27. United States Army, "Executive Summary," *Attack on the 507<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Company, 23 March 2003, An Nasiriyah, Iraq*, U.S. Army Official Report on 507<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Co., (Draft, Predecisional [July 17, 2003]); Laura Cruz, "507<sup>th</sup> Fought Hard: Official Report Finds 'Acute Fatigue, Isolation, Harsh Environmental Conditions' Contributed to Deaths in Ambush," *El Paso Times*, July 17?, 2003; both at <http://www.why-war.com/files/articles/07102003a.pdf>. (The El Paso Times took special interest in the 507<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Company because it was headquartered at nearby Fort Bliss.) A comprehensive history of combat at An Nasiriyah during that period, early in the war, told from the Marines' perspective is, Richard S. Lowry, *Marines in the Garden of Eden: The True Story of Seven Bloody Days in Iraq* (New York: Berkeley, 2007).

28. Lowry, *Marines in the Garden of Eden*; Bragg, *I Am a Soldier Too*, pp. 79-104, 110-127, 129-134 (rescue). The story of the Iraqi informant is told in his memoir, Mohammed Odeh Al-Rehaief, with Jeff Coplton, *Because Each Life is Precious: Why An Iraqi Man Risked Everything for Private Jessica Lynch* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003). Though the *Saving Jessica Lynch* film was made from Al-Rehaief's perspective, doubts have existed about the integrity of this account. But it has not, to my knowledge, ever been subject to systematic analysis. Among other questions raised about his account are his contentions about Lynch's abuse at Saddam Hospital, which Iraqi doctors and nurses vigorously dispute. It is also claimed that Al-Rehaief takes credit for what might have been intelligence gathered from a number of informants. However, the other informants have never identified themselves or been named; see, "Same Fake Propaganda Lies about a Firefight," <http://chomsky-must-read.blogspot.com/2011/05/chomsky-on-bin-laden-jessica-lynch-lies>

29. Johnson, *I'm Still Standing*, pp. 1-6, 14-18, 25-32, 43-46, 53-59, 69-77, 91-97, 105-113, 119-132, 141-149, 165-209.

30. Susan Schmidt and Vernon Loeb, "She Was Fighting to the Death," *Washington Post*, April 3, 2003.
31. James Bradley with Ron Powers, *Flags of Our Fathers* (New York: Bantam Books, 2000); Parker B. Albee and Keller C. Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi: Raising the Flags on Iwo Jima* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 1995).
32. Bragg, *I Am a Soldier Too*, p. 140.
33. W. Joseph Campbell, " 'She Was Fighting to the Death': Mythmaking in Iraq," in *Getting it Wrong: Ten of the Greatest Misreported Stories in American Journalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), pp. 144-162.
34. Campbell, *Getting It Wrong*, pp. 158-159, 239(n.). The explanation and correction were issued first by brigade commander Col. Heidi Brown, in an interview on National Public Radio on March 23, 2004, as part of an effort to recognize Sergeant Walters' conduct on the battlefield. They then appeared, according to Campbell, in Nicholas Kristof, "Unbearable Emptiness," *New York Times*, July 28, 2004; and Steve Woodward and Paige Parker, "Clearing up the Record," *Oregonian*, November 13, 2003.
35. Bragg, *I Am a Soldier Too*, pp. 152-161, 176-180.
36. Campbell, " 'She Was Fighting to the Death,'" pp. 160, 161-162.
37. [Mark Morford, "The Big Lie of Jessica Lynch," \*San Francisco Chronicle\*, September 5, 2003;](#) [Edward Helmore, "Private Jessica Ryan Says President is Misusing Hero 'Heroism,'" \*The Observer\*, November 9, 2003;](#) [Lynda Hurst, "Jessica Lynch's Story is Turning into a Monster for the Bush Administration," \*Toronto Star\*, November 16, 2003.](#)
38. Bragg, *I Am a Soldier Too*, pp. 142, 198.
39. Jose Martinez and Megan Rellahan, *Edgar Hernandez, POW: An American Hero* (Los Angeles: Ocean Breeze Books, 2008), pp. 13, 38, 44-45.
40. M. L. Doyle, "Acknowledgments," Johnson, *I'm Still Standing*, p. ix.
41. Johnson, *I'm Still Standing*, pp. 255-259; Lee Hockstader, "Insult to Injury: Raw Deal for Jessica Lynch's Black Comrade-in-Arms," *Washington Post*, October 25, 2003.
42. Nancy Etcoff, *Survival of the Prettiest: The Science of Beauty* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), p. 39.
43. Bragg, *I Am a Soldier Too*, p. 154.
44. Etcoff, *Survival of the Prettiest*, p. 139, and on blond hair color, pp. 104-106, 126-128.
45. Bragg, *I Am a Soldier Too*, pp. 15, 23, 24, 32, 33, 102, 122, 123, 171.
46. Etcoff, *Survival of the Prettiest*, p. 149.
47. Etcoff, *Survival of the Prettiest*, p. 154.
48. Bragg, *I Am a Soldier Too*, pp. 14, 15, 24, 27, 28, 35, 37, 40.
49. Bragg, *I Am a Soldier Too*, p. 169.
50. Susan Faludi, "Precious Little Jessi," in *The Terror Dream: Fear and Fantasy in Post-9/11 America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007), pp. 165-195. Also, see Deppa Kumar, "War



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