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"Born Again Hard": Sexualized Violence in the Creation of American Warriors

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INTRODUCTION

Cultures are built upon myths that reinforce and glorify the way citizens wish to view themselves as part of a larger, stronger whole. These myths are central to the strength of a culture due to the shared sense of greatness, responsibility, and cohesion mutual belief instills. Globally, examples of cultural myth include French elegance, Arabic divine religious sanction, and British diplomatic proficiency. Specifically American mythology includes the pioneer mentality, equality for all citizens, and global caretaker. These myths, as with those of other countries, were born of historic actuality or ideology. The basis for each of these American myths, however, is the embedded, overarching myth of the American warrior. The myth of the uniquely American warrior, rather than European warrior mythology, is rooted in the militia man of the Revolutionary War. The militia man was a citizen called upon to serve his belief in the "new" American ideal of democracy. After the Revolutionary War, American warriors were men who served their country by protecting their families during the westward expansion of the United States, often in conjunction with, or in addition to, military service. As American civilization has progressed, the need for each household to have its own warrior-protector has been negated, and the warrior role has shifted from the social realm of individual citizens to the specific, specialized realm of soldiers in the armed forces. The creation of warriors in this new esoteric realm requires that warriors be constructed to meet rigid standards of physical prowess, belief, and behavior. Specifically, the American warrior should be in superior physical condition, uphold American beliefs of cultural and social supremacy, and act according to the highest moral and ethical standards. The inherent conflict of this idealized construction requires that American citizens who desire to become warrior-soldiers be reborn through the extremely violent, and explicitly sexual, purgatory of military training. This rebirth and its negative effects upon American warriors and culture is elegantly illustrated in contemporary American war film and literature such as Stanley Kubrick's 1987 film *Full Metal Jacket*, Wallace Terry's oral history collection of Vietnam veterans *Bloods*, and Anthony Swofford's 2003 Gulf War I memorandum *Jarhead*.¹

Kubrick's film investigates the role of sexualized violence in the creation of the ultimate American warrior, the Marine, through the interaction of Gunnery Sergeant Hartman and

¹ Stanley Kubrick co-wrote the screen play for *Full Metal Jacket* with Michael Herr whose book, *Dispatches*, is based on Herr's experiences as a reporter in Vietnam. The character of Joker and second portion of the film draw heavily from *Dispatches*, often using the exact dialogue and similar scenes. Herr will be cited as the author though the quotes appear in the film.

Gomer Pyle in the basic training section, and Joker and Animal Mother during the Vietnam (Tet Offensive) sequence². The opening scenes of *Full Metal Jacket* indoctrinates the recruits, as well as the viewer, into the military environment by erasing their individuality through physical conformity. Their hair is cut to match, their dress is identical, and their quarters are devoid of any personal touches or differentiating factors. The effect of this studied stripping away is to render the recruits *tabulae rasa*: blank slates to be re-born into Marines. Gunnery Sergeant Hartman, splendidly acted by actual Drill Instructor R. Lee Erney, masterfully breaks down the mental structures of his "maggots" by verbally insulting their sexual proclivities and personal beliefs, in many cases even renaming the recruits as he sees fit—thus depriving them of their last link to the outside world.³ The effect of this conditioning is to force the recruits to rely solely upon Hartman for validation, erasing their familial and social ties to the outside world. In short, they have been reborn into the Marine Corps with Hartman serving as a hyper-sexualized parental figure.

Hartman's position of ultimate authority allows him to violently condition the recruits, mentally and physically, into hardened Marines. Sexuality lies at the heart of this conditioning, as emphasized by his repeated references to "pussy," homosexual acts, and the weakness of the female sex, referred to collectively as "Mary Jane Rottencrotch."⁴ Hartman equates weakness in any form with the female sex, suggesting that the only way for the recruits to become "men" is to adopt his system of beliefs.⁵ This point is laboriously illustrated by Kubrick during the basic training sequences of naming and sleeping with their rifles, "the only pussy you people are going to get," and the equation of rifle and penis while marching, hand on crotch, and reciting, "This is my rifle. This is my gun. This is for fighting. This is for fun."⁶ The equation of sexual aggression and violence suggested in this scene is reinforced by the fact that the only women to appear in *Full Metal Jacket* are hookers during the Vietnam sequence. This portrayal of women as only acceptable for sexual release objectifies the female gender, suggesting and excusing violent treatment of anything feminine due to their role as "lesser" or "weaker" beings.

While the rifle as phallus is a standard gender symbol, Kubrick uses this symbolism creatively to illustrate the transformation of Private Pyle (Vincent D'Onofrio) from weak to hardened Marine. Paul Williams's essay entitled "'What a Bummer for the Gooks': Representations of White American Masculinity and the Vietnamese in the Vietnam War Film Genre 1977–87" provides an excellent discussion of Pyle's deviant role within the Marine Corps family. Pyle begins the film as an inept, overweight disgrace to the Marine Corps summed up by Williams as ". . . a 'disgusting fatbody', [who] betrays white racial virility. He obstructs the Marine Corps' production of 'indestructible men'. . .'"⁷ Pyle's continual failure at physical training and mental ineptitude, showcased during practice of close order drill, set him apart from the other Marines, branding him a deviant due to his inability to conform and endangering group cohesion.⁸ Under the tutelage of Joker, Pyle makes great strides; but it is not until the platoon as a whole turns against him and delivers a "motivational" beating that Pyle is able to be re-born "hard."

² *Full Metal Jacket*, DVD, directed by Stanley Kubrick (Burbank: Warner Brothers, 1987).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

The sexual aspects of this scene are not subtle: dim lighting, restraint, heavy breathing, underclothes, and Joker's (supposedly Pyle's friend) obvious satisfaction at having delivered the final blow, all suggest sexual sadism.⁹ This scene reinforces Hartman's powerful parental position, this action is a result of his subtle suggestion that the other recruits were not providing Pyle with the proper motivation, further bonding the platoon as a family through coordinated violence. Pyle's transformation into a hard soldier is completed when he is accepted by Hartman after becoming an excellent marksman, outshooting all in the platoon, and mastering close order drill. Hartman delivers praise, in the form of a sexual pun, after Pyle is able to recite a general order, which all Marines are supposed to memorize, Joker has forgotten: "Private Pyle, you are definitely born again hard."¹⁰ Hartman's use of the word "hard" to describe Pyle suggests that he has achieved masculine virility under Hartman's instruction in addition to his physical (hardened) transformation and mental mastery of Marine Corps general orders. Pyle's mastery of his rifle symbolizes his mastery of himself, stripping away feminine weakness and mental ineptitude to reveal a potent hard-body and a mind capable of precision killing. The American warrior.

Hartman's death is significant; in the process of recreating Pyle, he, ironically, trained his own killer. The murder/suicide scene is rife with sexual connotation similar to the set up of the "motivational" beating. The backlighting of the men's scantily clad, hardened physiques reinforces Pyle's physical transformation as he delivers Hartman's oedipal death sentence with his rifle/phallus, essentially killing his father and fornicating with his mother in one fell stroke. Pyle's immediate suicide is also blatantly sexual as he orally embraces the weapon he loves, and that made him a man, as the means of eliminating the deviance he has recognized within himself.¹¹

Kubrick's jarring transition from Pyle's suicide to Vietnam combat fails to allow the viewer an opportunity to reflect on Pyle's rejection of himself as a creation of sexually violent Marine Corps training. The training methods used to reform Pyle's mind and body resulted in violent rejection of himself and the murder of Hartman, whom Pyle deemed responsible for his learned deviance. Joker's failure to address the implications of Pyle's death suggests that he has become numbed to violence because he does not care enough about Pyle, to whom he became a surrogate older brother, to contemplate the reasoning behind Pyle's actions. Though the audience is supposed to be following Joker's narrative transformation, one became deeply involved with Pyle through his trials, which leaves the viewer with a sense of alienation from Joker. Kubrick may have meant this transition to impart the inevitability of war and the life-goes-on mentality of the Corps, but, more importantly, by choosing to sweep Pyle aside, he emphasizes the incredible level of psychological numbing basic training achieves.

Kubrick develops Joker through his portrayal as an "everyman," to whom the viewer can relate; who also happens to be intelligent enough to understand what is going on around him. However, Joker's inability, or unwillingness, to take counter action suggests that he has

⁷ Paul Williams, "What a Bummer for the Gooks": Representations of White American masculinity and the Vietnamese in the Vietnam War Film Genre 1977-87," *European Journal of American Culture* 22, Issue 3 (2003): 233.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Full Metal Jacket*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Williams, 233.

become deviant through training in his acceptance of sexually violent ideals and the psychological numbing he exhibits after Pyle's suicide.¹² Joker, as noted by Claude J. Smith, Jr., in his article entitled "Full Metal Jacket and the Beast Within," is constructed in such a way that he "should be the voice of acerbic reason," providing a scathing critique of the physical and mental conditioning he has endured and that is responsible for Pyle's suicide.¹³ Joker's confused identity exploration occurs during the Vietnam sequence of the film in contrast to Animal Mother, who takes the place of Hartman as the oppositional character.¹⁴ Joker ought to represent humanity surviving vicious conditioning, but his words and actions belie this ideal. He cannot divorce his humanitarian impulses from his warrior training, stating: "I wanted to be the first kid on my block to get a confirmed kill!" while, simultaneously, wearing a peace symbol and expressing a desire to explore the "duality of man."¹⁵

Joker embraces the sexually violent attitude toward women learned in basic training, legitimizing their objectification during the Tet Offensive portion of the film. Through his language, "Ya know, half of these gook whores are serving officers in the Viet Cong; the other half have got T.B. Be sure you only fuck the ones that cough," and his lack of reaction, psychological numbing, to the door gunner who proudly shoots women and children to "Get Some!" violent sexual satisfaction Joker rejects the humanity of women and illustrates his acceptance of their characterization as "weak."¹⁶ Joker further demonstrates the effectiveness of sexually violent training by being more than willing to purchase a Vietnamese hooker and haggling about the prices in Da Nang and taking part in the platoon wide recreational use of a conveniently appearing hooker during a break in the combat sequence.¹⁷ What appears as his crowning humanitarian action, the mercy killing of the female sniper, is in fact violent sexual satisfaction—she is quite literally begging for it—and he inducts himself into warrior culture by satisfying her desire for death and his own desire to be a "killer."¹⁸

In contrast, Animal Mother appears to be the cookie cutter construction of a Marine: "The Marine Corps does not want robots. The Marine Corps wants killers. The Marine Corps wants to build indestructible men, men without fear."¹⁹ He has been mentally and physically engineered through training and combat into a hard-bodied and unquestioning killer. Animal Mother provides an example of the effects of sexually violent conditioning through his treatment of the hooker, "I'll skip the foreplay," reinforcing the bestial nature created by this training.²⁰

However, the viewer must question this interpretation due to the fact that Animal Mother quite obviously realizes exactly what he is, evidenced by his comment during the discussion of American engagement in Vietnam: "This isn't about freedom; this is a slaughter. If I'm gonna get my balls blown off for a word, my word is 'poontang'."²¹ This comment underlines his realization of his own insignificance, and that of idealized beliefs within this environment, resulting in his eschewing of humanity for sexual gratification.

¹² Claude J. Smith, "Full Metal Jacket and the Beast Within," *Literature Film Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1988): 228.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Full Metal Jacket*.

¹⁶ *Full Metal Jacket* and Herr, 35.

¹⁷ Michael Herr, *Dispatches*, (New York: Vintage, 1977), 40.

¹⁸ *Full Metal Jacket*.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

While Kubrick certainly uses *Animal Mother* to illustrate the inhumanity produced by sexually violent military training, his function is not simply that of a bestial warrior. As suggested by the second part of his name, *Animal Mother's* role includes the parental position of hardened alpha-warrior. Although not the official leader of the platoon, he blatantly ignores orders to leave a fellow Marine behind and goes to the aid of his friend without regard to his own safety in the same manner a parent would to a child. This valorous action brings into sharp focus the intimate bond facilitated by military training and his role as a surrogate parental figure for the men of his platoon. Though he is unable to save his friend/child, he leads the remainder of the platoon into the sniper's lair and exacts revenge by refusing to shoot the female sniper and end her misery. His action is parental revenge and a blatant disavowal of the feminine in his refusal of her satisfaction, highlighting Joker's confused humanitarian/warrior impulses and reinforcing *Animal Mother's* superiority. *Animal Mother* is the ultimate warrior, showing courage under fire and respect for the Corps, as evidenced by his participating in a war he obviously does not believe in while respecting his fellow soldiers in combat. Kubrick's portrayal suggests that *Animal Mother's* inhumanity is superior to Joker's mental moral confusion through his rejection of feminine ideals such as peace and "duality."

Full Metal Jacket illustrates sexually violent training methods and the mental and moral confusion resulting from psychological numbing. However, it does not present a complete picture of the ramifications of this type of sexually violent training and objectification of women upon young men freed from social constraint. Wallace Terry's collection of oral histories from Vietnam veterans, entitled *Bloods*, graphically presents the actions of young men who feel entitled to force their sexual desires upon Vietnamese women. Specialist Woodley, Jr., age nineteen at the time, recalled:

One night we were out in the field on maneuvers, and we seen some lights. We were investigating the lights, and we found out it was a Vietn'ese [sic] girl going from one location to another. We caught her and did what they call gang-rape her. She submitted freely because she felt if she had submitted freely that she wouldn't have got killed. We couldn't do anything else but kill her because we couldn't jeopardize the mission . . . So we eliminate her. Cut her throat so you wouldn't be heard . . . This other time we were in a ambush site. This young lady came past. She spotted us. It was too late. We had to keep her quiet. We captured her. We thought, Why kill a woman and you had no play in a couple weeks? We didn't tie her up, because you can't seduce a woman too well when she tied up. So we held her down . . . We found out she was pregnant. Then we raped her. We still had five days to go out there without any radio contact. So we wouldn't let her go. We didn't want the enemy to know we were there. She had to die. But I don't think we murdered her out of malice. I think we murdered her because we didn't want to be captured.²²

Woodley's account is echoed by several other soldiers', though no one else admitted to participating in a gang rape. Instead, gang rape was accepted as normal, "We passed these two black guys raping a woman at the door of the hootch . . . And the protocol of the folks in my squad was just keep moving, not to interfere, everything was all right."²³ Susan Jeffords,

²² Specialist 4 Arthur E. "Gene" Woodley, Jr., in *Bloods*, ed. Wallace Terry (New York: Ballantine, 1984), 247-248.

²³ Specialist 4 Haywood T. Kirkland, in *Bloods*, ed. Wallace Terry (New York: Ballantine, 1984), 93.

in her book *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War*, explains gang rape and its acceptance as: “. . . combin[ing] collectivity and display as the masculine bond performs as a group, with itself as audience . . . raping and watching others rape leaves no position for any other action within the bond; if you challenge the rape you risk being rejected by the collective.”²⁴ A soldier cannot afford to be rejected by his peers because his life may well depend on them. The necessity for maintaining group cohesion forced officers to allow sexual violence, as noted by Specialist 5 Emmanuel J. Holloman:

A lot of time they raped the women in the villages they were suppose [*sic*] to be protecting. That happened quite a bit, and nobody said anything about it. Even the lieutenant who was in charge of a platoon let it happen. He’s about their age, not experienced enough to control them. He goes along with it. He’d be crazy if he went against his own platoon. He doesn’t want to criticize his men, he wants one big happy family.²⁵

Though some soldiers spoke out against gang rape, most participated because they feared rejection by their peers; this behavior is evidence, and reinforcement, of the sexually violent training and objectification of women the men received at boot camp which complicated their repatriation into American society after coming home.

American society demands the creation of warriors through sexually violent military training to support the American Warrior myth. These soldiers are excellent warriors, but socially stunted after their service because of this training. Their rebirth through sexually violent basic training and subsequent violent experiences has trained them for death, not life. Robert Jay Lifton’s book, *Home From the War: Learning from Vietnam Veterans*, discusses the experiences of Vietnam veterans upon returning home and attempting to repatriate into American society, as well as their feelings and attitudes toward the Vietnam War. The experiences of Vietnam veterans, drug and alcohol use and abuse, chronic unemployment, and societal exclusion, are familiar themes within this work, nicely summarized by Lifton’s quote from Charles Omen: “the best of soldiers while the war lasted . . . [but] a most dangerous and unruly race in times of truce or peace.”²⁶

The “danger” of these warriors lies not only in their training, but also in the guilt they carry, which defines their relationships after returning home. Lifton defines this guilt as specific to the Vietnam War: “The American survivor of Vietnam carries within himself the special taint of his war. His taint has to do with guilt evoked by death.”²⁷ Death guilt is experienced by veterans not only in relation to their actions while in Vietnam. Death guilt, combined with sexually violent training methods, left Vietnam veterans unable to form romantic attachments, in the words of one returned soldier: “If I’m fucking, and a girl says I love you, then I want to kill her . . . [because] if you get close . . . you get hurt.”²⁸ The possibility of love was terrifying to these men due to their trained rejection of the feminine and the weakness they feared would result from decreased psychological numbing, summarized by Lifton as “Love or intimacy . . . posed the threat of corruption and

²⁴ Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 69.

²⁵ Specialist 5 Emmanuel J. Holloway, in *Bloods*, ed. Wallace Terry (New York: Ballantine, 1984), 83.

²⁶ Robert J. Lifton, *Home From the War: Learning from Vietnam Veterans* (New York: Other, 2005), 39.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 99.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 271.

disillusionment, of still another 'death.'²⁹ These soldier's actions, experiences, and guilt went on to influence the next generation of warriors through their personal, family experiences and the legacy of film and literature inspired by the Vietnam War.

Anthony Swofford's 2003 memoir, *Jarhead*, highlights the burden the next generation carried in relation to the unsatisfactory outcome of Vietnam and the social confusion that resulted from sexually violent training methods. Swofford's father was career Air Force and served in Vietnam, about which "he only spoke once," and suffered from mysterious ailments during Swofford's childhood, migraines and myotonic dystrophy of the hands, that Swofford believes to be directly related to his father's refusal to obtain psychiatric help after returning from Vietnam.³⁰

Swofford's childhood was lived in the expectation that he would join the military as a means of fulfilling his initiatory rite of passage; an expectation his father attempts to derail by refusing to sign a contract allowing him to enlist early, stating: "As soon as you can sign that contract on your own, go ahead. Until then I am responsible for you . . . I know some things about the military that they don't show you in the brochures."³¹ Swofford ignores this advice, undoubtedly based on his father's knowledge of the training he would undergo, and joins the Marines at seventeen and half as part of the generation living the legacy of Vietnam.

Jarhead provides a real-life perspective in relation to and building upon the sexually violent training Kubrick showcased in *Full Metal Jacket*. Unlike *Full Metal Jacket*, Swofford's narrative does not unfold chronologically from his induction into basic training. Instead, the reader is given the introductory image of an older Swofford remembering his Marine service, no longer hard bodied, but able to tell his story in a way that he could not have when he was closer to it. His careful attention during the introductory chapter to inform the reader that he cannot tell what is "true nor false but *what I know*" lends credibility, because he does not pretend to have discovered answers or meaning in his experience, leaving the burden of interpretation on the reader.³²

Swofford begins by illustrating the effects of sexually violent Vietnam War films on his generation with the unit activation of Surveillance and Target Acquisition Platoon of the Second Battalion, Seventh Marines (STA 2/7), who immediately "rent all of the war movies they can get their hands on" and "buy a hell of a lot of beer."³³ By his own admission, Swofford and his platoon find themselves entranced and romanced by the war films they watch: "we get off on the various visions of carnage and violence and deceit, the raping and killing and pillaging" because they want to believe that they are akin to the warriors depicted in the films.³⁴ He further states that they enjoy the films because:

. . . Vietnam films are all pro-war, no matter what the supposed message . . . because the magic brutality of the films celebrates the terrible and despicable beauty of their fighting skills. Fight, rape, war, pillage, burn. Filmic images of death and carnage are pornography for the military man . . . getting him ready for his real First Fuck.³⁵

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Anthony Swofford, *Jarhead* (New York: Scribner, 2003), 49.

³¹ Ibid., 207.

³² Swofford, 2.

³³ Ibid., 5.

³⁴ Ibid., 6.

The violence of these films is explicitly sexual to Swofford and his Marine Corps family in its erotic celebration of their superiority as American warriors. This interpretation reinforces the effectiveness of the mental conditioning, similar to that seen in *Full Metal Jacket*, Swofford received and absorbed during his "birth through the bloody canal of boot camp."³⁵

Swofford's mental conditioning included objectification and dehumanization of women, noted in his unabashed recollection of "that special whore."³⁷ He is able to move beyond objectification in his relationship with Yumiko in Japan and his exchange of letters with Katherine. However, these relationships were doomed from the beginning, either due to rotation out of country or Katherine's engagement. Swofford's relationship with his long time girlfriend, Kristina, reveals his inability to create a true relationship by allowing her to insist they stay together while he knows she is unfaithful. Though he does eventually reject her by taping her picture to the "Wall of Shame," Swofford offers no later evidence that he has been able to eschew his training and hold a meaningful relationship.³⁸ Swofford exhibits the confusion caused by sexually violent Marine Corps training and the glorification of sexualized violence, as illustrated in popular Vietnam film and narrative, through his failure to form meaningful romantic attachments.

The most explicitly sexual scene in *Jarhead* occurs, not as an obvious rejection of the feminine, but rather an expression of the dehumanization the Marines have undergone as a result of sexually violent mental conditioning. A pick-up game of football in the desert, meant to showcase their physical prowess as highly trained warriors, degenerates into a:

Field Fuck: an act wherein marines violate one member of the unit, typically someone who has recently been a jerk or abused rank or acted antisocial; ignoring the unspoken contracts of brotherhood and camaraderie and esprit de corps and the combat family.³⁹

The Marines of Swofford's platoon hold the offender on hands and knees and take turns mock-violating him from behind.⁴⁰ The fact that this act does not involve actual sexual contact only makes it more disturbing; the frustration that these men feel at their situation is vented through sexual domination of one of their own. Swofford and his platoon have been taught the same lessons of the recruits in *Full Metal Jacket*, that sexual aggression is an acceptable method of release: ". . . we're angry and afraid and acting the way we've been trained to kill, violently and with no remorse."⁴¹

The effectiveness of their tactical training is showcased by the successful completion of the Gulf War mission to "liberate" Kuwait; though that success is marred by incidences of friendly, "Fucked Fire."⁴² Friendly fire is the result of the need for release after too much build-up time and too little combat action, which is, for these men, a type of sexual frustration.

Marines are trained for combat, and when combat is not forthcoming the eventual release will be more deadly due to the delay. Edward Tick, in his book *War and the Soul*,

³⁵ Ibid., 5.

³⁶ Ibid., 43.

³⁷ Ibid., 174.

³⁸ Ibid., 92.

³⁹ Ibid., 20-21.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 22.

⁴² Ibid., 219.

explains that in war:

The waiting and watching make us wakeful beyond the possibility of sleep . . . Yet though we are on permanent vigilance and cannot rest, days may pass with nothing to do but the most routine tasks. Boredom reaches the extreme and can be worse than battle. We long to break the tedium. Nervousness, grief, rage, and terror need outlets. The only means of release is the gun.⁴³

Swofford further explores the situation by stating: "To be a Marine, a true marine, you must kill. With all of your training, all of your expertise, if you don't kill, you're not a combatant . . ."⁴⁴ These young men all want to be true Marines; they have been trained until they must expend their aggression. When a combat situation does not materialize, they create one; either through aggression toward their own, Friendly Fire, or a feminine substitute, as is in the case of the "Field Fuck," in an effort to gratify the violent desire their training has instilled.

Swofford, surprisingly, does retain his humanity through his sexually violent training and service in the Marine Corps. Though his ties to his Marine family are arguably stronger than those to his biological family, he is able to see beyond the mental conditioning he has received and view the Iraqi soldiers as human while, also, holding out hope for a "normal" life when he musters out. Regardless of this intact humanity, Swofford carries with him the legacy of his training:

You consider yourself less of a marine and even less of a man for not having killed while in combat. There is a wreck in your head, part of the aftermath, and you must dismantle this wreck . . . It took years for you to understand that the most complex and dangerous conflicts, the most harrowing operations, and the most deadly wars, occur in the head.⁴⁵

Swofford's realization is one that must be taught to American society as a whole: a lesson in the dangers of creating warriors through physical and mental sexualized violence. Once warriors are made, they cannot be unmade into ordinary citizens. They cannot forget the objectification of women and feminization of all things weak. Warriors cannot be turned on and off as needed to serve their country; their country must serve them by refusing to allow the creation of a race of warriors unable to function within the society they have sworn to protect.

It should be no surprise, given the previous examples of sexually violent conditioning and objectification of women, that some male members of the Armed Forces show a greater incidence of spousal violence. This disturbing trend is highlighted by the 2003 study "The Effects of Peer Group Climate on Intimate Partner Violence among Married Male U.S. Army Soldiers" by Leora N. Rosen, Robert J. Kaminski, Angela Moore Parmley, Kathryn H. Knudson and Peggy Fancher. The work of Rosen et al. takes into account factors such as alcohol use, childhood abuse, depression, race, and rank to conclude that the factor with the greatest influence is "a climate of hyper-masculinity, . . . associated with increased IPV [Intimate Partner Violence]."⁴⁶ Though a self-reporting study, the effect of hyper-masculine ideals upon the soldier's ability to relate to his family suggests that the creation of American warriors through the use of sexually violent conditioning is deeply damaging to the

⁴³ Edward Tick, *War and the Soul*, (Wheaton: Quest, 2005), 26.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 247.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 247-48.

⁴⁶ Leora N. Rosen et al., "The Effects of Peer Group Climate on Intimate Partner Violence among Married Male U.S. Army Soldiers," *Violence Against Women* 9, no.9 (2003):1065.

individual and their role within the society that insisted on their creation.⁴⁷ Based upon this study, and investigation of sexually violent conditioning, it is reasonable to conclude that the American system of cultural beliefs based on the warrior myth is self-destructive.

The detrimental nature of current cultural reliance on the outdated American Warrior myth requires a rewriting of these myths to embrace the changing needs and interactions of increasingly global cultures and civilizations. American soldiers can no longer be "like Jolly Green Giants, walking the Earth with guns" reducing all in their path to rubble.⁴⁸ Instead, warriors must be conditioned to recognize the humanity within themselves and others as a positive reflection of the ability of a global society to solve its problems with reason and thought, before bullets and bombs. As noted by Anthony Swofford, "Some wars are unavoidable and need well be fought, but this doesn't erase warfare's waste."⁴⁹ It is imperative that the waste of warfare not be the humanity of young people through sexually violent training.⁵⁰ Sexually violent training also extends "warfare's waste" into the family unit through acts of spousal violence.⁵¹ A culture based upon a myth that is inherently conflicting, the moral killer, and relies upon sexually violent training methods and the objectification of women is not sustainable. Instead, American culture will consume itself while clinging to the brutality of tradition. The glorification of sexualized violence in the film and literature representative of American national myths must be recognized as dangerous to society and rewritten accordingly.

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⁴⁷ Ibid., 1066.

⁴⁸ *Full Metal Jacket*.

⁴⁹ Swofford, 255.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

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