

The chief reason warfare is still with us is neither a secret death wish of the human species, nor an irrepressible instinct of aggression, nor, finally and more plausibly, the serious economic and social dangers inherent in disarmament, but the simple fact that no substitute for this final arbiter in international affairs has yet appeared on the political scene.

Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*, 1969

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The Value of Human Life

The ocean was particularly rough that day. A rescue helicopter hovered at the far end of the beach where the attention of the random array of people was focused on the base of the cliff. Four rescuers were carrying a black, zipped body bag up to the road. The victim's family was being led away by the state highway patrol.

A collective grief hung over the beach that was absent of its usual playfulness. The beach goers had just seen a father dive into the water, rescue his drowning son by hurling him over the fierce pull of the waves to safety only to be caught himself by the next, stronger wave. In one swoop, the wave sucked him up and crashed him to the ocean floor before sending him out to sea where the rescuers in the helicopter found him.

It was over. But the people at the beach that day could not go back to their activities as if nothing had happened. One woman, her cheeks puffy and red, told me the details through her sobs, tears mounting with each sentence. Her husband and children sat behind her in mute sadness. No, she did not know the man who drowned nor his family. Soon she and others began to pack up their things. This was not a beach day.

A life, untimely taken, had been snapped in an unsuspecting moment. As the family was led away, one could feel the overwhelming

sadness among the strangers on the beach—a shared grief even in their separateness from each other. One could imagine the family, what it must have been like for them to prepare for a picnic at the beach, not knowing that their lives would be devastated in a few short hours—not knowing that their loss that day of a husband, a father, would ravage their hearts. How could life go on normally for them? Or for us?

What did it mean to those people who watched the boy fighting for his life, saw his father rescue him, then saw that man die? They were strangers whose lives were altered, whose tears and sadness were immediate. Shaken, I was drawn into their implicit unity, a force that seemed to hold this random array of people together. What produced this palpable shared grief that seemed to unite people who did not know each other, did not speak with each other?

Shared human consciousness. In moments like these, we rediscover the spirit that fires our humanity. We find that beneath all of the ideology, politics, myths, and beliefs that parcel us into different groups, beyond our separate loyalties to our cultures, religions, ethnicities, or races we humans deeply value our own and each others' lives. Unless one's humanity has been distorted or perverted, the most normal reaction when strangers witness another's loss of life is to feel the grief for a life just lost—even the life of a stranger.

After the body had been removed, others began to arrive, setting out their blankets or chairs, throwing Frisbees and walking their dogs along the shore. For them, no evidence remained of the tragedy from earlier that morning. Life had returned to normal. But I was unable to take in the stunning views and magical light that usually bring me peace and delight at the ocean. As I walked along the shore trying to absorb what had just happened, a young woman, dangling keys on a ring from her finger, was asking passersby, "Did anybody lose their keys?" I asked where she found them. "They just washed up on the shore." I shuddered to the core of my being, it seemed, thinking of the keys slipping from the pocket of the thirty-two-year-old father as the water took his life. The friend I was with gave me a knowing shrug that spoke volumes and said simply, "Let's go," as if there was no more that could or should be said in the face of such loss.

When we human beings see life threatened or slipping away, especially in an untimely fashion, we are united by a force of consciousness in which neither race nor gender, ethnicity nor nationality matter. We act instantaneously. Either we try to save the life at risk, or, like those standing on the beach, strangers to the victim, we strain as if we are willing the person's victory over the odds. Our lifesaving responses are as collective as they are spontaneous, whether we are silently urging life's victory against those odds or running to get help or actually attempting a rescue. We accept unquestioningly that our reaction is normal to the extent that if anyone should persist in his or her playfulness in the face of such human tragedy, we become suspicious and question her or his sense of decency.

We react, not only from personal ethics, not only from our brain's response to another's distress, but first and foremost from that consciousness that we all share because we are human. This shared human consciousness is not something special that is invoked in the face of tragedy. It is so basic to being human that we usually do not even notice how it filters through our daily lives into all of our interactions. Interaction—which is how we socially engage with each other—is where our shared consciousness is made. Shared consciousness required humans to develop language to communicate with each other, and to interact with their own selves, making us human because we are social beings.

At crucial moments such as the drowning at the beach, it may seem as if we are driven by instinct to the unfolding tragedy. But, on closer look, we find that intention plays a stronger role. The people on the beach, not only the victim's family, were making conscious decisions to be there. They chose not to go on with their playfulness, not to turn away, not to disregard the drowning boy. Instead, they stood there watching and crying. And because they did not turn away, the tragedy unfolding before them poured into their own lives. They allowed it in along with the grief that swept over and enveloped all of them, and that made their reactions immediate and spontaneous but also conscious and intentional.

With only a hint of what it was like at the beach, most people recognize that they have experienced this collective grief; they know it in their hearts. Their feelings are not confined only to those of their

own family or clan, ethnicity or race, gender or sexual orientation, or nationality. Those differences do not disengage us from that deep life force within us that propels us to save and protect human beings whose lives are at risk. Each time I tell the story of the drowning that day on the beach near Bodega Bay, people spontaneously connect to it with similar stories of events from their own experiences that elicited reactions like the one I described. When I speak of the value of human life to a friend or in a lecture, I am greeted with heads nodding yes, telling me, "I know what you mean." Most of us know implicitly that when faced with situations such as that drowning, our consciousness makes us aware of ourselves as actively engaged, sometimes helping, other times gripping on to all the force of hope we can muster even when we are only bystanders.

And then, as if all of this means nothing at all, there is war.

While the United States was entering the most bloody year of its war against Iraq,* in one summer month of 2006, Israel dropped 4.6 million made-in-the-USA cluster bombs that in their unpredictability were meant to kill randomly across southern Lebanon.¹ Against a country that is three-quarters of the size of the state of Connecticut, the Israeli Air Force launched more than 7,000 air attacks on Lebanon between July 12 and August 13, while the Israeli Navy conducted an additional 2,500 bombardments.² The invaders do not bother to distinguish between civilians and soldiers. One in three of the 1,180 Lebanese civilians killed were children. The Israeli civilian death toll was 43. Nearby, the U.S. forces were waging war in Iraq, where the civilian death toll had already passed 650,000 and would climb to over 1.3 million by 2010 and where nearly 3,000 American soldiers had already been killed.

Those wars against Iraq and Lebanon, initiated by the most heavily militarized states in the world, were both planned in advance. Both were launched against states that posed no imminent threat of inva-

* In this book, I reject as a fiction the language that suggests that the U.S. war against Iraq was a coalition of states' military forces and likewise, that "Nato led forces" drive the war in Afghanistan. Both invasions and all forces are under U.S. military command. At the time of the invasion of Iraq, U.S. troops numbered 250,000 of the total 297,000, 45,000 of which were from Great Britain. Where "coalition" suggests a united effort and common purpose, the threats made by the United States to countries that did not participate with it in its war, hardly indicate global assent to the U.S. war.

sion to their attackers. Neither war was a preemptive war as the invading state leaders then claimed because neither Lebanon nor Iraq had planned an attack to preempt before they were invaded. They were war crimes—the "willful killing, torture or inhuman treatment, including... willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement of a protected person,... taking hostages and extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly" according to Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Both wars, as all wars do, shattered the shared human consciousness that draws people together to save human life, a consciousness that was so evident when that man drowned at the beach. They beg the question: why do wars persist in the face of our human urge to save and protect human life? To answer that question, this book looks beyond the prisms of nationalism or even ethnic identity to envelop all of humanity. It goes into combat where "death blossoms," as some soldiers say, and replaces the paradigm of war with the palpable awareness of our shared human consciousness. It upends the "soldier's sacrifice," a euphemism that those at home—politicians and families—employ to elevate soldiers' deaths as valiant, as if killing and war were noble, as if more soldiers should fight and die to vindicate the ones already dead.

As an American I live with a deep shame over the death and destruction the United States has inflicted on people around the world. But it is not enough to expose my country's crimes. This book frames them in a new paradigm, one that charts a course to unmaking war and remaking men. This new paradigm is already emerging in our consciousness and through our actions. It has been awakened by men who refuse to fight in combat, enlivened by feminists such as the Afghan women who courageously reject not only the U.S. occupation but their oppression by Afghan "fundamentalist warlords and misogynist terrorists"³ as well. This new framework of understanding is a human rights paradigm because it places the dignity of human beings and their rights above all other considerations. It is a feminist paradigm because it confronts the power of masculinity as it is socialized and constructed for war as well as female complicity in that power. And yet because shared human consciousness transcends nationalities

(nationalism), races, ethnicities, classes and gender, this feminist human rights paradigm is global, encompassing all human beings.

To answer that question—"why do wars persist in the face of our human urge to save and protect human life?"—this book focuses directly on the masculinity of war, from soldiers in combat to the leaders in the White House and around the world, from how masculinity is made to how militaries turn men into remorseless killers, and it looks at how, in that same masculinity of war, resistance forces fight the occupiers and defend vulnerable peoples.

The making of soldiers for combat is the dehumanization of men, and recognizing that is the first step toward unmaking war. I first began to think about dehumanization of men for and in combat during Israel's 2006 summer war against Lebanon when something struck me as oddly wrong about the reports of civilian casualties as "the loss of innocent life." I know, of course, that the term "innocent lives" refers to civilians and especially means women and children. But something jarred my consciousness when I heard the term "innocent lives," which is rarely used to report the civilian casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan when it is Americans doing the killing. To divert Americans from thinking about their soldiers killing innocent people, the media and military rely on cold, calculating language such as "collateral damage."

Embedded in our language of war is our social agreement about human life. That term "innocent lives" nagged me until I finally asked myself, "If we agree that it is wrong to kill civilians in war, then there must be others who *can* be killed. Our language, even that which we use to expose killing civilians, condones killing. That is, we, as societies, states, countries, peoples, conspire to agree that it is alright to kill some people, those whose lives are not innocent. Who are these people?"

Men in combat.

In the paradigm of war, it is acceptable, if regrettable, inevitable, and unavoidable that men will be killed in combat—on every side. Everyone knows that. Indeed, no wars could be fought without that conviction. After all, the 120 Israeli soldiers and 250 Hizbullah fighters were killed in that Lebanon war. By 2010 over 4,300 American troops had been killed in Iraq and 1,000 in Afghanistan.

When U.S. soldiers' death toll hit 4,000, Americans had, apparently, had enough and began to demand withdrawal of the United States from Iraq. It was as if the first 3,999 deaths were acceptable because they were inevitable and because they were mostly men. It was as if we have some kind of magic but unstated limit to the number of soldiers killed in combat we would condone. It is there in that acceptance of the inevitability of death in war that we destroy the value we hold for human life in our collective consciousness. And we are all diminished by that act.

What about women in combat? Officially there is no such thing in the U.S. military. Yes, increasing numbers of women are serving in combat zones in Iraq and Afghanistan, but as medics, technicians, truck drivers, and at checkpoints. They are not sent to fight in combat even though many have been caught in firefights or had to respond to being mortared. As of this writing in 2010, that is still the U.S. military's position. Political scientist Cynthia Enloe points to the military's "inner sanctum of masculinity" that has included "the submarine corps, armored divisions, fighter plane squadrons, paratroopers, irregular elite forces such as the U.S. Army Special Forces, and the infantry regiments."⁴

What are they to us, those men who are sent off to kill, who come home without limbs or their sanity—or return home in coffins? Beyond the grandiose claims of patriotism, nationalism, religious beliefs, and ethnic identities, what are they to their country, to their people, really?

They are expendable!

Expendable lives. To the United States. To Lebanon. To Palestine. To Britain. To Israel. To Australia. To Iraq. To Afghanistan. To Russia. To Georgia. To the Sudan. To China. To Zimbabwe. . . . In every war of aggression, for every war of liberation. In every defending military and militia. In every country, of every people.

How in the madness of war do so many human beings throughout the world—who share an unconditional love of life, who are connected to each other through the life force that urges us away from death to spontaneously want to save another's life and to protect one's own—come to accept war as inevitable? How do we sustain as valid a belief in the distinction between "innocent," civilian, or noncombatants'

lives and the lives of those in combat? Who are we to determine who can and who cannot be killed as if the power of the state supersedes the value of human life, of every human life? How do we hold in our hearts, against our shared human consciousness, the conviction that men will be killed in combat and that it must be that way?

Every society makes men's readiness to fight in combat a matter of their manhood. Upon that illusion a ready body of soldiers is made for state leaders—presidents, prime ministers, ayatollahs, and dictators alike—to call up to fight and be killed in their wars. That is why militias and resistance forces of the countries that are invaded and occupied can rely on their own steady supply of human beings whose lives can be sacrificed in fighting the aggressors.

Men's expendability is inscribed in international law. When I began this work, I had not expected to discover that all those men in combat, on every side, when they are "engaged in hostilities," are even forsaken by international humanitarian law. While laws do not say that yes, one class of human beings, men who are soldiers in combat, can be killed, Article 3.1 of the 1949 United Nations Geneva Convention indirectly, yet nevertheless decisively, holds that only those "*persons taking no active part in the hostilities, ... shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria*" (emphasis mine).⁵

So, according to international law, persons taking "active part in hostilities" do not have to be treated humanely? True. Soldiers' human rights to protection against torture are restored, at least legally, only when they stop fighting or when they have been taken captive by their enemy. That is why we are so outraged to discover that the United States, in violation of the Geneva Conventions, has tortured prisoners of war. Powerful human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch keep our attention focused on the inhumanity of killing civilians and torturing prisoners. But soldiers who are still in combat know that they are killable as long as they are fighting. It's the law. They are our *expendable lives*.

Think of what would happen if the Geneva Conventions did not suspend the human rights of soldiers while they are in combat. If soldiers in combat could not be legally killed, legally there could be no

war. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human beings, through their nation-states, have agreed that the right of human beings to live is unconditional and unequivocal, that human rights cannot be abrogated or abolished, nor can these rights be segmented into categories for some and not for others. Human rights are inalienable and inherent to being human. They cannot be revoked.

By excluding those engaged in hostilities from protection of their right to live, *the Geneva Conventions actually violate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948*, which guarantees that "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person" (Article 3). "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (Article 1), and hence, "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status" (Article 2).⁶

In revoking the human rights of soldiers in combat, the Geneva Conventions segment them into two classes: civilians (presumed to be women and children) with human rights, soldiers in combat (men) without them. That renders human rights conditional according to the class of persons one belongs to (those who are and those who are not engaged in hostilities), violating the principle that those rights are inalienable to all human beings.

Ultimately, the Geneva Conventions compromise everyone's human rights. Instead of prohibiting war, they accept it as inevitable and then regulate it. The reason is to limit the loss of human life in the civilian population and to protect prisoners of war only when they are no longer "engaged in hostilities." But, in fact, the loss of civilian life has risen from 10 percent of all casualties in World War II to 97.77 percent in Iraq and 78 percent in Lebanon in one month of 2006. Such is the fallacy of regulating war. Bereft of their human rights, soldiers in combat have only their own military-trained brute force to protect their lives. That is how male aggression and violence become inscribed in international law.

It does not have to be that way. In this book, I introduce new choices we can make about how we socialize boys, how the military trains soldiers for combat, how we choose our leaders, new means of resistance to occupation, and how we are governed in a globalized world.

By the conclusion of this book, it will be evident that world peace will elude us until we demilitarize states, eliminating their militaries and leaving states to police within their borders, and we establish a global peacemaking military to address violations across borders as well as crimes against humanity within them. But even demilitarization will not be enough. War will not be unmade without remaking masculinity. That is an imperative, if we are to have peace. But we must first ask new questions of men if we are to learn how they were made expendable.

Men, we need to know how you internalize, while growing up to be a man who may join a militia, or a military or paramilitary, that you may be killed by the time you are 20 or 31 or 19, or as young as 12 and 14 for boy soldiers who are drafted into Third World wars? When as a child you saw in movies and in the news that in combat it is always *men* who are fighting, *men* who are maimed in war, *men* who are killed, how did you come to accept this? While you were playing with other children were you beginning to understand that in a few years you might come home from a war without limbs or your sanity? Or not come home at all? What happens to that awareness in you as you are developing a sense of self? That is, how does your own expendability affect the formation of your life? You've not been asked these questions before.

The answer to them is stunningly, frighteningly simple: masculinity.

Masculinity requires that men's lives be expendable. Violent masculinity is modeled, socialized and taught to boys until it becomes an unconscious reaction to being expendable. To ensure that young people, both boys and girls, do not miss that point, the military brings the violence of war into their lives with video games. At the Army Experience Center in Philadelphia, the U.S. military spent \$13 million to build a video arcade that is filled with games so that teenagers can enjoy simulated combat attacks in mock-up army vehicles. Although the army is legally prohibited from recruiting children and teens under the age of seventeen, teens of thirteen are allowed into this center where all games are free and army recruiters circulate talking to them. Peter Lehu, with the organization The World Can't Wait, describes the atmosphere and the large touch-screen monitors where teens are introduced to career opportunities in the army. "One particular screen shines a brightly-colored graph that shows dubiously that a life in the

military will lead to a six-digit salary, more than any teen could hope for as a civilian."⁷

The center is all about virtual experience. The gaming stations recreate regions of Iraq complete with Arabs to shoot down or "blow away" as some teenagers express their excitement. Research is conclusive and clear: "violent video games are significantly associated with: increased aggressive behavior, thoughts, and affect; increased physiological arousal; and decreased prosocial (helping) behavior."⁸ Peter Lehu, observing the effects of the teenagers virtual experience, found, "If watching kids in chairs shoot enemies with a video game controller supplied by the Army is disconcerting, then watching them hunched over giant machine guns shooting out of helicopter windows at nameless Arab simulations is horrifying."⁹ Recruiters are waiting for them when they leave to promote the military way of life.

The Army Experience Centers that are being developed around the country are only a more slick version of video arcades around the world. After meeting with a project director on men's violence in Bethlehem in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, I searched out an Internet café. Inside, I found several young Palestinian men sitting around a huge screen each with a control device in his hands, playing Kill Baghdad. This kind of scene is played out all around the globe because those games are available worldwide.

Those young men in Bethlehem and the teenagers in the Army Experience Center in Philadelphia must disconnect themselves from the likelihood that the killing they are seeing on the screen could actually happen to them one day. If they did not distance themselves, the knowledge of their own expendability would be unbearable. As sentient beings, we simply cannot go forward in our lives with a death sentence dangling in front of us.

Miraculously for them, in a virtual world created at the U.S. Army Center they learn to want to kill Arabs but nothing happens to them. They are immortal and superior to those who tried to kill them "virtually." Further, I suggest that in the real world, playing these games has subdued their higher levels of consciousness, making it impossible for them to fully understand that they may become the "expendables" of war. The more that boys enjoy the virtual reality of war, the less real the consequences of war are to them. They see themselves both as

men who can go out and kill and as teenagers who are impervious to being killed. They are merely virtually expendable.

As the expendability of male lives slips further away from these young men's consciousness, playing at killing Arabs in the U.S. Army Center brings racism together with the experience of being shot at and having bombs explode around them. Labeling people of other races and ethnicities as enemies, killing them because they are different than you, is the racism that is implicitly internalized with *core masculinity*. After shooting down Arabs, they turn to sip their soda drinks. That racism mixes with the reality of their own *expendable lives* and goes somewhere else.*

Some would argue that women, children, and families are also the expendables of war. In this book, *expendable lives* refers to the class of human beings who are identified by their male gender, are socialized and then trained to know themselves—years before a gun is pointed at them or their truck triggers a roadside bomb—as those who can be sacrificed in war. Male expendability is a corollary to the sexual objectification of girls and women who are socialized to know themselves as sexual objects, a powerful and destructive process that is fed by what I have called elsewhere the prostitution of sexuality.¹⁰

Our societies impose powerful negative sanctions on men who refuse violent masculinity. Boys who are not aggressive, who cower when attacked by other boys, and who will not fight, are bullied and taunted for being wimps or wusses. Those men who are caring, soft and tender risk ridicule for being effeminate, that is, like a woman. That misogyny and its contempt for all that is female is a foundation of male aggression that forms into what I call *core masculinity*. It is core because it precedes all other ways of being a man and because it traverses all classes, cultures, states, ethnicities, and races.

Core masculinity contains both men's expendability and their contempt for women. It requires women's complicity in accepting men's protection, which justifies the aggression and violence expected of them. It is universal not because it is in male biology but because states and movements require men's lives for combat. But its near universality testifies to its power not to its inevitability. Nothing is

* June 2010: unrelenting pressure from a coalition of antiwar groups was successful in closing the Philadelphia center.

"natural" about this type of fighting or this type of masculinity in any culture. It is made by society to serve the warring needs of macho state leaders as well as the needs of resistance or liberation forces. If the masculinity of war were natural, male aggression would just happen on its own. Society would not have to mount the powerful social pressure of *core masculinity* it imposes on boys and expects from men.

The first step in unmaking war is resisting military recruitment and the controlling, painful sanctions that keep a militaristic masculinity in place. Being tough, aggressive, and unfeeling are roles and behaviors that are not only expected of boys but that are normalized in sports. It is likely that only a few boys and men will enjoy fighting, roughhousing, punching, and kicking and not internalize that violence and allow it to shape their identities. More likely, violent sports like boxing and football that involve hitting, tackling, shoving, and pushing set the stage for violence and for war. The traumatic brain injuries that often come with these sports exacerbate aggression. They also reinforce male expendability.

As recent studies of masculinity have shown, many types of masculinities exist and the diverse experiences of being a man differ by culture, class, sexual orientation, and life interests. But *core masculinity* is imposed on boys by society through its expectations and requirements of manhood. The protector role, the role of the aggressor becomes so ingrained from repeated reinforcement from birth that it precedes all the diversity of masculinities as academics and men's movements write about them,¹¹ and as author John Stoltenberg has shown in his classic book, *Refusing to Be a Man*.¹²

I have spent a lifetime working against men's violence against women. Some readers may wonder why male expendability should matter to me. Why am I turning to men now, when women and children are most harmed by men in war and in their homes? To begin with, *core masculinity* does not arise in a vacuum. Women are culpable in perpetuating male expendability. Male expendability requires women's acceptance of men as their protectors, hence it requires they have soldiers and/or husbands to protect them. Protect them from what, though? The violence conjured by *core masculinity*! That chauvinist circular thinking, requires the protection of women from the

violence that comes with rendering men expendable. And finally for many women in danger that protection is imperative.

Buried underneath this presumption of protection is another burning feminist question: can women ever expect full equality in a state or society where men, who deny that equality to women, are rendered expendable? As long as some human beings, men, are taught that they are superior to other human beings, women, and that they are supposed to sacrifice their lives to protect those who they have been taught are inferior to them, women's full equality is impossible. The presumption that war is inevitable is likewise a mandate for gender inequality and male superiority because as long as men are sent to war, in exchange for the expendability of their lives, they will be granted and taught superiority over women. False superiority is what men receive for their expendability. And it feeds upon the learned aggression that they will call upon in combat, the aggression that later will make many of those same men hate themselves.

But most of all, I turn now to the expendability of men's lives because while adhering to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I cannot parcel out the value of human life, defending it for some, ignoring its devaluation in others. And I know that when human rights are safeguarded for some at the expense of others, we are set up for deeper, more long-term violence from those who have been deprived of their rights. We cannot contain male violence against women as long as men's lives are rendered expendable.

2 Making Men Expendable

Considering the masculinist devaluation of men, should anyone be shocked that, having been made expendable, so many men dare not get too close to others? In everyday life, most American men would have us believe that they are not good with all that feeling stuff. At first I was entertained by the current vogue of male self-deprecation in American comedy where men bring us to side-splitting laughter with their portrayal of themselves as people who recoil when, in intimacy, a woman says, "Let's talk," or who will agree to anything their wives ask if it means they'll get sex. They let us see them as vulnerable, possibly, for a moment, even as inferior. They are the men who are "from Mars" and behave like they should be sent there. Aw shucks! They just can't help it! And isn't there something kind of cute about admitting it?

It is not that men are from Mars; it is that their masculinity is shaped from having to suppress their humanity as the result of being made expendable. This devaluation of their lives and their own fear make disconnection safer than compassion, violence more realistic than connection. And it makes cowardice the norm.

Emotional disconnection of men is socialized in boys to the extent that it becomes their standard for manhood. Of course vast differences in how boys internalize these social expectations range from the total rejection of them to the extremes of macho behavior and bul-

lying. But I have observed another aspect of that expectation of men. In relation to combat, I suspect (and men's gender roles bear out my suspicion) that the emotional disconnection from others that permeates masculinity is men's nearly universal survival response to their having been rendered expendable. For how could there not be deep fear of being killed in war, of having to kill others in war?

Men, knowing that you may die very young, neither by accident nor from illness but in war, how do you grow up? How do you become who you are? I want to know what happens to you as you learn to conform to the death wish of masculinity. As you watch the photos and IDs of men killed in combat rolling down your television screens on the evening news, how do you internalize the awareness that you could die in a few years in combat somewhere? A friend of mine remembered with a sarcastic laugh, "Yeah you learn that you are just cannon fodder."

"They just don't think of it," more than one mother has said to me about their sons and the reality that they could be killed or kill others in war. If we dig beneath surface reactions, we find that it is not that boys and men do not know that they may be expected to make that patriotic "sacrifice" when they are young. Rather, with the optimism of being young, many assume that they are immune to the possibility of death in their youth. And that allows them to accept and actively pursue the warrior role as a measure of their manhood.

Fear is the only sane response to being rendered expendable, the legitimate human emotion one feels when one's life is at risk. But *core masculinity* teaches that fear is unmanly; if it is felt, it must be stuffed away. It cannot be shown. *Core masculinity* papers over fear with violence, a way to prove manhood. The aggression expected by *core masculinity* most often yields cowards. That is the violence I see when young men scream "cunts" from their cars at eighty-year-old women who are standing on street corners holding Peace Now signs as they mourn the deaths from war with the organization, Women in Black. That is the violence driving soldiers who kill women and children in the country they have invaded or rape the women serving in the military with them. Cowards attack and harm people who cannot defend themselves. And cowards are the other men who cover for them.

The dominating behavior that results from *core masculinity* is cowardice. We usually think of cowards as those who are not strong and tough when it is required of them and do not have the courage to face difficulties or pain without fear. But a coward who is wedded to *core masculinity*, "harms or attacks people who are weaker or unable to defend themselves."¹ Crudely, the military makes that heroic; the society treats it as bravery.

In *The Things They Carried*, writer Tim O'Brien tells the story of a young man who had protested against the Vietnam War and then received his draft notice at the age of twenty. Until that moment, "I felt no personal danger; I felt no sense of an impending crisis in my life. Stupidly, with a kind of smug removal that I can't begin to fathom, I assumed that the problems of killing and dying did not fall within my special province."² When he realizes that all that makes up war has actually entered his life, his expendability becomes conscious. He speaks of "the rage in my stomach. Later it burned down to a smoldering self-pity then to numbness."³ Filled with terror, he walks off his job and heads for a remote region of Minnesota. "I did not want to die. Not ever. But certainly not then, not there, not in a wrong war."⁴ He is physically sick, emotionally racked, and has hit a breaking point.

He knows that he should head for Canada and refuse the war. But something else pulls on him. "Intellect had come up against emotion. What it came down to, stupidly, was a sense of shame. Hot, stupid shame. I did not want my people to think badly of me."⁵ Would he be unmanly to his family and friends and even strangers if he did not go to war? Despite those fears, he is ready to dive from a fishing boat and swim a mere twenty yards to Canada to escape serving in combat. But he can't. He cries.

He is a coward, not because he cries but because he does not swim those twenty yards and therefore does not exclude himself from fighting and killing. "What embarrasses me much more, and always will," he confesses, "is the paralysis that took my heart."⁶ That is how irrational masculinity is in its expectation that men accept the expendability of their lives.

This story exemplifies the countless other young men who are expected to respond not to their own deep values but from the often brutal standards of masculinity. "Right then, with the shore so close,

I understood that I would not do what I should do. I would not swim away from my hometown and my country and my life. I would not be brave."⁷ He makes a decision—choosing the demands of masculinity over his humanity. It is a decision that would lead him to take others' lives, and it would haunt him for years to come.

Later he reflects, "It had nothing to do with morality. Embarrassment, that's all it was. And right then I submitted. I would go to the war—I would kill and maybe die—because I was embarrassed not to."⁸ The military counts on the cowardice that is deeply ingrained in *core masculinity*. In this rare, deeply honest glimpse into the moral dilemma that young men face when expected to fight in war, we see the power of masculinity that boys learn from childhood, that feeds wars with *expendable lives*. And because men, like all human beings, are always acting subjects of their lives, they have to find ways to live with their decisions. Some justify them with patriotism, others flaunt them in hyper-masculinity, or, reversing those decisions, some are now refusing cowardice and deserting the military, unwilling to fight and kill in war.

Most men, after all, value human life even in the face of the irrationality of war that makes them violate their own humanity. That is why I ask: Men, is being expendable and knowing that you may have to fight and die in war too much for you to know consciously? After all, being expendable is contrary to your life force. It goes against your own growth and development. If you were imagining your own mortality, fully aware of being expendable, you would not be able to go on with your daily life. There would be little point in planning a future, developing projects, making plans. Why bother if your life is without value and likely to be sacrificed in a war? That is what the guys on the front discovered in retrospect in the classic *All Quiet on the Western Front*:

Albert expresses it: "The war has ruined us for everything."

He is right. We are not youth any longer. We don't want to take the world by storm. We are fleeing. We fly from ourselves. From our life. We were eighteen and had begun to love life and the world; and we had to shoot it to pieces. The first bomb, the first explosion, burst in our hearts. We are cut off from activity, from striving, from progress. We believe in such things no longer. We believe in war.⁹

Young men are not allowed to know that aspect of their expendability before they enlist in the military. The devaluation of their lives is shown to them as heroic, manly sacrifice. But there are levels of knowing and perceptions that we cannot afford to know consciously will go somewhere else in our being for storage. The unconscious protects us from knowing the unbearable by absorbing that which is too much for us to live with in conscious reality.¹⁰

When as a girl I watched romantic movies, I was internalizing the expectation that one day I would be swept off my feet by some handsome man who would love me and take care of me, give me passionate kisses, and I would make babies. Those movies were complete with the expectation that I would live through my husband. They were boilerplate lessons in male identification from which I would have to wrest myself later if I was to have my own identity and shape my own life. What are boys watching and internalizing when they see all those soldiers being mowed down in that war movie? Do they see their own limbs flying into the air, their warm blood chilling in the air as it spills out of them? Likely not. Rather, *core masculinity* fortifies them with that distancing that allows them to separate and disengage from those messages to the point where killing becomes entertainment. In distancing and disengagement, the unconscious takes over and becomes the holding place for men's expendability.

Unconscious are not all alike. Incredibly varied types of personalities form in the unconscious process of burying expendability. Yet patterns can be found. The trick of the unconscious is that it is not discriminating. It is irrational. It lies. It is fraught with contradictions. For example, we corrupt our shared human consciousness while we hold the contradictory beliefs that we value human life above everything else at the same time that we accept the inevitability of men killing and being killed in combat. Men's deaths in combat are consciously intended. Military leaders plan for them, and men themselves are expected to put their lives at risk. In contrast, we are meant to believe that civilian or innocent lives taken in war are mistakes, unintended consequences of combat.

Mothers and wives and lovers who accept—even applaud—their men going off to combat live with the contradiction of the human life force that focuses on saving and protecting human beings and their

own knowledge that there is a high likelihood that their spouse, partner, son or daughter will likely kill other human beings and that they may not come back alive. Politicians regularly elevate that acceptance with the heroic language of the "soldier's sacrifice," as if one's son killing or being killed in war should make any parent proud. We are asked over and over again to violate our shared human consciousness rather than act from the human life force that makes killing or putting oneself in the line of fire intolerable.

For you young men about to become soldiers, facing your own expendability invokes your unconscious. Without much effort on your part, your unconscious protects you from that which is antihuman and saves you from that which is consciously unbearable to know by tucking it away so that you do not see it and cannot easily find it. You live as though your expendable life is compatible with your life force, which has inherent in it the urge to protect and save human life. You learn to believe that your life force is for protecting at the expense of yourself. You have internalized this inhuman reality that is lost to your consciousness. Your anger and aggression are sealed, disconnected from feeling for others as well as yourself.

Core masculinity seals anger and aggression away in the unconscious where it becomes the source of the rage that the military will tap to prepare you for combat. It is the same expendability that feeds into the expectation that you exist to protect others, women and children especially, which often turns to violence against women. Here is the unconscious source of men's emotional disconnect and suppression of their own feelings.

Since I began writing this book, one of the most common misgivings people have expressed about my thesis that expendability is built into masculinity is, "What about women? They are serving in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan." Yes, as we have already seen, women in the military are inching their way toward combat. In fact, as of 2007, 20 percent of the service units in Iraq included women; seventy-one U.S. servicewomen had been killed in Iraq.¹¹ Because women are serving in combat zones, the common belief is that they are assigned to fight in combat. To correct that, the military narrowed its definition of combat thereby enabling it to put women in combat zones but not

assign them to actual fighting, yet use them unofficially in combat if needed.¹²

Most of the time, being in a combat zone is different than being in combat. Women are taking serious risks and increasingly becoming the objects of hostile fire in Iraq and Afghanistan. While these wars have taken a proportionally larger toll on servicewomen than in any prior U.S. conflict, women are not even sent for combat training before they deploy. Yet some find themselves caught in the crossfire of combat. In 2005, Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester was in a military police convoy that was ambushed. She "maneuvered her team through the kill zone into a flanking position where she assaulted a trench line with grenades and M203 rounds. . . She then cleared two trenches with her squad leader."¹³ She was the first woman since World War II to receive the Silver Star for valor in combat.

Women's more influential role in relation to combat is found back home in the support many give to making men expendable for war. From women's expectation of male protection to parents' socialization of sons into *core masculinity*, neither male expendability for war nor female vulnerability to male violence arises independently of each other. We women who were not socialized from childhood into the expectation that we would fight in war and you men whose expendability and violence invokes our vulnerability are intertwined in that dance of death that is war.

Growing up with two younger brothers, it never once occurred to me that I would have to join the military, go to war, register for the draft (although later I joined the protest against it), or refuse to serve my country. At the age of twenty, I did not wonder whether I would come home from the war without some limbs or if I would come home at all. I did not have to face the possibility of being thought of as a coward if I did not put my sanity and my life at risk for my country's wars. I was more concerned with how to delay or avoid getting married and resist being turned into some man's housekeeper, the prevailing working-class goal for girls of my age back then. My young, developing sense of self did not imagine sacrificing my life for my country, nor was that expected. I have never had to think of myself as someone who would bomb or attack neighborhoods, villages or

military installations. Those scenarios had nothing to do with being a girl or becoming a woman.

Only now, much later in my life, do I wonder about that working-class trade-off my brother Danny was making when he enlisted in the army. Already he had learned at home that while he might be beaten, he could not hit girls, especially his sister. In that same home, my two brothers learned that the masculinity expected of them was exempt from the inferiority assumed to be inherent in all women. It was their reward for being expendable. And in the way that females are implicated in male expendability, that same home is where and how I learned to be a woman. To escape our abusive home, Danny enlisted in the army at seventeen. He was set up for that sign outside the army recruiting office: "Uncle Sam Needs You!" Imagine being needed, he remembered thinking at the time.

In stories of American men fighting with their lives on the line in Iraq, deceptions at the recruiting office that include promises the military never intends to keep, along with the working-class need for money for college or to pay off family debts figure prominently in men's decisions to enlist.¹⁴ A naïve sixteen-year-old boy signed up to be called at seventeen, he says, "mostly because I thought it would be a good way to make a little money during high school, and because I was assured that nothing would ever happen, our country wouldn't go to war."¹⁵ The year was 2001.

Military recruitment relies on boys knowing their expendability. Since the draft ended in the United States, the military has developed other ways of tracking teens and trapping them in the service. Under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, high schools must give military recruiters the names and contact details of all of their juniors and seniors. Students are usually not informed that they may opt out and refuse to have their names given to the military. Antiwar writer David Goodman has discovered that the number of students who opt out has increased significantly. Undeterred, the military has fought back, aiming its ads at their parents. Only 5 percent of those parents would recommend the military to their children, yet the ads try to draw them in: "Your son wants to join the military. The question isn't whether he's prepared enough, but whether you are."¹⁶

By 2004, one-fifth of all military recruiters in the United States were under investigation for lying, coercing, and making false promises such as promising that boys would not be sent to Iraq if they enlisted. Aimee Allison and David Solnit have shown how the Department of Defense explicitly exempts the military from consequences for lying to get new recruits by stating that recruiters may change the terms of enlistment documents without notice. The bonuses they offer are more like loans.¹⁷ In 2010 the U.S. military was enticing new recruits with, "There are many benefits to joining the Armed Forces, but few directly affect your pay as much as enlistment bonuses. In fact, if you enlist in the military you may be eligible for up to \$40,000 in cash bonuses." Then come the disqualifiers—the ones they name—"bonus will depend on the service branch, education level, civilian experience, specific job specialty... and length of contract," and the ones they don't name.¹⁸ Actually, "65 percent receive no money for college, and only 15 percent ever receive a college degree," according to Allison and Solnit.¹⁹ With eight-year enlistments that are often extended, combat is not a place for job training. "There aren't many jobs for M240 machine-gunners stateside."²⁰ But it does shape young men through their twenties, the most formative years of becoming an adult. How else, other than lying and making false promises, can the U.S. military attract men when the job description includes a much higher than usual probability of being killed?

Both women and men accept that the likelihood of dying or being disabled in combat is part of being a man, writ large into masculinity by the state and by cultural and social values. I became acutely aware of the extent to which we not only live in masculinist society but also to the extent to which it lives in us one evening in Paris.²¹

I had slipped away from my writing to see a new, much acclaimed film, *Indigènes*. (*Days of Glory* is the title in English.) The film portrayed indigenous Algerians, Moroccans, and black Africans from the French colonies in Africa who were recruited and used by the French to fight the Nazi occupation in France only to suffer humiliation at the hands of the French with whom they had enlisted. In the racism that is inherent in war, it soon became evident to me that those indigenous North Africans were used in that war in much the same way African Americans were used by the U.S. military in World War II—human

beings, because they were Arab or black Africans were sent to take the first line of fire from the enemy.

The film began with North African men tearing themselves apart from tearful families, their expendability engaged on behalf of their colonizers, the French. Like most of the audience, I became caught up in the men's subjectivity, their feelings, their reactions to racist slights and offenses by French soldiers, their loss of buddies and brothers, their longing for their families, their eagerness to return home, and their uncompromising fight against the Nazis.

As the first men in the line of fire, their numbers quickly dwindled. Finally, of those few left, a small band of the *indigènes* were surrounded by Nazis in a remote village. I found myself so drawn into the battle that I was writhing in my cinema seat, relieved when they picked off one Nazi after another. At some moment, my own physical discomfort from the contorted position into which I had wrestled myself during the battle drew my attention from the film to my body. I let my focus rest on myself for a moment, observing my reactions to the violence in the film. I was shocked to see that I had been urging the killing that was on the screen before me. I was becoming disengaged from my own humanity.

This was not the same urge that I experienced that day on the beach near Bodega Bay. This urge was for death. The Nazis, not to mention the looming, monstrous horror of the Holocaust, offered no other possibility. That was not a trick of the director or the script. It is the paradigm of war—kill or be killed—and I was writhing in it, if only in my imagination.

Sure it was a film, sure they were Nazis, but only then did I realize that I, who reject the death penalty and oppose all wars, was urging the killing of some. I was relieved each time they, the *indigènes*, killed a Nazi soldier. I could only have that reaction to urge killing by disengaging from my own life force and from connection to all others. In that act of severing our connection to others, they become killable.

In my defense, the film was meant to evoke those reactions in me. Its good-guys-versus-bad-guys scenario is typical of most World War II films, the masculine paradigm of war in which the enemy, the bad guys (in this case Nazi soldiers), are without humanity. Viewers saw Nazis in a way that soldiers are trained to see their enemies on

the battlefield, be they Vietnamese "gooks" or Afghan and Iraqi "rag-heads"—objects without humanity.

During the film, just as soldiers in combat, we come to know nothing of the enemy's families, nothing of their subjectivity, their likes and dislikes. We did not see them eating meals together or pining for loved ones or having flashbacks to memories of childhood. Objectification turned to depravity, we saw them only as killing machines. And in fact, that may be what they had been reduced to by the Third Reich. That is how states engage men in combat to carry out their crimes against humanity.

In the film, success was when Nazis were killed. The depravity that began with the ruthless, depraved extermination of Jews turned with seamless continuity to the annihilation of the Nazi soldiers. But the breakthrough message of the film, and it was a real breakthrough that brought about French recognition of the *indigène* fighters for the first time since World War II, was the extent of French military racism. That was where my attention was supposed to be focused—becoming conscious of this form of racism and applauding the heroism of men from the former French colonies who had not before been recognized as heroes. And well they should be, as they finally are now because of the film. But gender drives the issue deeper.

It was not until I was walking back to my studio after the movie that I realized that never once did I put myself in the place of those doing the killing—neither the French nor the *indigènes*, and certainly not the Nazis. I never imagined myself being one of those who was trying to kill the other. I just wanted the *indigènes* to live, and someone, not me but the *men*, the indigene soldiers to kill the Nazis. I relied on men to do the killing.

Although it was only in a movie, assuming the role of the protected gender is where my disconnection from my own humanity began. It was as if I was saying, "Men—I want you to get them—those Nazis, those enemies. Certainly I cannot do it. I am not trained. I am not aggressive. I am not violent. You must do it." That is the bargain isn't it? Women will produce, rear, and nurture men's children, and men will protect us. That is how war connects women and men. The very meaning of masculinity is embedded in the expectation of women's vulnerability that is men's excuse to fight—to protect us. You men

and we women have both internalized, indeed, embodied our masculinist society in which male power makes the world more violent and then offers women protection from it by killing, which provokes more violence against us.

I am walking through the minute details of my experiences in this film as they show how easily anyone can slip into that gendered death trap. I watched myself, and I realized that instead of fully engaging in the force of life that is my connection to all human beings and refusing the entire kill-or-be-killed war paradigm, I was assuming that someone else would do the killing: men. Only then did I ask myself how different my reaction to the film might have been than that of many of the men in the theater. After all, I thought only of someone else killing the Nazis. But could these men feel that way? Had some of those men sitting in the theater seen themselves in the place of soldiers fighting against the Nazis? Had some of them actually fought in the French Resistance? Or would some of them be fighting in the next war? Or was this film part of their socialization into, and preparation for, being called upon to kill? Have any of those men around me killed for their countries? We are not supposed to ask these questions. We are expected to leave unspoken the crimes of war that rest silently on men's hearts. "Not any longer," I thought.

Another, more rational and heartfelt, more human and hopeful way must be found. Fortunately, the work of remaking masculinity is already underway, undertaken by men including, maybe especially, those deserters who refused to kill for their countries. But first, we must know how men are made into remorseless killers for war and why they are expected by their militaries and militias to behave in ways that, if they were in civilian society, would be considered criminal and would be punished.

3 Remorseless Killers: Military Training

Most new military recruits are not seasoned macho men or super-masculine women when they join the military. Although some, as we saw after the September 11, 2001, attack on the United States, just want to "kickass," revenge being their excuse, most are naïve seventeen or eighteen or nineteen-year-olds who enlisted either because they could not find a job or their unemployment benefits ran out or because they thought they could earn enough money for college by joining the military. Two weeks before the 2003 invasion of Iraq, one soldier who joined the U.S. Army to get money for college remembers seeing the sign at the recruiting station that told him of the \$40,000 he could earn if he enlisted. He said to himself "That could be mine. I'll be a man. I'll earn the money myself." A recruiter told him that he would not be deployed. None of it was true. "I was 19. I knew nothing of the world. I believed everything everyone told me."¹

One marine veteran who enlisted at seventeen to get money for college admitted that "I didn't understand the world, politics, foreign policy. I was oblivious." He found the conditioning in boot camp training to be "ruthless and merciless." He learned the repetitive U.S. Marine chant "Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill without mercy!" It was as if it chilled him to the bone to speak of discovering that in order to be a Marine,