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"Blood, sperm and tears"¹

Sexual Violence in War

The societal condemnation of sexual crimes as a war-time practice is slowly growing as the victims raise the courage to speak out.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, February 20, 2001:

Brigadier General Tono Suratnam reportedly raped at least one woman in East Timor. Suratnam, now stationed in Jakarta, served as commander in East Timor from June 1998 until August 1999. Before the Timorese voted for independence from Indonesia in a referendum on August 30, 1999, Jakarta's soldiers and police perpetrated ... thousands of crimes against humanity there ... Rape, the crime the general is suspected of having committed, was a widespread tactic employed by the Indonesian forces to control rebellious provinces in the world's largest island state. In East Timor, there were 'rape houses', such as the former Tropical Motel in Dili, where women who were not yet eighteen were kept as 'sex slaves' for soldiers of all ranks...

Esmeralda Boe and Morta Abu Bare are from East Timor and are old enough to be the grandmothers of the teenage Timorese girls. In December 2000, shortly before the German newspaper article cited above appeared, they testified before the International Tokyo Tribunal on the sexual crimes committed by the Japanese military during World War II², reporting on what they had been subjected to as children more than fifty years ago. The Japanese abducted an estimated 200 000 girls and women from various countries in East Asia and brought them to the Japanese theaters of war, in order to provide 'comfort' to their soldiers. The Japanese term for comfort is *jan*. An English-German dictionary also refers to "soldier's comfort" and translates this phrase as *Liebesgabe* [gift of love]³ – an indication that the practice of providing soldiers with coerced sexual intercourse is not a Japanese invention.

With respect to the issue of retribution for the 'comfort women', the Japanese government is playing for time, hoping that a phenomenon for which they do not intend to take responsibility, will be past history. But this strategy is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain. The Tokyo Tribunal, public perceptions of UN reports on recent incidents in East Timor and, most importantly, the February 2001 decisions of the international court in the Hague in the 'Foca Trial'³, according to which rape must be sanctioned as a war crime – all these events are evidence that sexual violence against women, as a

virtually ever-present phenomenon of past and current wars⁴, has recently become the focus of increased public attention.

It would seem that sexual violence against women does not become a topic of public discussion until women who were its victims have an opportunity to speak out.

Until the late nineteen sixties, there were widely held views that talk of rape was more or less interspersed with hysterical female fantasies, that such acts were provoked, consciously or unconsciously, by women, and that they were perpetrated by sick or criminal individuals.⁵ It was not until the early nineteen seventies that feminist authors, among them Susan Brownmiller, Germaine Greer, Susan Griffin, and Kate Millett, countered these widely held views with a radically different perspective. In books like *Against our will* (Brownmiller), *Sex and domination* (Millett), and *Rape: the all-American crime* (Griffin) they pointed out the extent to which rape was an everyday occurrence and the function of sexual violence as a means of stabilizing hierarchical gender relations in times of peace and war. The work of these authors was empirically underpinned with the personal accounts of women who felt encouraged in revealing their experiences because of the women's movement. In 1971, Susan Griffin concluded that

Rape is an act of aggression in which the victim is denied her self-determination. It is an act of violence which, if not actually followed by beatings or murder, nevertheless always carries with it the threat of death. And finally, rape is a form of mass terrorism, for the victims of rape are chosen indiscriminately.⁶

In the nineteen eighties discussion centered on the cultural constructions of femininity and masculinity which form the basis for the hegemonic relations between the sexes referred to above.⁷ Feminist scholars defined the category of gender, as a socially and culturally determined identity, as opposed to sex, a biological category, and asked how anatomical differences could be employed to justify a supposedly natural and ahistorical hegemonic relationship.⁸ Miriam Engelhardt argues that the notion that men *have* a body whereas women *are* a body leads to the conclusion that a man, as a subject, has a relationship to his body, can control or manipulate it or use it as an instrument or weapon, whereas a woman is equivalent to her body; the essential core of herself is regarded as being inside her body. Men can injure, women are perceived as vulnerable. Female sexuality must be protected, because it can be robbed, as if it were an independent body part. By assigning men the power to injure and women the susceptibility to be injured, women's status as victim and men's status as protector become naturally given constants.⁹ Revealing that these are cultural constructions does not limit their potency in the social realities which affect real bodies; however, it does open the way for new perspectives. Knowledge of these constructions can be useful tools for examining the myths and narratives written into gender constructions, according to which, for example, men achieve honor by defending their own women in war or "conquering" their enemies' women. What are the dangers that men defend their women against, how do such conquests take place, and what purpose do they serve?

If sexual violence in wartime has increasingly come into focus since the mid-nineteen nineties, then this has been due, for the most part, to the fact that witnesses of such violence from the former Yugoslavia and from the countries

in which the Japanese coerced women into becoming "comfort women" have begun speaking, with the support and encouragement of other women activists.

These witnesses speak to a male *and* female public, presenting their experience as an experience of *war*. This is not a matter of course for

although women are affected by war – not in the same way, but just as much as men – they are not authorized to speak about war and the military in our culture. As historiography has shown, when wars are over, male experience in wartime is incorporated into cultural memory, whereas female experience is not.¹⁰

Female experience is banished to a gray zone of the private.

Belligerent acts of warfare are not acted out solely between enemy soldiers, they are also directed purposefully against the civilian population, against women, children, and old people. Prior to the wars in the former Yugoslavia, there was no systematic investigation of the kinds of belligerent acts perpetrated against female civilians. Thus, although the Japanese army's attack on Nanking has gone down in history as the "rape of Nanking," the fact that this was not merely a metaphoric rape but real mass rape and murder of the cities' women was not recognized and the question of what this kind of violence reveals about the way in which war is conducted was not considered until very recently.¹¹ Women's reports substantiate that sexual violence is a regular component of acts of war, rather than a unavoidable secondary phenomenon associated with the "exceptional state" which is war. Sexual humiliation, coerced prostitution, rape, and mass rape are part of the planning of warfare, despite the fact that individual soldier's motives for perpetrating these forms of violence may be very diverse. During the Tokyo Tribunal, a "Public Hearing on Crimes against Women in Recent Wars and Conflicts"¹² also took place, with women from various countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America presenting testimony. Despite the difficulties encountered in finding a vocabulary appropriate to recounting such occurrences, these women succeeded in describing very precisely what they had experienced.¹³ To date there are no comparative studies which focus on possible differences in the ways in which sexual violence is perpetrated in different kinds of war and in different theaters of war, with their different historical and cultural backgrounds. The statements made by these women from a number of different countries and continents are instead characterized by their striking similarity.

Kin Young Suk, former Korean "comfort woman," describes how she was treated by the Japanese officer Nakomora:

'You Korean girl, you are pretty, let us have a little fun.' But I was only twelve years old and had no idea what 'Let us have a little fun' meant. Nakomora took out his penis and he undressed me and I was so afraid. He forced me to lie on the floor and injured me with his bayonet and I bled. He took off my pants and raped me until I bled.¹⁴

From this report we can conclude that Officer Nakomora had equal "fun" with all these acts, the verbal and physical torment as well as the sexual act of penetration.

The system of "comfort stations" as well as the military brothels elsewhere was a system of sexual slavery in which women were not only sexually exploited, but also subjected to severe physical abuse and not infrequently murdered. Christa Paul notes that the term coerced prostitution tends to obscure the true nature of this form of violence by suggesting a residue of voluntary participation on the part of the women; in the case recounted above, the officer cynically demands this form of participation.¹⁵ The soldiers who "made use of the girls' services" stood in line in front of the "comfort stations"¹⁶ and were aware that they were involved in a form of mass rape. Just as in this instance a bayonet was used, so did many soldiers use their weapons to abuse the women physically during rape. Joanna Bourke refers to the role of the bayonet during military training:

More robust forms of military training had to be used to encourage men to hate. During the First World War, Second World War, and (even) during the Vietnam War, the bayonet drill was, as we have seen, widely used to 'awaken savage instincts'.¹⁷

An Algerian witness at the hearing reported on events from the year 1995 and the fundamentalist practice of 'mutaa marriage' as a 'temporary marriage of pleasure,' a euphemism which, like Nakamora's talk of "fun," may include the presumption that the act of violence arouses not only pain and fear in the victim, but pleasure as well:

They covered my face and I could not see anything. They also ordered me not to look at them. They shouted at me 'you should be ashamed'. They raped me in turn shouting rude words. I was screaming, my children could hear me but they could not do anything. They raped me. My body was bleeding because of all the beating. But this did not upset them. They kept insulting and beating me while raping me.¹⁸

Here, rape and beatings are linked to gestures of demonstrative humiliation, a phenomenon repeatedly reported on by witnesses from other theaters of war – covering the face or blindfolding, relatives forced to witness or even participate in these acts, such as fathers forced to rape their daughters.

In 1999, a witness from Burundi was first the victim of sexual violence perpetrated by rebels and later abused by government soldiers whom she had expected to come to her aid:

They ... tied my arms and legs open on four trees like Jesus on the cross. I was shaking, crying, praying ... One person went on kissing every part of my body paying no attention to my cryings or expressing my anger loudly ... He quietly penetrated me with his penis so hard that I thought he had used a knife instead. He ejaculated on me and I started vomiting again. The first person left me there and I was hoping to be dead in the following minute. Then another person did the same thing ... He was telling me how my ethnic group had done so many bad things to him and to his family that he will do the same to everybody he meets until his death ... One day, after their normal 'homework' of raping me, they told me that they would take me to my 'brothers' meaning the government soldiers and that I should not say anything about what I saw there.

After reaching a government military post, the witness hoped to be "in good hands" but was instead

left with one person who asked me to have sex with him. He threatened if I did not, he will take me back to the rebels ... He then tied me up like the previous group of people, forced himself on me and raped me ... The second person came and did the same and the third person ... ¹⁹

The coercive gestures of tenderness appear to fuel the perpetrators lust as much as the talk of revenge accompanying the acts and the certainty that after handing over the victim to her presumed protectors, she would be subjected to further abuse.

A witness from Bangladesh recounts her realization that she was tormented with pleasure, as a way of increasing the terror:

Suddenly I saw them looking at me with lust. I have seen such expressions so often. I started struggling against them, they slapped me ... Pakistan army officers including some non-Bangalis and Bangalis who supported the army tortured me during the entire period of the war. I was gang raped twice.

And she emphasizes: "I am not only a victim of rape or violence, I am a victim to the atrocities committed by the Pakistan army and their collaborators during the war of 1971." ²⁰ Thus, she names a further possible motive for the abuse she has experienced. In Bangladesh, as in Bosnia years later, women were intentionally raped in order to make them pregnant – a strategy of warfare which has been the focus of international legal discussion in recent years. ²¹

Although these statements do not permit us to conclude unequivocally whether perpetrators merely use penetration as an extreme form of physical abuse or whether these acts evoke sexual arousal and heighten it in a special way, in my view, what is decisive for women is the experience that the perpetrators are capable of either kind of act and that when women are considered enemies in the context of war, they are forced to endure the instrumental use of male sexuality as abuse. "The element of truth behind all this, which people are so ready to disavow, is that men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved, and who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result," Freud goes on, "their neighbour is for them ... also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, ... to use him sexually without his consent, ... to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him." ²² When individuals – for the most part women but at times also men, ²³ a fact which is treated as a special taboo – become victims of sexual violence in war, this is what happens, in this sequence and combination.

The commanders of armies, for example Emperor Hirohito as the commander-in-chief of the Japanese Army in the Asian-Pacific war, ²⁴ knew and know what occurs. We do not have to assume that military strategists draw up plans behind closed doors for utilizing this "temptation" militarily. Nonetheless, we can demonstrate that this phenomenon is incorporated into military schemes and employed strategically at many sites of warfare. Although there is as yet a lack of sufficient research on these questions, there

are indications that what has been substantiated for Japan and the former Yugoslavia may also have occurred in Nazi Germany.²⁵

Kevin Gerard Neill even goes so far as to assert: "Like any rifle or shell, rape in war assumes the level of being a weapon. It serves a specific military purpose. ... raping the women of a defeated people or nation becomes part of the effort to destroy them."²⁶ Rape is an attack on the property and powers of control of one's male adversary, one which permanently irritates the social fabric, dehumanizes the enemy and plays out ethnic identities against one another.²⁷ The hypothesis supported by Susan Griffin²⁸ and others, namely, that the rape of women is directed primarily against male adversaries highlights how such military strategies fundamentally degrade women to objects. The concrete sexual attack on a concrete female body is blended out, the victim and the actual act disappear. But, as Susan Brownmiller notes, women are not only targets of wartime violence because they belong to the enemy, but also because they themselves, with their reproductive and sexual capacities and vulnerabilities, are the enemy. They are raped because rape is meant to underpin male dominance and female subordination. And finally, they are a target because they secure the restoration of civilian life after war has ended.

Both Griffin and Brownmiller adhere to the notion of the instrumental utilization of sexual violence, but this concept does not explain all the elements which emerge from the accounts of both women survivors and soldiers. Thus, an answer to the controversial question²⁹ of whether acts of sexual violence during war are acts of pure violence, of sexual violence, or of sexuality coerced with violence might possibly be ascertained by examining the accounts of victims and perpetrators. This question is so pertinent because the answer to it should prove relevant to a further question: is this a form of violence which is produced by war as an "exceptional state" and which employs sexuality coincidentally or are more or less clearly manifest predispositions found in civilian life expressed during war in a more extreme form. Rhonda Copelon argues that, although it is not possible to make a direct connection between the conscious and strategically employed practice of rape as a weapon in war and rape as it occurs in peace time in both the public and the private sphere, war increases the brutality of rape, reduces the sensitivity about human suffering, and promotes feelings of male superiority. But these distinctions are not so clear. Characteristic of gang rape in civilian life, just as in wartime, is its occurrence in public, its repeated and open triumph over the victim. When rape occurs within marriage, Copelon goes on, then the same thing happens as observed in Bosnia: this kind of rape is brutal, occurs repeatedly, denies women control over their powers of reproduction and may cause her to leave her home. And both kinds of rape are far from being subject to effective social and legal sanctions. Rape, wherever it occurs, is an attack on one's identity, one's self-perception, and the certainty of one's own being, something previously taken for granted. It is an attack not only on the body and bodily integrity, but also on one's sense of being at home in a community, one's sense of trust in interpersonal relationships, Copelon concludes.³⁰

What is so obvious is nonetheless often overlooked: the answers of the victims differ from those of the perpetrators. The social practice of treating rape as an open secret, as something which one talks about without saying who and what one is talking about, serves not only to ward off questions about causes and motives for rape, it also creates an atmosphere of shame, shame which is a burden piled onto the women who have already been humiliated, which isolates them and prevents them from defending themselves against the

injustice inflicted upon them. In a bizarre twist, they become the guilty ones, responsible for the soiled honor of the family or the community. They face the threat of being driven out.

In Tokyo women like Maxima Dela Cruz from the Philippines and Teng-Kao Pao Chu from Taiwan recounted how war destroyed their lives: "We came home in tears. We couldn't tell anyone., for we would have been killed. It was so shameful and so we dug a deep hole and buried it." "I lost my life. I was viewed as a filthy woman. I had nothing to keep my head above water with and the job prospects were very limited. I suffered terribly." ³¹

Only now, fifty years later, are the women able to speak about their experiences. Many of those who shared their plight have died in the meantime, many have committed suicide, many remain silent to this day. But speech is the prerequisite for putting feelings of rage against the perpetrators to use for oneself, for perceiving depression as a normal, not a crazy reaction, and for actively dealing with the psychological and physical effects resulting from these events – in other words, the prerequisite for assuming the status of a survivor, rather than a victim.

Speaking about traumatic experience takes courage – the violation of intimacy must be revealed in public, memory can trigger flashbacks, one can expect to meet with substantial resistance and attacks on one's credibility.

Men also speak about their wartime experience and describe the deformations incurred in war. In his book *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*,³² American psychiatrist Jonathan Shay describes the "military folk culture that makes dehumanization of the enemy a self-evident, necessary truth"³³ (203) and transforms soldiers into potential berserkers: "I didn't care if I lived or died. I just wanted blood. I just wanted revenge, and I didn't care. I didn't see myself going home. No ... nope ... no, I didn't." ³⁴ (52) For Shay, his patients are severely traumatized victims of this type of warfare – a view which one can comprehend. But the author fails to discuss two aspects: the fact that these soldiers committed acts of excessive violence against women and what the effects of this violence were on the soldiers' psyche. In a passage entitled "Suffered exclusively or primarily by women after defeat", Shay begins by quoting Adrienne Rich:

Rape is a part of war; but it may be more accurate to say that the capacity for dehumanizing another which so corrodes male sexuality is carried over from sex into war. The chant of the basic training drill: 'This is my rifle, this is my gun [cock]; This is for killing, this is for fun' is not a piece of bizarre brainwashing invented by some infantry sergeant's fertile imagination; it is a recognition of the fact that when you strike the chord of sexuality in the ... [male] psyche, the chord of violence is likely to vibrate in response; and vice versa. ³⁵ (133)

Shay overlooks the potential impact of this radical statement by describing as a consequence what Rich has interpreted as a prerequisite and by failing to consider – throughout the book – what might have induced these, for the most part very young and often sexually inexperienced, GIs to commit acts of excessive sexual violence:

Likewise the soldier inflicts lifelong injuries on himself when he makes rape or rape–murder part of his war ... The overwhelming majority of combat veterans whom I have known are painfully of the absence of intimacy, tenderness, light playfulness, or easy mutuality in their sex lives.³⁶ (134–135)

Shay does not take up the fact that soldiers in Vietnam actively lived a form of sexuality which was hardly compatible with feeling of intimacy and tenderness, but instead describes a flashback of the terrors experienced: "For many, sex is as sure a trigger of intrusive recollection and emotion from Vietnam as the sound of explosions or the smell of a corpse. Sex and anger are so intertwined that they often cannot conceive of tender, uncoerced sex that is free of rage."³⁷ (135) In a section entitled "Pissing contests", he appeals to the victims of the victims:

One would think that severe psychological injury would give rise naturally to shared compassion and mutual respect among the many diverse groups of trauma survivors, such as have lived through genocide, political torture, domestic battering, incest, war, abusive religious cults, and coerced prostitution. Unfortunately, it has not.³⁸ (205)

What Shay overlooks in his work is revealed in the interviews with Vietnam veterans cited in Mark Baker's *Nam: the Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women who Fought There*³⁹ with a degree of clarity which suggests what a relief it must have been for the soldiers to speak about this kind of experience. A similar motive may have lead former Japanese soldiers to testify before the Tokyo Tribunal. Although this testimony was presented before an audience of both sexes,⁴⁰ it seems to me that the statements were addressed to male, rather than female hearers.

Yoshio Suzuki:

As the head of an artillery unit I myself allowed the soldiers after an operation in 1944 to 'do as they pleased.' In a group of older women I met a woman who was about thirty. I sent the others away – she tried to get away by way of the toilettes. Seeing her like that heightened by sexual arousal. I undressed her, she was naked and I raped her brutally, beat her with my rifle. She couldn't defend herself, she was shaking, her face was white, and she was speechless, she obeyed me without contradiction.⁴¹

Suzuki describes an experienced and lived–out connotation of an act of violence with sexual pleasure which was officially sanctioned in civilian life and partially tolerated in war. It appears that this occurrence continues to cause him feelings of shame today, but this is shame he feels toward himself and not toward the victims. Perhaps the victims were so frequently killed after being raped because their tormenters exposed themselves to their victims in this way.

One Vietnam veteran describes how "hate and frustration" were vented on a Vietnamese girl in the presence of her father:

She was crying. I think she was a virgin. We pulled her pants down and put a gun to her head ... I was taking her body by

force. Guys were standing over her with rifles, while I was screwing her ... Baby-san, she was crying. So a guy just put a rifle to her head and pulled the trigger just to put her out of the picture ... That's what the hatred, the frustration was. After we raped her, we took her cherry from her, after we shot her in the head, you understand what I'm saying, we literally started stomping her body.⁴²

Whereas the horror about oneself is palpable in this account of the escalation of violence, the laconic "nature is nature" of other statements can perhaps be interpreted as an attempt to ward off such reactions:

You take a group of men and put them in a place where there are no round-eyed women. They are in an all-male environment. Let's face it. Nature is nature. There are women available. Those women are of another culture, another color, another society. You don't want a prostitute. You've got an M-16. What do you need to pay for a lady for? You go down to the village and you take what you want.⁴³

Another witness at the Tokyo Tribunal, the former Japanese soldier Yasugi Kaneko presents a logical motive which he subordinated himself to and which was horrifying in its consequences for the murdered woman:

We still had the slogan 'Have more babies, future soldiers and mothers' in our heads and when I went into combat, the commanding officers ordered 'Kill the women, kill the children! For as adults they will be our adversaries!' I was supposed to kill children and might have died any minute myself, so I raped women. If you are supposed to kill women, you might as well rape them, right.⁴⁴

Vietnam veteran Sergeant Mac Custer "made love *and* war:"

They were supposed to go after what they called a Viet Cong whore. They went into the village and instead of capturing her, they raped her – every man raped her. As a matter of fact one man said to me later that it was the first time he had ever made love to a woman with his boots on ... But at any rate, they raped the girl, and then, the last man to make love to her shot her in the head.⁴⁵

Military schemes based on the notion that the soldiers' potential for violence might be released and channeled as described above to combat the enemy and the motives of the soldiers themselves for perpetrating sexual violence do not necessarily coincide. They can also run counter to one another in grotesque ways, as in the case described by Joanna Bourke.⁴⁶ During the My Lai massacre on March 16, 1968, in the course of which women were raped and slaughtered in the most atrocious ways, Lieutenant William L. Calley becomes enraged, as he later related in his autobiographical observations *Body Counts*, upon encountering the soldier Dennis Conti, who was forcing a young Vietnamese mother to perform oral sex on him. He orders him to put on his "damned underpants." Calley later considers what enraged him so much about this occurrence:

Rape: In Vietnam it's a very common thing ... I guess lots of girls would rather be raped than killed anytime. So why was I being saintly about it? Because: if a GI is getting a blow job, he isn't doing his job. He isn't destroying communism ... Our mission in My Lai wasn't perverted, though. It was simply 'Go and destroy it'. ... No difference now: if a GI is getting gain, he isn't doing what we are paying him for. He isn't combat-effective.⁴⁷

Dennis Conti, who thought he was realizing his right to the spoils of war and enjoying sex was mistaken; he was expected to employ his capacity to perpetrate sexual violence in the interests of "combat-effectiveness."

Soldiers must be trained, conditioned to kill in the theaters of war; ideally, this occurs while they are still in training, but in the case of Vietnam, there was often not enough time.⁴⁸ Some may have acquired the necessary capabilities in the course of their male socialization.⁴⁹ But not every eighteen year old GI joins the army as a Rambo or John Wayne – to name only two of the most influential, even though quite diverse reference figures, named for example by the Vietnam veterans interviewed by Mark Baker. Frank Barrett, an American professor for Systems Management, has utilized life history interviews with officers of the US Navy to study the "organizational construction of hegemonic masculinity,"⁵⁰ a construction aimed at conditioning soldiers to kill. That the notion of occupying a hegemonic position with respect to others can be produced with the help of racist ideologies is an accepted and familiar thought. Hate training,⁵¹ in which the adversary is degraded to the level of an inferior, threatening, despicable other, serves to eliminate the barriers to killing. What is lacking are studies which focus on the significance of the observation that, in practice, this inferior, threatening entity, this other from which one must distance oneself, is for the most part female and the male adversary is therefore also classified as effeminate. Barrett describes how military training utilizes gender constructions. Being a soldier means being a man and being a man means not only being tough, disciplined, and competent, but especially not being female. The jargon of the soldiers and the drill instructors is replete with sexist language. It is no wonder that this contributes to producing real hatred of women, an emotion which can be awakened at any time, particularly in combat situations. Barrett also points out that, ultimately,

every gender regime has internal contradictions between ideology and practice ... For example, if the hegemonic ideal of masculinity involves an image of rugged heterosexuality, independence, and toughness, how do these men carve out an identity in an organizational world in which much day-to-day work neither demands nor allows for these displays?⁵²

And the author describes how the interviewed men deal with this conflict, the contradictions between the demands of military routine – willingness to subordinate themselves, toleration of dependence and group pressure – and the perceived limited opportunities for acting out the hegemonic model of masculinity. They compete as individuals to prove they are the most persevering and in groups – for example aviators (highest in the hierarchy) versus Marines versus supply personell (lowest status in the hierarchy) – to demonstrate that they are most combat-effective and competent, thus reaffirming and reinforcing their masculinity within the male association which is the military. Jonathan Shay goes one step farther and points out that the gender system is transferred to the army: "Armies, like families, are

institutions that create a world. Both successfully engender the new member's respect, loyalty, love, affirmation, gratitude, and obedience."⁵³ Shay describes the features of rules for organizing processes of exclusion and inclusion and subordination within the army as family, "whether the new member experiences them as benign or malevolent."⁵⁴ The close relationship to fellow soldiers compensates for the absence of women: "The terror and the privation of combat bonds men in a passion of care that the word *brother* only partly captures. Men become mothers to one another in combat."⁵⁵

The absence of women as sexual partners, which Shay does not discuss, is compensated for by women's devaluation and sexuality is reduced to sexual potency. In the accounts of soldiers, there are repeated references to how the use of a weapon and the experience of combat become means for reaffirming one's sense of sexual prowess. Mark Baker writes: "A gun is a power. To some people carrying a gun constantly was like having a permanent hard on. It was a pure sexual trip every time you got to pull the trigger."⁵⁶ Joanna Bourke quotes: "The experience seemed to resemble spiritual enlightenment or sexual eroticism: indeed, slaughter could be likened to an orgasmic, charismatic experience. However you looked at it, war was a 'turn on'."⁵⁷

What remains to be investigated is whether such orgiastic experiences serve to compensate for the actual absence of a female sexual partner and thus, the lack of opportunities to reaffirm one's potency as a vital life expression. It is also possible that such experiences contribute to compensating for the contradiction which results from the demands made on soldiers, i.e. that they prove their worth in enacting both the hegemonic–masculine and the familial–feminine roles. The reaffirmation of sexual potency through combat and the possession of a weapon is counteracted by the deathly danger of combat. What may function with relative ease on the drill yard becomes a precarious affair in wartime. The confrontation with fear, an emotion stigmatized as unmanly, is unavoidable; dependence on a responsible and competent boss and a good buddy is a question of life or death. "The mortal dependence of the modern soldier on the military organization for everything he needs to survive is as great as that of a small child on his or her parents,"⁵⁸ writes Jonathan Shay. This dependence is linked to feelings of powerlessness which also contradict the hegemonic masculine self–image. Experiencing feelings stigmatized as womanish or childish, in keeping with negative or exclusionary aims, is perceived as failure and these emotions can turn to hatred of women, mothers and lovers, so sorely missed in just such a situation. If this interpretation is true, then the following statement of a Vietnam veteran, a statement which first seems so bizarre, makes sense: "The U.S. Army [in Vietnam] was like a mother who sold out her kids to be raped by [their] father to protect her own interests."⁵⁹

When fear and dependence turn to rage and rage turns to hatred, which is vented in turn in aggression, then the model of hegemonic masculine identity is at least partially fulfilled. This is a process of transformation which is difficult to achieve individually, which calls for a group or person to relate to (the buddy), someone who reflects the individual, reaffirms him, and supports him. In a live–threatening situation, soldiers who are extremely dependent on one another commit gang rape, reaffirm in the group their sexual potency and their capacity to overcome fear, with its feminine connotations. The Double Veteran, the veteran who not only rapes women but has also killed them, has proven himself: he has overcome fear in this kind of "SOP" – Standard Operating Procedure. From his perspective, the act of violence has emerged in an emergency situation; this view follows the logic in civilian life, according to

which women themselves provoke rape when they question the perpetrator's masculinity. Perhaps this is why the men's statements do not appear to be addressed to women. In this kind of survival strategy, women are excluded as subjects; they are, as quoted above, bodies.

The Japanese historian Yoshimi Yoshiaki describes the soldiers' situation. His description matches the situation in other theaters of war – for example Vietnam – where the consequences were similar.

In the Japanese military, soldiers were treated very badly and their rights as human beings were ignored. As the war dragged on, they found themselves in the increasingly desperate situation of not knowing when the war, which had taken them from Japan to China and which made no sense to them, would end. They didn't know what they were fighting for. Their negative feelings increased constantly and the commanders feared that this attitude might spread among the officers. The military administration came to the conclusion that establishing 'comfort stations' might prove effective.⁶⁰

The logic of the military leadership takes into account that the violence and frustration experienced by soldiers may vent itself as excessive sexual or other violence against civilians. The relief which comfort stations in Japan and military brothels in Vietnam and in the areas controlled by the German Wehrmacht were supposed to provide not an opportunity to suppress potential explosions of violence, but rather to channel and control them. Soldiers are conceded opportunities to exercise sexual power because this power contributes to stabilizing combat moral, the willingness to endure the fear of death, and the willingness to kill.

The relief provided here is not the result of counteracting frustration with sexual pleasure – independent of whether or not the individual soldier perceives it as such – but results instead from the triumph of sexual potency over death. This triumph rules the following scene, in which the body of a dead Vietcong is desecrated:

They had propped the corpse against some C-rations, placed sunglasses across his eyes and a cigarette in his mouth, and balanced a 'large and perfectly formed' piece of shit on his head ... I kept my officer's face on, but inside I was ... laughing. I laughed – I believe now – in part because of some subconscious appreciation of this obscene linkage of sex and excrement and death; and in part because of the exultant realization that he – whoever he had been – was dead and I – special, unique, me – was alive.⁶¹

Since the readiness to kill and be killed makes potential heroes out of men, the reaffirmation of their sexual potency, as the prerequisite for their capacity to kill, cannot simply be subjected to negative sanctions. Whatever runs counter to military goals is sanctioned and is then considered a crime against honor. Talk about sexual violence, in everyday life and in theoretical discourse, is itself a cultural and political process which in turn affects this phenomenon. One sometimes hears the objection that it is impossible to talk about the details of sexual violence without potentially provoking a pornographic interest. This objection highlights the need to focus on and discredit this pornographic reception and to talk publicly about details in order to defuse myths and taboos

which work counter to this aim.

The recent trial against perpetrators of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia before the International War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague has been a breakthrough on several levels. It was the first such trial dealing exclusively with rape and sexual violence during war. The proceedings considered severe abuse of Muslim women in the Bosnian town of Foca. On February 22, 2001, head judge Florence Mumba announced the judgement: the three main defendants were sentenced to twenty–eight, twenty and twelve years in prison.

"I wish I could have seen the perplexity in the faces of the men, perplexity resulting from the contradiction between what they thought they had done and what was categorized by the court as constituting a crime against humanity," wrote Slavenka Drakulic. She points out that with this decision an unspoken social contract has come into question, according to which sexual violence in wartime is not a war crime but must be viewed as a marginal side effect of the moral brutalization caused by war. The witnesses' courage in breaking the silence and subjecting themselves to re–experiencing the terrors they have survived was what opened the way to this turnaround.

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- ¹ This is the title Gertrud Koch choose for her essay in the journal *October* 72 (1995), 27–42.
- ² Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery, Tokyo, December 8–12, 2000.
- ³ The 'Foca Trial' refers to a trial before the UN Tribunal on War Crimes in former Yugoslavia, convened in the Hague.
- ⁴ Surveys can be found in Dorothy Q. Thomas, Regan E. Ralph, Rape in War: "Challenging the Tradition of Impunity," *SAIS, A Journal of International Affairs*, vol. XIV, no. 1 (winter–spring 1994); Women's Caucus for Gender Justice (ed.), *Public Hearing on Crimes against Women in Recent Wars and Conflicts: A Compilation of Testimony* (Tokyo and New York, 2000).
- ⁵ Cf. Charlene L. Muehlenhard, Sharon Danoff–Burg, and Irene G. Powch, "Is Rape Sex or Violence? Conceptual Issues and Implications," In *Sex, Power, Conflict. Evolutionary and Feminist Perspectives*, edited by David M. Buss and Neil M. Malamuth (New York, 1996).
- ⁶ Susan Griffin, "Rape, the All–American Crime," *Ramparts* 10, no. 3 (Sept. 1971): 35.
- ⁷ A survey can be found in Ruth Seifert, "Militär und Geschlechterverhältnisse. Entwicklungslinien einer ambivalenten Debatte," In *Soziale Konstruktionen – Militär und Geschlechterverhältnis*, edited by Christine Eifler and Ruth Seifert (Münster, 1999), 44–70.
- ⁸ Theorists such as Judith Butler have moved beyond this view to assert that biological sex is also a social construction and thus subject to social change. The implications of this deconstructionist approach to sex and gender when considering sexual violence in war have not been studied to date; authors who have considered sexual violence more generally in this perspective are Sharon Marcus, Renée Heberle and others.
- ⁹ Miriam Engelhardt, "Vergewaltigung. Zur ordnungsstiftenden Funktion der Thematisierung von weiblicher Verletzungsoffenheit und männlicher Verletzungsmacht" (unpublished paper, Hamburg 2000).
- ¹⁰ Ruth Seifert, "Militär", 48.
- ¹¹ Cf., among others, Iris Chang, *Die Vergewaltigung von Nanking. Das Massaker in der chinesischen Hauptstadt am Vorabend des Zweiten Weltkriegs*, (Zürich, 1999).
- ¹² Women's Caucus for Gender Justice (ed.), *Public Hearing on Crimes against Women in Recent Wars and Conflicts: A Compilation of Testimonies* (Tokyo and New York, December 2000).
- ¹³ Thus, Hyunah Yang, a member of the South Korean "testimony team" at the Tokyo Tribunal, points out that the term rape was unknown to Korean survivors at the time they were raped. In their studies of the accounts of the memories of Holocaust survivors, Joan Ringelheim ["Genocide and Gender: A Split Memory," In *Gender and Catastrophy*, edited by Ronit Lentin (London 1997), 18–35] and Fionnuala Ni Aolain ["Sex–Based Violence and the Holocaust: A Reevaluation of Harms and Rights in International Law," *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* (12/2000):43–84] conclude that a much more differentiated language must be found to describe appropriately sexual violence perpetrated against women.

- 14 This and the following passages quoted from the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery (Tokyo, December 8–12, 2000) are taken from a tape recording of the witnesses' statements simultaneously translated from their native languages into English. This recorded version was translated from English into German and transcribed by Gaby Zipfel. The passages cited here have been re-translated from this German version into English. Such quotes are cited hereafter as: Tokyo Tribunal, G.Z.
- 15 For a discussion of this term, see Christa Paul "Vergewaltigungslager als Instrument der Kriegsführung" In *Zwangsprostitution von Frauen in bewaffneten Konflikten*, In *Kriegsverbrechen und Menschenrechtsverletzung*, edited by Terre des Femmes (Bonn 2001).
- 16 Photograph reprinted in Yoshimi Yoshiaki, *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military during World War II* (New York 1995), 130.
- 17 Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face-to-Face Killing in Twentieth Century Warfare* (London 1999), 153.
- 18 Public Hearing, 8.
- 19 Public Hearing, 11, 12.
- 20 Public Hearing, 53, 53.
- 21 Cf., among others, Anne Tierney Goldstein, *Recognizing Forced Impregnation as a War Crime under International Law*, (New York: Center for Reproductive Law and Policy, 1993). On dealing with the children resulting from such rapes, see Charli Carpenter, "Surfacing Children: Limitations of Genocidal Rape Discourse," *Human Rights Quarterly* 22 (2000): 428–477.
- 22 Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, in *Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XXI, trans. James Strachey and Anna Freud (London: Hogarth Press: 1964), 111.
- 23 According to recent reports, this has occurred in Chechenya, cf. Lipkan Basajewa, "Wer vergewaltigt wird, schweigt, Russische Soldaten mißbrauchen in Tschetschenien auch Männer," *die tageszeitung*, August 6, 2001: 6.
- 24 The experts testifying before the Tokyo Tribunal were able to prove this fact and [Rest des Satzes unleserlich.]
- 25 Cf. Birgit Beck, "Vergewaltigung von Frauen als Strategie im Zweiten Weltkrieg?" In *Gewalt im Krieg. Ausübung, Erfahrung und Verweigerung von Gewalt in Kriegen des 20. Jahrhunderts, Jahrbuch für Historische Friedensforschung 4*, edited by Andreas Gestrich (Münster 1996), 34–50; Insa Meinen, "Wehrmacht und Prostitution – Zur Reglementierung der Geschlechterbeziehungen durch die deutsche Militärverwaltung im besetzten Frankreich 1940–1944," *1999. Zeitschrift für Sozialgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts* 14 (1999): 35–55; Franz Seidler, *Prostitution. Homosexualität. Selbstverstümmelung. Probleme der deutschen Sanitätsführung 1939–1945*, (Neckargmünd 1977).
- 26 Kevin Gerard Neill, "Duty, Honor, Rape: Sexual Assault against Women during War," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 2, vol. 1 (2000): 5.
- 27 On the question of how these goals relate to one another, see Rhonda Copelon, "Gendered War Crimes: Reconceptualizing Rape in Time of War," In *Women's Rights, Human Rights: International Feminist Perspectives* (New York and London 1995), 63–79.
- 28 Susan Griffin, *Rape*.
- 29 See the selected bibliography on "Sexual Violence in Wars" in *Mittelweg* 36 no. 5/2001.
- 30 Rhonda Copelon, *Gendered War Crimes*, 75f.
- 31 Tokyo Tribunal, G.Z.
- 32 Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York: Touchstone Books 1995).
- 33 Shay, *Achilles*, 203.
- 34 Shay, *Achilles*, 52.
- 35 Adrienne Rich, "Carytid: Two Columns," In *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966–1978* (New York 1979) 114f.
- 36 Shay, *Achilles*, 134–135.
- 37 Shay, *Achilles*, 135.
- 38 Shay, *Achilles*, 205
- 39 Mark Baker, *Nam: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There* (New York 1981).
- 40 The Japanese soldiers quoted here testified before the Tokyo Tribunal; the Vietnam veterans gave their consent to publication of their accounts.
- 41 Tokyo Tribunal, G.Z.

- 42 Baker, *Nam*, 211.
- 43 Baker, *Nam*, 206.
- 44 Tokyo Tribunal, G.Z.
- 45 Sergeant Michael MacCuster, In *The Winter Soldier Investigation: An Inquiry into American War Crimes*, edited by Vietnam Veterans against the War (Boston 1972), 29, quoted here from Karen Stuhldreher, "State Rape: Representations of Rape in Vietnam," In *The Vietnam Generation Big Book*, vol. 5, no. 1–4, (March 1994); see also Bourke, *Intimate History*, 191.
- 46 Burke, *Intimate History*, 172–175.
- 47 Quoted from Burke, *Intimate History*, 173.
- 48 As a result , newly arrived GIs were abruptly forced to commit senseless atrocities, such as abusing the body of a dead Vietcong, as Mark Baker recounts.
- 49 Cf. Thomas Kühne (ed.), *Männergeschichte / Geschlechtergeschichte. Männlichkeit im Wandel der Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main 1996).
- 50 Frank G. Barrett, "The Organizational Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity: The Case of the US Navy," *Gender, Work and Organization* vol. 3, no. 3 (July 1996): 129–142.
- 51 See for example Bourke, *Intimate History*, chapter 6, Love and Hate.
- 52 Barrett, *Hegemonic Masculinity*, 75.
- 53 Shay, *Achilles*, 150.
- 54 Shay, *Achilles*, 150.
- 55 Shay, *Achilles*, 49.
- 56 Baker, *Nam*, 206.
- 57 Bourke, *Intimate History*, 15.
- 58 Shay, *Achilles*, 5.
- 59 Shay, *Achilles*, 5.
- 60 Tokyo Tribunal, G.Z.
- 61 William Broyles, as cited in Bourke, *Intimate History*, 15.

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