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Sexual Politics and the Art of War: Patriarchy and the Military

by

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Abstract

This thesis accounts for the stunning cruelty that women experience in war. The explanation focuses on the relationship between militarism and war and patriarchal consciousness. It focuses on one particular aspect of patriarchal consciousness, namely the patriarchal construction of sexuality. This thesis shows that the understandings integral to war and the understandings that typify patriarchal sexuality act as a mutual cradle of consciousness. It identifies four specific relationships between war and patriarchal sexuality. The first of these is the relationship between the understanding of the good soldier and the patriarchal notion of male sexuality. The next relationship to be discussed involves the use of rape as a conscious military tactic and its role as a concrete manifestation of patriarchal sexuality. Also discussed is the positioning of woman as the destroyer of men's sexual gratification. The final relationship to be examined involves prostitution. It reveals the tendency of the military to engage in the provision of sexual servicing for soldiers as a means of controlling men and maintaining efficiency and effectiveness.

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Introduction

“ In Nam, I fucked some of the dirtiest whores you have ever seen in your life.”¹

“ There was one girl who was about 12 who was great. She was one of my favourites.”²

These quotes have been extracted from the personal accounts of soldiers who fought in the Vietnam War. Accounts of this sort are replete with tales of sexual conquests. They are filled with memories of men’s experiences with the prostitutes of Southeast Asia. They are also filled with graphic accounts of the rape and sexual mutilation of countless Vietnamese women and young girls. Such acts are undeniably a central part of war. From the accounts of Vietnam veterans, it is clear that soldiers understand rape and prostitution as normal practices within the context of war. These practices are much more a part of war than any military is willing to admit publicly. How does this come to be? Are the people who organize and participate in war driven by some depraved force? The purpose of this thesis is to begin to make sense of these disturbing practices. It will present an argument about how and why these grave and violent acts have become a critical facet of war.

In particular, it will advance the basic thesis that an inextricable relationship exists between war and the patriarchal model of sexuality. It accounts for the behaviour, both

¹Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 188.

²*Ibid*, 189-190.

routine and exceptional, in war. To understand this relationship attention is first placed upon patriarchal consciousness itself. It begins with the realization that the world in which we live is one both distorted and hostile in nature. This hostility has women specifically as its focus. This loathing and contempt of womanliness is a product of patriarchy.

Analysis then turns to the gender critique of war. This critique necessarily begins with a deconstruction of patriarchy and its connection to militarism and war. From here, we will examine the patriarchal model of sexuality and its significance to war. It is only through an understanding of the close relationship which exists between the two that we gain proper insight into the depravities that are a normal part of war.

Chapter One

Patriarchy, Militarism, and War

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the various factors which create and sustain the close relationship between patriarchy, militarism, and war. This analysis necessarily begins with a discussion of patriarchy and its role in the creation of the masculine and feminine spheres of life. Secondly, this chapter will examine the relationship between patriarchy and war. Here the analysis is rooted in the gender critique of war which asserts that patriarchal consciousness and war share the same logical base. Included in this analysis is a discussion of the significance of war to the reinforcement of gendered understandings. The next focus of this chapter will be on the role which patriarchy plays in the creation of the soldier. It is here that a strong connection between soldiering and patriarchal masculinity is revealed. At this point we will also address the isolation of war to the masculine sphere of life. Finally, we will discuss the relationship between masculine rationality and war.

Patriarchy and Patriarchal Consciousness

Men and women are beings vastly different from one another. Few would deny that men feel, think, and act in a manner identifiably distinct from the way in which women do. We must ask why this is. Is it true that men and women are born as distinct biological entities? Are the attributes of masculinity and femininity which shape us a product of biology? Or are these traits the product of a cultural force? It is the latter question that provides clues to the differences between men and women. The polarity which exists between men and women is not the sole product of genetics. The biological factors which distinguish women from men are rather few. It is patriarchal culture, a culture that has evolved over a long period of time which is responsible for the creation of men and women as two profoundly distinct beings.

Patriarchy is a cultural force that is manifested in, among other facets, the social construction of gender. The latter is essentially a dichotomous split of our world into two oppositional categories, man and woman. That is, patriarchy reflects the creation of man and woman from male and female. This social consciousness shapes all that we are, all that we do, and all that we aspire to be.

It is through a shaping of all facets of life that patriarchy creates man and woman from male and female. This involves the “creation of a package of assumptions, teachings, and expectations that serve as the standard for appropriate male and female

behaviour.”¹ These standards act as the definitive gendered image of manhood and womanhood. They identify specific characteristics and behaviours as appropriate for men and for women.² Patriarchal consciousness ensures that these standards are met through the creation of strict cultural scripts. These scripts outline the model of language, feeling, and thought which patriarchy has defined as appropriate for men and women. Through the internalization of these scripts, males and females unconsciously learn to be men and women in their early lives.

The masculine and the feminine scripts are a set of ideals to which all men and women must measure up to ensure their acceptance in society.³ However, to measure up to these rigid distinctions of masculinity and femininity means completely different things for men and women. The dichotomous structure of patriarchal consciousness praises all that it defines as masculine. Those characteristics it defines as feminine, in contrast, are held in low regard or are despised. Patriarchy is not only responsible for the creation of gender, it is also responsible for the creation of a gender hierarchy, a dichotomy which directs masculinity and femininity to opposite ends of a value scale. This “hierarchy of human worth” plays a critical role in shaping many facets of a

¹Cynthia Enloe. “Beyond Rambo: Women and the Varieties of Militarized Masculinity”, in Eva Isaksson, ed. *Women and the Military System*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988, 83.

²*Ibid*, 83.

³Nancy M. Hartsock. “Masculinity, Heroism, and War”, in Adrienne Harris and Ynestra King, eds. *Rocking The Ship of State: Towards a Feminist Peace Politics*. London: Westview Press, 1983, 135.

society.⁴

For example, in a patriarchal society rationality is valued over emotion. The former is assigned to the masculine sphere of life, the latter to the feminine sphere. As a result, women are seen as more emotional while men are more rational. Such rationality grants men the privilege and authority to make well informed decisions, untainted by the emotion and hysteria characteristic of womanliness. In keeping with this dichotomy, man has come to be associated with the mind, and woman has come to be associated with the body. Men are presumed to embody the attributes of strength and independence. This necessarily positions women as weak and dependent. As one who is weak and dependent, it is assumed that a woman is incapable of survival in the absence of a good man.

In a complementary language, the binary structure of patriarchy positions women as “the other” as they are “the second and weaker sex”. She is at the bottom of the hierarchy of human worth. That is, women are considered to be less worthy than men because they do not possess the masculine attributes of strength, rationality, and independence. Her small measure of human worth makes her fit only to cater to and serve men, a goal around which woman properly revolves her life.

Patriarchy creates a polarity between the masculine and feminine spheres of life, ensuring that they exist in a relationship which is also one of identification with the masculine as an overcoming of the feminine. To be a man is not to be a woman. The

⁴Betty Reardon. *Sexism and the War System*. New York: Teacher’s College Press, 1985, 40.

preservation of a masculine identity is wholly dependent on this.⁵

The product of this dialectic is a fear and loathing of all that is associated with femininity. The only way masculinity is protected from feminine pollution is through its destruction. Sara Ruddick states that such fear acts as “the motivational force behind the drive to master whatever is defined as womanly.”⁶ The organized hatred and loathing of womanliness is the product of such fear. This phenomenon is properly defined as misogyny. The writings of Betty Reardon are helpful in further understanding misogyny and its critical role in patriarchal consciousness. Reardon insists that the process of learning to be men and women begins even before birth. She states that “every male is taught at birth to fear the possibility of being like a woman.”⁷ This fear initiates a subjugation and destruction of anything associated with womanliness. According to Reardon: “...misogyny is not only an expected condition of a patriarchal society, but is in

⁵This thesis asserts that the patriarchal dialectic, that is, the affirmation of the masculine and the relentless negation of the feminine, is internalized by each individual male. In other words, men are men invariably. Although there may be some unresolved pressures or contradictions at the level of individual consciousness, men are always more or less masculine. Patriarchy does not allow men to sidestep the intensive discipline which requires that they become men through the internalization of the masculine/feminine dialectical script. This allows us to speak of men with the safe assumption that they have interiorized the understandings of life which produce a corresponding relative uniformity at the level of practice and behaviour. This is essentialist to the extent that it assumes that this process of interiorization is invariable, and also to the extent that it assumes that a full basket of human characteristics - eg: rationality and emotion - are present in each human being to be manipulated.

⁶Sara Ruddick. *Maternal Thinking: Towards A Politics of Peace*. London: Women's Press, 1989, 45.

⁷Betty Reardon. *Sexism and the War System*. New York: Teacher's College Press, 1985, 35.

fact a form of self hatred in which both men and women are conditioned to despise the feminine and in turn, women.”⁸

The Relationship Between Patriarchy And War

The ideals of masculinity and femininity play a critical role in our development as human beings. These ideals are reinforced through the social mechanisms and institutions which surround us. This is how patriarchy maintains its power. It ensures that all aspects of our lives are imbued with some form of gender identification. Our appearances, thoughts, and daily functions are all products of masculine affirmation and feminine negation. Social mechanisms and institutions exert constant pressure to ensure that we remain within these spheres. The specific focus of this thesis will be on the relationship between militarism, war and patriarchy broadly, and patriarchal sexuality and war more particularly.

We ask: what exactly is the relationship between patriarchy and war? The work of Cynthia Enloe has focused specifically on this relationship. She identifies a variety of powerful links between patriarchy and war. Enloe does not hold that patriarchy and war are two separate entities. She acknowledges that both are “analytically separate, meaning

⁸Betty Reardon. *Sexism and the War System*. New York: Teacher’s College Press, 1985, 52.

that each of these ideological constructs has its own distinct history.”⁹ However, this fact does not obscure the interconnected relationship that exists between the two. Patriarchy and war share a critical aspect of the distortion of authentic human life. Both are cultural creations rooted in an affirming and negating relationship between the masculine and feminine spheres. Each involves a movement between masculine and feminine dimensions. Patriarchy and war share the same logical move in consciousness and practice. More to the point, war is an element of patriarchy that mimics its basic misogynistic logic.

From these observations we may make a number of claims about war. War is a highly gendered activity, “one which ritually marks the gender of all members of society.”¹⁰ War is also directly associated with the achievement of manhood. It provides the context in which masculinity is proven and femininity is overcome. War functions as an invitation to manliness, a testament to courage, and as a thorough denial of all that is womanly. As Cynthia Enloe asserts, “expectations about what it means to be masculine and what it means to be feminine are more than likely to be among the pillars holding up the newest, as well as the oldest, military ideals.”¹¹

⁹Cynthia Enloe. “Feminists Thinking About War, Militarism, and Peace”, in Beth B. Hess and Myra Marx Ferree, eds. *Analyzing Gender: A Handbook of Social Science Research*. California: Sage Publications, 1987, 532.

¹⁰Margaret Randolph Higgonet et al, eds. *Behind The Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, 4.

¹¹Cynthia Enloe. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women’s Lives*. London: Pluto Press, 1983, xxiii.

Some deny that a powerful relationship exists between patriarchy and war, especially those whose theories are rooted in biology. These theorists attempt to reduce and explain militarism and war as biological factors. These claims deny the critical role of patriarchy in favour of seeing war as the manifestation of a preexisting human nature. Genetic determinists in particular claim that exaggerated male aggression is a critical aspect of human nature. They “embrace the rhetoric that human aggression is universal and inevitable.”¹² Theories rooted in genetics and biology claim that war is an “adaptive feature innate to human existence.”¹³ That is, all humans possess a “genetic propensity for war.”¹⁴ Violence and warfare become inevitable outcomes of this human characteristic. Such theories imply that “fate, or at least the range of potential fates, are set before birth and are beyond our control.”¹⁵

The gender critique of war stands in direct opposition to theories which reduce war to a biological imperative. It denies that the explanation for war will be found in the genes, or that it will be found in testosterone levels. It contends that men are not cerebrally programmed or biologically hardwired for war. This critique asserts, rather, that there is a relationship between a socially constructed patriarchal consciousness and

¹²Anne E. Hunter, ed. *Genes and Gender VI: On Peace, War, and Gender: A Challenge To Genetic Explanations*. New York: The Feminist Press, 1991, 9.

¹³*Ibid*, 9.

¹⁴Susan Oyama. “Essentialism, Women, and War: Protesting Too Much, Protesting Too Little”, in Anne E. Hunter, ed. *Genes and Gender VI: On Peace, War, and Gender: A Challenge To Genetic Explanations*. New York: The Feminist Press, 1991, 64.

¹⁵*Ibid*, 72.

war. War is a gendered experience, shaped by patriarchy and, in turn, functioning to reproduce it. It thereby amounts to a celebration of manliness and of men, and by extension promotes masculine domination.¹⁶

The close relationship between patriarchy and war has a number of aspects. In particular, we will first address the tendency of war to sustain and reproduce gendered understandings. It plays a critical role in the isolation of women to the feminine sphere of life and the glorification of masculinity. The second aspect to be addressed is the role of patriarchal standards of masculinity in the creation of a soldier. This practice, in particular, involves a thorough overcoming of all things womanly. Thirdly, this rejection of femininity also extends to the practice of war itself. The final aspect of this relationship is the role of the masculine attributes of rationality and abstraction in the shaping of militarism and war.

War And Common Gendered Understandings

Susan Gubar and Maureen Honey have studied war and its close links to patriarchy. Both disclose the significance of militarism and war to women's oppression and to misogyny. Included in the work of both women is an examination of the Rosie the Riveter campaign during WWII. An analysis of this campaign reveals that war and militarism depend on gendered understandings, especially notions of appropriate

¹⁶Sara Ruddick. *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*. London: Women's Press, 1989, 109.

womanhood. As increasing numbers of men were called to war, industry was left to face mass labour power shortages. In desperation it turned to women as a supply of labour. This required that wartime propaganda target women as a reserve labour force by appealing to them in their capacity as mothers, nurturers, and domestic keepers. As Honey states, "the emphasis was not on women's right to be treated fairly and judged as individual workers, but on their heroic service to the nation."¹⁷ This duty required "self sacrifice and placing the welfare of the soldiers above their own desires."¹⁸ Such an appeal created an "ideological framework which emphasized female patriotic service over self advancement, creating an explicit connection between the safety of soldiers, the security of victory, and the activities of civilians, in particular those of women."¹⁹ Media campaigns were imbued with messages which appealed to women's nurturing and domestic nature. They focused on the self sacrifice "required of women to ensure the safety of husbands and sons and to ensure the preservation of the way of life they cherished."²⁰ Honey describes the role allocated to women during war as a "complicated mixture of strength and dependence, competence and vulnerability, egalitarianism and

¹⁷Maureen Honey. *Creating Rosie The Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda During World War II*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1983, 51.

¹⁸*Ibid*, 51.

¹⁹*Ibid*, 56.

²⁰Sherna Berger Gluck. *Rosie The Riveter Revisited: Women, War, and Social Change*. New York: New American Library, 1987, 12.

conservatism.”²¹

Gendered understandings played a critical role in shaping campaigns designed to encourage women to contribute to war efforts. Propaganda positioned them as the epitome of vulnerability, the weaker sex, and as in need of the protection of men. As Gubar states, “monitory images were designed to illustrate what would happen to women if men lost the war.”²² In keeping with gendered notions, woman is positioned as weak and dependent. It is the responsibility of men to “keep her safe back there.”²³ She is “the guardian of the hearth, who represents vulnerability, spirituality, and nurturance.”²⁴ Woman in this context, imbued with patience and understanding, is fulfilling her appropriate role. She is the “sweetheart and homemaker who made sure that the home remained comfortable and familiar, and who represented a wholesome blend of old fashioned sweetness and gentle caretaking.”²⁵

Gendered understandings also position femininity as inherently sexual. In keeping with these understandings, wartime propaganda was not exempt from a focus on women as sexual objects. Such objectification equated women’s war function with remaining

²¹Maureen Honey. *Creating Rosie The Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda During World War II*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984, 7.

²²Susan Gubar. “This Is My Rifle, This Is My Gun: WWII and the Blitz on Women,” in Margaret Randolph Higgonet et al, eds. *Behind The Lines: Gender and The Two World Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, 231.

²³*Ibid*, 246.

²⁴Maureen Honey. *Creating Rosie The Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda During World War II*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984, 216.

²⁵*Ibid*, 94.

attractive to men. As Gubar states, “even women warriors and war workers were displayed in quasi pornographic nudity in magazines throughout the war years.”²⁶ Women’s sexual availability to men was an aspect of womanhood upon which propaganda relied to provide motivation and inspiration to soldiers. As Honey states, “while the young factory worker had initially been portrayed as directly contributing to the war effort through her labour, she came to be treated primarily as a decorative object that would inspire fighting men to greater feats.”²⁷ Despite women’s responsibility as homemaker and factory worker, “the implicit focus remained on female sexuality and availability to men.”²⁸

In other words, the ideology which defines women as mere sexual objects remained unchallenged in the face of significant social upheaval. Gubar reveals that women were the object of many sweet dreams. They were “pinned up unclothed in countless photographs that decorated bunks, barracks, bombers, and artillery tanks named after women, movie stars, and models, depictions which clearly represented what men were fighting for.”²⁹ Inherent in this sexual objectification of women is the reduction of

²⁶Susan Gubar. “This Is My Rifle, This Is My Gun: WWII and the Blitz on Women,” in Margaret Randolph Higgonet et al, eds. *Behind The Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, 231.

²⁷Maureen Honey. *Creating Rosie The Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda During WWII*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984, 15.

²⁸*Ibid*, 114.

²⁹Susan Gubar. “This Is My Rifle, This Is My Gun: WWII and the Blitz on Women,” in Margaret Randolph Higgonet et al, eds. *Behind The Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, 239.

women to property which is owned and guarded by men. Gubar's analysis of wartime propaganda reveals that it "presented the enemy as he who would rape and murder our women."⁵⁰ That is, woman was the property of men, and the embodiment of sexual satisfaction which must be protected.

Through an examination of the works of Gubar and Honey, we witness the tendency of war to reproduce and solidify gendered understandings. By reproducing these understandings, war acts as a mechanism through which patriarchy is strengthened. Due to the close connection between patriarchy and war, it is imbued with a loathing of all things womanly. To achieve a deeper understanding of this, it is helpful to turn to some specific aspects of war.

Ideological Militarism And The Making Of A Soldier

We stated previously that militarism and war are intimately and automatically bound up with the exclusion and deconstruction of things feminine. No where else is this more apparent than in the process of indoctrination utilized in the creation of a soldier. The process of military socialization makes effective and frequent use of gendered concepts and the ensuing hatred of women which follows. Ideological militarism thoroughly identifies adequate manhood with soldiering. It projects a life of service in

⁵⁰Susan Gubar. "This Is My Rifle: This Is My Gun: WWII and the Blitz on Women," in Margaret Randolph Higgonet et al, eds. *Behind The Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, 231-236.

the military as the ultimate path to manhood and the destiny and duty of all men. That is, soldiering is regarded as what truly masculine men do. Soldiering in this sense acts as a “patriarchal initiation rite”, the test which one must pass to confirm true manliness.³¹

Militarism requires that soldiering be firmly equated with the masculine sphere. To achieve this, femininity must be firmly denied. This requires that “qualities which are stereotypically common to women and homosexual men be associated with all that is undesirable and unacceptable.”³² Misogyny and homophobia come to function as basic components in military indoctrination and critical elements in the making of a soldier. Such hatred equates the making of a soldier with a “killing of the woman inside”, a process which requires that “boys attack and grind down whatever in themselves is womanly”.³³ To initiate this process, military socialization begins with techniques to achieve psychological control of recruits. It utilizes patriarchal concepts of adequate manliness to “forge crucial links between traditional masculinity, aggression, and

³¹Judith Hicks Stiehm. “The Effects of Myths About Military Women on the Waging of War,” in Eva Issakson, ed. *Women and The Military System*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988, 104.

³²Helen Michalowski. “The Army Will Make a Man Out of You,” in Pam McAllister, ed. *Reweaving The Web Of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1982, 332.

³³Sara Ruddick. *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*. London: Women’s Press, 1989, 143.

military function.”³⁴ Recruits learn that “to be a man is to be a soldier, not a woman.”³⁵

As a system driven by fear and hatred, the military “ attempts to so merge soldiering and manhood that they become almost indistinguishable.”³⁶ It achieves this through a process of systematically teaching men to hate in themselves what the military deems as feminine.

To be a soldier is to aspire to, and eventually to embody, all the ‘worthy’ qualities and behaviours of masculinity, including a tendency towards domination, aggression, and violence. Military socialization draws an explicit link between these masculine attributes and military tasks and duties, so that they become one in the same. It is this specific end which basic training and boot camps attempt to achieve through a variety of means. One particularly powerful technique for training in boot camp is the systematic attack on recruits sexuality by use of verbal and physical threat. Names of feminine identification such as “faggot”, “girl”, or “pussy” are continually hurled, insults which men find highly offensive.³⁷ These threats are used with the intention of “frightening men into obedience and aggressiveness” by ensuring their humiliation.³⁸ As an alternative to such

³⁴Christine Ball. “Women, Rape, and War: Patriarchal Functions and Ideologies.” *Atlantis*. 12:1, 1986, 88.

³⁵Nancy M. Hartsock. “Masculinity, Heroism, and War”, in Adrienne Harris and Ynestra King, eds. *Rocking the Ship of State: Towards a Feminist Peace Politics*. London: Westview Press, 1983, 134.

³⁶Cynthia Enloe. “Beyond Rambo: Women and the Varieties of Militarized Masculinity,” in Eva Isaksson, ed. *Women and the Military System*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 79.

³⁷*Ibid*, 79.

³⁸*Ibid*, 79.

humiliation, the military “then offers men a masculine identification based on aggression and dominance.”³⁹ Recruits are rewarded for displays of aggression and brutality, qualities thought to affirm their masculine status. Only on these occasions of “violent and aggressive outbursts do drill instructors tend to ease the ceaseless litany of “you dirty faggot” and “can’t hack it little girl.”⁴⁰

Basic training not only demands aggression, violence, and domination, but teaches recruits that their very survival depends upon the maintenance of these attitudes and behaviours.⁴¹ As one recruit recalls “the best way to stay alive was to learn the training, be aggressive, and accomplish the designated mission, which is to close and destroy. In other words, effectiveness and aggression became a means of protecting ourselves as well as our masculine self image. Non-effectiveness and non-aggressiveness were a clear and present danger.”⁴²

Through the process of basic training anything remotely feminine is purged through regimented instruction. This requires that the creation of a soldier involve a strict discipline against the body, as the body is perceived as part of the feminine. Men are also taught that emotions such as anxiety and fear are unacceptable. These are emotions

³⁹R. Wayne Eisenhart. “You Can’t Hack It Little Girl”. *Atlantis*. Vol 12, No 1, Fall 1986, 15.

⁴⁰*Ibid*, 16.

⁴¹Helen Michaelowski. “The Army Will Make a Man Out of You,” in Pam McAllister ed. *Reweaving The Web Of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1982, 332.

⁴²R. Wayne Eisenhart. “You Can’t Hack It Little Girl.” *Atlantis*. Vol 12, No. 1, Fall 1986, 16.

associated with femininity, and emotions for which there is no room within a military establishment. As a result, “soldiers are forced to control ordinary emotions of fear and desire which are explicitly labelled as feminine, rather replacing them with masculine aggressive impulses.”⁴³ What the military aspires to create is a group of men thoroughly desensitized. These men achieve satisfaction only in the act of soldiering, a state of being which the military equates with a strong and visible masculinity.

This has serious repercussions, both for soldiers themselves, as well as for those whom they regard as the enemy. A strong and visible masculinity, by military standards, is measured by a willingness to kill. One has to actively, and sometimes even with pleasure, engage in brutal acts such as maiming, raping, and killing to pass initiation and become one of the boys. Dead bodies are celebrated as trophies and as affirmation of one’s manhood. In other words, militarism fosters a blatant disrespect for life as an inherent achievement of masculinity. It boasts of the idea of “the warrior as the male par excellence, for he can administer death.”⁴⁴ In keeping with the dichotomy characteristic of patriarchy, this masculine attribute is intrinsically bound to a loathing and rejection of all aspects of womanliness.

Men thoroughly indoctrinated into militarism are taught to find excitement and exhilaration in the idea of death. So distorted has this phenomenon become that those who do not actively engage in the killing and destruction are looked upon as abnormal,

⁴³Sara Ruddick. *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*. London: Women’s Press, 1989, 109.

⁴⁴Jean Bethke Elshtain. *Women and War*. New York: Basic Books, 1987, 198.

prudish, and of course, feminine. The work of Sara Ruddick is helpful in this analysis. She states that “boot camp recruits are ladies until, trained in obedient killing, they become men.”⁴⁵ Basic training does not turn boys into men, but rather “beasts, who will fight and destroy at a moments notice, without any regard for what they are fighting for and why they are fighting.”⁴⁶ We witness this frightening reality take root in “ the growth of paramilitary training camps, in which men take lessons in throat cutting, ear removal, and killing using sticks, hands, feet, knives, rope, and firearms of all descriptions. Also on the curriculum are ambushing, patrolling, rappelling, camouflage, bobby-traps, and torture.”⁴⁷

Militarism attempts to obscure and glorify the brutality and murder of war through the use of terms such as honour, courage, bravery, and sacrifice. Terms such as these function to unite men under the guise of brotherhood. However, it is not merely the courage required to kill that unites these men in soldierly brotherhood. It is the misogyny characteristic of militarism and of war which acts as a force of unity. This thorough denial of any links to femininity forms a critical part of all aspects of militarism and war.

⁴⁵Sara Ruddick. *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*. London: Women’s Press, 1989, 143.

⁴⁶Helen Michaelowski. “The Army Will Make a Man Out of You,” in Pam McAllister, ed. *Reweaving The Web Of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1982, 328.

⁴⁷Jean Bethke Elshtain. *Women and War*. New York: Basic Books, 1987, 198.

War As A Man's Job

It is not only the act of soldiering which militarism glorifies as a quintessentially male activity, it is also combat itself. The protection of war against feminine threat is critical, for it is only in war that the ultimate test of one's masculinity lies.⁴⁸ Militarism asserts that "combat is the forum where men may exercise unlimited control and domination."⁴⁹ Enloe states that such declarations add strength to "the claims of men to a uniqueness and superiority which justifies their dominant position in the social order."⁵⁰

It is the dichotomy characteristic of gendered understandings which preserves combat as an exclusively masculine activity. These gendered understandings relegate "women to nurture, men to combat, women to the creation of life, and men to its destruction."⁵¹ Such a dichotomy positions men as suited to combat, for they possess the masculine attributes of "hardness, toughness, and suitability for action and brute force."⁵² Women on the other hand possess the non military traits of "softness, fragility, passivity,

⁴⁸Cynthia Enloe. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*. London: Pluto Press, 1983, 15.

⁴⁹*Ibid*, 15.

⁵⁰Cynthia Enloe. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*. London: Pluto Press, 1983, 15.

⁵¹Ruth Roach Pierson. "They're Still Women After All: Wartime Jitters Over Femininity," in Eva Isaksson, ed. *Women and The Military System*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1988, 31.

⁵²*Ibid*, 31.

and gentleness.”⁵³ The tendency to equate masculinity with courageousness is another factor which denies women access to combat. Women cannot participate in war, for they do not possess adequate courageousness, a masculine attribute which only men may possess.⁵⁴

Drawing upon gender constructs, militarism ensures that the role of women is confined to that of wife, sweetheart, and mother. She must always act in her appropriate capacity as passive, yet attentive nurturer and caretaker. Militarism ensures that the ideal of femininity is synonymous with the role of non-combatant. However, the non-combatant does play a significant role in maintaining the smooth operation of the military. Women as mothers in the military are responsible not only for “producing a new generation of men, but also for nurturing and socializing her sons to become strong and soldier like and her daughters to develop penchants for loyalty, mothering, and low paid and unpaid labour.”⁵⁵ In her appropriate role as wife, a woman must learn to please and mirror man rather than speak for herself. Her role as military spouse requires that she “be an effective morale booster or a comforter of the wounded partner, since the

⁵³Ruth Roach Pierson. “They’re Still Women After All: Wartime Jitters Over Femininity,” in Eva Isaksson, ed. *Women and the Military System*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988, 31.

⁵⁴Women do appear in some military establishments at the level of combat. However, as Enloe reveals, patriarchy ensures that the term combat itself is in a constant state of change in order to secure it as an area in which any links to femininity and womanliness may not be found.

⁵⁵Cynthia Enloe. “Beyond Rambo: Women and The Varieties of Militarized Masculinity,” in Eva Isaksson, ed. *Women and The Military System*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988, 77.

spouse is a woman doing what a woman naturally does so well.”⁵⁶

The military also places significant focus on the ideal of the nuclear family. It is the mechanism which guarantees the provision of stability and motivation to soldiers and potential ‘warriors’. The work of Donna Warnock illustrates how the nuclear family suits military purposes. When they “form the base of a social structure, they function to divide the society itself into small, easily controlled and relatively powerless units, which provide a ready vehicle for the perpetuation of hierarchy and domination.”⁵⁷ Since women are considered as central to the preservation of the nuclear family, their subordination and reduction to roles defined as appropriately feminine is imperative. That is, militarism achieves its objectives through the exercise of strict control over the lives of women, control which attempts to “alter their daily lives, their hopes, their fears, their labour, and their sexuality.”⁵⁸

Due to the “centrality of combat to militarism” it is an experience which cannot be shared with women on any level.⁵⁹ The military engages in a constant redefinition of

⁵⁶Cynthia Enloe. “Beyond Rambo: Women and the Varieties of Militarized Masculinity,” in Eva Isaksson, ed. *Women and the Military System*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988, 78.

⁵⁷Donna Warnock. “Patriarchy Is A Killer: What People Concerned About Peace and Justice Should Know,” in Pam McAllister, ed. *Reweaving The Web Of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1982, 26.

⁵⁸Cynthia Enloe. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women’s Lives*. London: Pluto Press, 1983, 85.

⁵⁹Cynthia Enloe. “Feminists Thinking About War, Militarism, and Peace,” in Beth B. Hess and Myra Marx Ferree, eds. *Analyzing Gender: A Handbook of Social Science Research*. California: Sage Publications, 1987, 533.

combat to preserve its masculine identity and exclusivity. As Enloe observes, “this constant redefinition ensures that war is protected from any threat of feminization. One constant factor in this redefinition has been of combat as somewhere where women are not.”⁶⁰ For those women who have been on or near the battlefield, their roles have been systematically marginalized to those defined as supportive. Nurses for instance have been historically “despised for their critical role in combat.”⁶¹ They have been persistently diminished as “angels of mercy” for the dying and the dead.⁶² They played the appropriately feminine role of the woman who by her very nature will “succour, sooth, heal, offer solace, and tend to the wounded soldiers with a woman’s touch, a remembrance of home, and a dream of ease and comfort.”⁶³

What these factors indicate is that militarism and patriarchy position war as an activity suited to men only. Although women play a critical role, it is always in a capacity subordinate to that of men.⁶⁴ In fact, any feminine presence which the military has not manipulated to serve its purpose poses a direct threat to war as “the core of

⁶⁰Cynthia Enloe. “Feminists Thinking About War, Militarism, and Peace,” in Beth B. Hess and Myra Marx Ferree, eds. *Analyzing Gender: A Handbook of Social Science Research*. California: Sage Publications, 1987, 534.

⁶¹Cynthia Enloe. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women’s Lives*. London: Pluto Press, 1983, 110.

⁶²*Ibid*, 110.

⁶³Jean Bethke Elshtain. *Women and War*. New York: Basic Books, 1987, 183.

⁶⁴For a discussion of these themes in a Canadian context, see Deborah Harrison and Lucie Laliberte. *No Life Like It: Military Wives in Canada*.

masculine uniqueness.”⁶⁵

Rationality and War

War is instinctively bound to the hierarchy and polarization inherent to gendered understandings. It is the masculine sphere in particular which plays a critical role in shaping “the dominant understandings of war”⁶⁶ Given this fact, militarism tends to conceive of its own practices in a manner consistent with the ideals of rationality and abstraction which are so important to patriarchy. “As patriarchy has the tendency to define reason and abstraction in complete opposition to the feminine, militarism and war necessarily require the absolute transcendence of all that is womanly.”⁶⁷

Sara Ruddick and Carol Cohn have engaged in an examination of a distinct mode of thought and language which emerges out of militarism and war. This mode of thought and language plays a critical role in the creation of the entire conceptual system of the military practice which preserves the distance between military action and its human consequences. This conceptual system uses claims to reason and rationality as mechanisms to conceal violence and brutality in a veil of legitimacy and righteousness. It

⁶⁵Cynthia Enloe. “Feminists Thinking About War, Militarism, and Peace,” in Beth B. Hess and Myra Marx Ferree, eds. *Analyzing Gender: A Handbook of Social Science Research*. California: Sage Publications, 1987, 534.

⁶⁶Sara Ruddick. *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*. London: Women’s Press, 1989, 141.

⁶⁷*Ibid*, 145.

equates violence, mass destruction, and killing with bravery and courage. Men in the military become guided by a conceptual system which holds no regard for human life.

This conceptual system requires that men not be allowed to revert “to soft, compassionate individuals who are irresponsible in their condemnation of mass homicide.”⁶⁸ To allow this is to allow men to be “nice, decent, and sensitive individuals who will do just about anything to avoid violence and war.”⁶⁹ This ensures that men display the courage necessary to make decisions and take action without regard for the human suffering and death these actions yield. To engage in such detached decision making is to operate in the sphere of an abstract (male) rationality.

Cohn identified the use of specific techniques to ensure detachment of decision making from its consequences. She writes that militarism “provides identifiable techniques of description and evasion that focus the mind on strategy rather than human suffering, sacrifice rather than killing, and the cause rather than the bodies torn apart in its name.”⁷⁰ In accordance with the “masculine fantasy of transcendence, military institutions force upon men the abstract understandings that systematically invert the proper valuation of human experience.”⁷¹ Militarism creates and promotes “a truth

⁶⁸Myriam Miedzain. *Boys Will Be Boys: Breaking The Link Between Masculinity and Violence*. New York: Doubleday, 1991, 21.

⁶⁹*Ibid*, 21.

⁷⁰Sara Ruddick. *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*. London: Women’s Press, 1989, 202.

⁷¹*Ibid*, 132.

abstracted from bodies and a self detached from feelings.”⁷²

Ruddick reveals this abstractness as characteristic of the military discourse as a whole. She states that “in militarist thinking, human bodies are subordinated to abstract causes, different bodies are organized around abstract labels of civilian and soldier, and the enemy or ally are polarized as ‘us or them’.”⁷³ Humans or victims are terms unknown, as “weapons, positions, and targets have always been the primary referents of military strategy.”⁷⁴ The purpose of such “brainwashing” is to “prohibit men from ever imagining the physical suffering and consequences of their actions.”⁷⁵

This is the task of war itself, that is “to portray the enemy in terms as absolute and abstract as possible in order to distinguish war from the act of murder.”⁷⁶ In other words, the enemy is projected in terms abstract enough to justify their killing without hesitation, creating a sense of achievement and satisfaction. Ruddick and Cohn have examined the creation of a “technostrategic language and just war discourse which is necessary to provide the illusion of rationality and to obscure the messy reality of war.”⁷⁷

⁷²Sara Ruddick. *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*. London: Women’s Press, 1989, 132.

⁷³*Ibid*, 146.

⁷⁴*Ibid*, 146.

⁷⁵*Ibid*, 146.

⁷⁶*Ibid*, 146.

⁷⁷Sara Ruddick. “Notes Towards a Feminist Peace Politics,” in Miriam Cooke and Angela Wollacott, eds. *Gendering War Talk*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, 116.

As Cohn states: “ in the world of defence intellectuals one does not discuss the bloody reality behind the calculations.”⁷⁸ She reveals that such language does not allow us to face the realities of nuclear warfare, to face the image of “ a seven year old boy with his flesh melting away from his bones or a toddler with her skin hanging down in strips.”⁷⁹ Such language also prohibits an acknowledgement of the psychological effects of warfare, either “ on the soldiers fighting the war or on the victims injured and fearing for their lives, as they live through tremendous deprivation, or helplessly watch their babies die from diarrhea due to lack of clean water.”⁸⁰ This sort of language is imbued with a blatant disregard “for human bodies and human lives, thereby shielding us from the emotional reaction that would result if it were acknowledged that one was talking about strategies for mass murder and techniques in creating mangled bodies.”⁸¹

What Ruddick and Cohn ultimately reveal is a startling disassociation of military thinking from human consequences. It draws on an abstract mode of thought and language that maps onto masculine ideals of cold, dispassionate rationality unobscured by considerations of human suffering and pain. To surrender to consideration of the

⁷⁸Carol Cohn. “War, Wimps, and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War,” in Miriam Cooke and Angela Wollacott, eds. *Gendering War Talk*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, 230.

⁷⁹*Ibid*, 232.

⁸⁰*Ibid*, 232.

⁸¹Sara Ruddick. *Maternal Thinking: Notes Towards a Politics of Peace*. London: Women’s Press, 1989, 34.

human body and its misery is equated with lapsing into emotion laden thinking, that is, with lapsing into womanliness. War requires distorted, one-sided notions of rationality that are understood as appropriately manly and which remain ungrounded and in the words of Cohn, “decontextualized.” This profound disassociation from the realities of war allows war planners to dismiss suffering and death as inevitable facets of life.

Conclusion: War and Its Collocation With Sexuality

Patriarchal consciousness includes a specific focus on the reduction of women to sexual objects. Patriarchy cultivates a specific notion of sexuality which isolates men and women to exclusive categories which are opposites yet mutually reinforcing. These categories correspond to notions of domination and submission. The military relies upon these particular ideas of sexuality. The prevailing sexual model in patriarchy may be summarized as the predatory male sexual subject who masters and controls the female sexual object. Woman in this sexual model is the being who is reduced to her sexual function only. Masculine identity in this model is equated with virility and the sexual domination and conquering of women. Woman is the perpetual sexual object, man is the complementary sexual subject. MacKinnon observes that “the defining theme of this objectification as a whole is the male pursuit of control over women’s sexuality, men not as individuals or biological beings, but as a gender group characterized by maleness as

socially constructed, of which this pursuit is definitive.”⁸² Women as sexual objects serve as the “yardstick, among other gauges, by which men measure their capacity for superiority and domination and hence their virility.”⁸³

War’s tendency to conform to and reinforce gendered understandings is especially reflected in this model of sexuality. Patriarchal notions of appropriate male and female sexuality are reflected in all aspects of militarism and war. War appropriates women’s sexuality for its own gain. It engages in “quite self conscious political policies” which ensures the continuation of women’s sexual objectification.⁸⁴ The following chapter will focus specifically on the patriarchal model of sexuality and its inextricable link to militarism and war.

⁸²Catherine A. MacKinnon. “Feminism, Marxism, Method, and The State: An Agenda For Theory,” in *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*. Nannerl O. Keohan, Michelle Z. Rosaldo and Barbara C. Gelpe, eds. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982, 18.

⁸³Susan Gubar. “This Is My Rifle, This Is My Gun: WWII and the Blitz On Women,” in Margaret Randolph Higgonet et al, eds. *Behind The Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, 253.

⁸⁴Cynthia Enloe. “Feminists Thinking About War, Militarism, and Peace,” in Beth B. Hess and Myra Marx Ferree, eds. *Analyzing Gender: A Handbook of Social Science Research*. California: Sage Publications, 1987, 531.

Chapter Two

Patriarchal Consciousness, Sexuality, and War

Introduction

Chapter One reviewed aspects of the relationship between patriarchal consciousness and war. Patriarchal consciousness, a complex array of intersubjective understandings regarding manliness and womanliness, becomes the guide by which we conduct ourselves in society. These shared understandings, moreover, are characterized by a privileging of the socially appropriated masculine characteristics of life and an associated loathing of those human traits understood as feminine. The misogynistic turn at the level of social consciousness extends to women directly as they internalize the loathed feminine characteristics of life through socialization. As a result of this the lives of women are burdensome and oppressive in patriarchy.

Analysis in Chapter One was concerned primarily with the relationship between patriarchal consciousness and war. We looked specifically at the critical role of patriarchy in the creation of a soldier. Gendered understandings play a critical role in attaching soldiering to the masculine sphere. This requires that any connection to the feminine be firmly denied. We also looked at the extension of misogyny into the arena of combat. Militarism also glorifies this aspect of war as a quintessentially male activity, and womanly traits, or indeed, women themselves are seen as destructive. The powerful resistance to a

womanly presence requires that women's role in war be reduced and subordinated to the activities of men. Included in this chapter as well was a deconstruction of the language and thought surrounding militarism and war. Here we drew directly upon the works of Sara Ruddick and Carol Cohn to expose the nature of a conceptual system created to support militarism, a system that disregarded life in favour of a grounded abstractionism.

Finally, we looked at war and its collocation with sexuality. This chapter explores the links between understandings of sexuality in patriarchy and war more closely. To set up our discussion, we will review the patriarchal model of sexuality. Included in this discussion will be an analysis of the link between accepted male sexuality and violence. This model is then discussed in terms of its links to militarism and war. We will begin by examining the ideal model of the soldier. This ideal is one explicitly shaped by patriarchy. The good soldier is positioned as a natural sexual predator who dominates and conquers women. Next, this chapter will discuss the significance of rape in war. Rape logically follows a discussion of the good soldier, since it reflects the domination of women portended in the patriarchal model of sexuality. The good soldier is expressed most directly and provocatively as the good rapist. Given this profound relationship, rape has come to play a critical role within the context of war. The Pandoran model of woman as the destroyer of the soldier will also be addressed. Patriarchy distorts women's uncontrolled sexuality, positioning it as a force which poses a significant threat to men, their virility, and their masculine identity. The final topic that will be examined is the institutional reduction of women to sexual objects. The primary focus will be on the military's widespread organization of sexual servicing for soldiers. The military, in keeping

with the patriarchal model of sexuality, has organized prostitution in order to meet the sexual needs of all men. This sexual management has evolved into a critical military strategy for controlling men and maintaining order and efficiency.

The Patriarchal Model of Sexuality

Patriarchy creates gendered understandings of sexuality for men and women. These sexual understandings mean completely different things for men and women. For men, the patriarchal model of sexuality is essentially predatory and revolves around notions of domination and conquering. For women, patriarchal sexuality means a relentless reduction to mere sexual objects. This objectification renders sexuality as an aspect of life in which men experience virtually unlimited power over women. Women's personal identity, hinging directly on her sexuality, becomes "that which is most her own, yet is most taken away."¹

Catherine MacKinnon builds on this basic notion of patriarchal sexuality. Through patriarchy we not only witness the creation of rigid distinctions between the masculine and feminine; we also witness "women's social definition as a sex."² These socially constructed

¹Rosemarie Tong. *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1989, 110.

²Catherine MacKinnon. "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda For Theory," in Nannerl O. Keohan, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, and Barbara C. Gelphe, eds. *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982, 15.

gender roles render “sexuality as a form of power.”³ As MacKinnon writes: “the social beings we know as man and woman are bound by the social requirements of heterosexuality, which institutionalizes male sexual domination and female sexual submission.”⁴ Authentic human sexuality becomes distorted with a model of sexuality that subordinates women as a conquered object.

The reduction of women to sexual objects is a basic feature of patriarchy. Women are offered no escape. Patriarchy contains a model of conquest and conquering of women through sex acts. The prevailing model of patriarchal sexuality links male sexuality with notions of destruction, conquering, and submission. Masculinity and manhood are consequently “equated with the wielding of power and the subjugation of femininity.”⁵ As a reflection of these ideas, patriarchy positions freely expressed female sexuality itself as something which poses the most threatening force to masculinity as a whole, and to men as individuals.⁶ From another angle, the reduction of women to sexual objects automatically places man as a dominant, sexual subject.

It is this explicit connection between male sexuality and domination which

³Catherine MacKinnon. “Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda For Theory,” in Nannerl O. Keohan, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, and Barbara C. Gelphe, eds. *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982, 2.

⁴*Ibid*, 15.

⁵Carole Sheffield. “Sexual Terrorism: The Social Control of Women,” in Beth B. Hess and Myra Marx Ferree, eds. *Analyzing Gender: A Handbook of Social Science Research*. California: Sage Publications, 1990, 172.

⁶*Ibid*, 172.

encourages male violence. As Kokopeli and Lakey write: "Patriarchy tells men that their need for love and respect can only be met by being masculine, powerful, and ultimately violent. As men come to accept this, their sexuality begins to reflect it."⁷ That is, the understanding of sexuality forged by patriarchal consciousness forces the "recognition that masculinity and sexual conquests go hand in hand."⁸ Male virility comes to be measured through the possession of power revealed through violence.

What breaks through clearly is the recognition of aggression and domination as a routine part of what is accepted as normal male sexuality.⁹ Rosemarie Tong expresses this concisely: "Male violence against women is normalized and legitimized in sexual practices. This is based on the assumption that when it comes to sex, men are by nature aggressive and dominant, whereas women are by nature passive and submissive."¹⁰ Sexuality and violence become inextricably linked. Patriarchy comes to glorify an ideal of masculinity as one in which "men cannot be men if they cannot possess women, usually in a sexual manner."¹¹ In other words, it is responsible for the creation of a society in which

⁷Bruce Kokopeli and George Lakey. "More Power Than We Want: Masculine Sexuality and Violence", in Pam McAllister, ed. *Reweaving The Web Of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1982, 233.

⁸Christine Ball. "Women, Rape, and War: Patriarchal Functions and Ideologies." *Atlantis* 12:1, 1986, 89.

⁹Rosemarie Tong. *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1989, 110.

¹⁰*Ibid*, 110.

¹¹Susan Oyama. "Essentialism, Women, and War: Protesting Too Much, Protesting Too Little", in Anne E. Hunter, ed. *Genes and Gender VI: On Peace, War, and Gender: A Challenge To Genetic Explanations*. New York: The Feminist Press, 1991, 98.

“each man is trained to equate virility with violence.”¹² This aspect of the patriarchal model of sexuality plays a critical role in the shaping of militarism and war. An examination of militarism reveals its commitment to the binary of male subject and female object. Also revealed is its dedication to the subjugation of all things womanly.

The Patriarchal Model Of Sexuality And The Military

The understanding of patriarchal sexuality is bound up with notions of soldiering, militarism, and war. This link is multifaced. At one point the notion of conquering critical to sexuality appears indistinguishable from the notion of a soldier. The soldier, in a sense, is the master predator, who “fucks over the enemy.” The logic of soldiering is identical to the logic of patriarchal sexuality. Indeed, through sexual understandings, the practice of war makes sense to the soldier. At another moment, we see the military incorporating patriarchal sexuality as a strategy to win, especially in the case of rape. At still another moment we see the military catering to the prevailing notions of male sexuality through organized prostitution. Whatever the relationship, the military is a social institution significantly constructed around notions of male sexuality.

Military thinking and practice is fuelled by deeply rooted notions of masculine domination and female submissiveness as its acceptable dynamic of power. As theorist Wendy Chapkis observes, “power possesses a deeply erotic component, endowing it with

¹²Donna Warnock, “Patriarchy Is A Killer: What People Concerned About Peace and Justice Should Know,” in Pam McAllister, ed. *Reweaving The Web Of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1982, 22.

an undeniable erotic charge. Military ideology and practice have evolved as one of the most significant cultural symbols of the re-enactment of these submission and dominance rituals.”¹³ Militarism and war effectively exploit the erotic element of power holding through the construction of “sexual fantasies built around images of masculinity.”¹⁴ This intimate link between masculinity and sexuality becomes clear in an examination of the soldier.

The Model Of The Soldier As The Model Of Sexuality

It is in the notion of the good soldier where we see an inseparable link between patriarchal sexuality and war. The soldier is a sort of sexual machine, a “real man who needs sexual access to women.”¹⁵ The soldier is the manly man who “earns the right to violence and sex. To fail is to remain womanly while losing the right to women.”¹⁶ Soldiers are trained to ward off threats to their masculinity, a defence which allows acts of sexuality to function as ritual assertions of manhood. Various aspects of “the military and its ideology exert great pressure on militarized men to perform sexually, whether they

¹³Wendy Chapkis. “Sexuality and Militarism,” in Eva Isaksson, ed. *Women and the Military System*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988, 109.

¹⁴*Ibid*, 110.

¹⁵Cynthia Enloe. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*. London: Pluto Press, 1983, 27.

¹⁶Sara Ruddick. *Maternal Thinking: Towards A Politics of Peace*. London: Women’s Press, 1989, 145.

have a sexual need or emotional feelings or not.”¹⁷

Militarism constructs the soldier as one who dominates, conquers, and destroys. It is evident that the very model of the soldier is the model of sexuality inherent in patriarchy. This model includes a glorification of the soldier as the embodiment of the conqueror and destroyer, the same ideals which are reflected in male sexuality.

Indeed, the collocation of soldierly understandings and sexual understandings are part of popular culture, and in this sense, the military merely absorbs them or institutionalizes them. This was revealed in a recent study of nicknames for the male penis. Theorist Deborah Cameron gathered two separate groups of American College students, one group male and one group female. Each were given a thirty minute time frame in which to compile as many names as possible for the male penis. The quantity of terms compiled by the two groups greatly varied, with the men generating 144 terms in comparison to 50 by the women. Cameron’s experiment, more importantly, indicates that there was a significant difference between men’s and women’s conception of the penis. Cameron’s study reveals that men refer to the penis “as something heroic, masterful, or warlike.”¹⁸ This study suggested that males perceive of the penis as a piece of weaponry, as warlike in character. Men, in their “metaphoric reference to the active role of the penis

¹⁷Cynthia Enloe. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women’s Lives*. London: Pluto Press, 1983, 35.

¹⁸Deborah Cameron. “Naming of Parts: Gender, Culture, and Terms For The Penis Among American College Students,” in *American Speech: A Quarterly of Linguistic Usage*. Vol 67, No 4. Winter 1992, 370.

in sexual intercourse, choose such terms as screwdriver, jackhammer, and fuzzbuster.”¹⁹ These are all terms explicitly linked to destruction and violence. As Cameron states, “it is prototypically the female body and genitals that are screwed, drilled, hammered, trimmed, and busted in these somewhat sadistic metaphors.”²⁰ These metaphors are highly indicative of the close association between war thinking and sex thinking that is part of everyday culture.

Cameron’s study also uncovers the presence of explicit notions of war and destruction in reference to sex. She indicates that male language reflects a startling “association of the penis with weapons of destruction.”²¹ These terms of weaponry fall into categories referring to “guns, spears and knives, and missiles.”²² Terms generated by men for the male penis include “love pistol, meat spear, and pink torpedo.”²³ Other terms such as “stealth bomber and destroyer also clearly evoke images of warfare and destruction.”²⁴ These terms reveal that the act of male sexuality centres around the critical idea of “the phallus as dominating and avenging itself on the female body.”²⁵ In other

¹⁹Deborah Cameron. “Naming of Parts: Gender, Culture, and Terms For The Penis Among American College Students,” in *American Speech: A Quarterly of Linguistic Usage*. Vol 67, No. 4. Winter 1992, 371.

²⁰*Ibid*, 371.

²¹*Ibid*, 371.

²²*Ibid*, 371.

²³*Ibid*, 371.

²⁴*Ibid*, 371.

²⁵*Ibid*, 373.

words, sex is the act in which a woman is conquered and destroyed through acts of explicit violence. That is, the act of sex is perceived of as an act of war, propelled by the goals of domination, subjugation, and destruction.

The sense of conquest akin to the conquering of women is built into the idea of the soldier.²⁶ Nowhere else is this intimate link between patriarchal sexuality and soldiering more obvious than in the act of “double veteraning.”²⁷ To become a double veteran, a term popular in Vietnam, a soldier had to rape and then kill a woman. A double veteran is twice the soldier, or, more to the point of patriarchy, twice the man. He has conquered on two important levels, with both his rifle and his penis.

The equating of masculinity with sexuality moves beyond its application to soldiers at the individual level to war as a whole. Understandings of war and sexuality reveal that they are not only mutually reinforcing. They both actively and overtly draw upon the shared understandings of domination, conquering, and subjugation. These shared understandings reveal a profound link between militarism, war, and sex. War and sex are mutually metaphorical. War thinking presents the enemy as subjugated through acts of sexuality. Common phrases such as “we really stuck it to them”, “we screwed them

²⁶This may explain the powerful anti-homosexual bias characteristic of militarism and war. To conquer is to participate in the patriarchal model of sexuality, a mechanism by which men bond. The activity of homosexual males tends to undermine this bonding and the premise of male sexuality as a whole. This is due to the fact that homosexual men do not conquer women sexually. Because of this, they are feared as sexual predators who represent the ultimate threat to manhood. They have the potential to position man as the sexual victim rather than the predator.

²⁷Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 187.

good”, or “fucking the enemy” illustrate this. Direct sexual references may also be found in common terms such as “humping the hills”, “breaking bush”, and “cherries”. They allude to the acts of war as acts of sexual conquering. The term “cherries” in particular refers to those soldiers new to war. Once they have “humped the hills”, “broken bush”, and “screwed the enemy”, these “cherries” have become men with the connotation of sexual experience. They have been successful in their initiation to war, and have proven themselves to be adequate soldiers and, therefore, adequate men.

Rape And War

Patriarchal consciousness identifies violence as a significant component of male gender identity. In its more extreme manifestation this can include rape. Rape, however, is not the end logic of an inevitable strive for dominance. It is rather “an act of masculinity and violence expressed in a sexual way and is therefore a definitive product of patriarchal conditioning.”²⁸ As a product of patriarchal conditioning rape necessarily involves man’s violent appropriation of woman’s sexuality. Feminist theorist Rosemarie Tong expresses this concisely. She states that through rape, “a man takes a woman’s sexuality, as it is mediated through her body, and through his actions proclaims that woman’s sexuality as

²⁸Bruce Kokopeli and George Lakey. “More Power Than We Want: Masculine Sexuality and Violence,” in Pam McAllister, ed. *Reweaving The Web Of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1982, 233.

being for men, for what men want and what men need.”²⁹

Rape plays a critical role in militarism and war. It functions as an extension of masculine domination through the violent sexual subjugation of women. It has evolved as a conventional military strategy whose purpose is to intimidate and frighten the enemy into submission. A variety of theories exist which attempt to account for the relationship between rape and war. One theory regarding rape in war claims that it is a natural and inevitable outcome of war. Such a claim states that “within the violent climate of war, wherein killing is regarded as permissible, even heroic, other forms of violence, namely rape, come to be regarded in the same manner.”³⁰ Such a claim lends credence to the legitimacy patriarchy accords violence as a natural part of being a man.

A second theory address rape from a more critical standpoint. It does not dismiss rape as an inevitable facet of war. Rather, it addresses the misogynistic nature of war and the role rape plays as an expression of male hatred. This claim states that “rape in war is a manifestation of behaviours and values common to all male combatants, behaviours and values which are antagonist towards all women. The violent climate of war merely affords all soldiers the opportunity to overtly express such hostility.”³¹

Neither of these theories dispute the fact that rape within war is “an everyday

²⁹Rosemarie Tong. *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1989, 111.

³⁰Christine Ball. “Women, Rape, and War: Patriarchal Functions and Ideologies.” *Atlantis* 12:1, 1986, 83.

³¹*Ibid*, 83.

occurrence and has become a tacit part of military policy.”³² Wartime rape has specific functions. It serves as an ideological tool, as an expression of “power, domination, degradation, and humiliation.”³³ It also functions to preserve “the polarity between women and men and as such preserve the dichotomy fundamental to the survival of patriarchy.”³⁴

The explicit inclusion of rape and related violences directed against women as conventional military strategy has several consequences. Christine Ball’s work reveals that rape “serves to perpetuate patriarchal ideas of female inferiority, ensuring that the polarity inherent to patriarchy is kept intact and reinforced.”³⁵ The act of rape does this in various ways. It serves to solidify “the idea of woman as “other”, and as a being separate and alienated.”³⁶ Rape also serves to reinforce the idea of woman as object, facilitating her reduction to “territory and booty.”³⁷ Ball writes that “...during war, the mass rapes of enemy women are of symbolic, political and military importance. Their rapes have symbolic significance of entitlement and ownership of the ultimate prize, the possession and domination of women.”³⁸

Wartime rape reflects patriarchal sexual understandings permeated with violence.

³²Christine Ball. “Women, Rape, and War: Patriarchal Functions and Ideologies.” *Atlantis* 12:1, 1986, 85.

³³*Ibid*, 83.

³⁴*Ibid*, 83.

³⁵*Ibid*, 85.

³⁶*Ibid*, 85.

³⁷*Ibid*, 86.

³⁸*Ibid*, 86.

It is its power to reduce women to mere sexual beings to be controlled and conquered that is most evident. Women are not perceived as beings with worth, ideas, and feelings, but rather as objects whose sexuality is a right due to men because they are men. Rape functions to perpetuate a state of “subjugation and powerlessness as it achieves its purpose of ensuring man’s superiority and triumphant manhood.”³⁹ Rape has evolved as a mechanism by which men may display overt proof of their masculinity. It is this power which has proven it to be an effective and integral part of military strategy and “a conscious tactic of warfare.”⁴⁰

A Sexualized Pandora As The Destroyer Of The Soldier

Militarism and war also reflect the distortion of women’s sexuality. Women’s sexuality can pose a threat to soldiers. Women and their spontaneous sexuality can be presented as a direct threat to the preservation of masculinity and the integrity of the soldier’s body. Ultimately, women can be seen as the destroyer of men’s sexual gratification if she is not adequately contained. Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert examine this phenomenon through an examination of the propaganda and literature of WWI and WWII.

³⁹Euan Hague. “Rape, Power, and Masculinity: The Construction Of Gender and National Identities in the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” in Ronit Lentin, ed. *Gender and Catastrophe*. London: Zed Books, 1997, 59.

⁴⁰Betty Reardon. *Sexism and the War System*. New York: Teacher’s College Press, 1985, 40.

Gilbert's work reveals that "women of all ranks and ages were filling the economic gaps men had left behind with "efficiency and enthusiasm."⁴¹ To most men, the war brought about a "festival of female misrule."⁴² They were threatened by a shift in the dichotomy so fundamental to patriarchy and its standards of masculinity. Women of this period "evolved into active, autonomous, and transcendent subjects as men were forced into passive and dependent roles."⁴³ Women were imagined to possess a 'sinister power' which they used to facilitate this reversal of roles. This threat to masculinity was "combined with the unmanning terrors of combat."⁴⁴ This combination culminated in the "creation of a generalized sexual anxiety and a sexual anger directed specifically at women."⁴⁵ It is this "sense of sexual wounding" which Gilbert identifies as "haunting so many male modernist texts."⁴⁶ This male sexual anger intensified with the growing idea that "women were eager to implore men to make mortal sacrifices through which they themselves would ultimately profit."⁴⁷

As men were "increasingly alienated from their prewar selves", women were

⁴¹Sandra M. Gilbert. "Solider's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War," in Margaret Randolph Higgonet et al, eds. *Behind The Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, 207.

⁴²*Ibid*, 212.

⁴³*Ibid*, 211.

⁴⁴*Ibid*, 198-199.

⁴⁵*Ibid*, 198-199.

⁴⁶*Ibid*, 199.

⁴⁷*Ibid*, 208.

imagined to embody a power strengthened at the expense of men.⁴⁸ Along with this newly acquired power came the license for women to possess an uninhibited and overt sexuality. In the face of a male sexual anger, such sexuality was perceived as deadly. Gubar reveals that misogynist perceptions of women's sexuality positioned them as posing an immediate and often times deadly threat to soldiers. This facilitated the rapid growth of a "menacing hostility which permeated both positive and negative roles of women in the literary works of this period. Yet this hostility also found widespread physical manifestations, as femininity and hence women themselves were viewed as the representation of a principle of evil which one must stomp out."⁴⁹ According to Gubar, "women were viewed almost entirely as ladies in waiting, soliciting outsiders, or resented beneficiaries of men's suffering."⁵⁰ As a result, "basic training films conveyed images of women as carriers of venereal disease, as objects of men's sexual exploitation, or as entrapments in marriage and monthly payments."⁵¹

Man's nemesis was "outrightly depicted as female, as she posed the threat of contamination and female pollution in her evil plan to infect fighting soldiers with

⁴⁸Sandra M. Gilbert. "Soldier's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War," in Margaret Randolph Higgonet et al, eds. *Behind The Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, 200.

⁴⁹Jean Bethke Elshtain. *Women and War*. New York: Basic Books, 1987, 201.

⁵⁰Susan Gubar. "This Is My Rifle, This Is My Gun: WW II and the Blitz On Women," in Margaret Randolph Higgonet et al, eds. *Behind The Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, 240.

⁵¹Christine Ball. "Women, Rape, and War: Patriarchal Functions and Ideologies." *Atlantis*. 12:1, 1986, 89.

horrendous venereal diseases.”⁵² Such is blatantly obvious in wartime posters which warn fighting soldiers against unprotected sex with ‘the enemy’. Women were personified in the form of the VD sisters, Gonnies and Syph. It is these two who would be responsible for luring soldiers to their death.⁵³

Both Gilbert and Gubar reveal that in instances in which women’s sexuality cannot be controlled, it must be destroyed. If a woman is not the docile, willing object who caters to the sexual whims of man, she is a disease ridden enemy intent on his destruction. This notion of women is a product of the patriarchal model of sexuality. In keeping with this model, the military engages in elaborate measures to appropriate women’s sexuality for its own purposes. As a result, it plays a critical role in the institutional reduction of women to sexual objects. The primary form of this institutionalized reduction is prostitution.

The Institutional Reduction Of Women To Sexual Objects

Proper masculinity is vitally important to militarism and war. Patriarchy requires that men display this masculinity through the sexual conquering of women. The military has institutionalized this socially constructed need. To ensure its smooth operation and preservation of morale, military institutions have accepted “the legitimization of men’s

⁵²Susan Gubar. “This Is My Rifle: This Is My Gun: WWII and the Blitz On Women,” in Margaret Randolph Higgonet et al, eds. *Behind The Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, 240.

⁵³*Ibid*, 240.

sexual needs.”⁵⁴ The military recognizes the need of soldiers to have a supervised outlet of sexual desire. This understanding is so powerful so as to prompt men to “demand the right to marry or to otherwise have access to women” to guarantee their commitment to military duty.⁵⁵ The end result of these ideas is the “organized expropriation of the sexuality of some, who are women, for the use of others, who are men.”⁵⁶ In other words, the military guarantees that men’s sexual needs are satisfied.

The work of Cynthia Enloe has focused on this facet of militarism and war. Her work includes an examination of the creation of The Contagious Disease Acts , originating in Britain in 1964. Her work provides a glimpse into the beginning of the organization of women’s sexuality. Enloe writes:

“The creation and enforcement of the Contagious Disease Acts permitted colonial police to conduct compulsory genital examinations on women around imperial military bases. Such laws were established in order to allow British soldiers overseas to have sexual relations with colonial women without fear of contracting any form of venereal disease. Underlying the Contagious Disease Acts was the belief that women must serve men and male institutions, not just by providing cheap or unpaid labour, but by providing clean sex. Only if women were sexually healthy, so it was implied, could men’s presumably uncontrollable sexual drives be allowed free reign without society’s

⁵⁴Cynthia Enloe. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women’s Lives*. London: Pluto Press, 1983, 4.

⁵⁵*Ibid*, 4.

⁵⁶Catherine A. MacKinnon. “Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda For Theory”, in Nannerl O. Keohan, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, and Barbara C. Gelphe, eds. *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982, 2.

male institutions being jeopardized.”⁵⁷

What Enloe shows is that the organized expropriation of sex for soldiers has required overt and calculated policies.

In view of this, women must be sexually available. The military has engaged in the large scale organization of militarized prostitution. This is to ensure that the sexual needs of soldiers are met without fail. Militarized prostitution is “the mobilization of women for the purposes of providing commercialized comfort, or, more appropriately, sex for troops.”⁵⁸ What this has meant in reality for women is their widespread dehumanization. Prostitution is by far the most systematic and institutionalized reduction of women to sexual objects in the military.

In the absence of a critical analysis prostitution has a certain conception which is altogether misleading. It is often times understood as “a projection of either mutual lust and degradation, or as an equal exchange of sexual need for economic need.”⁵⁹

Prostitution is properly understood, however, as the misogynistic “establishment of a male social system in place to ensure the satisfaction of male demand for sexual servicing

⁵⁷Cynthia Enloe. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*. London: Pluto Press, 1983, 82.

⁵⁸*Ibid*, 82.

⁵⁹Catherine A. MacKinnon. “Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda For Theory”, in *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*. Nannerl O. Keohan, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, and Barbara C. Gelphe, eds. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982, 17.

and for objectified sex.”⁶⁰ The military engages in the “direct, large scale, and brutal demand and organization of women as sexual slaves in a manner fashioned to meet military needs.”⁶¹ Soldiers come to assume that “one of the prerogatives automatically due upon committing to military service is the sexual availability of local women.”⁶²

This can be seen clearly in military bases. As Cynthia Enloe observes, “ a military base is not simply an institution for servicing bombers, fighters and aircraft carriers, or a launch pad for aggressive forays into surrounding territories. A military base is also a package of presumptions about the male soldier’s sexual needs and the local societies’ sexual needs, as well as assumptions regarding the local societies’ resources for satisfying those needs.”⁶³ Given these ideas, we witness the recruitment of military “comfort women”. These women’s sole purpose is to provide unlimited sexual servicing to military personnel of all sorts. The military utilizes this service as a means by which to “control soldiers behaviour, satisfy their sexual needs, maintain morale, and prevent the spread of venereal disease.”⁶⁴

This system of institutionalized sexual management requires the cooperation of

⁶⁰Cecilia Hoffman. “Prostitution As Choice”. *ISIS Women In Action*, vol 1(1995), 6.

⁶¹Cynthia Enloe. “Bananas, Bases, and Patriarchy,” in Jean Bethke Elshtain and Sheila Tobias, eds. *Women, Militarism, and War: Essays in History, Politics, and Social Theory*. London: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1990, 201.

⁶²*Ibid*, 201.

⁶³*Ibid*, 200.

⁶⁴John Lie. “The Transformation of Sexual Work in 20th Century Korea”. *Gender and Society*, Vol 9, No.3, June 1995, 327.

both military organizations and local governments. Both are responsible for establishing and enforcing explicit policies dealing with the organization of prostitution. These regulations are designed to ensure the smooth operation of comfort stations. In other words, the military assumes responsibility for coordinating access to sexual servicing for soldiers, as well as for monitoring and treating sexual workers for venereal diseases.⁶⁵

The military coordinates prostitution in various ways. Prostitutes may be kept on base under the guise of laundry or service women. Or they may be kept in brothels and whorehouses off base.⁶⁶ Military elites may not always be directly responsible for the recruitment and coordination of prostitution. Often times this responsibility is transferred to local bar owners, pimps, and police.⁶⁷

The organization of prostitution has become a facet critical to military development and strategy. Military institutions engage in increasingly regimented forms of organizing prostitution. A manifestation of such organization has come to be known as the 'rest and recreation industry.' This industry is highly regimented in nature, and has developed into a regular part of a soldier's tour or duty. It is thought that soldiers cannot be subjected to the rigours of war while being denied the comfort of women. To deprive men of this need is to jeopardize military efficiency. Once a soldier has committed six months to military service, he is eligible for R&R, in which the military provides the sites

⁶⁵John Lie. "The Transformation of Sexual Work in 20th Century Korea." *Gender and Society*, Vol 9, No.3, June 1995, 327.

⁶⁶Cynthia Enloe. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*. London: Pluto Press, 1983, 45.

⁶⁷*Ibid*, 45.

for men to satisfy their sexual cravings.

We may gain a glimpse into the R&R industry by looking at the Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Station. Both were headquarters of the United States Navel Force in the Philippines .These bases were established in 1944 as the United States' largest overseas military bases.⁶⁸ It was Olongapo, a small fishing village surrounded by Subic Bay's 40,000 acres, that the US Navy selected as its model comfort station. Military personnel worked in cooperation with the Philippine authorities and local entrepreneurs. Together they engaged in a widescale process of organizing militarized prostitution for the purpose of "providing US servicemen with Filipino sexual labour as part of their tours of duty."⁶⁹ In efforts to perfect its operations, the military "set up clinics, where women were licensed and monitored for sexually transmitted diseases. After they were checked, the women were issued sexual health identification cards."⁷⁰ These were to be produced on demand by the US military police and the woman's customers.⁷¹ In other words, it was the job of these doctors to "ensure that male soldiers were provided access to the sex they needed without jeopardizing military operational readiness."⁷²

The introduction of American military forces to the war in Vietnam facilitated the

⁶⁸Sheila Coronel and Ninotchka Rosca. "For The Boys." *MS*. Nov/Dec 1993, 13.

⁶⁹*Ibid*, 12.

⁷⁰*Ibid*, 12.

⁷¹*Ibid*, 12.

⁷²Cynthia Enloe. "Bananas, Bases, and Patriarchy," in Jean Bethke Elshtain and Sheila Tobias, eds. *Women, Militarism, and War: Essays in History, Politics, and Social Theory*. London: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1990, 202.

rapid growth of the R&R industry in the late 1960's.⁷³ This propelled the Philippines to become a particularly popular R&R centre. It is estimated that the Philippines was hosting up to 10,000 service men daily during this period. To meet demand, local government recruited as many as 20,000 comfort women, from its own population, and from places such as China, Indonesia, Japan and Taiwan.⁷⁴ Recruitment techniques included purchasing, coercing, and even kidnapping women.⁷⁵ Given this fact, little or no chance of escape was offered to the thousands of Filipino and other sexual slaves.

Olongapo became a site where massage parlours and brothels were “as integral a part of operations as were dry docks.”⁷⁶ Many of these brothels and massage parlours featured “the house speciality, where ten dollars could purchase lunch, a cold beer, and oral sex under the table provided by a woman on her hands and knees.”⁷⁷ Government officials hid behind the labels of “entertainers and hospitality girls” as a means of denying their role in the organization of prostitution. They had little interest in curbing such a “prosperous industry.”⁷⁸

⁷³Cynthia Enloe. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*. London: Pluto Press, 1983, 39.

⁷⁴Sheila Coronel and Ninotchka Rosca. “For The Boys.” *MS*. Nov/Dec 1993, 12.

⁷⁵Cynthia Enloe. “Bananas, Bases, and Patriarchy.” in Jean Bethke Elshtain and Sheila Tobias, eds. *Women, Militarism, and War: Essays in History, Politics, and Social Theory*. London: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1990, 202.

⁷⁶*Ibid*, 200.

⁷⁷Sheila Coronel and Ninotchka Rosca. “For The Boys.” *MS*. Nov/Dec 1993, 13.

⁷⁸*Ibid*, 13.

Personal accounts of women who lived through these horrors reveal the malice with which the military pursued its objectives. As one woman recalls, “ whenever a Navy ship was docked, she was forced to have sex with a minimum of four or five servicemen daily. Each man paid the bar owner ten dollars for her services, of which she was given a small fraction.”⁷⁹ As another woman reveals: “I knew nothing about sex. I wept and wept because of the pain. My body shook, I passed out. Everyday different soldiers came to rape me. That whole time, my vagina was bloody and swollen, all I had was a towel to cover myself.”⁸⁰ In addition to enduring daily sexual assaults, many of these women were also forced to cook, clean, and massage military officers.⁸¹ When these entertainers and comfort women were used up, when they were no longer of any use to the military and local entrepreneurs, they were often times abandoned in remote areas where they were left to die of disease or starvation. Others were simply killed.⁸²

Conclusion

Numerous studies reveal that women are first and foremost the victims of the patriarchal state of war. They are beings whose worth as humans is not recognized. Rather, they must endure the ways of life which patriarchy creates for them and which war

⁷⁹Sheila Coronel and Ninotchka Rosca. “For The Boys.” *MS*. Nov/Dec 1993, 11.

⁸⁰*Ibid*, 12.

⁸¹*Ibid*, 12.

⁸²*Ibid*, 11.

reproduces and strengthens. Women must endure abuse in a multitude of forms, including sexual objectification and rape. Often times, they even face death. Such realities indicate a startling truth, that although war has serious consequences for many, it is women who are its perpetual victims. War is an institutionalized expression of the misogyny at the centre of patriarchal consciousness. This is especially clear when we focus on patriarchal sexuality and war. Chapter Three examines the personal accounts of several men who served in the Vietnam war. These accounts are replete with stories of the abuses women are forced to endure in war. Soldiers spoke of rape, prostitution, and women in a revealing manner. They often spoke of instances of rape and prostitution as if they were natural and acceptable parts of war. These accounts also reflect the profound relationship between patriarchal sexuality and the ideal model of the soldier, as well as the idea of woman as the enemy of man. In other words, their stories reveal the true misogyny of war.

Chapter Three

Vietnam, Patriarchal Sexuality, and War

Introduction

In Chapter Two we discussed the patriarchal model of sexuality that is critical to militarism and war. We identified the intimate connection between soldiering and sexuality. This connection is rooted in the fact that both share the same logic. That is, both draw upon notions of conquering women. We then looked at the explicit role rape plays in war. We discovered that it is an extension and acting out of these notions of conquering and conquest. The military utilizes rape as a strategy for winning wars. A study of the patriarchal model of sexuality also included the notion of woman as man's enemy. Women's spontaneous sexuality in particular presents a significant threat to men. She is not only responsible for the destruction of men's sexual gratification, but also for the destruction of men themselves. Finally, we discussed the institutional reduction of women to sexual objects. No where is this more obvious than in the organization of militarized prostitution. We discovered that the military is responsible for the institutionalized management of women's sexuality for the purpose of pleasing and servicing men.

This study now turns to the Vietnam War to illustrate the critical relationship between patriarchy, militarism, and war. Personal accounts of men and women who served in the Vietnam war provide startling proof of the links discussed in Chapter Two. These

accounts reveal the capacity of patriarchal sexuality and war to reproduce and reinforce one another.

Hearing The Soldier's Story

To expose the intimate relationship between patriarchal sexuality, militarism, and war, this study addresses a selection of personal accounts of war. The Vietnam experience in the words of soldiers themselves reveals a profound connection between patriarchal sexuality and war. Their thoughts, emotions, and expressions are direct products of a patriarchal consciousness. They are imbued with the idea of conquering and destroying women. The soldier's accounts of raping and killing women are recounted with an air of excitement and accomplishment, and rarely with shame. Veterans speak of penetrating and destroying the enemy with a similar elation. They speak of sex and prostitution as a right of the soldier. These personal accounts expose the brutality and horror of war guided by patriarchal ideas of proper sexuality.

Paradoxically, the war was very brutal for the soldiers as well. Their accounts are filled with disturbing memories of losing limbs and watching friends die. I believe it is only with a view through their eyes that we may truly witness the misery of war and the power it has to distort and destroy lives. One soldier described war as "big and as horrible an event as man has yet devised to touch a massive number of lives at the same approximate time and in an unforgettable way."¹ The Vietnam War was no exception. It

¹Charles R. Anderson. *The Grunts*. New York: Berkley Books, 1976, 155.

has been described as one of the most brutal and distorted of all wars. This brutality and distortion is clearly reflected in all personal accounts. The malice which characterizes war becomes startling obvious. The brutality is also reflected in the effects this has had on the lives of countless men and women. Tens of thousands of Americans were killed during the course of the Vietnam War. Yet veterans believe that the American body count compiled by the American military is far from accurate. They claim that these statistics have been altered and in no way accurately account for the number of deaths in Vietnam. One veteran stated:

“...I don’t believe for a moment that there were only 53,000 people killed in Vietnam. I don’t know how it is possible to disguise thousands of deaths, but I believe that there were thousands more Americans who died than were reported. I saw it with my own eyes constantly.”²

Despite these brutalities, the American military had little problem recruiting soldiers for service in Vietnam. Coercion did play a role, but was by no means the primary force which propelled men to military service. Personal accounts reveal that many men were willing and anxious to serve their country. Men simply believed that “when the country called, men went.”³ The idea that serving in war was what men did was widely accepted.

Whatever their motivation, terms such as honour, valour, and duty “quickly lost

²Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men And Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 128.

³Peter Goldman and Tony Fuller. *Charlie Company: What Vietnam Did To Us*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1983, 4.

their appeal as men were exposed to the reality of war.”⁴ In these accounts, one veteran described what war meant for him:

“What war is about in reality is the uncounted months of endless marches over these roadless jungles, dragging thousands of pounds of food and equipment on aching, bleeding backs and shoulders, the months of suffering from dysentery and malaria without proper rest or drugs, dying on nameless hills, in unrecorded streambeds, of cowering in terror and hatred as the B-52's and Phantoms roared overhead at will, dropping an array of weapons designed to do nothing but snuff out lives.”⁵

Personal accounts also expose the vast distance between the glorified image of war and what it meant in reality. It is this experience of war which stands out in the accounts studied. Militarism claims that war will create noble men. However, militarism requires that nobility and honour be earned through destruction and murder. It creates an environment in which men earn respect and create a kinship with other men thorough killing and destruction. Success is measured and awards are earned by killing and improving body counts. Accounts reveal that killing was “encouraged with rewards of medals, hot meals, and time off from the horror, incentives which were the only way to ensure that men would keep killing each other day after day.”⁶

Men’s reactions to these requirements of militarism were varied. Some were fascinated and enthralled with the killing and the brutality. They killed with an

⁴Charles R. Anderson. *The Grunts*. New York: Berkley Books, 1976, 148.

⁵*Ibid*, 148.

⁶Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 168.

“unquenchable thirst” and a “blood lust.”⁷ Others were terrified and horrified by what they experienced in Vietnam. One veteran described his experience in the following manner:

“Vietnam was like a nightmare for a full year without waking up. Every minute of it I was scared, every night, double scared. It got to the point where I was frightened all of the time. Either it broke you or it made you hard.”⁸

Others recall being:

“overpowered by a primitive hate and anger that they claim the war itself had wrung from men. They became violent, dangerous individuals. These men accepted an enemy in any form as the recipient of their aggression when the officially designated enemy was not handy.”⁹

The extraordinary dimensions of men’s reactions to the Vietnam War is exemplified in the following quotation:

“I come to embody hatred. I don’t direct hatred at the exhaustion, the heat, or the gook I stalk. I become hatred, something that produces hate and requires it to exist. I ingest it and excrete it.”¹⁰

These quotes reveal that the Vietnam War left no one unaffected. In actuality, it was responsible for the collapse of the lives of many young men. These men were forced

⁷Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 135.

⁸Stanley Goff, Robert Sanders, and Clark Smith. *Brothers: Black Soldiers In The Nam*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 160.

⁹Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in The Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 198.

¹⁰*Ibid*, 81-82.

to internalize an ideology which failed to recognize them as humans. Men were the victims of the brutality and malice of war. They were turned into machines whose purpose was to kill on command. Yet they were also vulnerable to the threat posed by the physical enemy they challenged, and faced the possibility of harm and death everywhere and at all times. However, patriarchy is responsible for the evolution of man as the victim into man as the victimizer. It is through the patriarchal model of sexuality that man is transformed from the victim to the aggressor. Woman becomes the victim. The man conquers, dominates, and destroys; woman is conquered, subjugated, and ultimately destroyed. To illustrate this point, we will examine the personal accounts of soldiers in a discussion of the profound link between the patriarchal model of sexuality and the ideal of the soldier.

Soldiering And Patriarchal Sexuality

War and militarism render mass destruction and death everyday parts of life. This is a deeply disturbing aspect of war. Militarism is responsible for creating a mentality in which killing and destruction are exciting and even fun. Incredibly, an even more disturbing element of the Vietnam War is unveiled in the soldier's story. This element is the relationship between patriarchal sexuality and war. As discussed in Chapter Two, both soldiering and patriarchal sexuality draw upon notions of conquering women. They share the same logical dynamic. Due to this connection, sex inevitably plays a critical role in the creation of a soldier. Soldiering itself is expressed using the patriarchal model of sexuality. In other words, a soldier's understanding of his role in war is directly linked to men's

understanding of their role as sexual subject. Included in this examination as well is the interconnected relationship between the language of war and the language of sex. A study of Vietnam revealed concrete evidence indicating that war is portrayed as a direct act of male sexuality. The enemy was continually presented as being subjugated through acts of overt sexuality. The soldier was the dominating man who has conquered and destroyed the womanly enemy.

The accounts of men who served in Vietnam are imbued with terms and phrases which indicate a profound disassociation from humans in the act of killing. The enemy was a being without a name or a face. It was rather an object that deserved to be conquered and destroyed. The enemy, in short, was objectified. The devices veterans used to describe their interactions with the enemy always indicate a measure of sexual domination. The term “penetrate the enemy” for instance, was one commonly used. Soldier’s accounts of the enemy indicate sexual connotations of this sort in various degrees. As one veteran described:

“...there was a certain joy you had in killing, an exhilaration that is hard to explain. After a fire fight guys would be really wired. “Wow man, did you see that guy *getting it?*”¹¹(my emphasis)

Another soldier claimed that “he loved to hear the artillery going off at night. It meant that somewhere, somebody was getting his *ass greased.*”¹²(my emphasis) The sexual

¹¹Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 184.

¹²*Ibid*, 248.

connotations and sense of domination are evident in these memories. Men felt victorious because they remain the dominating sexual subject. The enemy was understood as the (sexual) object which has been conquered. These ideas are particularly evident in the following quote:

“...at the Karump-rump-rump of each volley of mortar rounds, at each burst of fire, the grunts back on the perimeter looked at each other and grinned. *Get some man, oh get some!*”¹³(my emphasis)

One soldier described this sense of conquest explicitly when he stated, “a gun is power. It is like a pure sexual trip every time you got to pull the trigger.”¹⁴

Terms such as “humping the hills”, “breaking bush”, and “cherries” were commonly used in Vietnam. The act of “humping”, for instance, is one which confirms a soldier’s masculinity. As one veteran described: “we were big, tough Marines. We can hump all day and fight all night.”¹⁵ “Humping” was the primary activity of the soldier. Those who were able to withstand the physical and mental exhaustion of “humping” were considered men without question.

The term “cherries” was also frequently used. “Cherries” were soldiers who were new to Vietnam. As new soldiers, they had yet to prove their worth as men. One veteran described his experience as a “cherry”:

¹³Charles R. Anderson. *The Grunts*. New York: Berkley Books, 1976, 31.

¹⁴Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 187.

¹⁵Charles R. Anderson. *The Grunts*. New York: Berkley Books, 1976, 60.

“...Cherries we were called, or Newby’s, or FNG’s, fucking new guys, by troops hardened and made less sanguine perhaps, by just a few months in the bush. Like them, we would age and bust our cherries, quickly.”¹⁶

Another veteran described a “newby’s” first fire fight. With reference to defloration we see all the “cherries” had proven themselves worthy by killing in the field. He stated:

“...we had bloodied all our cherries painlessly.... and they had all seen and even tasted the reality of blood lust, the indescribable flock of emotions that came over us that day and carried us away. What a triumphant moment!”¹⁷ (my emphasis)

These accounts are indicative of the interwoven relationship between male sexuality and war. Soldiering is animated by the model of patriarchal sexuality. To be a man is to be a soldier. To be a soldier is to conquer and destroy.

Rape

We have confirmed that the model of the soldier is explicitly shaped by the patriarchal model of sexuality. This has been illustrated in the sexualized connotation which the act of war adopts. This patriarchal model of sexuality takes on an even more concrete form within war. This concrete form is rape. Rape is an acting out of the

¹⁶Bernard Edelman, ed. *Dear America: Letters Home From Vietnam*. New York: Pocket Books, 1985, 1.

¹⁷Tom Carhart. *The Offering*. New York: Warner Books, 1987, 123.

patriarchal model of sexuality. It solidifies the binary of man as subject and woman as object. Rape is also a product of the logical base which patriarchy and militarism share. This logic positions the man and the soldier as the conqueror and the destroyer of woman. Recognizing the power of the dichotomy of conqueror and conquered which rape creates, the military has appropriated it to suit its purposes. In other words, rape has evolved as a critical and effective military strategy. It is a standard operating procedure used by military strategists to intimidate enemies and ensure their cooperation. Rape is a manifestation of brute force which everybody understands. It is also a distorted method of bonding men. Trust was formed among men engaging in the acts of brotherhood such as rape and killing. The brutality of rape provided the forum where men displayed their male virility, confirmed their masculinity, and became one of the guys.

An examination of the war in Vietnam and American military strategy reveals that rape played a critical role in advancing military objectives. The rape of local women was a strategy used to humiliate and intimidate Vietnamese “communists”. As Ball writes: “ the rape and sexual mutilation of Vietnamese women was a conscious tactic used to advance military objectives by forcing intimidation and submission.”¹⁸ These were standard operating procedures executed with specific techniques for extracting information from the Vietnamese people. Rape was a strategy particularly common in village sweeps which sought out VC and NVA suppliers. Observe the following quote:

¹⁸Christine Ball. “Women, Rape, and War: Patriarchal Functions and Ideologies.” *Atlantis* 12:1, 1986, 85.

“We’d stand them up against the wall, put a gun to his head, and say “Talk, if you don’t talk, we’re going to pull the trigger”. Or they’d take a man’s wife or daughter and screw them right in front of him, and make him talk. If he didn’t talk, they would shoot the woman and then shoot him. This was customary.”¹⁹

These were crimes that military leaders were instructed not only to ignore, but to encourage.²⁰

Soldiers reactions to rape took a variety of forms. Some men approached rape with hesitation. They were torn between the power and reputation it promised and an awareness that it was wrong. Others approached rape with earnest and enthusiasm. They thrived on the power and its erotic component. There were still others who were disgusted by it, yet had no choice but to turn a blind eye to ensure their physical safety. One veteran spoke of rape in this sense:

“...there was one guy in the platoon that told me they were searching in this hut one time and there was a really pretty young Vietnamese girl. He walked over to her and jammed his hands down her pants and started to take her clothes off. She was shivering and scared. There were two or three other guys in the hut. The girl’s mother came in and starting raising hell and they backed off. I had the feeling that they would have raped her if her mother hadn’t come in. I don’t know what I would have done if I had been faced with that sort of thing. I don’t think that I would have taken part, but I don’t think I would have tried to stop it. That would have been encouraging your sudden death. Any officer knows that if he messed with you, in a field fight you could shoot him in the head. That was

¹⁹Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 65.

²⁰Tom Carhart. *The Offering*. New York: Warner Books, 1987, 259-260.

standard operating procedure in any infantry unit.”²¹

For the majority of men, their role in rape was shaped by a fear of failing to conform to standards of masculinity. If they did not participate in these expressions of masculinity, they would be considered less of a man. To fail this test of manliness was to lose the trust of all other soldiers. In other words, one could never be part of that sacred brotherhood, or one of the guys. The accounts of veterans reveal the important role rape played in this sense. Rape was an experience which men shared. It was also an experience that stayed in the field. One soldier described an incidence of rape and his role in detail:

“...so we went running, taking the daughter. She was crying, I think she was a virgin. We pulled her pants down and put a gun to her head. Guys are taking turns screwing her. It was like an animal pack. “Hey, he’s taking too long screwing her!” Nobody was turning their back or nothing. We just stood in line and we screwed her. I was taking her body by force. Guys were standing over her with rifles while I was screwing her. She was screaming “Why?” Baby-san was crying, so a guy just put a rifle to her head and pulled the trigger. Then we started pumping rounds into her, kicking her, and stomping her.”²²

This veteran vividly described what was colloquially known in Vietnam as double veteraning. Here a man first rapes, and then kills a woman. In the logic of patriarchal consciousness she has been conquered twice. The soldier was then twice the man, once a rapist and once a soldier. Personal accounts reveal that soldiers were both pressured and

²¹Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 171.

²²*Ibid*, 189-190.

encouraged to rape women, kill them, and mutilate their dead bodies. It was expected of soldiers, and those who refused were branded as abnormal and deficient as men.

Accounts also reveal that many soldiers understood rape to be a natural and inevitable facet of war. They believed that men are in constant need of sex and that men in this state are always ready to rape. One veteran spoke of this notion of manhood:

“You take a group of men and put them in one 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. These women are of another culture, another colour, another society. You don’t want a prostitute. You got an M-16, what do you need to pay for a lady for? You walk to the village and take what you want.”²³

These accounts also reveal that for some men, the act of rape was an expression of the power they wielded. Rape was not only a means of satisfying a sexual craving. It was a right of men as powerful figures. Such is reflected in this veteran’s experience in Vietnam.:

“But in the Nam you realized that you had the power to take a life. You had the power to rape a woman and nobody could say nothing to you. That God like feeling you had was in the field. It was like I was a God. I could take a life, I could screw a woman. I can beat somebody up and get away with it. It was a God like feeling that a guy could express in the Nam.”²⁴

The accounts of soldiers in Vietnam reveal that rape plays a critical role in the context of war. War is intimately connected with gendered understandings. This positions

²³Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 187.

²⁴*Ibid*, 172.

it as critical to the reproduction of patriarchy. Patriarchy requires that women be dominated and subjugated. The act of rape does exactly this. It not only ensures the conquering of women in the most violent manner, but also guarantees a man's unquestionable acceptance into the masculine domain.

A Sexualized Pandora As The Destroyer Of The Soldier

Through acts of overt masculinity, men confirm their masculine identity. These acts in particular involve the sexual conquering and destruction of women. However, it is in this capacity that women may also pose a direct threat to men and the preservation of their masculine identity. The binaries characteristic of patriarchy play a fundamental role here. In addition to isolating men and women to the masculine and feminine spheres, these also position woman as the enemy of man. Woman's threat to man may take a variety of forms. The one which stands out in the accounts of Vietnam is the idea of woman as the potential destroyer of man's sexual gratification. Not only does woman pose a direct physical threat, she also undermines man's masculine identity. It is woman's spontaneous or uncontrolled sexuality which is explicitly focused upon. She may destroy man's virility by infecting him with venereal diseases. This was a theme commonly found in the accounts of Vietnam veterans.

Soldiers were continually warned of rampant VD rates and of the necessity of protecting themselves. Women were the embodiment of this threat. Upon their first

introduction to the military, this is a threat which men were made aware of. Women's capacity to destroy men's sexual gratification was evident in several accounts. As one veteran described:

"There had been boom boom girls from Cua Viet Village hanging around the perimeter wire, but if anyone ever touched one, it was a guaranteed case of the clap. So that was a craving that had to be set aside for R&R or until rotation back home."²⁵

One veteran remembered the pleasure of visiting "Sin City." He also remembered the threat:

"Sin City. That's a little town outside the camp near Pleiku. The army tries to control prostitution and VD by keeping an area where you can go and fuck your brains out if you are an enlisted man, or, being an officer, you can sneak in. It's guarded by Military Police and everything. The American doctors check the whores three times a week for VD, but you got to be standing first in line after they get through to be sure that you don't get the clap."²⁶

Soldiers were warned to have sex only with those prostitutes possessing a medical card. This was not only to protect against the threat of VD, but to save their lives. Accounts reveal that women were also thought to possess a direct physical threat to soldiers. One veteran spoke of this in length:

"I know that some of the whores were putting glass up their vaginas and others were infected with a strain of syphallis that was very virulent. The spectrum of antibiotics they were using at the time was not wide enough to get rid of it. The VC and NVA

²⁵Charles R. Anderson. *The Grunts*. New York: Berkley Books, 1976, 29.

²⁶Frederick Downs. *The Killing Zone: My Life In The Vietnam War*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 7.

figured an American combat loss was a combat loss. It doesn't matter if a guy can't go to war because he's got the clap and it hurts when he takes a leak, or if he can't go to war because he has a bullet in his head. Either way it's a loss."²⁷

Women's betrayal also extends to a direct threat to soldier's physical safety. Men were warned to use women as a sexual outlet only. To talk with prostitutes was to render them vulnerable. In other words, women were considered to be natural allies of the enemy. They were capable of extracting vital information from fighting men, information that would lead to their demise. As a result, soldiers were warned to avoid any form of "pillow talk". One particular account spoke directly of women in their capacity as spies. That is, of women using their sexuality as a weapon on behalf of the enemy. It laid specific blame on prostitutes who warned the enemy about a military endeavour. The result was the massacre of several American soldiers on Fire Base Julie. He stated:

"It was the whores of Lai Khe who told them that they were going up to Fire Base Julie before they had it from their officer, and the men presumed that the same intelligence had been passed in the spirit of 'equity' to the enemy."²⁸

These perspectives are indicative of the power of a dichotomy which positions woman as the enemy of man. This notion finds a concrete form within war. As these accounts reveal, woman is held directly responsible for the destruction of men's sexual

²⁷Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. Berkley Books, 1983, 187.

²⁸Peter Goldman and Tony Fuller. *Charlie Company: What Vietnam Did To Us*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 100.

gratification. To threaten the sexual capacity of a man is to threaten his masculine identity. In other words, woman is positioned as the ultimate enemy of man. In war, men faced the threat of mutilation and death at the hands of a physical, visible enemy. Yet patriarchy still managed to ensure that the ultimate threat that all men feared and despised lay in the form of women.

Prostitution

Another facet of militarism and war which was examined in Chapter Two was prostitution. The organization of prostitution was an activity fully acknowledged in the accounts of Vietnam veterans. As elaborated in Chapter Two, its organization centres around the idea of men's sexual need. Militarism supports the patriarchal ideal which claims that men cannot function in the absence of a sexual outlet. Inherent in this patriarchal model of sexuality is the sexual objectification of women. In other words, the organization of war is closely and automatically bound up with the reduction of women to mere sexual objects. A woman's worth is solely a reflection of her capacity to please and service men.

The organization of sexuality and a soldier's reaction to such organization are facets of militarism and war which occur in degrees. Yet the one factor which is inevitably present is the male demand for female objectified sex. The patriarchal model of sexuality requires that men dominate and conquer women as a means of proving their manhood. Sexual conquests function as an affirmation of manhood. Due to the strong link between

soldiering and masculinity, this proof of manhood is one which every soldier feels compelled to display. As one veteran stated:

“It was a big thing to be a man in Vietnam. They went out and they got laid, and they used to brag about how many times they got the clap. Well, hey, you are a man if you got the clap. The more times you got it, well, even better.”²⁹

The frequency with which one caught ‘the clap’ was a measure of one’s sexual prowess and, therefore, one’s manhood.

The satisfaction of sexual needs was a pursuit of most soldiers. Personal accounts reveal that upon coming out of the field, soldiers were looking for good food, good drink, and lots of sex. They equated the satisfaction of sexual needs with physiological necessities such as food and drink. Base camps were deficient if they did not cater to these widely felt needs of soldiers. Men would complain of “ the lack of cold beer and hot broads.”³⁰ This is illustrated in the following quote:

“...when we would come out of the field, we’d want some boom boom, a piece of tail. You had to have a little bit of those things that made you feel good. We got some hot slop, something to drink, we got some boom boom(sex). Really man, those were the only things that you lived for. That was the only thing that kept you going in the field.”³¹

²⁹Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 217.

³⁰Charles R. Anderson. *The Grunts*. New York: Berkley Books, 1987, 157.

³¹Stanley Goff, Robert Sanders, and Clark Smith. *Brothers: Black Soldiers In The Nam*. New York: Berkley Books, 1985, 142-143.

The military's organization of prostitution hinges upon a number of factors. It must recognize that soldiers need access to a sexual outlet merely by virtue of being men. It must also recognize that soldiers earn the right to that sex through displays of 'courage' and 'honour' in the arena of combat. Such a notion is evident in the following quote:

“...they know that they can't stick your ass over here for a year and not expect you to fuck something, so they must have decided that since they couldn't stop it, the least they could do was control it.”³²

These accounts reveal that the organization of prostitution took a variety of forms. The one constant factor in this organization was the acknowledgement that sex was a service critical to the maintenance of military efficiency. In other words, sex was a mechanism for relieving the stress and strain of combat for the purpose of keeping soldiers in prime fighting form. A sexual outlet for soldiers provided entertainment, relaxation, rehabilitation, and rewards. Military bases in Vietnam were one area where prostitution was organized. These bases were regularly used by various military units. Soldiers were either on their way to the field, or on their way back. Given this fact, there was a constant need for sexual servicing.

Laundry girls provided one outlet of sexual servicing. Their recruitment required minimal bureaucratic effort. These women fulfilled a double function, as servant and as whore. Nurses stationed on military bases also provided some sexual satisfaction, when they could be convinced or coerced. To servicemen, nurses were commonly referred to as

³²Frederick Downs. *The Killing Zone: My Life In The Vietnam War*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 7.

“round eyed tail.”³³ To satisfy soldiers cravings, the military also engaged in the organization of weekly USO shows. Here “a pair of leggy and busty Australians teased the troops with miniskirts and a few kisses.”³⁴

Military bases were also the site of stand downs. This was a time when units had the chance to relax in a secure area away from the strains of combat. Here they were given access to the goodies unknown in the field: hot food and unlimited drinks. If they were lucky, “depending on what local queens the first sergeant could line up, they might even get laid.”³⁵ As one veteran fondly remembered:

“...we had at this particular base camp a nifty set up. We had this barbed wire that we could move away and let the whores come in and fuck everybody in the bunkers.”³⁶

Men’s reactions to the organization of prostitution in the Vietnam War varied. Some were disgusted, some were indifferent. The majority of men perceived of sexual servicing as a reward they earned and deserved. For those men, it was only natural that prostitution be a regular part of war. The “rest and recreation” industry was a critical mechanism in the organization of prostitution. For the military, it served a variety of purposes. R&R was used by military elites as a system of rewards and punishments. For

³³Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 209.

³⁴Charles R. Anderson. *The Grunts*. New York: Berkley Books, 1976, 33.

³⁵Tom Carhart. *The Offering*. New York: Warner Books, 1987, 148.

³⁶Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 154.

those soldiers excelling in war, R&R was their reward. Soldiers were “rewarded for good body counts and kill rations with in country R&R’s.”³⁷ For those soldiers who were deficient killers, R&R was the benefit they risked losing. R&R also served military purposes by allowing men to escape the drudgery and horror of war for a short period. Once away, soldiers could once again live like men. This required that they have unlimited access to women and to sex. In this respect, R&R was the only way to ensure that men maintained the proper frame of mind needed to maintain their efficient military service. Among soldiers, R&R was more commonly referred to as “I&I”, for “intoxication and intercourse”, which composed the usual program.³⁸ The military maintained and coordinated various R&R sites. In country R&R was usually scheduled in Saigon, while out of country sites were located in areas such as Bangkok, Hong Kong, Tai Pei, Singapore, and the Philippines. All were well known for their unlimited access to women.

Personal accounts indicate that the rest and recreation experience was one which varied for individual soldiers. For the majority, it was the opportunity to have completely objectified sex and calm fraying nerves. For these men, women did not have a name or a face. They merely provided a means to “clean the old pipes out.”³⁹

The sexual services of women were also available to men in a number of forms. There were hotels which functioned as official whorehouses and bars where a soldier

³⁷Peter Goldman and Tony Fuller. *Charlie Company: What Vietnam Did To Us*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1983, 77.

³⁸*Ibid*, 114.

³⁹Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 159.

could have his pick of women to rent. Women of all ages were available for a day or a week, depending on how much a soldier was willing to pay. Accounts reveal that many soldiers describe this time as “the sweetest in a lifetime.”⁴⁰ As one veteran remembered:

“...I had a beautiful broad, nineteen years old. Sucking and fucking all night long. I was having bacon and eggs and pussy for breakfast.”⁴¹

This short period of rest and recreation is one aspect of the military experience which most men remembered with pleasure. This veteran described his fond memories:

“The place where I spent many an evening when I could get away from the war was in the Hung Dao Hotel, a three story dilapidated shack in the middle of Tu Do Street in Saigon. The first floor was almost like a hospital ward, they had rolled about ten beds into it. The second floor was the kinkier stuff, so they had little rooms. That was for officers or people who wanted to fuck alone. The whores cooked and lived on the third floor. We had some hot times with the whores of Hung Dao.”⁴²

Several accounts also indicate the casual manner in which many soldiers approached prostitution. For these men, sex was not a reward, it was rather a natural aspect of being a man and a soldier. Prostitution was a right, not a privilege. This is illustrated in the following quote:

⁴⁰Stanley Goff, Robert Sanders, and Clark Smith. *Brothers: Black Soldiers In The Nam*. New York: Berkley Books, 1985, 115.

⁴¹Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 159.

⁴²*Ibid*, 189.

“We would get a bunch of the men together and go to Vung Tau or Saigon. I would have a whore blowing me and I would reach over and hit the squelch button a couple of times and roll back.”⁴³

The idea that women are beings whose purpose was to please and service men is an inevitable assumption which arises from patriarchal notions of sexuality. Her capacity to do this is a measure of her worth. This veteran spoke of prostitution in the following manner:

“I didn’t care. I didn’t want the hassle of establishing a relationship. I just wanted to get it on. There would be a dozen of us in the Hung Dao Hotel. Somebody would yell “One, Two, Three, Switch”, and everybody would jump up and run into somebody else’s room and start fucking whoever was in there. The whores were so non-chalant; they’d be smoking a cigarette while you were fucking them.”⁴⁴

For other men, their experience with prostitution took on a much deeper meaning. Depraved of all sense of humanity in combat, “the fleshpots of Bangkok and other areas” promised soldiers the opportunity of finding love, security, and fulfilment.⁴⁵ For these men, the availability of prostitution was “the perfect medicine for the lonely Marine” in desperate need of love.⁴⁶ Personal accounts indicate that many soldiers fell in love with

⁴³Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 189.

⁴⁴*Ibid*, 189.

⁴⁵Tom Carhart. *The Offering*. New York: Warner Books, 1987, 102.

⁴⁶Charles R. Henderson. *Marine Sniper: 93 Confirmed Kills*. New York: Berkley Books, 1988, 18.

their prostitutes. Lt. Stan Goff remembered the prostitute he met and fell in love with in Hong Kong:

“I walked into the Old Savoy Club. Upstairs they had a lot of entertainment, downstairs at the bar was where the girls were. So I went downstairs. I was sitting there having a drink, when mama-san approached me, “Hi GI, You want a girl GI?” I said “Yeah, that’s a good possibility.” She say “Oh, I got a girl for you GI.”.....Suzanne appeared after about five minutes....She said “OK, I go with you and we talk price in your room. You have to pay mama-san to take me out.” So I paid her five bucks just to get Suzanne out of the place. She sat over on one side of the room which pleased me. I sat back on the other side, watching her crossing and uncrossing her legs, letting me see what I wanted. We started talking price. After much dickering, we agreed on thirty dollars a night for the whole week.....It was gentle love making, though it was all night long. I wanted it to be good, to myself, as well as to her. It was a great experience. I heard all kinds of stories about prostitutes myself, that they had no feeling and stuff, and that was all bullshit....She stayed with me all the rest of the time and I was very sad about leaving her. I even thought about going AWOL.”⁴⁷

Captain Jim Gabbe also spoke of a similar experience in his writings to family members during the war. He wrote:

“...have fallen spectacularly in love with Kim, my little Vietnamese whore. She is very beautiful in that tight-skinned, exotic, Oriental way. She is very quick, cheerful, and affectionate.”⁴⁸

Personal accounts of this nature indicate a failure on the part of soldiers to

⁴⁷Stanley Goff, Robert Sanders, and Clark Smith. *Brothers: Black Soldiers In The Nam*. New York: Berkley Books, 1985, 206-211.

⁴⁸Bernard Edelman, ed. *Dear America: Letters Home From Vietnam*. New York: Pocket Books, 1985, 147.

recognize the true purpose of prostitution. What we witness is the objectification of women being confused for authentic love. Many soldiers were blinded by this confusion and captivated by the women they encountered. However, these accounts indicate that the objectification of women was a factor always present. Women were understood as something exotic and unique to be experienced. Observe the following quote:

“The young girls are sometimes so beautiful that you don’t think they are real. There are more good looking women in Saigon than in any other city I’ve ever been in. Peasant girls with perfect complexions, black eyes, long shiny black hair, and incredible figures. They can be teases, but more often than not, they’re attractively shy, soft, and extremely feminine, they’re easily the cream of Southeast Asia.”⁴⁹

These women held an appeal for men due to a number of factors. Not only did they embody the ideal of femininity, but their sexual availability presented men with the opportunity to be completely uninhibited. This sexual availability also preserved the dynamic of male sexual subject and female sexual object, a dynamic which confirmed the soldier’s masculine identity.

Conclusion

The perspectives of Vietnam veterans provide an in-depth look into militarism and war and their intimate relationship with patriarchy. War is the context in which ideals of

⁴⁹Bernard Edelman, ed. *Dear America: Letters Home From Vietnam*. New York: Pocket Books, 1985, 93-94.

masculinity and femininity are played out and strengthened. That is, war solidifies patriarchal ideals. It confines women to the feminine sphere and provides the opportunity for men to affirm their masculinity. An examination of the inseparable link between war and patriarchal sexuality is particularly revealing. It indicates the startling momentum behind men's drive to master women sexually. It also reveals the critical role such patriarchal notions of sexuality play within the context of militarism and war. Through sexual conquests, men remain manly both in their own eyes, as well as in the eyes of other men. This expression of masculinity is a critical facet of militarism. The intimate relationship between patriarchy and war allows notions of sexuality to take on a concrete form. As a result, we see the institutionalized management of women's sexuality and the use of a rape as a military strategy.

Conclusion

It has been the purpose of this thesis to gain insight into the forces which shape militarism and war. In particular, our task has been to determine what precipitates the inclusion of prostitution and rape as strategies for success within the context of war. These acts are understood as natural and inevitable facets of war. Evidence of this may be found in the words of soldiers themselves. Rape and prostitution are viewed with a resignation and acceptance. Men speak of sex with women as if it were a right, something which they have earned. Patriarchy accords this right to men merely by virtue of their being men. Veterans casually speak of their unending search for “pussy” and “boom boom”. They speak of whorehouses and brothels which offered “women’s sensual services for a truly modest fee.”¹ In some areas, “ a good fuck would only cost one carton of cigarettes.”²

These were the things that made men feel like men. Soldiers spoke fondly of the mama-sans and hootch girls who rightfully catered to their sexual needs. They remembered the women who “followed them up Highway 13 on bicycles and serviced them in the bushes at \$3.00 a ten minute trick.”³ Veterans also spoke of the prostitutes who were particularly attuned to the way of the soldier. They knew that a night of

¹Tom Carhart. *The Offering*. New York: Warner Books, 1987, 243.

²Bernard Edelman, ed. *Dear America: Letters Home From Vietnam*. New York: Pocket Books, 198, 90.

³Peter Goldman and Tony Fuller. *Charlie Company: What Vietnam Did To Us*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 21.

drinking and relaxation also required “ an uninhibited tumble with one or more of the girls.”⁴ Men remembered the rest and recreation experience as well. They remember “hiring girls at \$12 a day and a cabbie at \$40 for the whole week. They bunked at the no questions asked comfort of the Imperial Hotel, screwing all night and lolling in the pool all day.”⁵

The words of soldiers indicate that prostitution is as commonplace to war as weapons. Here prostitution serves a function that is rarely recognized in the literature on war. It is not only a way in which soldiers blow off steam and calm fraying nerves. It is rather the primary means by which a man affirms his masculine identity.

Rape is another method by which men achieve these ends. Personal accounts of Vietnam veterans are also replete with memories of raping and injuring women. Soldiers spoke of patrolling villages as they engaged in the military tactic of the village sweep. As one soldier stated, “ we walked through the villages all the time drunk and stoned, ready to have a good time and screw all the women.”⁶ Rape in this context was considered a coveted skill, and a measure of physical prowess and prestige.⁷ It was an act which functioned as an expression of masculinity and a means of uniting men. This was particularly evident in the disturbing act of double veteraning, an act very popular in

⁴Lt. Col. L.H. Burruss. *Mike Force*. New York: Pocket Books, 1989, 60-61.

⁵Stanley Goff, Robert Sanders, and Clark Smith. *Brothers: Black Soldiers In The Nam*. New York: Berkley Books, 1985, 115.

⁶Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 173.

⁷*Ibid*, 129.

Vietnam. Double veteraning required that a soldier first rape and then kill a woman. Testimonials reveal that men often engaged in this crime, because it meant they would retain their status as manly men. Once men had raped a woman, they would murder her and mutilate her dead body. Often times they would cut off her breasts and beat her face with guns and knives.

In the context of the military there is a strong sense that these acts are not only encouraged, but required. As one soldier admits, “we were encouraged to do these things. The officer expected you to do it or something was wrong with you.”⁸ This indicates that rape is widely used as a conventional military strategy, as we see now in Yugoslavia.

This thesis has not only been concerned with the pivotal role which prostitution and rape play within militarism and war. It suggests that there is a certain banality which characterizes these crimes within war. Such depraved acts are cast aside as trivial and unimportant. There is a casual approach to the predatory behaviour of soldiers towards women. The presence of rape and prostitution within war are understood as natural and inevitable. These acts are assigned a normality that compels us to explain them. From the perspective of this thesis, the most revealing explanation may be found by examining the understanding of patriarchal sexuality and the soldier.

There is, however, more to this explanation. We see through our examination that patriarchal sexuality informs and cradles men’s basic understanding of war itself. This suggests something much more sinister. War appears to be critical to the basic

⁸ Mark Baker. *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*. New York: Berkley Books, 1983, 65.

reproduction of patriarchy. It draws upon basic patriarchal understandings and, in the process of doing this, affirms and strengthens them.

Susan Gubar has written on this function of war. Her work centres around one fundamental thesis: that war is a critical moment in the reproduction of patriarchy. The close relationship we witness between patriarchal sexuality and war provides a glimpse into this general truth. Gubar's work reveals the extent of women's vulnerability under patriarchy. She indicates that women are first and foremost the perpetual victims of war. Gubar observes that "what women face in wartime is not only the unleashed violence of sex starved men, but also the elaborate images such men construct as a compensation for and retaliation against the sex they are presumably fighting to preserve, but that they are really preserving themselves to fight."⁹ What Gubar observes is that women face a far greater threat from the men defending them than they do from the enemy.¹⁰ She exposes war as a blatant attack on all aspects of womanliness, and therefore on women themselves. Gubar speaks of "woman's sense that the war was a blitz on them."¹¹ She writes that a "women's literary works depict the ruin of the war as the site for the ruin of women's lives or communities."¹²

As Gubar writes and this thesis confirms, war is responsible for the reproduction of

⁹Susan Gubar. "This Is My Rifle, This Is My Gun: WWII and the Blitz On Women," in Margaret Randolph Higgonet et al, eds. *Behind The Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, 257.

¹⁰*Ibid*, 228.

¹¹*Ibid*, 258.

¹²*Ibid*, 258.

patriarchy. Patriarchy plays a critical role in shaping all aspects of war which in turn reproduces patriarchal understandings. These relationships ensure that both patriarchy and war are intimately and automatically bound up with a loathing and hatred of the feminine. Patriarchy generally and war in particular involves an attack on all things womanly. Both of these entities revolve around the aim of overcoming womanliness and controlling women. War is to its very core a practice deeply misogynistic in nature.

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