

**MASCULINITY, WAR, AND REFUSAL:
VICISSITUDES OF GERMAN MANHOOD BEFORE
AND AFTER THE COLD WAR**

A Dissertation

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Over the course of the last two centuries, Germany has experienced several shifts in its position in what I refer to as the war system. The war system is an important determiner of masculinity such that variations in one impact the other. The total surrender of Germany in 1945, combined with the association of the Nazi regime with heroic, soldierly masculinity, has opened the door in post-World War II Germany for new forms of masculinity to arise. A key value in the new configuration is the increased importance of refusal and the decreased importance of obedience and subordination. Between 1945 and 1990, Germany remained a nation both divided and occupied. This, combined with the literal feminization of German society in the immediate post-war period, led to the valorization of refusal. In effect, in an occupied society, the relationship of masculinity to nation-state is shifted. At the same time, of course, market pressures have led to a more individuated society—yet it is important to point out that though refusal has become much more common in all Western societies, in none of the traditional Great Powers has the culture of the military itself become so accommodating to the idea of refusal. This shift, I think, can be attributed to the institutionalization of refusal within the Bundeswehr, and its valorization in German society as a whole, as subsequent generations encounter the failed refusal of the Nazi period in a war system context that has isolated the German military from deadly

combat—a situation which is, of course, changing in the here and now. These trends can only really be understood through an analysis that triangulates on changing masculinity by making use of a variety of evidence, historical, literary, institutional and personal. Finally, the relationship between war and masculinity itself should be seen in a longer evolutionary perspective and assumptions about inevitability challenged through comparative ethnography and review of the archeological evidence.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Steven Lester Gardiner holds a B.S. in anthropology and sociology from Lewis & Clark College and a M.A. in cultural anthropology from Cornell University. Gardiner is a fifth-generation Oregonian who has lived and worked in Portland, Gresham and Boring, Oregon; Seattle, Washington; Lawton, Oklahoma; El Paso, Texas; Newport Beach, California; White Sands, New Mexico; Ithaca and New York, New York; and Scwäbisch Gmünd and Berlin, Germany. He spent the early part of the 1980s in the first Pershing II nuclear missile unit to be deployed in Germany. More recently he spent seven years as a researcher, writer, editor and director for a Portland- and Seattle-based civil rights group, the Coalition for Human Dignity. In June 2003 he married Angie Reed Garner and they live together in Prospect, Kentucky.

for Angie Reed

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During the spring of my second year at Cornell my father passed away, dying of lung cancer. We lived in different worlds and I am left with the feeling that I never tried hard enough to help him understand mine. As this is a work about masculinity, and each man grows up to some extent in the shadow of his father, I nod to his memory. The things I learned from him, for better or worse, are part of who I am. One of the last things he said to me before dying was that he was proud of me. It was one of the few times in his life he had ever said so.

My mother deserves special thanks for attempting to understand the

strange habits of her academically-inclined, globe-trotting son. From her I learned what I know of how to be a good person. She provided financial support and encouragement through the long years I worked for the Coalition for Human Dignity, a period that forms an essential, if invisible, backdrop to this work.

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PREFACE

In a letter to people of the Greek city of Corinth traditionally attributed to Paul of Tarsus (1 Cor. 13:12), the apostle warns that the world is not always what it seems, “for now we see through a glass, darkly.” Yet he also proffers the hope that the epistemic myopia that is our lot in life may one day, kingdom come, be corrected. My hopes for such a day are slim. At least as regards all things human, perfect knowledge remains, I believe, unobtainable. Fatally embedded in dynamic and intricately interlocking systems that stretch from molecules to galaxies and from the Big Bang to the heat death of the universe, we lack perspective. So perhaps Paul will be right after all: when, at the end of time, the complexity of the universe has been reduced to a point of cold uniform dispersion, the system will be a lot easier to understand. Not, of course, that there will be anyone around to understand it.

This dissertation is my attempt to look “through a glass darkly” at two things—note the precision of the language—war and masculinity. I did not, however, start out with this focus. The primary locus of my investigation was contemporary Germany, where I did two years of ethnographic fieldwork from September 1999 through October 2001. My original intent was to look at the impact of the German military on the larger German society. My understanding evolved as I tried out various theoretical frameworks and applied them, like corrective lenses, to my dark vision. This is my invitation to the reader to try on a particular set of such lenses.

At first when I sat in on various training seminars conducted by the German army, I could see only the orderly replication of a system with which most everyone seemed fairly satisfied. Only later, as I conducted a number of

in-depth interviews with professional soldiers, former draftees, and conscientious objectors, did I start to see first the importance of *refusal* in the construction of post-World War II Germany identities, and second, the second the way refusal fit into a post-war reconfiguration of German masculinity.

Compared to what I knew of Germany history, the increased valorization of refusal amongst German men emerged from interviews with various informants. It was clear, however, that other key soldierly values, e.g. physical and emotional toughness, were also affected. In many ways the ideal German soldier in the year 2000 was not only very different from the his counterpart from 1900 or 1940, but also from soldiers in the armies of other major Western powers today. I was seeing, in many ways, a *comparatively* kinder and gentler army—gentler as compared with my own military experience in the American army and my knowledge of German military history. Eventually I hypothesized that changes in Germany's relationship to war as an activity, brought about as a result of its defeat and occupation following World War II, had had a significant impact on the construction of German masculinity.

Well, there was clearly a *correlation* between the two—but what about causality? This is an area where I still see but darkly—nonetheless I now would be surprised if Germany's changed position in the *war system* was not at least in part responsible for the changes in the extant form of masculinity and soldierly values.

At the same time that I was trying to understand the relationship between the war system and masculinity, by tracing it backwards through German history, I was trying to sort out the more specific business of refusal. The stories my informants told about their experiences with refusal, though

they often related to issues of identity, didn't typically make reference to war system changes. Rather, their stories—what I think of as identity narratives—touched on expectations and constraints imposed by formal and informal sanctions: laws and peer/parental pressure.

Tracing these formal and informal sanctions from rearmament through century's end, I found a clear trajectory. Values associated with the National Socialist regime—including obedience, toughness and the relatively greater importance of the Volk as compared to the individual—were not immediately abandoned, but led to deep splits in the population. However, the post-1945 political changes, and the total defeat of the NS state, did open room for a widespread critique of traditional military masculinity, and, indeed, militarism itself. Some of these critiques were written into the German Basic Law—for example the constitutional right to refuse to do military service. Others operated at the cultural level, erupting in the work of post-war authors and artists and informing the social movements of the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Though it is hard to weight the relative impact of these phenomena, collectively it is clear that German masculinity has changed.

Yet if I was going to make the assertion that German masculinity had changed and that the change had something to do with the war system, I started to think that maybe I should try to clarify what I meant by “masculinity” and “war.” This led, inexorably, to a second round of research, working backwards through German history and on to a broader evolutionary conception of war and gender.

This second set of investigations underlies the entire project but is set forth primarily in Chapter 1, a theoretical exploration of gender and war. Though the latter chapters hang together without this detailed unfolding of

underlying concepts, I was unable to bring them into their current form without backing up and considering bigger issues of origins and sources of change and variation. In particular I was concerned to challenge various forms of both biological *and* cultural determinism. In my view, both gender (or sex/gender) and war are complex amalgams of biological and cultural factors mutually imbricated in complex, bi-directional feedback loops. The complexities are, admittedly, daunting. Nonetheless I make a case for these the involvement of these interlocking complexities in the origins of both war and gender and in the specific historical intersection between the two in the almost (but not quite) universal selection of men as combat soldiers.

The issues raised in Chapter 1 are more general and abstract than those raised in the chapters that follow. The language and body of theory addressed reflect this. For the reader primarily interested in the German military or issues relating to post-WWII conscientious objection it might seem to be beside the point. Ultimately, however, it is meant to provide tentative answers (and additional questions) associated with problems of change and stasis. As a prelude to discussing *how* change happened in post-war Germany, I wanted to respond preemptively to the critique that phenomena of the sort under discussion—war and gender—are stable, biologically determined, or of such ancient and unchanging provenance as to be impervious to most change.

In other words: change is possible.

That is not to say that it is necessarily easy. The complexity of the systems involved are such that the consequences of particular interventions are hard to predict. Moreover, the events and interventions that I posit as important for the subsequent transformation of German masculinity are, by

any standards, extreme. The total surrender of Germany and its subsequent occupation eventuated in the disbanding of the German military. Former Nazis were tried by the Allies. The war itself led to massive changes in German demography, with millions of men killed, wounded or imprisoned in the immediate aftermath. In other words, the precipitating change in Germany's position in the larger war system was major. The calculus by which *degree* of change in the war system correlates with *degree* of change in masculinity, of course, has not been invented. I don't mean to suggest, however, that the relationship is necessarily linear.

The only correlation that I can claim with complete authority is that between the writing of this dissertation and my own conscious reflection on war and masculinity. As a former soldier both have been issues of residual fascination for me. I undertook research on the military in no small part because of a feeling of unfinished business. I chose the *German* military largely because of the history of recent change, but also because of the impression that when it comes to the Western version of soldierly manhood, the Germans, and especially the Prussians, have been widely considered as the paradigmatic example. Moreover, the specter of the Holocaust and the catastrophe of World War II was much on my mind as I began this work, and now as I bring it to a tentative conclusion, precisely because I am interested in the possibility of change.

INTRODUCTION

Berlin is a city saturated with history. The past permeates not only the monuments and museums, but the endless streets of five-story, masonry-front apartment buildings. It rises up from the subway stations, flows through the canals and hangs in the air, usually like a miasma, but occasionally as the sweet scent of linden blooms. For all the weight of history, however, there is also a relentless modernity. Unlike London or Paris or Rome, or even New York or Tokyo, Berlin's history is tilted decisively, inevitably, toward the twentieth century.

Like all great cities, Berlin is a multiplicity. There is the Berlin of the Kaiserreich, imperial city of an empire that never quite achieved the lofty ambitions it set for itself in competition with French and British rivals. There is the Berlin of the Weimar era, of Otto Dix and the cabarets. There is the Berlin of the Third Reich, which defies any single epithet. There is Cold War Berlin, cut in half by the most tangible manifestation of the Iron Curtain. Then there is today's Berlin, in the apt title phrase of a book by John Borneman, *Berlin After the Wall* (1991).¹ Composed as they are of an uneasy amalgamation of wartime memories, grainy photographs, faded newspaper clippings, television documentaries, books, movies and nightmares, most of these Berlins no longer exist. Our connection to them is, at best, tenuous. They, like Dicken's *Ghost of Christmas Past*, reside primarily in the imagination.

¹ A search on Amazon.com turned up twenty-eight books (in English) about post-Cold War Berlin that included the phrase "after the wall" in their titles. The equivalent phrase in German is *nach der Wende* (after the change). A search on Amazon.de (the German language version of the online book giant) turns up seventy some titles using that phrase. The vast majority of these, however, have to do with Germany as a whole, as opposed to Berlin. The phrase, "*nach der Mauer*," a more literal translation of "after the wall," turns up only nine titles.

Only the last Berlin—Berlin after the wall—has substance. It is a Berlin of yellow sky cranes and an unintentionally ironic glass, steel and stone building called the Reichstag, home to the Bundestag, the German parliament.² Consciously constructed with the democratic value of *transparency* in mind, the new structure is designed so that visitors can look down from overhead galleries and see their representatives at work. No *less* appropriate metaphor for the actual workings of the German government, characterized as it is by intricate compromises, local-national alliances, and bureaucratic inertia could be found (Katzenstein 1987).

Yet whatever the intended trope, the actual feeling of staring down from the galleries at the lawmakers in session in the new Reichstag building is one of almost infinite distance. It does make a sort of sense. As one young man, himself close to the political process (a political aide to a member of the Bundestag), put it to me when questioned about the apparent apathy of ordinary Germans toward national politics: “Germans think politics is the business of politicians; people don’t do anything because they know they can’t do anything.”

This distance between people and government is echoed in the growing symbolic distance between present and past. Berlin is a city of elisions and evasions. The space once occupied by the Wall is increasingly not even an absence. At least in the city itself, the West-that-was shades imperceptibly into

² The original Reichstag building was destroyed by arson on February 27, 1933. Though no definitive answer to the question of perpetration and responsibility has ever been proffered, what is clear is historically clear is the results. Hitler and his supporters used the incident as proof of a widespread communist conspiracy to undermine the government. By the early hours of the February 28th, over 4,000 communists and anti-Nazi intellectuals had been arrested. Though not a Nazi, 86-year old President Hindenburg was shaken by the incident and easily convinced to sign an emergency decree suspending the basic rights of citizens. Known as the “enabling decree,” this ordinance provided the legal cover for the Nazis to take control of the entire state apparatus and to use the full force of the state repressive apparatus against its enemies.

the East-that-was, the heretofore division paved over with newly-renovated apartment buildings and department stores, all constructed in the obligatory Berlin style. In most places you can now walk from West to East across an erstwhile border that once cost lives, without noticing.

I did so, regularly, on my way to the Laundromat.

This is my Berlin and I arrived with my partner, Angie Reed Garner, in late September 1999. We stumbled off of our plane at Tegel airport, in the northwest of the city, and took a Taxi to Wilmersdorf, where a sparsely-furnished apartment—prudently, if unadventurously prearranged with a Berlin contact back at Cornell—waited for us. The taxi driver responded to my German with grunts. The REM song “The End of the World as We Know It (and I Feel Fine)” was playing on the radio—as it would countless times in the months leading up to the millennium—but this particular rendition felt appropriately personal. This was my first time in the field.

It was a little past noon when we arrived in front of our new home on Konstanzer Strasse, in a quiet residential neighborhood a few blocks from the Ku'Damm. A combination of jetlag, Berlin architecture, and the gray central European light cast a surreal haze over the experience. I kept trying to shake my head, to wake myself up. Over the course of the next two years I would become accustomed to the Berlin light and architecture. The jetlag and mental cobwebs, however, seemed to stay with me.

Jet lag, mental cobwebs, the kind of “culture shock” that cosmopolitan anthropologist types are supposed to be immune to, were constant companions in the field. That first day, a day that I should by tradition recount with an eye toward building my own personal mythology, was particularly unsettled.

Most of our things were in storage. Our household goods had been jammed into the basement of a kind friend—thank you, Fran—when we left Ithaca to become homeless wanderers the previous spring. With us were three overstuffed military-style duffle bags (one of them a survivor from my first sojourn in Germany, as a soldier in the United States Army almost twenty years before), a battered beige suitcase, and a hastily-purchased laptop computer.

Angie Reed spoke virtually no German and I was acutely aware—no, strike that, I was sick with worry—that in spite of my classroom study, I wouldn't be able to communicate with any "real" Germans (meaning those not being paid to suffer my abuse of their language). My first chance came when we arrived on the landing outside our fourth floor apartment, panting and sweating from dragging the eighty pound duffle bags up the steep stairs.

The building, typical of many older Berlin residential arrangements, was designed such that each floor featured a trio of apartments, left, right and center, arranged around a foyer which was separated from the stairwell by a door. It was my introduction to the German penchant for barriers. Immediately upon my dropping the luggage with a thump and wrestling the foyer door open, an elderly German woman poked her head out from the left-hand apartment, and gave me the look—the infinitely skeptical, slightly askance and disapproving look so typical of Berliners. She started to duck back into her apartment. I thought her quite capable of phoning the police.

Fortunately I'd been warned. The woman was my new across-the-foyer neighbor, Frau Richter.³ She had been described to me as a nice old lady who

³ Unless otherwise indicated I use pseudonyms throughout this work. In crafting them, however, I have maintained a symmetry with the form of address I actually used with the person in question. That is, I never referred to Frau Richter in any less formal manner.

was easily frightened. I would do well, my contact had advised, to introduce myself and make it clear that I was an American student subletting the apartment from him.

“*Hallo*,” (hello) I said, attempting to arrest her flight, eager from both a personal perspective not to scare my new neighbor, and an anthropological one, not to frighten my first native. When she continued her retreat, I repeated the greeting.

“*Guten Tag*,” she said, rather severely.

It was not until some months later, when I read an article in a German newspaper about changes in the German language, that I realized that amongst older Germans the informal “*Hallo*”—nearly ubiquitous with younger Germans—was considered overly familiar and the more traditional forms, *Guten Tag*, etc., were preferred.

Not exactly a stellar performance on my part—but then so much of anthropological fieldwork is about being willing to muddle your way through situations that saner folk would avoid putting themselves into in the first place. The memory of this encounter remains sharp. I was exhausted, fuzzy-headed and confronted with a suspicious neighbor. Worse, I could see that Angie Reed was dead on her feet and doubtless worried that I might lose my temper or otherwise make a complete fool of myself. I was fumbling with the apartment keys and trying to figure out what to say to smooth things over.

“*Ja*,” I said, like an idiot, “*Ich bin Stefan Gardiner, Doctorand aus die USA und der neue Untermieter. Ich bin ein Freund von Johan Beck.*” (Yes, I am Stefan Gardiner, a graduate student from the USA and the new sub-letter. I am a friend of Johan Beck.)

Likewise some informants are Major or Professor or Herr, while others are Fritz or Hans.

“What?” she said, putting a hand to her ear. “I can’t understand you.” All in German, of course.

When speaking a language with which you are less than one-hundred percent fluent it is very common to speak softly. It’s something like the adult version of mumbling the answer when a teacher calls on you unexpectedly in fourth grade. There’s a certain logic to the practice, as presumably the teacher knows the answer to the question and the “foreign” interrogator knows how to speak the language with which you struggle. It is, however, a terrible tactic for basic communication.

“I’m the new tenant,” I said, spitting my consonants as enthusiastically as I could manage under the circumstances. “I’m a friend of Mr. Bech’s. I’m from the United States.”

“*Ach so,*” she said, her eyes lighting up, “*Sie können nicht sprechen. Sie sind Ausländer.*” (Oh, I see, you can’t speak. You are a foreigner.)

From the look on her face she might as well have said, “oh, you’re an idiot who doesn’t even know how to talk.” I could tell, however, that having safely categorized me, I was at least safe from an immediate intervention by the authorities.

Big Questions

During the time we were preparing to go to Germany, Angie Reed asked an odd question:

“How often do you think about the Holocaust?”

I mumbled a reply, not sure what she was getting at.

“Come on,” she said, “how often?”

“Okay,” I said, “every day, at least. I don’t know how many times.”

For the seven years prior to being accepted into the anthropology program at Cornell, I worked for a civil rights organization called the Coalition for Human Dignity. Its purpose was to monitor and oppose the extreme right, including neo-nazis, the Christian Right and the so-called Christian Patriot movement. In some sense I suppose I was looking for the source. I understood, of course, that a notion of this kind reeked of essentialism. It was, however, an ironic and nominal essentialism, reflecting not a belief in the unchanging, but the intersection of stereotype and personal obsession—and I am of the opinion that it's a waste of time to try to study something you're not obsessed with at some level.

By the time we packed up and headed for Berlin, however, I'd moved beyond the need to look at the neo-nazi and neo-fascist right per se. The big interpretive question that I took with me—the kind that is extremely difficult to operationalize or turn into a funding proposal—is “have the Germans changed and if so, how?”

The subject of such a query, of course, is inevitably a kind of projection. Any generalized statements about “Germans” are apt to lack validity, verifiability and other such notions generally valued by social scientists. National character arguments are most definitely out of fashion. Moreover it is ground that a great many people have taken up before me. Any “conclusions” that I came to would probably be nothing more than pale iterations of other people's work.

This knowledge, of course, didn't change the basic nature of my real question. I just had to find some co-questions that would be more academically acceptable and potentially productive. Hence my initial focus on the military, a key institution of National Socialist Germany that was, at least

ostensibly, reinvented in a completely new way after the war. The story of the Bundeswehr seemed to suggest that change was possible and I was out to understand how things had changed, as in *by what means*.

Following my fascination, I was, over the course of my two years in the field, involved in dozens of conversations on topics related to the military, foreign policy, nationalism and related topics. Some of these conversations can be classified without too much violence as interviews. The majority, however, were informal if earnest and prolonged discussions with new German friends and acquaintances. In these conversations the subject of this work was often front and center, though I didn't realize it at the time.

Again and again the conversations returned to a knot of related topics: refusal (*Verweigerung*), individualism, and obedience (*Gehorsamkeit*). It was only much later that I began to understand what I was being told, that refusal in the paradigmatic form of conscientious objection, increasingly valorized throughout Europe, had gradually become a paramount value in post-World War II Germany. Moreover, it was a value that was particularly important for men *as men*, for it was men who were subject to conscription. I started to think that the much commented-upon post-World War II changes in German masculinity (Beck 1986; Jerome 2001; Bogdal 2001) might be linked in important ways to processes more specific than an all-encompassing modernization.

Specifically, I began to link changes in German masculinity with changes in the German military and more broadly with German attitudes toward war. This in turn led me to an investigation of the place of Germany as a nation-state in an international system of alliance, defensive posturing and war preparation—what I refer to as the *war system*. I made it my task to

examine some of the ways in which war and masculinity are entangled with each other and consider how this has been reflected in contemporary Germany and over the course of recent German history.

Thus, though my fieldwork began with an examination of the Bundeswehr, the contemporary German military, my project is not an institutional study. From my ethnological study of some specific institutions of the Bundeswehr—particularly those responsible for training soldiers to interact with the larger society—I worked backwards, looking for the roots of key concepts and practices. Even as I sat in on the training of recruiters, press officers and youth officers, I was also conducting interviews with soldiers, ex-soldiers and conscientious objectors.

As my sample size grew, I began to discern a very interesting contrast between those who had served or refused to serve most recently and those from earlier times. Put simply, while conscientious objection (as well as all forms of refusal and disobedience) loomed large in the identity narratives of those who came of age *before* the late-1980s, those who served or refused since 1989 had a markedly (and increasingly) blasé attitude toward the whole business. Which is not to say that they were more obedience-prone or less likely to refuse, quite the contrary, they did so with much greater ease. A major difference was that the decision to refuse military service seemed no longer to elicit aspersions against ones manhood or patriotism.

Part of this change was undoubtedly the result of the increasing valuation of the social contributions of conscientious objectors through the mandatory alternative civilian service (*Zivildienst*). Beginning with the liberalization of both the criteria and process for obtaining status as an objector (*Wehrdienstverweigerer*) in the early 1980s, objectors in civilian

service have become such an important source of low-cost social labor that German social services now depend upon them. The need for their labor has become so significant that it now constitutes one of the strongest arguments against complete abolition of conscription (Kuhlmann and Lippert 1991b, Bredow 1992, 299–300).

Yet this reevaluation of civilian service is, in itself, part of a larger trend regarding what it means to be manly in German society. Traditional, pre-1945 masculine values in Germany almost precluded German men from the helping occupations, particularly at their lowest levels—taking care of the elderly, looking after children, doing the most menial tasks of cleaning and tending—that are central to *Zivildienst*. Nor did these attitudes change quickly. Even while the German population was deeply split over issues of rearmament and the military in the 1950s and 1960s (Noelle and Neumann, 1956; Noelle-Neumann and Neumann 1967), conscientious objection continued to be controversial and rates of objection low into the late 1970s. Objection did not reach a level of parity with conscription until the late 1980s (Bredow 1992, 297).

It is also true that the trend toward an increasing state accommodation with refusal goes well beyond Germany. Different Western societies have dealt with growing tension between the pre-1945 idea of military service as a key component of virtuous republican nationalism and an increasing public rejection of obligatory service in one of two ways. In the case of the United States, the answer to this conflict was found in the abolition of the draft and reliance on an all “professional” military—sometimes referred to as an economic draft, disproportionately attracting those with few alternative prospects.

Britain was actually ahead of the U.S. in this, abolishing the draft in 1960 (WRI 2000, United Kingdom). France maintains the draft, but has created procedures for conscientious objection and substitute civilian service under military supervision since the mid-1960s. The number of actual objectors, however, remains very small, only about 8,000 of over 150,000 conscripts in 1994 (WRI 2000, France). Italy maintains a draft and allows for conscientious objection, with a growing number of objectors, reaching close to a quarter of all men called up in a year (WRI 2000, Italy). In Spain the numerical situation is closer to that in Germany, with up to fifty percent of draftees filing for conscientious objection (WRI 2000, Spain).

So clearly Germany is not an isolated example, but part of a trend toward either the abolition of conscription or the institutionalization of conscientious objection with or without mandatory substitute service. This suggests a bigger picture for the forces leading to state accommodation with refusal. Yet the German situation, though part of a pattern, retains some unique elements. Not least of these is the *positive* valuation given to conscription as a way to keep the military integrated into society. The dependence on the social labor of those doing civilian service has already been mentioned. And, finally, there is the lack of state resistance to the idea of refusal. In another country the burgeoning numbers of objectors in the late 1980s might have been seen as a crisis. In the German context it seemed normal—exactly because by the time the number of objectors increased to levels rivaling the number doing military service, refusal had been normalized. In a sense, the institutions, primed by a prior wave of activism and changing attitudes, anticipated the higher numbers of conscientious objectors.

The War System, History and Origins

In an attempt to understand the normalization of refusal in Germany and beyond, and the place of refusal in the construction of masculinity, I was led to a close reading of German history for clues that might come from consideration of prior reconfigurations. The obvious starting place, of course, was the defeat and occupation of Germany in 1945 and the subsequent dissolution of the armed forces, division of the country, and integration of the Federal Republic into the Western Alliance (and the German Democratic Republic into the Warsaw Pact, though for the most part the story of the GDR is beyond the scope of this project).

One important consequence of the post-1945 changes in Germany was its *isolation* from the immediate possibility of war. Paradoxically, West Germany's position on the frontlines of the Cold War (a war which was increasingly understood as unthinkable, because of the nuclear capacities of the primary opponents) created a level of insulation from actual combat. Though the country itself was at first occupied by and then later host to large numbers of foreign troops, no German soldiers died in combat or fired a shot in earnest in the decades between the founding of the Bundeswehr and reunification with the East.

There was, in effect, a pacification of Western Europe as a whole, and Germany in particular. Of the large states, this was particularly true for Germany in that unlike the French or the British, its military was deployed neither in the conflicts associated with the latter part of decolonization on the one hand, nor in peacekeeping chores on the other. Both by provision of the German Basic Law and because of the continuing mistrust of its European

neighbors, the army of the Federal Republic was a strictly defensive entity.

Thus from the point of view of a global system of interstate relations of war and peace—what I refer to, following Joshua Goldstein (2001) as the *war system*—the position of Germany had shifted considerably as compared to its place in the pre-1945 system. The same is true for Europe as a whole, with Germany as the most extreme example. Germany moved from being among the most belligerent, aggressive and nationalist participants in the war system, to an isolated, integrated and existentially peaceful nation-state.

This is not to say that Germany was no longer part of the war system, but that its role in that system was considerably diminished. This occurred in combination with a well-documented turn away from the valuation of military values as central to the construction of masculinity and a generalized skepticism of all things military (Borneman 1998a, 302–302). How did the two fit together? Was there a causal connection between changes in the war system and changes in masculinity? What role did the increased valuation of refusal play here?

In order to answer these questions, I turned to the historical record, to consider the relationship between Germany's changing position in the international war system over the past few centuries and the valuation of the military and military virtues on the other. I recount this history in some depth, from the time of the Napoleonic Wars through German Unification and the First World War in chapters 2 and 3 and consider the aftermath of the Second World War in Chapter 4. My view of the complex and important relationship between the war system and local forms of masculinity emerge from a consideration of this history. The contemporary trends began to make sense to me only as I charted them in relation to past developments, seeing the shift

and flow of values and societal position of the military as institution in relation to the war system.

With respect to the big question of continuity—had the Germans changed—I started to see the question less in term of continuity vs. discontinuity, and more in terms of social values within a society *shifting* not in lock step with the war system, but in response to war system repositioning. Put another way, Germany's new position in the war system opened internal space for shifts in values associated with masculinity. This did not happen automatically, but over time as always extant (if previously ineffectual and isolated) forces within Germany moved away from militarized values, particularly obedience.

I began to place recent German history, and particularly the shift in masculine values away from obedience, discipline and toughness—the paramount military virtues—toward refusal, independence and openness, in a larger context. That context is the way in which the war system seems to shape masculinity, and that participation in the war system tends to lead toward the valorization of the aforementioned military virtues. This, of course, is a claim.

Germany is a particular test case, and the relationship seems to hold. In my mind, an attempt to generalize from the German case requires an examination of longer trends in war and masculinity. In particular, a general theory of war and masculinity has to address the evolutionary origins of each and the particularity of their intersection. Because so much is at stake, it would also seem important to attempt to sort through alternative causalities, including those grounded in biological determinism, for the origins and particularities of

gender and war. This I attempt in chapter 1, raising questions and proposing possible solutions to the origins of war, masculinity and the war system.

Triangulation: The Anthropological Study of Western Institutions

The last three chapters are dedicated to an exploration of Germany since 1945, weaving back and forth from historical and literary sources to my own fieldwork in Berlin between 1999 and 2001. Thus some of my source material emerges from fairly traditional ethnographic practice—spending time in a particular ethnographic setting, making observations, reflecting on them, eliciting comments from Germans, and conducting interviews. Then again, what I actually wrote about—masculinity, war and refusal—certainly went far beyond the particular corner of the Bundeswehr where the bulk of my official fieldwork was done. My less-formal fieldwork did as well. I made no attempt to represent the training facilities where much of my participant observation took place—in various training courses conducted by the Bundeswehr Academy for Information and Communication—in any kind of ethnographic detail.

There is a methodological problem here associated with trying to study something as large as masculinity and war in a large scale, complex state society. Traditional anthropological methods, grounded in village studies, would seem not to apply—or, as I would have it, they apply but are insufficient. The method I settled upon was to combine the situated study of various small groups—the sets of officers and NCOs who went through the various training seminars that I sat in on—with formal and informal interviews with Germans from as diverse backgrounds as I could possibly manage.

Even taken together, however, the interviews plus the participant observation materials still kept me isolated from larger and longer trends. My somewhat ad hoc solution to this limitation was to use German media, public events and controversies, opinion polls, literature and history to supplement my first hand observations. These materials, of course, are a somewhat idiosyncratic selection, often chosen because they happened to fit my personal fascination with the subject of continuity and change. In other cases an informant who was knowledgeable of my project would point me to a source or an event. An enthusiastic (or thorough) few amassed clippings for me. Whenever possible, I would test my perceptions and interpretations of a particular controversy (for example, the controversy over the Wehrmacht Exhibition, discussed in detail at various places herein) against those of one or more informants. The informants didn't always agree with me—or with each other—but disagreement was much more often a matter of emphasis than pure opposition.

Gradually in my review of media, opinion, literary and historical sources and their correlation with my own interviews and observations, I came to have a certain amount of confidence in two points. One, the Germans had changed in significant ways since 1945—even if their ongoing struggles with demographic change and attitudes toward the ethnic other could easily make for another dissertation (and they may). Two, the nature of the change was fundamentally a shift in masculine values away from obedience, hardness and discipline (the military virtues extraordinary) and toward refusal, openness and individuality.

The shift has not been a complete break, but a trend. This trend has followed on, and likely from, Germany's changed position in the international

war system. The shift in values did not happen instantly or automatically, but had to be fought for and created, through collective action, cultural representation and law. From the point of view of my central fascination with change—and let me be clear, I mean change in the descendants of the people who perpetrated the Holocaust—this is a particularly significant shift. This is so because of the nature of refusal itself. To the extent that the prerequisite to genocide is the *hardening* of the individual, then the moment for refusal is *not* when someone puts the gun in your hand and orders you to start shooting, but much earlier. Learning to refuse means in the first place refusing to be hardened—and, perhaps more to the point, refusing to perpetrate regimes of hardening on the next generation.

Limitations: A (West) German (Male) Story

For the most part this work refers to various shifts in the relationships between war and masculinity from the Kaiserreich through the Weimar Republic, the National Socialist period, the Bonn Republic and what I see as its successor state, unified Germany. The specifically East German story is not without interest, but it is sadly beyond the scope of this project, though the facts and circumstances of division are directly relevant. East German soldiers play a part in my research only to the extent that they enter the Bundeswehr after unification, and then mostly as seen through the eyes of officers from the former West Germany. I understand this as a limit. The things I have to say about Germany and Germans should, in the post-1945 era, be interpreted as applying to the Federal Republic, unless otherwise indicated.

Because my fieldwork focused on the military, and because I have

elected to address war and masculinity, I have little to say about German women or German femininity. Again, this is not from a lack of interest, but from limits of time and resources. To do justice to the same themes as they apply to women and femininity would require a second dissertation. For if war has almost everywhere been defined as the business of men, women are nonetheless implicated in the war system. Their roles are many and my focus on soldiers and soldierly masculinity casts a distorting light on them. This is a lack that I would, at some time in the future, like to address.⁴ For now, however, this is a work about men and war.

⁴ Following a decision by the European Court ruling that the exclusion of women from most positions in the Bundeswehr violated the basic rights of women, Germany reversed its longstanding position and began to admit women in January 2000, in the middle of my fieldwork. As of yet this ruling has done little to change the overall demographics of the Bundeswehr, particularly given that as of this point only men are subject to conscription, but the Bundeswehr was mounting a fairly ambitious public relations program designed to reassure the public that women were, in fact, welcome in its ranks.

CHAPTER 1
THE WAR SYSTEM:
TOWARDS AN EVOLUTIONARY
THEORY OF WAR AND MASCULINITY

In the last half-century contradictory efforts in science and scholarship have involved, on the one hand, attempts to find genetic or more generally biological origins for specific aspects of gender and gender-linked behavior such as “aggression” and war-making (Lorenz 1966; Wilson 1978). On the other hand many scholars have argued, persuasively if not always clearly, that gender in its various forms is a relatively fragile social construct that requires a lot of cultural reinforcement to maintain (Butler 1990, 1993; Laqueur 1990). Debates of this simplistic type, pitting nature against nurture, though long since clichéd, nonetheless remain completely current in both the academy and the public sphere.

This chapter is an effort to work through the theoretical issues lying behind the possible origins and sources of variation in sex/gender on the one hand and war on the other hand—respectively a “trait” and “phenomenon” that have been at the center of the nature vs. nurture debate more often than virtually any others. Though this project is focused on the co-variation of masculinity (an aspect of “gender”) and the war system (the interstate context of war) in Germany in the post-World War II period, it is, I think, important to look first at the ways in which masculinity and war have been conceived and try to sort out the various kinds of explanations—and to reject those that clearly do not work, even if a complete explanation remains elusive.

To begin, it is worth taking a moment, I think, to consider why the

nature verses nurture debate continues to fascinate people, contributing to the commercial success (and political influence) of such irredeemable garbage as Herrnstein and Murray's book *The Bell Curve* (1996). One possibility is that the either/or dynamics of the debate is driven by reductionism, on the model of the paradigmatic sciences, especially physics. Whether the focus is on the biological end of the spectrum or the cultural, reductionist thinking allows the theorist to eliminate an entire set of variables from consideration—or, as is more common, relegate them to the causal dustbin of unimportance. Extreme statements from one end of the spectrum elicit extreme denunciations from the other in the classic way of people talking past each other. Attempts to combine biological and cultural explanations quickly involve a staggering level of complexity, and run hard into the wall of our ignorance.

We now have a reasonably good description of “the human genome,” but as for higher levels of biological explanation—particularly neurological functioning but also gene expression, protein synthesis, enzymatic action, hormonal effects, embryological and behavioral development—our knowledge is still sketchy at best. In terms of culture we are hardly less ignorant, particularly at the level of meta-knowledge (or theory). We may be most ignorant of all with respect to how culture and biology intersect and influence each other—undoubtedly a crucial nexus of explanation.

There is all this tempting and vulnerable complexity (vulnerable, that is, to myopic, ideological interpretations), and a corresponding temptation to reduce that complexity down to a more “thinkable” level. Yet, at the same time, it must be said that the tendency to complicate and confound is no less prevalent than reductionism as a human cognitive strategy. Moreover, the reductionist tendencies in the nature/nurture debate have not been

evenhanded. The tendency of the last two centuries, with the rise of the biological sciences, has been to biologize and medicalize, and more recently geneticize, human behavior. Those on the nurture end of the argument, though no less prone to exclusionary thinking, have for the most part responded to this tendency by attempting to explain why it can't be true, at least in a particular case. Thus reductionism alone, though it certainly plays a role in the favoring of one methodology over another within particular academic disciplines, is unlikely to be solely responsible for the endurance of the debate.

I tend to think that the real reason for the continuing fascination with nature vs. nurture is the *political* implications. The nature vs. nurture debate is really about the ways we typically conceptualize the possibility of change and the desirability of stasis. The clash of the progressive desire to “make change happen” with the conservative desire to categorize certain relationships as beyond the proper reach of human “social engineering” gives the nature/nurture debate its perduring heat.

In the short form, traits and resultant behaviors that can be identified as exclusively or primarily genetic in origin are (supposedly) not easily subject to directed modification or cultural intervention. The adage about the musical pedagogy of pigs comes to mind. The counterpoint, of course, is that traits that have a larger cultural component are, according to the presuppositions of the debate, subject to intentioned modification. It is perfectly possible of course for both types of traits—genetic and cultural—to resist change and remain relatively static. Moreover, the presumption that genetic inequalities are not easily susceptible to cultural modification is obviously incorrect. Corrective lenses, for example, are an entirely non-controversial cultural amelioration of a

genetic/biological inequality. The presumption of many, however, is that characteristics with strong, direct genetic origins will resist change, belonging somehow more intrinsically, or *essentially*, to the individual—not least of all because such traits are presumed to be passed on, more or less intact, to offspring—notwithstanding the fact that traits *per se*, as phenotypic expressions, are not genetically heritable. Strictly speaking, only genotypes are genetically heritable. Observed variation in a particular trait, in a particular population, at a particular time may or may not have a genetic component. As Richard Lewontin puts it rather starkly, “We do not inherit our phenotypes. They develop throughout our lifetimes partly as a consequence of our genotypes—but only partly” (Lewontin 1995, 18).

In the language of evolutionary theory, the granddaddy of theories of change and stasis, the *tendency* to pass particular traits from generation to generation is referred to as *heritability*—i.e. some mechanism by which offspring resemble parents—which is one of the two characteristics necessary for natural selection to take place. The other necessary factor is referred to as *differential fitness*, which means the presence of differences within a *population* that, under given circumstances, make a difference in the ability of individuals to survive and reproduce.

Heritability refers to the conservatism or intergenerational fidelity of a trait. The conventional unit of such fidelity, as understood since the genetic revolution, is the gene—or the minimal segment of DNA that “codes for” some portion of the phenotype as it emerges. Philosopher David Hull (1980) refers to genes and all analogous devices as “replicators”—where heritable information is codified.

Differential fitness refers to the business end of the selection process.

In any given population, there will be a certain amount of phenotypic variation from individual to individual. Some individuals will, because of this variation, have a better chance of passing the reproductive bar. Hull refers to such “evolutionary individuals” as “interactors”—i.e., they interact with the environment.

The difference between interactors and replicators is a key one, because it highlights the two-stage process of natural selection and points to the fact that causality—in the sense of Aristotelian efficient cause—is at the level of interactors, not replicators. Replicators are like bookkeepers—a vital function to be sure—and information recorded here becomes a kind of basic blueprint for the next generation. It is interactors, however, that make contact with the environment and are differentially successful. Only interactors are operant at the level of selection and thus replicators qua replicators can never be seen as the locus of efficient cause in evolutionary processes.

Philosopher of science Elliott Sober extends the point, arguing that though replicators are necessary for natural selection, such replicators need not, in principle, be genes.

Strictly speaking, evolution by natural selection does not require genes. It simply requires that offspring resemble their parents. For example, if characteristics were transmitted by parents teaching their children, a selection process could occur without the mediation of genes (Sober 1994, 479).¹

Thus the exact vehicle of replication is not essential, so long as there is such a vehicle. A gene is like an institution. And (here is a point very important for

¹ Keep in mind that when Darwin first proposed the mechanism of natural selection as the primary mode of evolution in 1859, he had no concept of genes—the site of replication—only the observation that offspring tend to resemble parents and a handful of subsequently disproved theories as to why.

consideration of continuity and change at the cultural level), exactness of replication (fidelity) does not necessarily act as an evolutionary determinant. Biological reproductive strategies with respect to replication run the gamut from asexual organisms producing exact self-duplicates (apart from change introduced via mutation), through hymenoptera species (ants, bees and wasps) that produce both clones and genetically unique individuals, to sexually-reproducing organisms, where reproduction happens via dissolution of the genetic structure (and many less familiar possibilities besides).

Discussion of heritability—that is, of the importance of mechanisms of stasis—in the context of a theory of change (evolution via natural selection) inevitably generates confusion. This confusion arises at least partially because the phenomenon under discussion is a two stage process—heritability plus selection—involving (at least) three hierarchical levels: the gene (as replicators), the organism (as locus of fitness and therefore unit of selection considered causally) and the population/species (as locus of genetic variation).² Given the need to keep *at minimum* these five components simultaneously in mind when thinking about evolutionary processes, confusion is understandable. Discussions of evolutionary processes are, in fact, particularly vulnerable to what Gregory Bateson so often referred to as the confusion of logical types (Bateson 1972, 180–192; Bateson 2002, 106–119).

² In conversations with both students and those casually interested in the subject of evolution I have found that the hardest point to get across—the one that seems to slip in and out of focus—is that natural selection is a two stage process. Whether by training or some innate quality of mind, most people tend to default to a one-stage process for evolutionary change—i.e. Lamarckism, or the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Lamarckism, of course, has the advantage of both power and simplicity. Unfortunately (at least from the point of view of ease of conceptualization), the strong intragenerational barrier between organism and gene means that characteristics acquired in the course of a life cannot be passed to the next generation using genes as replicators. This does not, of course, prevent the operation of Lamarckian processes at other possible level of evolutionary pressure, species selection for example, nor, more obviously, in culture (e.g. Gould 2002, 722–724).

Working backwards, I'll start with variation. Conventional evolutionary change, in the sense of evolution by natural selection, refers to changes in the *frequency of occurrence* of a particular characteristic in the *population*. Put another way, although natural selection functions primarily *through* individuals, by “selecting” differences that make a difference in reproductive success, it can only be measured in the aggregate. It can only be measured at the level of the population as it changes over time, as a change in the frequency of a trait or behavior as it is distributed through the population. Variation exists at the level of the population, with selection “acting” to weed out those that don't manage to survive to reproduce.³

Because *population* and *individual* represent different levels of hierarchy, or logical types, they are incommensurable as objects of theory. Statements about the population do not necessarily apply to any particular individual and statements about the individual may not apply to the population at all. As Bateson puts it:

there is a deep gulf between statements about an identified individual and statements about a class. Such statements are of a *different logical type*, and prediction from one to the other is always unsure. The statement “The liquid is boiling” is of different logical type from the statement “That molecule will be the first to go” (Bateson 2002, 39).

Confusion arises when theories derived from (or found to be in substantial

³ Note that selection does not *necessarily* weed out *any* particular individual nor *any* particular phenotypic variation in a given generation or span of time. Under certain conditions the affect of selection can be very relaxed; under others it can be very strict. Moreover, non-selective processes—e.g. a volcanic eruption or meteor impact—may wipe out portions of a population (or entire populations) irrespective of phenotypic variation. Biological determinists often presume a tight fit between past selection and current variation that may not obtain. The theory only requires that under certain intersections of population and environment, at certain times, selection occurs.

agreement with) one hierarchical level are applied unwittingly to another.

Even this separation of levels, however, can only take us so far in dealing with biological and other information rich, replicative systems. In abstract logic there are classes, and classes of classes, and classes of classes of classes, etc., that can be denoted as different levels. Such schemata, however, lack the biologically essential element of time. The nominal levels of biological systems are actually more like nested, complexly interfaced processes linked together with the additional input of collateral energy (Bateson 2002, 174).

For example, in thinking of evolution by natural selection, it is all too common to miss the fact that *variation*, arising from various *processes*, exists *synchronously* only at the level of the population, not in individuals.⁴ Thus statements that apply to variation—e.g. those that refer to frequencies, means, modes and totals—do not apply to individuals. Likewise, statements that characterize an individual are not *ipso facto* characteristic of the population. Thus, for example, the statement that the average height of population *n* is 67-inches, tells you nothing about individual *a* even if he is part of that population. Averages apply to groups, not individuals.

There is a necessary corollary to the division between individual and population as each is impacted by natural selection that is, perhaps, not obvious at first glance: natural selection is an inherently *conservative* process. If this seems counter-intuitive, it is because we “know” that natural selection is largely responsible, in Darwin’s phrase, for “the origin of species” and ultimately the fantastic diversity of life on Earth.⁵

⁴ This is a simplification unless read literally. Individuals can express phenotypic variation over time, changing anatomically, physiologically and behaviorally within a range.

⁵ A new “post modern synthesis” seems to be emerging in evolutionary theory that

In a long letter to Darwin, Alfred Russel Wallace, often described as the “co-discoverer” of evolution by natural selection, writes:

The action of this principle [natural selection] is exactly like that of the centrifugal governor of the steam engine, which checks and corrects any irregularities almost before they become evident; and in like manner no unbalanced deficiency in the animal kingdom can ever reach any conspicuous magnitude because it would make itself felt at the very first step, by rendering existence difficult and extinction almost sure to follow (Bateson 2002, 39–40).⁶

Which is to say that “selection” in the sense of natural selection works not by picking that which works best for a particular individual, but by “filtering out” that which doesn’t work across the range of variation existent in the population. There is no case-by-case “picking” of the preferred, which is what we usually mean when speaking about selection.

The process of natural selection may or may not have an impact on the reproductive success of any individual in particular. Theoretical “optimality” is no guarantor of evolutionary success and theoretical non-optimization no guarantor of evolutionary failure—success defined as reproductive success or passing the genes that code for the characteristics in question onto the next generation. Rather, at the level of the population, those traits that support reproductive success are more liable, in the aggregate, to become more

acknowledges a fuzzy hierarchy of evolutionary individuals, including, at least, genes, cell lineages, organisms, demes (stable breeding populations), species and clades as potential loci of selection (or non-selective evolutionary pressure). Though organisms still take pride of place when adaptation of complex organs—e.g., eyes, brains—in multicellular creatures is concerned (Williams 1992), selection at the deme/species level may well be a more important factor in generating overall biotic diversity (Sober 1980; Sober and Lewontin 1982; Gould and Lloyd 1999), while gene selection and non-selective iteration may be more important in generating the raw material from which higher levels in the hierarchy are constructed (Kimura 1985, 1991).

⁶ Wallace’s letter to Darwin is reprinted in *Darwin, a Norton Critical Edition*, ed. P. Appleman (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970).

common in the population *over time*.

There is more to emphasize, in fact, than Wallace ever glimpsed about the conservative nature of natural selection as a process. Writing without benefit of knowledge of genetics, nor even the differentiation between sex cells and somatic cells, neither Darwin nor Wallace could know just how important *conformity* would be for sexual reproduction—the most common source of variation in microevolution. In short, it is not only that the environment acts as a check on radically non-conforming mutations, but that sexual reproduction itself requires a very high degree of genetic conformity between gametes—too much difference and fertilization is impossible. Thus the first step in the selective process is a sorting for fidelity. Sorting occurs redundantly, at the level of the combination of gametes in sexual reproduction, and then again at the level of survival to reproduction after fertilization.

So, to follow through, if natural selection is *typically* a conservative process, acting to weed out that which is *too* different, then how does change occur at all? The answer is of two parts. In the first place, it is not *always* the case that it is the outliers which are weeded out. Under certain conditions, e.g. environmental change or the emigration into new territory, it might be that it is the *very different* obtains a previously unknown advantage. The different may be selected for and those nearly the mean completely wiped out. This possibility may in fact be an important driving force in macroevolution (Eldredge and Gould 1972). In the second place, even under more “typical” circumstances—i.e. during periods of relative environmental stasis—the selective filter *only* removes differences that are *too* different—i.e. big enough to prevent successful reproduction. Differences that make a difference—i.e. those that are significant enough to provide some reproductive advantage, but

not so great as to prevent reproduction (failure in which, keep in mind, can just as easily be the result of behavioral incompatibility or territorial segmentation as genetic mismatch)—*tend* to spread through the population. There is, however, no guarantee. Moreover, there is no necessity that such selective processes produce “optimal” solutions to various survivability problems as defined by abstract criteria. Life muddles along.

My point here is to consider natural selection as one way of thinking about stasis and change. Why? Partially because biology and evolution *undoubtedly* have a place in the explanation of *all* human behavior, and in the balance between stasis and change in human social relations. Nor is the role of biology in behavior, in culture itself, necessarily a small one. Attempts to eliminate biological factors in understanding culture and social behavior inevitably smack of special pleading.

Unfortunately, a great many attempts to include biological factors in the explanation of culture and human social behavior amount to little more than an attempt to *reduce* such to genes and to invoke biological determinism as an unanswerable cause for behaviors we find hard to explain or injustices we have found difficult to eradicate. In my view, the difficulty does not come from the inclusion of biological factors in cultural explanation, but from reductionism, categorical confusion, and the mistaken assumption of present function as emerging inevitably from the ability of natural selection to “adapt” organism to environment—what Stephen Jay Gould and Richard Lewontin (1979) have criticized as the “Panglossian Paradigm.”

Dr. Pangloss, of course, is the character from Voltaire’s *Candide*, the learned teacher of the young Candide, who argues that the world we live in is the best of all possible worlds and that things could not be other than they are.

When Candide returns to Pangloss after a series of adventures, and discovers that the old man is gravely ill, dying of syphilis, his pupil exclaims, "what a strange genealogy is this! Is not the devil the root of it?"

The unflappable Pangloss then explains that it is not the devil at all, but a further demonstration of life's inevitable beneficence. "Not at all," says the old sage,

...it was a thing unavoidable, a necessary ingredient in the best of worlds; for if Columbus had not caught on an island in America this disease, which contaminates the source of generation, and frequently impedes propagation itself, and is evidently opposed to the great end of nature, we should have had neither chocolate nor cochineal.⁷

Thus in Pangloss's worldview, any ostensible tragedy—whether his death from syphilis or the deaths of thousands in Lisbon from a volcanic eruption—however bad it may seem, is justified by both inevitability—"it could not have been otherwise"—and a deeper, invisible good. In the misuse of evolutionary theory, the equivalent reasoning allows that some extant, apparently obnoxious behavior type (e.g. aggression), can be "explained" by its "adaptive" utility under certain circumstances and therefore must have been shaped by natural selection. I will return to this point below.

Besides panglossian tendencies—which fallaciously presume that existent traits *must* have been shaped to present utility by the inexorable workings of natural selection—and confusion of logical types, the most common misapplication of evolutionary reasoning to social and cultural phenomena may be the failure to account for, or often even to acknowledge, *emergence*.

⁷ From chapter 4 of *Candide*, as it appears at <http://www.literature.org/authors/voltaire/candide/index.html>.

Emergence is a general systems theory concept that formalizes the old adage concerning things that are “more than the sum of their parts.” Emergence, as the very word implies, requires time, developing from a temporal *process* instead of a formal relationship (Bateson 2002, 100). Even a simple, enduring structure like a house can be seen as emergent in the process of its construction. A house is not constructed as walls + floor + roof + doors + etc., but rather as a particular spatiotemporal arrangement of elements that *emerges* only when they are put together in a particular way, in a particular order, as is possible only in certain environments. Moreover, though a house is not a complex, self-replicating system, its continuing status as *house* can certainly be affected by additional inputs. It is relatively enduring, but input of sufficient strength, an earthquake for example, might transform it from a house in to a pile of rubbish.

Moreover, there are other characteristics that are non-emergent in a strictly philosophical or mathematical sense, but still provide a level of fitness at the population level that does not exist for the individual—variation is the most obvious example. Thus reductionism, and particularly reduction of cause (which is an attribute of interactors) to the level of replicators (paradigmatically, genes) is a failure to reason at the appropriate hierarchical level—a confusion of logical types. Replicators qua pre-replicators can never be causes in the evolutionary sense because they do not code in a linear way for phenotypes.

There are, in fact, only a limited number of ways in which change can propagate in a population and much of the complexity that emerges does so as the result of the interaction between various levels of the hierarchy. The close study of genes, though it offers the promise of telling us something about historical relationships between populations, can never offer an insight into

either evolutionary cause (which is a matter of interactors) or emergent traits or fitness that exists only at the level of the collectivity.

Three Models of Stasis and Change

With the basic understanding of evolution via natural selection as a model of change/stasis presented above, I can proceed to a discussion of other types of change/stasis and their possible relationships to natural selection. There are three conceptually separable—but often in practice irrevocably and intricately linked through feedback loops and emergent properties—types of evolutionary (i.e. change/stasis) models:

(A) those in which information is transferred from parents to offspring (heritability) exclusively through their genes (e.g. human blood type) and in which evolutionary change (differential fitness) is defined exclusively in terms of successful biological reproduction.⁸

(B) those models in which fidelity of intergenerational similarity (heritability) is by some replicator other than genes (learning, culture) or by genes and culture but fitness is still defined exclusively in terms of successful biological reproduction.

(C) those models in which information is passed along via non-genetic paths (learning, culture) and fitness is determined *not* by biological reproduction, but by some other criteria, e.g. having students or imitators, cultural reproduction.⁹

⁸ Note that non-genetic factors are often responsible for a portion of phenotypic variation of a trait. Type A models don't require genes to be 100% responsible for observed variation—they rarely are—only that they be the only *replicator* at work. Environmental conditions may account for observed variation, but not be a replicator in this sense.

⁹ These criteria are adapted from those suggested by Elliot Sober in his elegant little essay, "Models of Cultural Evolution" (1994, 480).

Models of type A conform to what is usually meant when we talk about natural selection. Type B models, though it may not be instantly obvious, also operate in a mode very similar to natural selection, in that extra-genetic information, passed from parents to offspring, can in theory produce the necessary heritability for the operation of selection. Selection models of this type can be evoked to explain behavior patterns that lead to differential reproductive success but that are not necessarily coded by genetic difference—the incest taboo might fall into this category. Sober writes:

Suppose that incest avoidance is advantageous because individuals with the trait have more viable offspring than individuals without it. The reason is that outbreeding diminishes the chance that children will have deleterious recessive genes in double dose. If offspring learn whether to be incest avoiders from their parents, the frequency of the trait in the population may evolve. And this may occur without there being any genetic differences between those who avoid incest and those who do not. Indeed, incest avoidance could evolve in this way in a population of genetically identical individuals, provided that the environmental determinant of the behavior runs in families (Sober 1994, 479).

Whether or not this explanation is the best way to account for the existence of the incest taboo as such is an empirical question, but the example illustrates some important points. It suggests the possibility of natural selection operating on behavioral patterns *without* the existence of specific genes that code for the trait in question. Information is passed along via teaching (in the broadest sense, including imitation, sanction, reward, etc.) from parents to children. Families that successfully pass the behavior of incest avoidance along tend to have healthier children who have better chances to survive to reproduction. If

they in turn teach their offspring the taboo, the trait is heritable, even though there is no specific gene that codes for incest avoidance.¹⁰

Furthermore, consideration of this example offers us the chance to circle back to the distinction between individual and population. The importance of the distinction becomes apparent when we consider that by defining evolution as a change in the frequency of a trait in the population, heritability *need not* be an all or nothing proposition. That is, for the trait to increase in frequency (or maintain a certain frequency once established), it does not require that *every* offspring of parents who kept the incest taboo also must keep it. Nor does it require that it be kept in the same way or to the same extent between parents and offspring. In fact, and this is a critical point that is hard for most people to keep in mind, the degree to which the trait is or is not passed along with absolute fidelity *in any particular case* is completely irrelevant to natural selection as such. All that is required is *some* degree of heritability and *some* degree of differential fitness.

Also, and perhaps most crucially for any consideration of evolution as a potential agent of change/stasis in human culture, *the selection process itself has absolutely no necessary relationship to the ostensible reason or meaning of the taboo as considered from the point of view of those actually practicing it.* That is to say, it is perfectly possible for such a process to operate “behind the backs” of those practicing it, and would require no knowledge of genetics or understanding of the greater statistical likelihood of double recessives in inbred offspring. People might adopt the practice of outbreeding for economic,

¹⁰ I do not mean to suggest that the range of actually-existing incest taboos could be accounted for or, more particularly, emplotted (placed into culturally meaningful narratives) by invocation of type B evolutionary models alone. As every anthropologist knows, the observable range of incest prohibitions extends far beyond any genetically valid motivation for outbreeding.

religious, military or any other reason or combination of reasons ever suggested for the incest taboo, and the natural selection process would still operate.

However, and this is the great big however that is so often elided in selection-based accounts of the spread of behaviors in humans, the possible operation of natural selection with respect to human social behavior is neither sufficient to “explain” these behaviors—in the sense of superceding the need to consider other types of explanation—nor necessarily the most important type of process in operation. Seeing the incest taboo, or any other complexly-structured, context-bound human sociocultural trait, as the more or less pure product of genetic determinism is the result of a double prejudice toward reductionist and adaptationist thinking.

In their essay on adaptationist fallacies, Stephen J. Gould and Richard Lewontin critique a case with similar logic—that of the Aztec human sacrifice and the supposed “adaptation” of cannibalism. Originally proposed by anthropologist Michael Harner (1977), and later championed by sociobiologist E. O. Wilson (1978), the idea is that the Aztec practice of human sacrifice can be explained as an adaptation by humans, genetically predisposed to be carnivorous, to chronic meat shortages (Gould and Lewontin 1994, 75).

Following Marshall Sahlins’ (1978) original critique of the Harner-Wilson use of the Aztec material, Gould and Lewontin argue that human sacrifice played an important role in Aztec cosmology and maintenance of social hierarchy. Sacrificial meat was distributed only to the higher levels of society and even then only a small portion of the potential (the arms) were actually eaten. Other sources of protein were not, in fact, in short supply. Given this larger understanding, they write:

We strongly suspect that Aztec cannibalism was an “adaptation” much like evangelists and rivers in spandrels, or ornamental bosses in ceiling spaces: a secondary epiphenomenon representing a fruitful use of available parts, not a cause of the entire system. To put it crudely: a system developed for other reasons generated an increasing number of fresh bodies; use might as well be made of them (Gould and Lewontin 1994, 76).

The references to “evangelists,” “rivers in spandrels,” and “ornamental bosses in ceiling spaces” refer to the two biologists’ acrid comparison of telling “just so stories” to explain the origins of currently existing traits as explaining the ornamental details in the nooks and crannies of a cathedral as the *cause* of said nooks and crannies.

There is, however, another point to be made, which requires a closer look at type C evolutionary models and their possible relationship to model types A and B. As noted, type C models are not, properly speaking, biological models at all. Rather they describe a kind of “cultural” selection that is analogous to type A models—whereas type B models have a mixed character (see Table 1.1 below). Type C models can be seen, for example, in certain

Table 1.1 – Three Models of Selection

Model Type	Heritability Agent	Fitness Defined By
A (Natural Selection)	Genes	Biological Reproduction
B (Mixed Selection)	Learning	Biological Reproduction
C (Cultural Selection)	Learning	Having Students

kinds of economic theories, for example the theory of the successful firm.

Consider a potential trait of such firms, say the attempt to maximize

profit. Let's start with the assumption that, *ceteris paribus*, a certain amount of profit maximization is adaptive for any specific firm. One explanation for the spread of profit-maximizing behaviors in the population is that managers and owners are well informed and able to calculate, using "rational self-interest" as a guide, how to maximize profit. The process can be learned, taught and imitated. This, however, is not a "selection" model at all, even though in effect it might lead to an increased frequency of profit-maximizing behavior. An alternative explanation of profit-maximizing behavior, however, is to forego the assumption that managers are particularly well informed and acting on a rational, calculated understanding of the system as whole. In this version, the frequency of profit maximization in the population might still increase, because those that don't profit sufficiently end up going out of business. Those that more or less by chance seize upon tactics yielding acceptable profit margins stay in business, meaning that over time profit-maximizing increases in the population of firms still in business

Four points follow from this discussion of the firm as a potential example of type C models of evolution. The first is obvious, but has very important implications—learned behaviors can be spread through processes other than selection. Instead of spreading from parent to offspring, they can move laterally through a population. Behaviors, processes and ideas can be taught to anyone, imitated and imitated again, even recreated by inference and guesswork based on product. Their lateral spread, in other words, is more closely analogous to contagion—the spread of a virus across a population—than to evolution by natural selection. Both are forms of diffusion (increasing frequency in the population), but they operate through different mechanisms.¹¹

¹¹ The reason that viruses, or bacterial infections for that matter, can spread quickly across a

The second, also obvious, is that traits spread by cultural replicators are Lamarckian in character. That is to say, traits acquired over the course of single generation by parents can be spread directly to offspring. A parent who learns a new technique for building fires, baking bread or making a more efficient weapon *can* teach this directly to his or her children. Again, the consequences are enormous. Such traits can spread far more quickly through the population. Moreover, and of equal significance, such cultural change is not suppressed by the needs of organismic integrity in the way that, for example, cellular mutation and replication within a single generation of the organism is. When a trait spreads through the culture, it is innovation (or fad). When a new cell type spreads through the body, it is cancer.

The third point, though perhaps not quite so obvious, is equally important: both selective and non-selective (contagious) modes of diffusion can operate at the same time. Going back to the example of the firm, specific operational tactics which have evolved more-or-less (and I will come back to this more-or-less business in a moment) at random, and proved useful under certain conditions, can then be imitated, taught, sold, bought, plagiarized, stolen, etc. Once something has been created as a culturally-transmissible possibility, it can spread like a disease. Moreover, to return to the “more-or-less random” business, I mean by this that the selection process is stochastic, involving both what Bateson has called a “raid on the random”—for the random is by definition the only source for the new—and a process whereby only certain results of random variation are allowed to endure (i.e., selection).

population of macroorganisms is because of a substantive difference in relevant temporal scale. Because there can be many thousands of generations of microorganisms in the same durational period as the lifetime of one macroorganism, contagious forms of the former can spread from host to host in, what from the subjective time reference of the latter, seems a short period of time.

Fourth point, the sweet spot—or best value in a range. Again, perhaps not quite so obvious, but also immensely important: often it turns out that the “best” result in evolutionary terms is not the biggest, smallest, longest, or even “most profitable” possible. If a ten-foot neck is good for reaching branches at the top of the tree that others can’t reach, a twenty-foot neck isn’t necessarily better—it depends both on the structure of the animal (can it support the extra length without losing mobility, the ability to bend over to drink, etc.) and the environment (are there trees available that could be reached with a twenty foot neck but not a ten foot neck?). And this leaves aside the limitations of form itself: the twenty-foot option might be structurally unworkable, or outside the range of available variation, even if it could in theory be useful.

In the case of the firm, certain behaviors might tend to maximize short term profits but lead to the rapid decline of a business’s ability to stay in business. Workers might quit, unionize or sabotage the firm because of low wages; equipment might break down because of lack of maintenance or replacement; other firms that invested more in marketing might gobble up market share, leaving the profit-maximizing firm with no customers. Certain activities might be very profitable, theft for example, or the more typical corporate formula known as “creative accounting,” but lead to consequences such as legal or social sanctions that hurt the firm or even force it out of business.

An important corollary of point three takes us back to the individual/population distinction and the consequences thereof. Actions taken by the individual that benefit the individual and are, therefore, in a narrow sense adaptive or attractive—that is, they could lead to differential reproductive success or the imitation of a strategy perceived as successful—can prove

maladaptive for the population. The classic example is the peacock's tail, which increases the individual's likelihood of reproduction, but almost guarantees the contraction of the duration of the species measured in geological time. Examples can be more extreme. This is most obvious in groups where phenomena such as unbalanced resource extraction and environmental pollution may lead to short term profits but result in increased stresses on the entire population.

So, to summarize my points so far, there are three conceptually separable but often inextricably entwined models of selection (see Table 1.2 below): (A) classic natural selection (heritability via genes, fitness measured in terms offspring); (B) mixed selection (heritability via culture—or genes *and* culture—but fitness till measured exclusively in terms of offspring); and (C) cultural selection/diffusion (where “heritability” is via culture, and “fitness” is measured in term so of students and imitators). These are three different *processes* that can all be operating simultaneously in ways that reinforce, oppose or are irrelevant to any particular trait.

With respect to the type C models, which I illustrated with the case of the firm, there are four important points: (1) traits spread via culture can be spread through non-selective modes (contagion), as well as a process analogous to natural selection; (2) acquired traits can be spread to offspring; (3) selective and non-selective processes can be operating simultaneously with respect to the same trait; and (4) in type C models—as in other types of selective models—there is often a “sweet spot” within a range of variation that is adaptive, where higher or lower values may not be. More is not necessarily better. It may in fact be lethal. Finally, there are (at least) three hierarchical levels at play in evolution via natural selection: (I) replicators (genes), (II)

interactors (organisms), and (III) collectivities (population/species).

The above summary is meant to convey something of the complexity and possibility of hierarchical entanglement that can, and so often does, lead

Table 1.2 – Outline of Evolutionary Models and Considerations

<p><i>Three Levels of Evolutionary Hierarchy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Replicators (e.g. genes) II. Interactors (e.g. individual organisms) III. Collectivities (e.g. populations or species) <p><i>Three Types of Evolutionary Models (Heritability/Fitness)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Natural Selection (genes/babies) B. Mixed Selection (culture/babies) C. Cultural Selection (culture/students) <p><i>Four important considerations for type C models</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diffusion possible by contagion as well as selection 2. Both Lamarckian and Darwinian processes possible 3. Contagion and selection can operate simultaneously 4. The sweet spot—more is not always better
--

to a kind of reductionist thinking that commits the cardinal sin of applying invalid kinds of theoretical propositions to inappropriate levels of analysis.

This, combined with a tendency to favor one-stage thinking, to view emergent phenomena as reducible, and to conflate present use with historical origin leads to errors of thinking both perverse and pervasive. Taking this discussion as the minimal set of underlying suppositions, I will now proceed to consideration of war and gender and some ways of thinking about their relationship.

The Origins of Masculinity and War

Joshua Goldstein, writing with a political science background but borrowing liberally, if selectively, from anthropology, has argued in a recent book (Goldstein 2001), that there is a strong link between war and masculinity. Though at an empirical level this is a rather obvious claim, the various possible *meanings* of such a claim remain controversial. Is the claim, for example, based on an ethnocentric extension of what has obtained in western societies in relatively recent times? Or is the link of masculinity and war a cross-cultural truth? Is the link biologically determined? Or is it the product of culture? What happens to men who fail as soldiers in societies where soldierly qualities are regarded as essential to manhood? Is the link between masculinity and war a factor in the oppression of women? If so, how does this work? What about peaceful societies? Are there such? Is gender differently constructed, within such?

These questions are basic ones, central to issues of peace, justice and social integration. They are also unlike some of the more esoteric questions posed in anthropology, of an immediate interest to people—or so at least I have found them to be. And if the default slant in parts of academia not under the spell of sociobiology and its successor projects tends to be away from biological determinism, a gut-level feeling that the link between men and war is the product mostly, or even exclusively, of biology (“nature”) is widespread in the broader population. The typically unexamined kernel of the argument is that men are, “by nature,” prone to violence and that war is in some sense the simple outgrowth of this. In other words, war is the product of “human” (read, human male) nature.

The interesting thing about Goldstein’s hypothesis is that he turns this

argument upside down—masculinity becomes, in his formulation, the product of war instead of the other way around—and inside out: instead of being “natural” in origin, gender has its origins in the sociocultural organization of intergroup conflict. The question concerning the link between the two arises for me—as it does for Goldstein—because of what could be called a comparative anomaly: both intergroup conflict (warfare in its modes, styles and goals) and gender norms, at least those not directly related to warfare, show a great deal of variability across cultures. Yet when it comes to gendering of war in those cultures where war is prevalent—the *link* between war and gender—variation diminishes almost (but not quite) to the vanishing point.

Much of what I have to say in this dissertation has to do with this link and its consequences, particularly for Germany, but also more generally. Although a definitive proof—if such a thing is even possible—of the historical link between war and gender is beyond the scope of this project, I think it worthwhile to consider the evidence as it exists and suggest some ways of approaching it—*if only because a consideration of the last two centuries of German history has played a pivotal role in the development of my conception of the way in which masculinity and the war system relate, in contemporary Germany and beyond.*

Variation and Origins of War

A part of the reason for my focus on the relationship between war and gender is what I see as a bias against theoretical frameworks that emphasize conflict as a causal agent in human history in anthropology and particularly in humanistic anthropology. The reasons for this bias are rooted, I think, in a reaction to misapplication of, and fundamental misunderstanding of, conflict-

based models as found in social Darwinism, human sociobiology and some types of economic theory. The history of misuse of conflict-oriented theory, indeed, warrants caution—and from the point of view of all disciplines at all times (not to mention popular conceptions), the opposite bias—toward crude conflict-based models—can likely be said to be operative.

I am speaking, however, to the subset of social science and humanities disciplines that includes especially cultural anthropology, social and cultural history, literary theory—including critical theory—peace studies, gender studies and other specialized disciplines that deal, especially, with issues of identity. A great deal of the interdisciplinary work that has happened in the last twenty years has been amongst these disciplines and specialties, and, I would argue, in this group—where I have no trouble placing myself—there is a bias against seeing warfare as a causal agent at the macroscopic scale.

This is not to say, of course, that questions of war have been completely ignored or considered unimportant by cultural anthropologists and those in related fields. The bias is not against considering war, per se, but against seeing the largest-scale, worldwide occurrences of war as a strong factor in the origin and subsequent shaping of particular institutions and identities. The following statement from Leslie Sponsel, an anthropologist of war and peace who has done fieldwork on Yanomami groups and written extensively on the mutual relevance of anthropology and peace studies, is fairly typical:

Peace appears to be elusive not because relatively nonviolent and peaceful societies are so rare—they are not—but instead because so rarely have nonviolence and peace been the focus of research in anthropology and other disciplines, including even the field of peace studies. The deficiency lies in the research, including the ethnographic

record, and not in human nature. Although conflict is inevitable and ubiquitous, violence is not. Human nature has the psychobiological potential to be either nonviolent/peaceful or violent/warlike. Nonviolence and peace appear to have prevailed in many prehistoric and prestate societies. War is not a cultural universal. The potential for the development of a more nonviolent and peaceful world is latent in human nature as revealed by the natural history of peace (Sponsel 1996, 114-15).

This is a balanced statement that I substantially agree with-- and will even take a moment to expand on my points of agreement.

Surely Sponsel is correct that both war and peace lie within the realm of human potentiality. Evidence from primatology, archeology, ethnography and history shows beyond any doubt that the *possibility* for both cooperation and violent conflict have existed, to some extent, in every known human society and in all of our nearest evolutionary relatives. Thus whether one wants to argue from biology or from culture, or any possible combination thereof, a simple "people have wars because they are innately violent" statement is misleading in the extreme. It is the explanatory equivalent of saying that people wear trousers because they have legs. Except when they don't—wear trousers. Except when they don't—have legs. The (il)logical form of the statement would be A is A, therefore B, or because A exists, B is inevitable. It commits the logical fallacy of assigning *causality* to prerequisite. Certainly the capacity for war (or peace) is *sine qua non* to the actuality of war (or peace), but can never be an efficient cause or seen as sufficient explanation.

I am in full sympathy with Sponsel's claim that as compared to war, peace may have historically been seen as a kind of evidentiary lack, elided in research because of ideological prejudices concerning the universality of war. As he puts it, "war is not a cultural universal." I would go even further, and

say—again on fairly cursory review of the evidence that could and probably should be examined statistically, using strictly operationalized criteria, although I have no real doubt that it would prove to be generally true—that most people, in most societies, at most times in human history, behave peacefully. The unexamined evidence for peace is liable to be far more widespread than war, even on simple intuitive extrapolation from the current situation. Most of the world’s nearly 6 billion human inhabitants are not engaged directly in war today and won’t be directly impacted by it. The same is true most days.

Now for the caveats. The “war is not a cultural universal” statement smacks more than a little of a disciplinary hammer used to beat down the naïve—and simplistic—notions of the uninitiated. At a session of the recent American Anthropological Association meetings in Chicago (2003), I heard one veteran anthropologist comment on the classroom technique of asking students to name cultural universals.

“Invariably, one of the first thing students name is war.”

Judging both from the knowing smiles of those in attendance and the delight with which the colleague in question explained the ritual disabusing of this supposedly ethnocentric idea, I whiffed (not for the first time) the peculiar scent of consensual (if parochial) delusion. As I had previously identified myself as interested in the anthropology of war (it was a small session, wherein people introduced themselves), the facilitator asked me how I would respond to a student who thought war might be a cultural universal.

I am rather embarrassed to admit that, rather than make a pot-stirring stink, I mumbled something about the matter being complex, and that universality is a tricky proposition. Not, of course, that a contrary claim would

be true in some unambiguous sense—rather I suspect that anthropologists, like people everywhere, can benefit from a few jousts on their paradigms..

In fact, to circle metaphorically back to evolutionary theory, I rather think there is a pretty analogy between the role a few paradigmatic statements of the “war is not a cultural universal” type play for anthropology as a discipline and the role played by the supposed textbook sequences of phyletic gradualism¹²—they are striking in the classroom, but not necessarily congruent with either fact or truth (Gould 2002, 760).

Obviously, to make any meaningful statements about war, peace and cultural universality, we would need appropriate definitions of all of these. With such in place, I would be somewhat comfortable with either of the following statements:

(1) the *capacity* to take part in war is latent in the vast majority of human individuals and the vast majority of human cultures have either been impacted by or participated in war in important ways.

(2) the vast majority of human individuals are peaceful most of the time and the importance and frequency of war varies from culture to culture and time to time.

A further question has to do with the *role* of warfare in the original moment and development of various social institutions and behaviors. I suspect that it is an important and somewhat paradoxical role. The origins of many types of cooperative behavior—including the classic selective puzzle of human altruism—may in fact be closely linked to so-called competitive cooperation (though I make no claims as to the *exclusivity* of this factor). Ethnologist Frans de Waal makes a good case for such origins based both on

¹² The slow, smooth and imperceptible evolution of one taxon into another.

primatological research and the logic of what factors would be necessary for the evolution of such characteristics by the mechanism of natural selection (de Waal 1994, 29–34).

War Itself

Before trying to take the argument any further I will provide a definition of what I mean by war and a context for thinking about what I refer to as the war system. Social scientists have proposed several possible definitions, which for my purposes can be divided between the *behavioral* and the *complex* (i.e. those involving both behavioral and structural considerations).

Behavioral definitions of war, such as those favored by Ember (1978) and adopted by Goldstein (2001) have the virtue of simplicity and inclusivity, but may fail to discriminate between phenomena that become important in an evolutionary consideration of the coevolution of warfare and society (Kelly 2000, 3). Aware of at least some of the issues, Goldstein defines war as “*lethal intergroup violence*” and goes on to explain:

If members of a small gathering-hunting society go out in an organized group to kill members of another community, I call that war. Indeed, warfare worldwide in recent years seldom has taken the form of pitched battles between state armies. A very broad definition such as “organized violence” has advantages, and still excludes individual acts of violence that are not sanctioned and organized. However, “organized violence” is not quite specific enough, since it would include, for example, the death penalty. The difference is that wars occur between groups (Goldstein 2001, 3).

But even specifying that wars occur between groups, does not do enough to distinguish war from certain types of capital punishment or unplanned, but lethal, skirmishes.

Raymond Kelly does a good job of setting out an operational definition of war that distinguishes it from similar instances of lethal violence using logical criteria that turn out to coincide with social-structural considerations. He writes,

The boundary between war (including feud) and other similar phenomena such as collective execution can thus be very precisely specified in terms of the presence or absence of a calculus of substitutability. The emergence of this calculus and its companion concepts is clearly a watershed event in human history in that it creates the preconditions for a more general deployment of lethal violence as *an instrument of the social group* and a legitimate means for the attainment of group objectives and interests (Kelly 2000, 7).

That is, instances of war (including blood feud) have a great deal in common with capital punishment and differentiating the one from the other becomes a matter of particular interest with respect to the origins of war and the delineation of warless, versus completely non-violent, societies.

The problem with the purely behavioral definition, even one as carefully drawn as Goldstein's, can be shown by ethnographic example. The Gebusia, as described in the ethnographic record (Knauff 1985, 16–31), are a group numbering some 450 persons who reside in small communities (average=27) in the south-central portion of Papua New Guinea. Living in the lowland tropical rain forest, in the Strickland River watershed, they are horticulturalists and hunters who rely economically on the shifting cultivation of bananas as a staple crop, supplemented by hunting, foraging for wild plant foods, and processing wild sago palms.

Many instances of lethal violence among the Gebusi are the result of attribution of lethal sorcery (Knauff 1985, 113–56). When someone falls ill the cause is typically considered to be sorcery and the malefactor is identified by

divination involving a spirit medium. The sorcerer is subsequently beseeched to withdraw his lethal sorcery so that the victim can recover. If the sick person dies, this is interpreted as a failure of the sorcerer to discontinue his sorcery. After death the Gebusi equivalent of an inquest is held. If the identity of the sorcerer is confirmed by divination the kin of the deceased have a social warrant to pursue the death penalty—a warrant that they may or may not carry out.

In any case, the crucial points are these. If there is sufficient consensus on the part of the deceased kin to seek the accused sorcerer's death (56 of the 211 cases in Knauff sample, 1985, 124–25), then these kin enact the sentence collectively. The executioners form themselves together, take up weapons, make a plan, and pursue the death of the sorcerer. To this extent the act resembles a raid or retaliation in a blood feud. However, the crucial difference is that if the aggrieved kin are unable to reach the specific individual accused, they may under no circumstances seek to kill another member of his group instead. There is no substitutability of individuals. There is an understanding that what is happening is the socially sanctioned punishment of a crime, i.e. capital punishment, carried out by a group that ostensibly looks like a raiding party. This understanding extends to the accused sorcerer's kin. In some cases, when they are convinced of their kinsman's guilt, they may actively collude in his execution. In the majority of cases they do not cooperate with the execution, but also do not pose violent resistance to it. Finally, and crucially, they do not retaliate (Knauff 1985, 123). This point is critical, because among gathering-hunting groups described in the ethnographic record, when warfare exists at all, its most typical manifestation is feud, where one group seeks indiscriminate revenge against another group

for a previous killing (Dickson 1990, 166; Otterbein 1968, 279).¹³

The criteria of *substitutability* thus becomes crucial in the differentiation of war from episodes of collectively enforced capital punishment which might, on purely behavioral grounds, look very similar. This differentiation is important because it allows the differentiation between *warless* societies, which on these criteria exist in the ethnographic record and may in fact correspond to the circumstances which obtained in human pre-history, and societies which are uniformly peaceful, lacking both homicide and capital punishment, which do not exist in the known ethnographic sample.

In Kelly's definition of collective lethal violence, violence can be importantly differentiated—externally, from non-collective lethal violence (homicide) and internally, between war and capital punishment, on seven relevant criteria: (1) collectivity, (2) group sanction, (3) considered morally justifiable by participants, (4) group esteem for participants, (5) organization and premeditation, (6) identifiable instrumental objectives, and (7) social substitutability. The only point of internal *differentiation* is on the last point, substitutability, and thus it is at the point where one individual can be substituted for another—which corresponds to a notion of collective guilt, collective injury, and collective responsibility—that one sort of social violence (war), differs from another (capital punishment) (Kelly 2000, 7)

The War System

Kelly's definition of war is subtle and powerful and it allows him propose an interesting theoretical framework for the coevolution of war and society

¹³ The account of Gebusi group execution provided above is largely derived from Kelly's account (Kelly 2000, 7– 9).

(see below). War, however, is not easily isolated to forces inside of a society and my interest lies primarily in the phenomena of warfare over time involving forces both intrinsic and extrinsic to particular societies—in other words, war as a system.

Goldstein writes, “I define the *war system* as the interrelated ways that societies organize themselves to participate in potential and actual wars. In this perspective, war is less a series of events than a system with continuity through time” (2001, 3). The *continuity* of the war system is crucial to its definition. In the war system lethal conflict is not simply that which occurs when groups meet by chance. Rather, the war system is characterized by *preparations for future wars grounded in memories of past ones*. The war system relies upon a sharp distinction between insiders and outsiders and treats all outsiders as, at the least, potential enemies. The war system is far more than the armed forces. It includes economic production, institutions that support war and war preparation, and, *most important of all*, the social production—through training, education and indoctrination—of human beings able and willing to fight wars. In certain circumstances, and as a useful shorthand, such people can be referred to as soldiers.

War and the war system can be thought of as a kind of “contingent” hierarchy. The war system itself has three levels:

- I. Individuals
- II. Group/Society
- III. Global

Each level can be further parsed, for example, Level I as soldiers and non-soldiers (or as combatants and non-combatants, an important distinction); Level II as a range of societies from the most warlike to the most peaceful; and

Level III as they system as a whole changes through time, expanding to include more groups and/or shrinking to include fewer. The hierarchy itself is contingent to the extent that at any one point in time each of the constituent units at the two lower levels may or may not be actually *at war* and each such constituent (individual or society) is more-or-less imbricated in the global system.

The (Possible) Origin of War

In considering the historical origin of war there are several types of evidence that we can consider: archeological, ethological and ethnographic. Of the three types of evidence, the archeological record is the most direct and for that reason most be given preferential weight. However, for reasons intrinsic to the discipline—and shared with other disciplines that deal primarily with the physical remains of prehistoric periods—archeology gives an incomplete view. The argument runs like this: because only a fraction of all artifacts of material culture (and human remains) are preserved, and only a fraction of those preserved have been found, any argument made from the evidence that has been found is suspect in that it only represents a fraction of a fraction and not a representative fraction at that. In other words archeology exists under the aegis of negative evidence, or that which has not (yet) been found.

The smaller the selection of evidence that has been dug up by archeologists, particularly when from a geographically restricted range, the more suspect any generalizations. So, for example, if the Upper Paleolithic period (35,000 – 10,000 BP) shows little or no evidence of war, there are a number of possible explanations for this: (1) warfare was uncommon or non-

existent during this period, (2) warfare is difficult to induce from the sorts of evidence available, (3) the extant finds are insufficient to draw any general conclusions. And, of course, the explanations are not mutually exclusive.

Note that explanations of the last type have the peculiar feature of irrefutability, in that someone can *always* propose the need for more evidence on the supposition that such evidence will contradict that which is available. Such a position certainly has its place when available evidence consists of a bare handful of examples or examples from a restricted geographic range, but becomes a rather obvious case of special pleading as evidence accumulates.

The primary reason for such special pleading, of course, is misalignment with some extant theory. Thus if war is presumed to be primal, with deep roots in the human past, then finding evidence of such would perforce be central to the archeological enterprise. If war is presumed to be of relatively recent origins, however, this would accord with the lack of archeological evidence for war between 35,000 and 10,000 B.P. The actual case is that theories of both types—recent and primal origins of war—exist and the archeological evidence is mixed. On the one hand, Keely (1996) has argued that there has been a systematic “pacification of the past” by social scientists who have discounted evidence of lethal violence in the archeological record. On the other hand, Kelly (2000) argues, that although “lethal violence” is common enough in the archeological record, there is no such unambiguous evidence for war, as defined above, before the late Paleolithic.¹⁴ Moreover,

¹⁴ The earliest known conclusive evidence for war, as opposed to other types of lethal violence, is from a Nubian cemetery (site 117) near what is now the town of Jebel Sahaba in the Sudan. The site dates to between 12,000 and 14,000 B.P. and the evidence consists of a number of grave with multiple internments and the presence of multiple stone projectile points imbedded in each skeleton and/or the presence of such points inside the skeletons. The combination of multiple deaths occurring within a short amount of time and the presence of the skeletal evidence of violence is highly indicative of warfare. By contrast, either factor in

based on a review of the evidence presented by Ferguson (1997), Kelly concludes that objection two, that the existent archeological evidence is ambivalent, seems to only apply to evidence pre-dating about 10,000 B.P., suggesting that the supposed difficulty of interpretation is an artifact of the absence of war—but not the absence of lethal violence.

In order to evaluate the likelihood of Kelly's conclusions we need to turn to the other types of evidence available, the ethological and the ethnological. With respect to the former—evidence based on contemporary observation of closely related phyla, especially the great apes—there are two things that can be said definitively.

First, the potential for lethal violence in species closest to humans in evolutionary distance—chimpanzees—is well documented (de Waal 1996, 38, 194). Though chimps are not evolutionary ancestors to homo sapiens, the fact that lethal violence exists in all known human societies (Otterbein 1986) *and* in many species of primates with lineages older than the divergence of hominoids (apes and hominids), strongly suggests that the common ancestor of hominoids had such potential.

Second, lethal violence between groups of chimps is also now well documented, and in fact seems to be more common in the wild than individual and intragroup lethal violence (de Waal 1996, 194). “Wild male chimpanzees, for example, may take over a neighboring territory by systematically killing off the males of the other community” (de Waal 1996, 30). Primatologists have observed lethal raids that include an element of strategy, to the extent that such lethal intergroup violence always seems to occur when an isolated

isolation—either a single individual grave showing signs of death by violence or a mass grave showing no such signs—might or might not be evidence of warfare (Kelly 2000, 148–151; Wendorf 1968, 993).

individual male or male and female is encountered in a border zone by a larger group of at least three males. The larger group attacks with relative impunity and in none of the observed instances were any of the attackers seriously injured (Goodall 1986, 522–34; Pusey 2001, 8–12, Manson and Wrangham 1991, 369–71).

Thus the evidence for origins of a potential for lethal violence—as well as many forms of peaceful cooperation and reconciliation (de Waal and van Roosmalen 1979, 62)—suggests a pre-hominid origin. War, however, is a somewhat different question. An ancient origin for “intergroup violence” is not necessarily equivalent to war, particularly when both social substitution and systemic factors are considered. Again, lethal intergroup violence observed in chimpanzees is behaviorally very similar to war but seems to differ in crucial dimensions—at least with respect to those systemic characteristics in which I am most interested.

A combination of the ethological and the archeological data thus tends to confirm ancient origins for lethal violence, including lethal violence with some collective component, but leaves war per se as an open question. Here I will, following Kelly, turn to the ethnological data in hopes of finding some clarification.

Even as archeological data suffers from intrinsic difficulties associated with permanent incompleteness, and ethological evidence from problems of defining criteria for analogical appropriateness, so ethnological analogies are fraught with their own difficulties.¹⁵ The classic objection to reasoning from

¹⁵ The appropriateness of analogies between apes and humans rests on the proposition of closeness in evolutionary terms as measured in both genetic similarity and temporal proximity of divergence. Yet all such analogies must contend with the reality that contemporary apes are not ancestral to contemporary humans. In fact all of the recent evolutionary ancestors of apes and humans are extinct and the hominoid group is an exceptionally small, side-branch on the

extant cultures backward to conditions in the human past is the primitivist fallacy. That is, the presumption that contemporary cultures of a particular type, typically those described as “hunter-gatherers” (or gatherer-hunters, in the ordering by caloric importance schema), can stand in for pre-historic cultures in evolutionary comparisons. The well-known objections to such primitivism are twofold. First, very few if any of such cultures can be considered “pristine” even when they are first encountered by colonial officials, missionaries and ethnographers. In most cases such cultures had centuries, or even millennia, of contact of some sort with neighboring pastoral and agricultural communities. Second, and more fundamentally, contemporary gatherer-hunters are *not* Paleolithic. The presumption that their way of doing things and thinking about the world—their cultures—are unchanged over tens of thousands of years is impossible to test and in many cases made unlikely by shifting climates and well-established migration patterns.

In spite of these objections, and with them firmly in mind, Kelly makes a fairly convincing case for using particular types of ethnographic evidence, in combination with the archeological evidence, in considering the origins of war. It would be redundant for me to rehearse the details of his argument here—and beyond the scope of my current project—but I will give a short outline followed by some explication.

(1) Most extant studies of peaceful societies make two counterproductive moves: (a) They establish utopian standards for what they

evolutionary tree. The historical path from apes to humans (or vice versa) is V-shaped, leading back to a common ancestor in the primate family, and then forward again through various branchings to contemporary species. The genetic distance is slight, but the expressive differences are open to interpretation—including the possibility that ape “cultures” are different not just in quantity but in type from human cultures.

mean by “peaceful” societies; (b) They identify societies by economic type (gathering-hunting, agricultural) instead of social organization.

(2) Use of ethnographic data to draw conclusions about the past should depend on characteristics that societies of a certain type have in common and that are logically consistent and in accord with the archeological record.

(3) Relevant traits must be defined in ways that are useful for evolutionary reasoning—thus behavioral homology is not enough to establish a good definition, in the same way that defining monarch butterflies and robins as “flying creatures with orange patterning” is true but irrelevant from the point of view of evolutionary classification.¹⁶

With respect to the first point, Kelly notes the tendency to look either at a highly sorted sample of the “usual suspects”—e.g. the !Kung, Semai, Mbuti, Siriono and Copper Eskimo (Fabbro 1978)—of “peaceful” gathering-hunting societies, if the investigator is primarily interested in peace, or to take a broader sample of gathering-hunting societies and thereby demonstrate that such societies are not, in fact, particular peaceful (Ember 1978), if the investigator is interested in war. These two tendencies correspond to subpoints (a) and (b) above.

In the (a) situation are studies like those of Fabbro (1978) which fail to discriminate between peaceful societies and warless ones. Thus Fabbro sets out criteria for peacefulness that include not only a lack of internal or external wars, but a lack of significant interpersonal violence and a lack of structural violence (oppression). Not surprisingly, no actually-existing societies live up to

¹⁶ Taxonomy has historically been one of the most contentious subjects in biology. Two principles, homology and descent have been employed, with the latter taking precedence since the ascent of evolutionary theory. However, actual classification, especially of fossil species which may be known by a single preserved shell or tooth, remains a vexatious process as descent can be very difficult to establish from the paleontological evidence.

these rather utopian expectations, leading Fabbro both to relax his criteria and to limit his sample to a small group of societies that, at least from available ethnographic evidence, are relatively peaceful by his criteria.

It is worth noting that an important reason for Fabbro's criteria is the presumption that types of violence strongly impact each other across levels. Thus it is often presumed, for example, that authoritarian forms of child-rearing will correlate with interpersonal violence, that interpersonal violence will correlate—"lead to" is the usual formulation—war. This, however, does not seem to be the case. Kelly writes:

The striking conclusion suggested by the comparative ethnographic data Fabbro assembles is that societies lacking war are not necessarily nonviolent in other ways and consequently not invariably "peaceful" in this extended sense of the term. Thus societies initially selected on the grounds that they were warless may fail to entirely fulfill the additional criterion of "little or no interpersonal violence." While this point runs counter to Fabbro's expectations and is downplayed, it emerges quite clearly from his data. They do not show that there is a strong pattern of covariation between one form of violence and another.... One can conclude that the attainment of societal peace in the form of an absence of war is not contingent upon an absence of other forms of physical violence. Achieving utopian levels of human perfection is fortunately not a prerequisite for peace (Kelly 2000, 19).

Kelly does a thorough review of the ethnographies of each of the groups described by Fabbro to back up his conclusion. His main point is that the utopian construction of "peaceful" societies is not very useful in looking at the ethnographic evidence concerning war and warlessness because peaceful societies of the utopian type don't exist and war does not co-vary with other types of lethal violence—suggesting it is hierarchically distinct.

In type (b) cases, the very existence of warless societies is thrown into

doubt by the twin mechanisms of an over-encompassing definition of war and the selection of gathering-hunting groups as the type that is supposedly warless. Carol Ember's work is the classic in this genre. In a 1978 *Ethnology* article, appropriately titled "Myths about Hunter-Gatherers," she reviews a sample of thirty-one gathering-hunting societies which had no reliance on either agriculture or herding. Her conclusion is that "64 percent had warfare occurring at least once every two years, 20 percent had warfare somewhat less often, and only 10 percent ... were rated as having rare or no warfare" (Ember 1978, 443, as cited in Kelly 2000, 2).

If only 10 percent of gathering-hunting societies in fact engage in warfare rarely or not at all, this is not exactly a ringing endorsement for the warlessness of the group. Of course 10 percent is not nothing, and leaves some wiggle room for discussion. The fact that such a small percentage of all gathering-hunting societies are warless, and many of these consist of only a few hundred individuals in any case, leaves plenty of room for recasting such societies as anomalies or interpretive mistakes. Worse still, many of these societies had homicide rates that were in fact higher than those found in state societies. Put another way, the low percentage of warless societies in the sample, combined with the high tendency to non-war types of violence, suggests that there is no causal relationship between the gathering-hunting mode of subsistence and warlessness. Without identifying a commonality among the warless societies, it is difficult to suggest any grounds for generalizations.

What Kelly points out, and demonstrates through a rigorous re-examination of the source data used in various studies, is that the warless societies observed do have something in common that *differentiates* them

from all other societies, including other gathering-hunting societies. It is *social organization* and not *mode of subsistence* which is the factor that covaries with war. In short, all of the warless societies were of the *unsegmented* type. All societies, of course, have some degree of organization, but those designated as “unsegmented” have the minimum level of such organization. Local groups of coresidents are the highest level of organization, even though a sense of shared language and culture extends beyond the group. Though the specific type of family is not specified, families typically form semi-detachable units. These units, by definition, have no character equivalent to a lineage or other perduring element that extends beyond the length of a marriage (Kelly 2000, 44).

Amongst unsegmented gatherer-hunters, as analyzed by Kelly, the vast majority are warless (although not peaceful in the extended sense of lacking in lethal violence). Also, even for those rare unsegmented gathering-hunting groups where war has been documented, the wars in question seem to fall into one of two clearly identifiable categories: either the unsegmented group is attacked by a segmented neighbor, or, and this is of particular interest, cases where a group of unsegmented societies meets the *very* specific criteria of cohabitation in a geographically isolated location (e.g. an island) with predictable and usually plentiful resources and a relatively high population density.¹⁷

¹⁷ Population density amongst gatherer-hunters, whether segmented or unsegmented, is generally quite low, often as low as 0.2 per square-mile (e.g. Semang, Copper Eskimo, !Kung, Ingalik, Gilyak, Gros Ventre, Eyak, Sauteaux, Comanche, Chiricahua, Shavante, and Aweikoma). But population density does not vary independently with frequency of warfare. Segmented gatherer-hunters living at this extremely low density (e.g. the Shavante and Aweikoma) are observed to have both internal and external warfare as often as once per year. High density in this class means above the 0.2 per square-mile threshold, with densities above 5 per square-mile being extremely rare (Kelly 2000, 72), e.g. 1 in 25 of the groups considered by Kelly.

The point here is that the ethnographic evidence concerning war supports the proposition that gathering-hunting groups of the unsegmented type are warless *except under very specific circumstances*. However extant unsegmented gathering-hunting groups may differ from human groups in the Upper Paleolithic, such prehistoric human groups would nonetheless likely share the key trait of unsegmented social structure centered on local coresidents. Even minding the danger of inappropriate backwards analogy, this seems a reasonable assumption, uncontroversial in the anthropological literature. Further, assuming the initial absence of segmented societies, it seems likely that the point of origin for warfare would be precisely those situations where resources were concentrated and relatively predictable, geography was somehow circumscribed, and population density high.

Whatever the truth of this particular construction, the general picture of warless contemporary unsegmented societies, combined with the lack of archeological evidence for war (as opposed to homicide) in the archeological record before about 10,000 B.P., suggests the origins of war as a wide-spread system is relatively recent and co-emergent with the development of agriculture, pastoralism *and* segmented social structures.

While I generally agree with Kelly's conclusions concerning the likely recent origins of war and find his definitions plausible, I nonetheless want to emphasize that his assertion that war is not a cultural universal has far more power when viewed as a statement about the long term, than the present. The group of societies which he uses to elaborate his theoretical claims—unsegmented gatherer-hunters—may have the relevant criteria of internal consistency and geographic distribution to make his claims plausible. They nonetheless constitute only a tiny portion of extant societies and an even tinier

portion of extant population. Moreover, today such groups tend to exist only in the most geographically isolated and inhospitable environments, where they have either been pushed by competition with more complex societies, or where such societies have not bothered to go, largely because of the low population densities supportable in such regions. The conclusion, then, is that war is not a cultural universal in an absolute sense, but it does seem to be ubiquitous with respect to societies above a certain level of social complexity over the last 10,000 years. The ethnographic counter-examples, in effect, consistently represent societies that have never developed the level of social complexity *necessary* to engage in effective warfare. For my purposes the most interesting thing about such societies is that if my assumptions about the link between warfare and certain styles of masculinity are correct, then this small group of societies that are not part of the war system as it has developed since Neolithic times should show gendering patterns that differ significantly from societies (the vast majority) which are part of this system.

Masculinity: Origins and Variation

Perhaps even more so than the human propensity for war, sex and gender have been front and center in the nature vs. nurture debate. Even the development of the two concepts—*sex and gender*—where until recently one sufficed, reflects this tension. Nor is the division into two concepts in English usage a straightforward one. Whereas it may seem simple enough—and it is certainly common enough in and outside of the academy—to attribute whatever is of “nature” to sex and of “culture” to gender, such a division is misleading both historically and existentially.

Historically, the word *sex* enters English from the Latin *secus* or *sexus*,

meaning *section*—thus the male or female section of humanity. It does not become common, however, until the late sixteenth century when it begins to be associated more specifically with women, as in “*the gentle sex*” (from the late sixteenth century), “*the weaker sex*” and “*the fairer sex*” (respectively from the early- and mid-seventeenth century) and simply “*the sex*” from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. The now common use of sex in reference to erotic behavior is more recent and seems to have been promulgated in medical and biological writing from the late eighteenth century. The full span of contemporary connotations, where the “active-eros” meaning all but overwhelms the “section of humanity” meaning any place but on an application form, does not obtain until the early part of the twentieth century (Williams 1983, 283–86).

For my purposes, the interesting thing about this history is that the term *gender*, formerly used almost exclusively as a grammatical term, enters English with the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, at least as much to differentiate the *division* of humans into women and men *from* sexual acts (and the panoply of connotations that accrued to sex over the course of the twentieth century), as to distinguish biological from cultural components of the sectioning of humanity (Williams 1983, 285).

So, from the historical perspective, the origins of the use of the term gender—with its proper grammatical associations—instead of sex was at least in part an effort to flee not so much from the bodily and physical, but from the active sense of sex, as in sexual behaviors. Thus the notion, common among progressives, that the distinction between sex and gender is somehow politically useful in the cause of justice—i.e., that by separating biology from culture we can at last get at the important cultural determinants, with biology

shoved safely out of the way—has to be considered in the context of this historical urge to distance from sexuality.

The problem with the distinction between sex and gender, however, goes much deeper than a tangled historical origin. My main point is that the uncritical use of the two terms to designate *differences* attributable to biology from *differences* attributable to culture does not so much bridge the supposed divide between nature and nurture, as cement it in place. In the process three sets of supposed binary divisions are reinforced: the difference between men and women as cultural subjects, between males and females as biological organisms, and between biology and culture as agents of determination. Each of these divisions are forcibly mapped onto a single plane of differentiation.

Nature vs. Nurture: Hierarchy, Process, Feedback and Emergence

Even the proposition that *both* culture and biology are responsible for observable differences between types of people remains counterintuitive to most people, or at least most Americans. A 1998 *Washington Post* poll, for example, asked men and women: “What do you think is the main reason for any differences there might be between men and women? Is it mainly because of the way men and women are brought up, or are the differences part of their biological makeup?” (Morin and Rosenfeld 1998, A17).

The question is obviously weighted towards the selection of a single factor. Still, about 10 percent of those answering volunteered “both.” Of the remaining 90 percent of the sample, men split evenly between a preference for biology verses upbringing. Women answered two-to-one in favor of upbringing as the most likely explanation for differences between men and women.

The question, however, was even more weighted than the failure of offering a “both” option. The relationship between biology and “upbringing” is not a simple matter of addition. First, biology is a mask for a plenitude of processes. There are several pertinent levels of structure and process *between* the gene and the organism, including proteins, biochemistry, cells, anatomy and physiology. Moreover, there are biological entities above the level of the organism as well, including the biological population and the species. Populations, of course, exist in the context of ecosystems which include other biota, and in environments that include non-biological elements. Similarly with “upbringing” (or “nurture” or “culture”), which is a stand-in for a broader set of factors including individual experience, social context and, again, the larger environment.

The nominal duality of biology/culture conceals a hierarchical multiplicity. This multiplicity, what is more, is no simple hierarchy of encompassing types. Unlike in abstract logical systems, wherein discreet levels of analysis can be defined, in biological systems—and in cultural ones—such divisions are misleading. The key difference between abstract systems and biological ones is the element of temporality—and the possibility of change it affords. Thus in applying the theory of logical types to “levels” of biological existence, it is important to recognize that the various levels are not related by convention, but rather by *processes*.

The *movement* from genes to proteins to cells to anatomy to physiology to neurons to neurological processes to consciousness to communication to culture and beyond entails a series of interlocking processes. Genes are built from strands of DNA. Proteins are synthesized and built up through the interaction of genes with the organismic environment. Proteins unfold various

ways that lead to anatomical differentiation, under the influence of biochemistry (also produced through gene-environment interaction). Moving up the hierarchical levels there is an intervention of processes that connect one with the next. In Bateson's words,

when we take the notion of logical typing out of the field of abstract logic and start to map real biological events onto the hierarchies of this paradigm, we shall immediately encounter the fact that in the world of mental and biological systems, the hierarchy is not only a list of classes, classes of classes, and classes of classes of classes but has also become a *zigzag ladder of dialectic between form and process* (Bateson 2002, 182, emphasis in original).

Thus form—equivalent to a hierarchical level—can be seen as mediated by processes that produce forms, that communicate with processes, that in interaction with the appropriate environments produce forms and so on. Yet even at this level of conceptual complexity, the surface of modeling actual biological and cultural systems has been only scratched. At the least, having disaggregated culture and biology into a multiplicity of levels, and then pointed out that such systems are characterized not by static levels but by interconnected processes, with outputs of one set of processes becoming inputs for the next, one still requires the concept of multidirectional feedback.

Feedback is, in essence, a fairly simple concept. Bateson illustrates it with the idea of a system surrounding thermostatic control of temperature in a dwelling. At the lowest level of this system is ambient temperature, which varies over time. As it changes from moment to moment (a process), it affects a thermometer, which registers changes in temperature in a way that is reflected in physical changes in a switch. This switch makes or breaks an electrical connection if the temperature goes below or above a set point. When

the temperature goes up, the connection is broken, and the furnace is turned off. When it goes down, the thermostatic switch reflects this change as well, reestablishing the electrical contact, turning the furnace back on, causing the temperature to rise. The result is the oscillation of the temperature around a mean. The actual change in temperature is *feedback*, of a particular level, to the thermostatic control module.

Temperature, however, is not the only possible feedback to the thermostat. A person who for whatever combination of reasons feels too cold in the dwelling in question, could change the set point of the thermostat. This too is feedback, which then becomes part of the system. The person in turn makes his decision to change the setting (a process), based on his personal discomfort threshold (similar to the set point in the thermostat, but controlled by the perceptions of the man instead of a thermometer). This threshold will vary over time for the same person (or from person to person in a population) based on a combination of training and experience, (a process), as well as factors like humidity that alter the experience of temperature, which becomes feedback to the threshold. The person's training and experience, in turn, depend on factors such as his socioeconomic status, place of origin, etc. Thus disparate levels or types of feedback have a feedback on the system as a whole (Bateson 2002, 184).

A fairly simple biological example of feedback between social environment and sex/gender comes from the wrasse fish. Wrasse males compete for territories that include several sub-territories occupied by females, with the females ranked in the fishy equivalent of a social hierarchy. If the territory-holding male dies, and no other male quickly claims the territory, then the dominant female in the territory changes, within a day, into a fully

functioning male and claims the territory (Caspari 1978, 104, cited in Goldstein 2001, 130). However complex the underlying mechanisms for the change from female to male, the presence or absence of a dominant male is social/environmental feedback that at least in the case of the wrasse fish can result in a change of “state” from female to male.

Taken together the factors outlined above—hierarchical multiplicity, process and feedback—serve to complicate any simple *combination* of biology and culture, much less a simple division. There is, however, another important consideration. Namely, human culture—which in this context I am using as a shorthand for non-genetic information/communication—is an *emergent* property.

Emergence, as discussed above, is a property of a system as it moves through time and space. Just as walls + floor + roof + doors does not makes a house, but a house only results when these elements are placed (which takes time) in a particular arrangement, culture is a non-additive outcome of the interaction of humans over time. A house, or rather the building of a house, is a terminal process. It has fairly definitive start and end points, and yet still emerges from the process. In more complex systems, and especially in multi-level/multi-process, self-replicating systems, emergent traits are continuously generated. What is more, in many cases it is traits emergent from one level/set of processes that interacts with traits emergent from another level—and these various processes can, over time, become so entangled one with the other, or may in fact emerge so entangled, that disentanglement requires theoretical violence.

As Geertz puts it his influential essay on the coevolution of culture, mind and brain:

...there is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture. Men without culture would not be the clever savages of Golding's *Lord of the Flies* thrown back upon the cruel wisdom of their animal instincts; nor would they be the nature's noblemen of Enlightenment primitivism or even, as classical anthropological theory would imply, intrinsically talented apes who had somehow failed to find themselves. They would be unworkable monstrosities with very few useful instincts, fewer recognizable sentiments, and no intellect: mental basket cases. As our central nervous system—and most particularly its crowning curse and glory, the neocortex—grew up in great part in interaction with culture, it is incapable of directing our behavior or organizing our experience without the guidance provided by systems of significant symbols (Geertz 1973b, 49).

“Monstrosities” may in some ways even be generous. A human monster, after all, is still human. An individual human without culture is thus a “monster” in the sense of an unformed or deformed human. But if neurological functioning, consciousness and culture are all three the *emergent* properties they seem to be, and if they have been formed, over evolutionary time, through a tangle of processes of types A, B and C that *feed back* on each other in complex loops, then homo sapiens itself seems unlikely in the extreme minus this complex of emergent feedback processes. A hominid species lacking culture would not be Homo sapiens, for culture is as much woven into the evolutionary texture of the species as bipedal locomotion and live birth.

Biological Gender and Cultural Sex

The discussion of nature and nurture presented above provides a backdrop for a more specific discussion of the perils involved in attempting to separate sex from gender, most profoundly because sex and gender are not an aggregation. Splitting the one from the other is not a matter of simply saying the difference between men-males and women-females is X percent

cultural and Y percent biological. At least in theory *heritability* might be reduced to a weighting of percentages of this type, but since an *average* heritability would tell us almost nothing about the array of specific traits that we are typically interested in when we talk about *differences*, even that project is of limited utility, particularly when it comes to characteristics such as rationality, aggression, perceptiveness, self-discipline, dominance, submission, nurturance—the stuff of behavioral sex/gender (stereo)typing—and particularly if notions of heritability are mapped onto a default either/or map.

I want, however, to spend some time considering why sex continues to seem (to most people) such a given. When it comes to our intuitions about sex and gender—as indicated in the *Washington Post* poll referenced above—there remains a curious, embarrassingly simple truth that much of the high-flown academic and feminist discourse seems designed to circumvent: Namely, there are males and there are females and they *are* biologically different. Science critic Anne Fausto-Sterling puts it like this:

In the current intellectual fashion, men are made, not born. We construct masculinity through social discourse, that array of happenings that covers everything from music videos, poetry, and rap lyrics to sports, beer commercials, and psychotherapy. But underlying all of this clever carpentry is the sneaking suspicion that one must start with a blueprint—or, to stretch the metaphor yet a bit more, that buildings must have foundations. Within the soul of even the most die-hard constructionist lurks a doubt. It is called the body (Fausto-Sterling 1995, 127–28).

In contrast, she explains, medical men and biological scientists (and she could

add sociobiologists to the list), have no such doubts. “For them, the body tells the truth” (Fausto-Sterling 1995, 128).

However, the truth about male and female bodies—and bodily capacities—is not so simple. Medical certainty arises, Fausto-Sterling argues, not through induction from irrefutable evidence, but from categorization, appeal to normative expectation, and, in a pinch, surgical intervention. Categorization is itself derivative of the study of variation in human populations. Through the study of such variation, outliers are identified and a norm, in the statistical sense, established. The statistical sense of a normal variation, however, refers to degree of predictability around a mean. In the case of human gender, it is conflated with “normal” in the sense of within the realm of the acceptable. “Thus we have a profound irony. Biologists and physicians use natural biological variation to define normality. Armed with this description, they set out to eliminate the natural variation that gave them their definitions in the first place” (Fausto-Sterling 1995, 128).

One of the most influential voices in the setting of sex assignment norms of the last quarter century is psychologist John Money. Among other things, Money developed a schematic road map of the journey to the acquisition of sex and gender (in the aforementioned biology vs. culture sense). In Money’s version—still reproduced in new medical textbooks at least into the mid-1990s—the journey to sex/gender determination must pass ten significant road marks:

- (1) chromosomal sex, the presence of an XX or XY chromosome set;
- (2) gonadal sex, instructions coded in the appropriate chromosome, X or Y, signal the undifferentiated fetal gonads to develop into either testes or ovaries;

(3) fetal hormonal sex, meaning the production of differing proportions of certain hormones, particularly testosterone in males-to-be and estrogen and progesterone in females-to-be, produced by the now differentiated gonads, and influencing later stages, especially 4, 5, and 6;

(4) internal morphological sex, meaning the development of internal sex organs;

(5) external morphological sex, meaning the development of external sex organs;

(6) brain sex, meaning the exposure of the brain to differentiated proportions of the aforementioned sex hormones;

(7) sex of assignment and rearing, meaning the decision by doctors and parents regarding whether the new born is *either* male *or* female and subsequent childrearing based on that assignment;

(8) pubertal hormonal sex, meaning the increase in the production of sex hormones that results in further morphological differentiation, particularly secondary sex traits;

(9) identity/role, meaning the acquisition of sense of self as man/woman and acceptance in roles culturally determined as appropriate thereto; and

(10) procreative sex, meaning the successful ability to engage in sexual intercourse resulting in impregnation.¹⁸

Even at a glance, an obvious feature of this “road-map” to sex/gender acquisition is its complexity—particularly given that the road-map metaphor is *intended* to indicate that *things can go wrong* at any stage of the process, resulting in individuals of ambiguous sex or gender. A second interesting point

¹⁸ This account is adapted from Fausto-Sterling’s summary of Money’s schema (Fausto-Sterling 1995, 129).

is the interface between the biological and the cultural, particularly in step 7, where sex assignment must be made based on some criteria.

Money is in some ways a radical constructivist, arguing that with respect to *gender* it is socialization that really matters—regardless of the *real* biological sex of a person. In fact his belief in this was so strong that not only did he advocate the surgical alteration of babies with ambivalent external sexual traits—intersexuals in the emergent emic language—he was involved in the rather infamous case of the sex reassignment surgery of a three year old boy whose penis was amputated in a horribly bungled circumcision.¹⁹ Despite his cultural determinism of what he calls “gender mapping” (Money 1995), including both culturally assigned sex roles and gender personalities, his schema retains an almost manic duality. He presupposes a necessary sorting of humans into either male or female categories.

Evidence of a strong version of this dualistic imperative is visible not just in Money’s theories, but in the criteria by which medical managers advise physicians to proceed when they encounter newborns of “ambivalent” anatomical sex:

Genetic females should always be raised as females, preserving reproductive potential, regardless of how severely the patients are virilized. In the genetic male, however, the gender of assignment is based on the infant’s anatomy, predominantly the size of the phallus (Donahue, Powell and Lee 1991, 527 quoted in Fausto-Sterling 1995, 130).²⁰

¹⁹ This sensational case came to light when the subject of the operation, who had been raised as a girl after the sex reassignment surgery, came forward almost thirty years after the fact. After 14 years living as a girl, he (now) went back to living as a man. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/horizon/2000/boyturnedgirl.shtml> as of January 28, 2004.

²⁰ Note that because “genetic females” should always be brought up as females (presumably meaning to be women), does not mean that surgical intervention isn’t practiced. Rather the “virilized” “genetic female” is typically subjected to the excision of “excess” genital anatomy.

That is, a genetic male born with a penis below a certain size (0.6 inches, where the average birth size is between 1 and 1.5 inches) is subjected to penile amputation along with the surgical construction of a vagina and the admonition to parents to raise “he” as a “she” (Danish et al. 1980).

I raise the case of intersex individuals to point up the cultural component of sex assignment: so strong is the presumption that people should be definitively *marked* as *either* male *or* female, that actually-existing variation is subject to surgical intervention in order to create categorical conformity. Also, I wish to note that extreme constructivism, as in Money’s case, is not in the least incompatible with either strong presumptions concerning underlying biological sex or strong gendered division of people into women or men.

Here we meet with our by-now familiar friend, the confusion of logical types. The physicians’ confidence in bodily truth—and the doubts of constructivists—come back to a failure to differentiate between map and mapped. Blithe confidence in “genetic sex” is grounded—as blithe confidence always should be—in a tautology: genetic sex of the individual equals that portion of the individual’s sex that is genetically determined. The fact of some part of the genetic code corresponding with some set of biological processes (within a variety of expressive possibilities depending on environment and other factors not well understood) defined as having to do with sex, isn’t controversial. It is, however, a completely different type of process than the assignment of category.

Another way to say this is that the distinction between sex and gender (biology and culture) is of a different logical type than the distinction between male and female. Above I discussed the *difficulties* involved in untangling

biology and culture in humans, of the complex interlock and multidirectional feedback between them, but this entanglement does not mean that biology unexists. The question is not *is there such a thing as a biological basis for sex*, but *what do differences that arise from biological sex mean?*

Here the possibilities for logical confusion multiply. As it turns out, conceptualizing and measuring *difference* is fraught with difficulties. In the first place, we have to decide what to measure. Even Money's highly schematic and simplified ten-fold path to the acquisition of adequate sex/gender should give some idea as to the problems involved. We might, for example, interrogate each of his ten steps—and I promise not to—with respect to discovering important differences, embedded processes and relationships. Even at the presumably cut-and-dried level of *chromosomal sex*, important complexities arise that are the merest snowflake in a blizzard compared to those that accrue within the entire system of biocultural evolution and individual development.

In humans, genetic material is distributed along 23 pairs of chromosomes (chimps and gorillas have 24 pairs) which are tube-like structures made of proteins and DNA. The DNA is the genetic material, itself made up of a pair of chains of acidic sugar-phosphate chains linked together by four base pairs (nucleotides), adenine, cytosine, guanine and thymine, generally abbreviated A, C, G and T. These four chemicals are arranged such that molecules of adenine (A) can only bond with cytosine (C). Likewise, guanine (G) can only bond with thymine (T). Thus the construction of the DNA molecule is accomplished by the predictable linking of the appropriate base pairs, A to C and G to T. This matching structure is what makes DNA, in the appropriate environment, a self-replicating molecule, because the base pairs,

linked by weak hydrogen bonds, come apart in the middle and reassemble predictably. The genes themselves, about 30,000 in humans by the latest count (Gould 2001), are in the form of strands of base pairs of differing length.²¹ Various arrangements of base pairs—arranged in triplets—code for 20 amino acids, which are the actual material from which proteins are formed.

Humans inherit half of their 46 total chromosomes (23 pairs) from each of their parents, 22 of which are matching in “type,” (meaning they are of the same shape but contain differing DNA chains) and are conventionally referred to by numbers 1 through 22. The remaining two chromosomes are referred to as X and Y, and contain the genetic information that leads to sex differentiation. In most cases human beings have either two X chromosomes (XX) or an X and a Y (XY). The Y chromosome seems to contain only one gene of importance (Breedlove 1992, 40–41), which apparently codes for only one protein, referred to as *testis determination factor* (TDF). This protein in turn impacts the other processes of sex differentiation outlined in Money’s schema, largely through the differential release of hormones. In the presence of the TDF protein, switched on by the gene on a Y chromosome, an embryo develops into a male; in its absence, a female. Hence, what is meant by *chromosomal sex* is a categorization into either XX for females or XY for males.

The reason for this highly simplified review of human genetics is that even at this level, where the usual expectation really is only one of two

²¹ The discovery that the number of genes in humans is *only* about 30,000 surprised most investigators. Earlier estimates were for 100,000 or more. The low number of genes struck a particular blow to certain forms of reductionism, as it means that “secondary” and “tertiary” processes—protein folding, genes acting in combination, random fixation, emergent properties, etc.—become more important in the biological construction of a human being than was previously hoped by some investigators.

possibilities—XX or XY—the matter is not so simple. As with so much else in the world of biological and cultural systems, the *usual* situation does not always obtain. Relatively rare, but still well-documented, situations occur of human beings with a different combination—XXX, XXY, XYY and X0 (meaning only one X). Thus even at the level of chromosomal sex, a simple split into two types is not possible without reference to factors from other levels and processes. Even the categorization of chromosomal type has a broader range than either XX or XY.

The variation in possibilities with respect to chromosomal sex only increase as we move through the various levels/processes. For example at the fetal sex stage (level 3) a condition called *androgen insensitivity*—a lack of responsiveness to the presence of hormones associated with the development of male phenotypes—leads to type XY individuals with female phenotypes. Chromosomal sex then differs from internal sex, external sex and most likely sex of assignment.

These examples may seem as if I am only pointing out that the usual classificatory system runs into some problems in some relatively rare cases. These “extreme” examples, however, are only the tip of the morphological iceberg. So far I have been dealing with—or treating characteristics as if they were—discreet variables.

A variable is a mathematical concept, usually represented by some symbol such as X , Y , p or q which can assume any of a prescribed set of values, called the *domain* of the variable. Variables come in three types: *constant*, *continuous* and *discreet*.

Constant variables can assume only one value, that is they don't vary at all or can be held constant or considered constant for practical purposes in describing the real world as opposed to theoretical systems.

Continuous variables can theoretically assume *any* value between minimum and maximum potentials. Such variables are usually characterized by *measurements*, which are only ever approximate representations of some point along a continuum. An example is the height. An individual of *height X* can be 58 inches tall, or 61.5 inches tall, or 63.045867978187873 inches tall.

Discrete variables, by contrast, are characterized by distinct *numbers* between minimum and maximum points. Thus the number *Y* of children in a family may be 0, 1, 2, 3, ... 26, etc., but it cannot be 1.333 or 6.47298. The number of possible variations can be large or small, as in the number of cells in the body of a particular human at a particular time or number of possible results in the flip of a coin.

In biological terms, traits that are characterized by discrete variables are referred to as *polymorphisms*. A polymorphism is characterized by qualitative difference—a particular possible trait is either present or absent. The familiar genetic example of hemoglobin type serves as an example. Hemoglobin is a blood protein that carries oxygen. Hemoglobin comes primarily in two types, classified as A and S.²² The S type hemoglobin, present in 25% - 30% of the population in parts of West and Central Africa, South India and the Arabian Peninsula, can result in a condition known as sickle-cell anemia. However, most people with hemoglobin S don't in fact suffer from anemia, since they also have hemoglobin A, having inherited a different type

²² There are, in fact, over 300 known hemoglobin variants, but the vast majority of these are known from only a single individual or one family (Lewontin 1995, 29). The larger number of variants does not, however, affect the basic point.

from each of parent, which, incidentally to this story, offers a degree of resistance to a particularly deadly form of malaria common in the same regions.

The point, of course, is that you either have S type hemoglobin or you do not. There are people who have both type A and type S, but the two chemically distinct types are just that. Polymorphisms of this type are qualitatively different from each other, characterized by presence or absence. They are fundamentally different from traits characterized by *continuous* variation such as height, weight, metabolic rate, form and most types of behavior.

In spite of the difference between continuous variables and discrete ones, there are a number of intellectual tricks, part heuristic device, part self-delusion, by which continuous variation can be characterized as discrete. Chief among these are aggregation, normalization and categorization.

Aggregation as used here is the process of combining some set of variables, in whatever mixture, as a single unit. So, for example, IQ tests claim to measure something called general intelligence, which is—in the definition of the tests—an aggregate of various sub-types of intelligence (mathematical, logical, spatial, verbal, etc.). The sub-types of intelligence are measured by separate tests and the various results are combined using statistical techniques to derive a single numeric value, referred to as IQ. Although IQ tests use a relatively sophisticated type of aggregation, even so the aggregation in question still obliterates the underlying variables—variables that vary independently of one another.

Normalization is the process of examining continuous variation in a given population and identifying a range of normality. In statistical terms

normality refers to symmetrical variation around a mean, most commonly defined in terms of standard deviations. This means in a normal distribution (graphed in the familiar form of a bell curve), 68.27% of all cases fit within plus or minus one standard deviation of the mean; 95.45% of all cases within plus or minus two standard deviations, and 99.73% of all cases within plus or minus three standard deviations. Thus *most* cases fit within plus or minus two standard deviations of a mean, and *almost all* within three standard deviations. Various sorting and sampling techniques and mathematical procedures can be used to tweak results that may be disproportionately weighted toward rare or unusual cases because of a small sample size. This can be referred to as *normalization*. Beyond statistics, what I mean by normalization is setting a *threshold* beyond which observable variation is simply disregarded (as in *normally* males have an XY chromosome pattern and females have an XX) or recategorized.

Categorization, as I use it here, refers specifically to the process of aggregation and/or normalization plus sorting and labeling. Thus in the case of IQ tests persons could be described as “below average” or “above average” with the average depending on the population tested. The meaning of “above normal” and “below normal” in this context, however, is detached from the statistical sense of the mean, and refers to below some defined range of scores presumed to match normal functioning. The aggregated IQ score becomes a grounds for categorization, which has in the not so distant past been further broken down into a rising scale of categories from idiot, through imbecile and moron before reaching the ranks of the normal.²³ Variables that

²³ These were all once terms of psychological import, even if they have become mere epithets and stock-joke characters. For a history of I.Q. testing and its uses to define “mental defectives” for eugenic and other purposes see Gould 1981, 188–95.

vary independently are first smothered in the aggregated I.Q., normality is defined in terms of this aggregate, and then further divisions are made, creating categories. These categories conceal the fact that the statement “he has type S hemoglobin” is not of the same logical type as “he is an idiot” (in the usage of circa 1920 American I.Q. testers). One is a statement about the presence of a discrete polymorphism; the other is an operationally defined portion of a scale of an aggregate, derivative value that has been normalized in a particular way.

In terms of sex/gender there are multiple processes—hundreds?, thousands?—spanning all of the steps (and many others) in Money’s schema. Most of these processes eventuate in traits that exhibit continuous variation. Many of these continuously varying traits exhibit only minimal covariance and in some cases none at all. This becomes particularly true when we move to behavioral traits of interest in considering the relationship of sex/gender to a particular activity, such as war. For though there are traits, the ability to gestate, for example, that can be described as possessed *only* by women (though, of course, not everyone conventionally classified as a woman has this ability), most traits exhibit continuous variation and vary independently.

This means, for example, that for height—a continuous variable—a population of humans shows a bi-modal distribution, meaning that heights will tend to cluster around two different points, which in turn correspond to categories we call women and men, with the mean height for men higher than the mean height for women. Thus if we graph women and men separately, under two different curves, the result is two normal curves (for height) that *overlap* significantly (see Figure 1.1 below). Thus though a man who happens to be close to the average height for all males will be taller than a woman

close to the average height for women, a tall woman is taller than an average man, and a short man is shorter than an average woman.

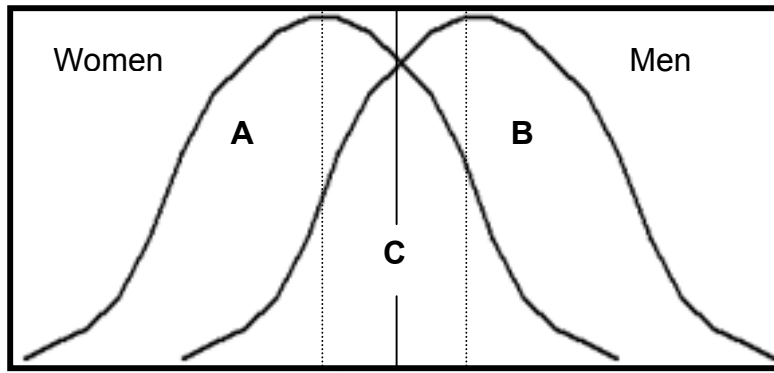


Figure 1.1 – Distribution of Height by Sex/Gender

The same pattern of overlapping curves—although by no means always normal curves—can be seen with most traits. Some overlap only at the very extremes. For example, both men and women produce testosterone, but at least in the case of adults, the amount produced by men is, on average, many times higher and the two curves hardly overlap at all. On many other measures—e.g. lower body strength, spatial computation, average speed over distance on foot, verbal ability, body weight, hand-eye coordination—the curves overlap significantly, sometimes favoring women, sometimes men. In some cases, of course, “favors” can only be defined contextually. A taller person has a potential advantage as a high jumper or in certain kinds of melee combat where reach is important; a shorter person has a potential advantage as an equestrian or in the cockpit of a jet aircraft.

The case, then, is that sex/gender is characterized by (1) overlapping curves, (2) continuous variables that do not necessarily sort neatly into two and only two categories, (3) the intertwining and emergent character of many

characteristics. Taken together I see this as a case where the analytically useful thing to do is to disaggregate traits and sets of traits from the sex/gender rubric and consider them independently with respect to whatever phenomena is under investigation. In other words, I'm making a case for thinking about *biological gender*—that is the biological contributions to phenomena usually thought of as cultural—and *cultural sex*, or the cultural contributions to what is usually thought of as sex. Or, better still, toward the recognition that in the case of many, many traits and sets of traits there is a strong sex/gender mapping, but that the actually observed variation means that even when a biological component to the variation pattern exists, the phenomena cannot be explained fully in biological terms—and vice versa.

The Masculine Continuum and Soldierly Qualities

Though I have spent some time discussing sex/gender in generic terms, this study is primarily interested in masculinity. Masculinity, of course, is neither sex nor gender, but a term connoting some set of traits that men *ought to have*. I say ought to, because in many cultures—those in which masculinity is considered important—masculinity is something that must be acquired and demonstrated. Phenotypic “maleness” may or may not be a prerequisite to the acquisition of masculine traits, but the acquisition of the appropriate traits is often considered necessary in order to become a *real* man.

In David Gilmore's *Manhood in the Making* (1990) he surveys masculine values from cultures around the world. He finds that on such common areas as the relative importance of sex, marriage, procreation, provisioning, protecting, public performance, audacity and generosity there exists a great deal of variation. In some cultures, e.g. Andalusian Spain,

performative excellence is the key masculine value (Gilmore 1990). In others, it might be some combination of carousing and physicality as a young man, followed by responsible and efficacious family life as a mature adult, as amongst the Mechinaku of Central Brazil (Gregor 1977). An examination of the ethnographic record reveals a great deal of such variation with respect to the many roles that a man might be expected to play under certain conditions. In some cultures, men harvest crops, and it is important to his masculinity that he do so. In other cultures, harvesting crops is considered women's work, to be avoided by men. In some cultures men and women both participate in certain activities, say tending children or fishing, in others these are exclusive to one or the other.

This observed diversity of sex/gender roles, then, is consistent with the picture of the biocultural constitution of sex/gender and the complex and often independent variation of particular traits, subject even to reversed assignment from men to women and women to men. There is, however, a set of practices and traits associated with masculinity, which do not exhibit the same degree of variation as other gendered traits. The most common of these are toughness, self-discipline, bravery and duty—these are the masculine traits associated with fighting war.

This most common set of masculine traits—what I gloss as *soldierly masculinity*—is specifically inculcated and encouraged through a broad class of rites of passage, public ritual and ongoing informal testing and competition. Not all warlike societies use all of these modes to produce soldierly masculinity, but the use of one or more is extremely common—for the additional cross-cultural commonality is that manhood must be earned, trained and constantly proven.

Gilmore hangs his interpretation of masculine commonality on neo-Freudian psychoanalysis (Gilmore 1990, 26 –27). I think neo-Freudian ideas have a place, but I don't think they can explain this most wide-spread set of masculine characteristics and the differing types of rites and testing associated with the making of real men. Simply put, neo-Freudian theory relies on the male experience of separating from the mother as a common developmental trauma. This trauma is supposedly derivative of the difficulty of forming a sex/gender identity different from that of the mother, while at the same time establishing an autonomous identity as someone separate (Erikson 1985; Mahler et al. 1975; Rochlin 1980; Stoller and Herdt 1982, Winnicott 1968). Yet all men have mothers from whom they separate, but there are cultures where men are not expected to acquire soldierly traits. In fact, soldierly masculinity is found precisely in that majority of cultures that participate in the war system. Moreover, those cultures relatively lacking in soldierly masculinity are precisely the kind of unsegmented, foraging groups shown by Kelly (2000) to be relatively warless, including the two outliers in Gilmore's sample, the Semai and the Tahitians (Gilmore 1990, 201 – 219).

Making Men: Rites, Rituals and Soldiers

The most important attributes for soldiers are not physical strength and ferocity, but bravery and discipline, both of which require a highly developed ability to suppress and channel emotion.

What war requires of fighters is not blood-lust or activation of murderous impulses. Rather, war requires men to willingly undergo an extremely painful, unpleasant experience—and to hang in there over time despite every instinct to flee. the

basic requirements for being a soldier, furthermore, tend to be the same everywhere. As General Sir John Hackett put it: 'Whether he was handling a slingshot weapon on Hadrian's Wall or whether he's in a main battle tank today, he is essentially the same" (Goldstein 2002, 266; Dyer 1985, 4).

These most characteristic soldierly qualities correspond to the emphases upon toughening and hardening found in manly rituals and manly expectations.

Any number of examples, drawn from diverse and geographically separated cultures could be given (Gilmore 1990, 13-14), but I will offer three, one from Ethiopia, one from nineteenth century Germany, and one from personal experience.

My first example comes from the Amhara, a Semitic-speaking tribe of agriculturalists residing in Ethiopia. For this group the crucial aspects of masculinity are described by the concept of *wand-nat*, which includes physical courage, stoic endurance, and undauntability (Levine 1966, 18, as quoted in Gilmore 1990, 13). As Gilmore explains, in order to prove their *wand-nat*, Amhara youth engage in whipping contests called *buhe* (Reminick 1982, 32). Gilmore's description is as follows:

During the whipping ceremonies, in which all able-bodied male adolescents must participate for their reputation's sake, the air is filled with the cracking of whips. Faces are lacerated, ears torn open, and red and bleeding welts appear (Reminick 1982, 33). Any sign of weakness is greeted with taunts and mockery. As if this were not enough, adolescent Amhara boys are wont to prove their virility by scarring their arms with red-hot embers (Levine 1966, 19; Gilmore 1990, 13).

On the one hand, the example is exotic and titillating, allowing us the conceit of "horrified" voyeuristic pleasure at the excesses of a people who is clearly Other. On the other hand, I am struck at just how familiar even this

“exotic” example of manhood-proving test really is. Young men in the Chicago neighborhood where I lived after my return from Berlin bear scars and boast of self-inflicted cigarette burns on their forearms.

Norbert Elias’s descriptions of Germany’s late nineteenth century dueling fraternities also jump to mind, in particular the *Bestimmungsmensur* (fencing match by appointment). In these “matches,” fraternity members were assigned to a highly ritualized “fight” with someone from a rival fraternity. Each member was required to fence a certain number of matches each semester during which he was closely monitored. He was forced to schedule a rematch if it was decided that he had violated the strict rules of the matches in any way.

The set of expectations for these matches, particularly after 1871 (see chapter 2 for the role of dueling in the late nineteenth century German bourgeoisie), were extremely rigid, designed to demonstrate courage and self-control in the face of pain, not skill or athletic ability. “The caps which had protected the head were done away with, stances which would help to parry the opponent’s thrusts were restricted. Students selected by their fraternities to participate in a fencing match by appointment had to return every thrust, but were allowed to move only hand and arm in doing so” (Elias 1996, 100). In other word, rather than the athletic contest we currently think of as the sport of fencing, these matches were about inflicting punishment and testing discipline.

It was a popular joke to get one of the beginners to bring a live chicken to the fencing ground. It was needed, he was told, so that its flesh could be used to replace the cut-off tips of noses. The rapiers with which the duels by appointment were fought were essentially designed to cut through the skin of the face and skull and the blood vessels lying below the surface. Only the eyes were protected. One could injure one’s opponent with a single blow so that the skin of the head hung down in great shreds. One could split one’s nose and lips so that, for the time being, one could no longer

speak; cut ears might hang down, and blood flow in streams
 from the veins in the temples (Elias 1996, 107).

Crucially, and similarly to the Amhara and other cases, “anyone who revealed himself as weak counted for nothing,” (107) and “anyone who did not satisfy these strict rules was thrown out” (99). Facial scars received in these duels were highly prized in later life, worn as a badge of honor. Nor was the dueling in these fraternities limited to marginal individuals. They included both social elites and intellectuals like Max Weber, who fought many duels as a student.

 The social contexts of the examples above are very different. The basic project of manhood-testing, and the precise characteristics most valued, are nearly identical. Of course, very similar results can be obtained—in terms of testing and training for courage and toughness—with different methods. In my own memory, growing up in rural western Oregon, I never fought unflinching bloody duels or whipped my peers. I was, however, subjected to various “toughening” rituals. I recall, for example, a football practice drill from late elementary school (approximately age 13–14), called the “meat grinder.” In this drill, mandated by the most authoritarian and most respected of the coaches, a single player would set himself a few yards from a line comprised of every other player. One by one the others would run at the set man full speed and deliver a “hit” (a body block in the parlance of American football). I was a relatively big, strong and skilled player in this context, but after the first several repetitions, I became dizzy. After twenty to thirty it was difficult to stand. Though blood was rare and mostly from nosebleeds, everyone who participated in these drills left covered with garish bruises, clearly visible in the locker room post-practice.

 I also remember a more “peer inflicted” form of toughness testing

similar to the Amhara burning themselves with hot coals and the Chicago youths with cigarettes. It was a “game,” popular among grade school boys from about age ten to fourteen, called “Man or Mouse.” In Man or Mouse, the “player” was expected to sit still and show no sign of weakness while another boy rubbed his thumbnail vigorously across the back of his hand. Though this may not sound particularly onerous, in fact the thumbnail would very quickly scrape away the outer layers of skin and create a wound akin to a rug burn or, in extreme cases, an asphalt scrape. Many of my classmates incurred permanent scars in this manner—some of the scrapes, not surprisingly, resulted in severe infections. The point of the game, of course, was to hold out as long as possible without saying “mouse.” In my own case, though I never objected to or refused to participate in the “supervised” meat-grinder football drills, I declined to participate in Man or Mouse and vividly recall the hot rush of shame associated with being a “wussy,” even while thinking that the “game” was unquestionably one of the stupidest I had ever encountered.

Examples of manhood tests could be multiplied almost indefinitely, though the examples listed above are fairly typical. The tests do not always involve simulated combat or direct competition. Toughening tests and training include, but are not limited to, adolescent circumcision, ritual torture, and acts of physical daring such as diving without equipment in shark-infested waters (Gilmore 1990, 12-14; Goldstein 2002, 264). In hunting cultures, the solo kill of a large game animal is often required to qualify as a real man, as in the case of the !Kung San (Gilmore 1990, 15). In a small but non-trivial number of societies, military training and toughening is followed by the requirement that an aspirant actually kill someone in order to prove his manhood (Ulman and Brothers 1988, 155).

The ubiquitous outcome—or at least the desired outcome—of all of these rites, tests and modes of training is a physical and emotional toughening of boys (some would say, a deformation) that prepares them to fight in wars, to be potential soldiers.

The Sex/Gender System

Masculinity, however, is not a simple precipitate of rites and rituals. It exists in a sociocultural context and even those aspects that are the most ubiquitous are still part of a larger cultural system. In fact, though the link between what I call soldierly masculinity and war is fairly clear, it is important, I think, to consider the context of sex/gender within which such masculinity is created. For this purpose, I will turn to Gayle Rubin's idea of a sex-gender system and the production of human beings of specific sex/gender.

Rubin's 1975 essay, "The Traffic in Women," is still one of the most productive pieces of analysis regarding sex/gender roles and the gendered division of labor. She opens it with a bold pronouncement: "The literature on women—both feminist and anti-feminist—is a long rumination on the question of the nature and genesis of women's oppression and social subordination" (157). This strikes me as obviously true and extremely important. I also think this focus forms part of a conundrum that tends to obscure the question of gendered injustice.

Consider: Non-feminist and pre-feminist writing, research and other cultural products tend to take sex/gender as a given. Even when sex/gender is addressed—as in the fin-de-siecle "crisis of masculinity"—it is usually done so from a proscriptive position: *thou shalt not fail in thy manliness*. Feminist (and as Rubin points out, anti-feminist) analysis focuses on the origins of

subordination. Is it nature? Is it culture? The potential problem is not, as certain post-structuralist /post-modernist analyses would have it, that feminist critique of gender oppression buys into “male” categories and modes of power. The problem, as I see it, is that the various suggested points of origin for gender oppression fail to posit a plausible cause or complex of causes. For if we say that women have less access to economic resources and political power, though this is a statement of fact, it does not speak to the question of why. And if we ground our answer to this question in a male conspiracy to disempower women, that simply pushes the question back a step.

A crude version of the male conspiracy theory (Patriarchy with a capital P) features the proposition that men are “naturally” oppressive, aggressive, domineering, etc., or at least more so than women. These traits give men an advantage in a supposed battle of the sexes which they use to gain a one-up position, mutually supporting each other against any challenge from the gendered Other. More nuanced versions of the theory might include some element of “maternal instinct” leading women to be disadvantaged by child-rearing duties, smaller, weaker bodies, or a “natural” tendency toward pacifism.

The vast majority of analyses of gender oppression either try to circumvent questions concerning the reasons why the particular division of labor exists—as in attempts to apply Marxian analyses to gender—or to let these questions of origin evaporate into an indeterminate fog and try to address issues of gender injustice through cultural engineering—even though such inequalities are presumed, though this is never quite stated, to be in some part biologically based.

Mode of Production and the Production of Sex/Gender

The goal of Rubin's essay is to suggest the outline of a theory of sex/gender with a degree of explanatory power similar to that of Marx's theory of capital/wage labor. Of course if gender oppression is already accounted for in the theory of capital, or more generally is a reflection of whatever mode of (economic) production is in use, then the a new theory of sex/gender production would be redundant. Hence the first part of her paper is taken up with a demonstration of where Marxian analysis has failed to account for sex/gender.

Her explanation of capital and relations of production under capitalism is exemplary and worth repeating here both for its elegance and also to set the stage for a critique. She writes,

Marx argued that capitalism is distinguished from all other modes of production by its unique aim: the creation and expansion of capital. Whereas other modes of production might find their purpose in making useful things to satisfy human needs, or in producing a surplus for a ruling nobility, or in producing to insure sufficient sacrifice for the edification of the gods, capitalism produces capital. Capitalism is a set of social relations—forms of property, and so forth—in which production takes the form of turning money, things, and people into capital. And capital is a quantity of goods or money which, when exchanged for labor, reproduces and augments itself by extracting unpaid labor, or surplus value, from labor and into itself (161).

That is, in Marx's definition, capitalism is a set of *relationships* between people, whereby the very terms of the relationships produce the expansion of capital. Capital, then, is a means for extracting *surplus value*.

The terminology here is confusing. After all, what can it mean for value to be surplus? Isn't value, by definition, that which everyone always wants, as

much as they can get? Rubin's gloss is exemplary:

The exchange between capital and labor which produces surplus value, and hence capital, is highly specific. The worker gets a wage; the capitalist gets the things the worker has made during his or her time of employment. If the total value of the things the worker has made exceeds the value of his or her wage, the aim of capitalism has been achieved. The capitalist gets back the cost of the wage, plus an increment—surplus value (161).

The only change I would suggest is to make the exchange between capitalists and laborers instead of “capital” and “labor”. The convention by which the same word, “capital,” stands for both the abstract opposite of labor *and* the ultimate product of capitalist relations of production is confusing even in German, a highly inflected language, and positively obscure in English. There is nothing intrinsically wrong in using a shorthand in which capitalism is said to do this or require that so long as we understand that social systems do not act on their own behalf; they are made up of people and emerge from the actions of people, capitalists and laborers.

The creation of surplus value in capitalist systems is possible because wages are not tied to the value of the things workers make, but by the value of what it takes to *reproduce* the worker. Reproduction here is tricky. In its simplest form it mean the ability to sustain the worker at a level that allows him or her to continue to work. Thus it includes such things as food, shelter, adequate rest and whatever pleasures or enjoyments are necessary to bring him or her back to work.²⁴ In general, the less it costs to reproduce a worker—

²⁴ Considered from the point of view of capital, that is the system of production and reproduction, it does not matter who does the work, so it is not necessary that a specific worker be reproduced at all. Hence if there are enough workers available able to do the work in question, wages need not even pay for minimal reproduction—literal starvation wages. In this sense, if divorced from other considerations (which it never is), capitalism is completely amoral. The only limitation on literally working people to death is the availability of more

i.e. bring him or her back to work the next day—the lower his or her wages and the more surplus value can be extracted.

Here is where many attempts to bring sex/gender into the theory of capitalist relations of production come in. The argument goes like this: the bedrock cost of reproducing a specific worker is determined by the cost in commodities—food, clothes, shelter, etc.—that it takes to keep him or her working. These commodities, however, are not purchased in an immediately or continuously usable form. These commodities require additional labor in order to reproduce workers who are fit to work: food has to be shopped for, prepared and cooked; clothes have to be washed and mended; living spaces have to be cleaned and cared for. In short, housework, typically the work of women, contributes significantly to the reproduction of workers, and thus amounts to unpaid labor which increases the amount of surplus value which can be extracted from the system.

All of this is rather obviously true, if too often neglected as a social reality, “but to explain women’s usefulness to capitalism is one thing. To argue that this usefulness explains the genesis of the oppression of women is quite another” (Rubin 1975, 163). It seems unlikely that all of human history was simply the prologue to capitalism with women predestined to play a particular role in augmenting the increment of surplus value. However valid the critique of the role of women in capitalism might be, it does not explain the origins of the oppression of women.

While acknowledging the power of marxian analysis in understanding class relations and explaining certain aspects of women’s oppression in the context of capitalist societies, Rubin suggests that an alternative mode of

workers able and “willing” to do the work.

analysis is needed to explain the origins of sex/gender and the specific forms of social relations characterized by historical forms of sex and gender. This she calls a sex/gender system and proposes its derivation from against-the-grain readings of Freud and Levi-Strauss.

Structuralism, Psychoanalysis and Kinship

At the intersection of Freud and Levi-Strauss lies the family, family relations and what anthropologists refer to as kinship. Freud's innovation is the location of the development of the individual psyche in the context of the family where he finds various problems and conflicts that center on the attainment of a functioning adult sexuality. Such functionality is presumptively heterosexual and divided by sex/gender, different for men and women. Levi-Strauss deals with many of the same themes addressed by Freud—particularly the incest taboo—and is interested in the origins of culture and social cooperation. Though neither man explicitly addresses the issue of gendered oppression, Rubin sees it as imminent in their writings. “In reading through these works, one begins to have a sense of a systematic social apparatus which takes up females as raw materials and fashions domesticated women as products” (Rubin 1975, 158).

In Rubin's reading of Levi-Strauss, the origins of the incest taboo in the exchange of women is the key point. “Since the existence of incest taboos is universal,” writes Rubin, glossing Levi-Strauss with her usual clarity, “but the content of their prohibitions variable, they cannot be explained as having the aim of preventing the occurrence of genetically close matings” (1975, 173). The factual diversity of whom is forbidden as a sexual partner logically eliminates genetic hygiene as the *only* reason for such prohibitions—

particularly since many such prohibitions exist between persons who are closely related by classification and not by genes. “Rather, the incest taboo imposes the social aim of exogamy and alliance upon the biological events of sex and procreation” (Rubin 1975, 173). “The prohibition on the sexual use of a daughter or sister compels them to be given in marriage to another man, and at the same time it establishes a right to the daughter or sister of this other man.... The woman whom one does not take is, for that very reason, offered up” (Levi-Straus 1969, 51).

And again, put slightly differently, he explains, “The prohibition of incest is less a rule prohibiting marriage with the mother, sister, or daughter, than a rule obliging the mother, sister, or daughter to be given to others. It is the supreme rule of the gift...” (Levi-Strauss 1969, 481, quoted in Rubin 1975, 173).

That is, incest prohibitions are about creating networks of social relationships by giving women as gifts. As gifts, however, women are unique, because gift-women facilitate other exchanges (bride price, dowry) and help to make durable relations. Levi-Strauss quotes an Arapesh man as representative:

What, would you like to marry your sister? What is the matter with you? Don't you want a brother-in-law? Don't you realize that if you marry another man's sister and another man marries your sister, you will have at least two brothers-in-law, while if you marry your own sister you will have none? With whom will you hunt, with whom will you garden, whom will you go visit?” (Levi-Strauss 1969, 485).

The basic point being that affines are useful and that only the incest taboo would insure their acquisition. Thus the exchange of women grounds social order, or at least social organization broader than relatively small family units.

It also implies a certain type of social order. “As long as the relations specify that men exchange women, it is men who are the beneficiaries of the product of such exchanges...” (Rubin 1975, 174).

As with Marx, there is a good bit of interpretive power in Levi-Strauss—as Rubin acknowledges. The idea of the “exchange of women” moves the oppression of women to the dynamics of social systems and away from biology. It also suggests that marriage and kinship may be more important to understanding the oppression of women than commodity relations. Nor is it difficult to find concrete examples of various ways in which women are trafficked, effectively treated as property or quasi-property by men.

Rubin, however, is also critical of Levi-Strauss’s notion of the exchange of women. She doubts that culture can be derived entirely from the incest taboo and the exchange of women. She writes, “The ‘exchange of women’ is neither a definition of culture nor a system in and of itself. The concept is an acute, but condensed, apprehension of certain aspects of the social relations of sex and gender” (Rubin 1975, 176). These relations, conventionally referred to by anthropologists as “kinship systems,” are at once interpretive frameworks and social impositions: people behave in certain ways toward each other based on categories, categories which they pass on along with the approved behaviors. Such systems are, “therefore, ‘production’ in the most general sense of the term: a molding, a transformation of objects (in this case, people) to and by a subjective purpose” (Rubin 1975, 176).

This is the seam in Rubin’s essay, the point where she makes the vital suggestion—that societies “produce” individuals whose prescribed modes of relating to one another are, in effect, what we call sex/gender—but she does not develop the idea very far. Following Levi-Strauss, she suggests that local

variation in gender roles disproves a biological basis for such specialization. In his account such specialization must serve some other purpose, specifically, “to insure the union of men and women by making the smallest viable economic unit contain at least one man and one woman” (Rubin 1975, 178).

That is to say, for Levi-Strauss, the simultaneous ubiquity of the division of labor by gender and the fact of its endless local variations means that it is the division itself which is vital, rather than any local variation in its content. Its purpose is to force men and women to depend on each other by causing them to specialize in different tasks. Rubin puts a spin on this, explaining it in terms of mandating heterosexuality:

The division of labor by sex can therefore be seen as a “taboo”: a taboo against the sameness of men and women, a taboo dividing the sexes into two mutually exclusive categories, a taboo which exacerbates the biological differences between the sexes and thereby *creates* gender. The division of labor can also be seen as a taboo against sexual arrangements other than those containing at least one man and one woman, thereby enjoining heterosexual marriage (Rubin 1975, 178).

Thus she teases out the implications in Levi-Strauss, arguing that heterosexual marriage becomes the foundation of kinship systems because males and females become “men” and “women” via a process that produces each as incomplete, needing the other. Heterosexual marriage must be guaranteed by the manufacture of economic interdependence, perhaps because heterosexuality itself is a weak force. Yet, she acknowledges, far more is going on in kinship and gender identity than the suppression of homosexuality. Viewed globally, many variations exist, including very specific forms of heterosexual requirement, e.g. cross-cousin marriage, as well as institutionalized homosexuality.

It is at this point that she turns to psychoanalysis for help in understanding the impetus behind kinship patterns, the manufacture of sex/gender and the traffic in women. She extracts a Freud seen through the lens of Lacanian feminism, presenting a theory of femininity in the following terms:

(1) kinship systems impose sexual prohibitions that mark human children in particular ways, depending on their place in the system.

(2) negotiation of the Oedipal complex requires establishing a relationship to the phallus, disjoined from anatomy, as a symbolic nexus of individual potency and social authority.

(3) this relationship is necessarily different for men and women, because men have rights to women that women do not have in themselves. The phallus, though not to be confused with the anatomical penis, is something that men have, but which simply passes through women.

Thus, “in the normal course of events, the boy renounces his mother for fear that otherwise his father would castrate him (refuse to give him the phallus and make him a girl)” (Rubin 1975, 193). The boy child, in essence, is bribed to concede the mother to the father in exchange for the phallus—the sign of social approval, the evidence of potent manhood. Though he gives up his initial love interest, with the phallus comes the guarantee of a woman of his own and his libidinal organization retains a heterosexual orientation.

“What happens to the girl,” however, “is more complex” (Rubin 1975, 193). Her discovery of the incest taboo is paired with the discovery that she is not just forbidden from having her mother, but from all women, by the rule of heterosexuality. The result is a double forbiddance at the nexus of individual identity and sexual orientation. “The mother, and all women by extension, can

only be properly beloved by someone ‘with a penis’ (phallus). Since the girl has no ‘phallus,’ she has no ‘right’ to love her mother or another woman, since she is herself destined to some man. She does not have the symbolic token which can be exchanged for a woman” (Rubin 1975, 194).

This picture of male and female sexuality, of course, is a mirror image of masculine and feminine identities, which is what the post-Freudians emphasize. With respect to identity, it is the boy child who is in the more “complex” situation, since he must not only “separate” from his mother, but establish a gender identity which is different from hers. The symmetry is predictable if we take gender differentiation as a necessary component of sexual attraction. There are enough inconvenient outliers however—in the form of homoerotic, gender bent and “perverse” attractions—that the *necessity* of gender differentiation as a prop to attraction is clearly counterfactual. In my evaluation, existing psychoanalytic models do have a certain explanatory power, but they have the feel of Ptolemaic astronomy, inventing nested epicycles to explain observable phenomena rather than positing a new center of the universe. The question I would pose to psychoanalysis is this: What if human social systems don’t revolve significantly around individual psycho-sexual development?

Habitus and Evolution

In spite of its limitations, Rubin’s essay is a remarkable attempt to address the issues involved in the generation of sex/gender and its consequences. Her goal, salutary as I see it, is to imagine a model that does for sex/gender relations what marxian theory does for class relations. The pregnant moment in her paper is in her invocation of Marx’s sense of

production in the most general sense, “A kinship system is an imposition of social ends upon a part of the natural world. It is therefore ‘production’ in the most general sense of the term: a molding, a transformation of objects (in this case, people) to and by a subjective purpose” (Rubin 1975, 176). More than the critique of capitalist relations of production per se, this is the biggest idea imminent in Marx: people make themselves (and each other), even as they are made by a world that was itself made in previous cycles of productive activity (Turner 1985).

If sex/gender is a product, that is produced through human activity, then an understanding of sex/gender should start with a description of concrete moments of its production and reproduction. Marx begins his analysis of capital in the first volume of *Kapital* with the commodity form, yet he is at pains to make the reader understand that he is starting in the midst of a process that is constantly moving. In some sense, it doesn’t matter where you start, as long as you start with the recognition that the place from which you start is never *tabula rasa*. There is a material body, which has been shaped by an evolutionary past. There is also a sociocultural past, also shaped by various selective and contagious change and yet self-replicating. This mode of self-replication, wherein people make cultures that in turn act back on people, is what Bourdieu and Elias refer to as a *habitus*, the sociocultural equivalent of an evolutionary context.

To understand sex/gender, I argue that you have to begin by de-centering individual psychosexual development and start with the idea of the social production of appropriately gendered, erotically adapted individuals, whereby “appropriately” I mean in accord with local expectations. “Regardless of other normative distinctions made,” writes David Gilmore, “all societies

distinguish between male and female” (1990, 9). They do more than recognize a biologically-inscribed difference; they also, without exception, “provide institutionalized sex-appropriate roles for adult men and women” (9)—i.e., they construct sex/gender. A few societies, a very few, construct more than two genders, as in the “intermediate” *berdache* of the Cheyenne and the *mahu* of Tahiti (9). The question is, however many variants of sex/gender are recognized, what are the forces that go into producing gendered persons?

The short form of the answer is that human children are shaped to fit into a matrix of already existing—but potentially shifting—roles and relationships. This is done both intentionally, through teaching, training, punishment and reward, and through various unconscious processes—unintended role modeling, imitation—and through constraints and opportunities. The processes work together. Hence where elaborate, gender marked clothing is available, parents purposefully dress children in a particular way to match the ascribed sex/gender. Children are often ridiculed for dressing in gender-inappropriate ways, or even for wearing clothing in a way that does not properly respect the seriousness of gender convention. They also see the way successful adults and older children dress and seek to imitate them.

The process does not, however, start with the children. The roles and relations are pre-existing, waiting for the children to be rendered, through human activity and their own participation. What is more, in order to count as an appropriate social person, each child must somehow fit or be fitted within the boundaries of one of two (or at most, a scant handful) types, in spite of the genetically-unique starting place of each child. Given a range of capacities,

people must be systematically trained in the gender-appropriate behaviors, dispositions, postures and activities.

The institutions that train and direct, of course, must themselves be produced, and this too happens through human activity. Thus in some way groups develop habits, technologies and cultural idioms that are self-reproducing. That is, in going about their business, people generate the very institutions that in turn shape people. This is what Pierre Bourdieu (1987) refers to as a habitus: people generate institutions through modes of acting; these institutions in turn train and direct people to the modes of action which produce and reproduce the institutions. In this way a cyclic recursion ensues, each turn of the cycle reproducing the set of factors that produced it.

In Bourdieu, however, habitus as an explanatory model tends toward stasis, that is, as a way to describe how societies reproduce themselves in more or less the same forms over time. This is an important question, because reproduction in the sense of continuous replication of very similar sets of relations, is intrinsically difficult. Every time a copy of something is made, whether a gene, a photograph, or a rite of initiation into manhood, there exists a potential for error. A variety of processes contribute to this potential.

Replicative fade, for example, sets in when one makes a photocopy of a photocopy. In only a very few "generations," detail is lost. There are also situational constraints and mutations. This could happen if paper becomes difficult to obtain and copies have to be made smaller or when someone spills coffee on the glass. In order for copies to be made with any hope of integrity, correcting mechanisms must be built into the replicative process. This editing, however, introduces still more opportunities for change. Even an explanatory or interpretive note, e.g. one explaining that in former times copies were

larger, constitutes a kind of change that may or may not turn out to be meaningful.

In the case of human institutions, dispositions and capacities, the successful reproduction from generation to generation is highly politicized. People are routinely accused of heresy, of hide-bound traditionalism, of heterodoxy, blasphemy and deviation. Social power is mobilized around the true, correct, authentic, etc. replication of the culture and those in power run great risks when they neglect, or are understood as being neglectful of, the appropriate reproduction of the culture. Given all of these obstacles, there must be powerful countervailing forces tending toward conservation of cultural forms.

There are of course. One example is a schema, or learned mode of interaction with an object. Typing, for example. The device and the skill to type, brought together, form a conservative totality, for knowing how to type is not an abstraction easily subject to invention, since meaningful variation would depend on changes in both knowledge and object (which has, in fact, happened with the introduction of personal computers). Perhaps a simpler example is the enduring organization of space, as in the construction of roads, fences, canals, durable structures and the like. These culturally-constructed spaces shape and constrain what happens within them in ways that encourage the reproduction of cultural forms—within certain parameters. Other examples include books, mathematical formula, idioms, folk wisdom, mnemonic devices, and standard operating procedures. Also, there is some help from innate human capacities, in that for most people it is quite possible to develop “habits” that are “second nature,” meaning things they do automatically, even though they are not “instinctive.”

In the usage of Norbert Elias, however, the concept of habitus is slightly more fluid. “Elias contends that ‘the fortunes of a nation over the centuries become sedimented into the habitus of its individual members’ [Elias 1996, 19], and it follows from this that habitus changes over time precisely because the fortunes and experiences of a nation (or of its constituent groupings) continue to change and accumulate” (Dunning and Mennell 1996, ix, preface to Elias 1996). Thus change is part of habitus, even if the trend of habitus qua habitus is toward continuity.

In a larger sense, this takes us back to the evolutionary models discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Type C models, that include both selective and contagious modes of transmission and change.

To review: War probably has its origins about 10,000 years ago. Most contemporary societies are not warless, but there continue to be examples of warless societies. The threshold for war is a certain level of social organization, the formation of segmented groups (e.g. lineages) or more complex social groupings. This corresponds to the idea of social substitution, of one person being equivalent to another. Certainly the capacity for both lethal violence and peaceful cooperation are firmly grounded in human biology. War however is more than just violence, or even intergroup violence, it involves both social substitution and has organized, purposive character.

Sex/Gender is a complex amalgam of traits that exhibit a lot of variation with mixtures of biological and cultural aspects and emergences. Masculinity fits into a system of sex/gender as a set of ideals that men are expected to acquire and practice. It varies considerably across culture *except* with respect to traits linked to war-fighting, what I call soldierly masculinity, which is more or less ubiquitous in those societies that fight wars.

Masculinity exists in cultural contexts in which issues of economic activity, sexual reproduction, social alliance and family form are also present, but the specific forms of all these vary from culture to culture. The specific contexts, however, are important in shaping the local variations found between cultures.

The question, then, is just how do war and masculinity come to co-vary the way they do? I suspect, though the matter requires further investigation, that it is the presence of war, or rather, the development of a standing war system between groups, that exerts the pressures that lead to the creation of soldierly masculinity. The basis for this proposition is logical: soldierly masculinity either doesn't exist, or is relatively muted, in unsegmented, warless societies. The least warlike societies, tend to have the least onerous forms of manhood initiation and least regard for soldierly values. More warlike societies tend to have initiations, rites of toughening and training, and elaborated beliefs about the importance of manhood itself. Therefore, the proposition is that with the advent of war an inter-group war system develops. This system links groups together by a number of processes that include warfare. The system exerts certain pressures that leads to the development of the rites, rituals and regimens through which soldierly masculinity is inculcated and the social expectations and rewards that encourage boys to acquire such masculinity.

The exact combination of processes and factors that moved particular groups to adopt regimes leading to the creation of some portion of its members as having soldierly characteristics is difficult to reconstruct. One possibility is a simple type C adaptationist model. In this case one or more groups varying in degree of soldierly masculinity already existing—perhaps by

“pre-adaptation” of traits for some other purpose, hunting perhaps, or ritual—might gain an advantage, presumably in warfare itself. Such groups would subsequently thrive through conquest and/or strong defenses and tend to expand, embedding their form of masculinity in the local incarnation of the war system.

Alternatively, in a type C contagion model, soldierly masculinity need not even grant an advantage in war. It could simply be copied because it was seen as attractive by other groups, perhaps because they believed it would give them an advantage in war, an area of endeavor fraught with uncertainty and fear and where it is difficult to ignore any potential advantage.

The two modes, of course, are not exclusive of one another, and the rites, rituals and regimes of training, once established, might henceforth have a quite independent life, acquiring meanings and importance far beyond war.

The actual mode of dispersion certainly is worthy of further study, but the basic point is that at the point of social complexity where not just war but a war system emerges, pressures toward the spread of certain forms of masculinity ensue. These forms might be pre-existing adaptations, developed for quite different reasons, and adopted parasitically by the war system; they might be directly shaped by selective forces, or they might even be invented from whole cloth. However originating, once extant, they are subject to spread by contagion, e.g. imitation, conquest, theft, immigration, etc.

So if the social production of soldiers is plausible at the point in human history where war comes on the scene, and we have seen that in fact for most of human history soldierly values have been bound up with masculinity—itsself a complex precipitate of sex/gender—the question remains: why men?

Why Men

If a group has a use for soldiers, and soldiers need to be raised up to have soldierly qualities, then why not train everyone and let the training itself sort out the most potentially war-adept, be they male or female? The question arises because of the overlapping curves discussed above. Some women would on any conceivable measure of war-adeptness score well ahead of most men. Moreover, the few verifiable instances where women have been soldiers in relatively large numbers, they have performed well and contributed to the successes of the armies they fought in, obliterating the objection that as women they would be unable to learn soldiering. So why only men as soldiers so much of the time?

In the first place it has to be acknowledged that there is a difference between inculcation with soldierly values and training as a soldier. Given that combat soldiers consume large amounts of group resources—weapons, training, food—not everyone can be a soldier. Societies may hold soldierly training and the potential for universal mobilization as an ideal, the reality is that someone has to plant and harvest, tend children, prepare food, repair weapons and continue the daily business of living.

It is also highly probable that one important reason everyone is not trained and prepared for war is that such training, at least in most of its historic iterations, is socially detrimental in non-war situations. Wars, though not “unnatural,” are nonetheless extraordinarily stressful. Effective soldiers learn to shut down or divert emotional responses like fear, horror and grief and “soldier on.” Almost no one, however, can do this indefinitely under battlefield conditions and a large percentage of individuals exposed to ongoing

conditions of war suffer enduring psychological damage, e.g. post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), from the experience (Gabriel 1987; Dean 1997).

Nor is the impact of soldierly training and toughening limited to those actually exposed to combat. The ability to shut down emotionally, to suppress immediate responses such as fear or grief, is adaptive under certain circumstances, but comes at a price. “Biology endows us with a range of emotional responses because they are useful in a complex language-using social species whose members depend on each other’s cooperation. To truncate this range of responses—such as by losing the ability to cry—diminishes a society” (Goldstein 2001, 269).

Emotional crippling in men means that women end up burdened with the majority of communicative, emotionally nurturing and empathic tasks in relationships. Not all men, of course, are equally affected, or affected in the same way, by the training. Some fail or refuse to be trained and hardened and thereby become negative examples, often paying a price in ridicule and contempt. Some make it through the training but are endowed with enough psychic flexibility to thrive, especially given the various bribes and spoils that accrue to war-adapted men. Some, probably more than anyone would like to admit, end up so damaged by the training for and/or experience of war that the capacity for empathy and communication are monstrously deformed. No one is unaffected.

It would seem then, that the maladaptive aspects of war-training and war-fighting, make it better for the minimum number of persons possible to receive such training. Thus efforts to achieve the maximum war capacity—adaptive in a time of war—and the best capacity for intragroup cooperation and communication, are at odds. In any case, actually-existing cultures have

solved the problem through a division of labor in which men, in most times and places, have been schooled in the characteristics of the soldier.

Remembering that sex/gender traits tend to have both biological and cultural components, that interlock in complex ways, we can nonetheless also take note that men tend to have average advantages on many war-adaptive qualities, such as size, strength and spatial cognition (useful in cross-country navigation). These average advantages would not lead to the exclusion of women from soldierly roles, unless selection is on the basis of something other than ability. I suggest that the answer to this riddle is that the slight average advantage of men is linked to an enhanced gender identity that includes the elements of soldierly masculinity linked to social privileges. Why? Because acquiring soldierly traits, much less fighting in wars, is onerous, and sex/gender, a previously existing if less important social division, becomes linked to both soldiering and social privilege.

Goldstein puts it this way:

...killing in war does not come naturally for either gender, yet the potential for war has been universal in human societies. To help overcome soldiers' reluctance to fight, cultures develop gender roles to equate "manhood" with toughness under fire. Across cultures and through time, the selection of men as potential combatants (and women for feminine war support roles) has helped shape the war system. In turn, the pervasiveness of war in history has influenced gender profoundly—especially gender norms in child-rearing (Goldstein 2001, 9).

Or, more succinctly, "gender identity becomes a tool with which societies induce men to fight" (Goldstein 2001, 252).

Furthermore, as argued above, the process of turning someone into an effective soldier tends to have a negative impact on his ability to perform other

tasks, described here as “intragroup cooperation.” This in itself, quite apart from the experience of combat, is difficult and expensive for both the society and the individual. Many of the “privileges of manhood” are actually bribes given out to men as the carrot part of a carrot and stick regime to induce them to accept the full package of masculinity—that is, to act the role of potential soldiers. This reward and punishment regime is reinforced by dualistic categorical thinking that transforms a range of possibilities into a clear-cut division.

Of course male privilege does not follow automatically or only from the selection of men as soldiers. Moreover, not all men become soldiers, yet the privileges of manhood extend to all men, or at least to all “real men,” meaning those who measure up to the locally construed standards of masculinity. Relatively few contemporary societies, in fact, are governed by active soldiers—even if former soldiers are quite common in this role. This, too, is adaptive.

Historically, soldier-led societies, and societies oriented disproportionately to the needs of the war system, have been prone to cataclysmic failure following from spectacular misjudgments.²⁵ Such misjudgments can, of course, also be made on the side of peace, but the same forces that mold men for the battlefield, also tend to inhibit, or at least limit, their ability to think outside the war box.

Biological factors alone, as noted above, cannot explain the gendered division of labor with respect to war-fighting. Even considering factors such as size and strength that favor the selection of men as soldiers, a selection based on such criteria would still lead to the training and deployment of large, strong

²⁵ Germany between 1890 and 1945 is a prime example.

women. The decisive reason for masculine militaries can probably be located in gender identity. With masculine identity comes certain privileges, which I regard as bribes, as well as expectations and punishments, which I see as goads. These bribes and goads compel men toward the acquisition of soldierly masculinity—fear of war compels the reproduction of this particular form of masculinity down through the generations.

Soldierly masculinity is in effect what emerges from the interaction of the war system and the sex/gender system. It is the name given to the characteristics of war-trained human beings—even if it also includes other characteristics having to do, for example, with ritual or economic activity. The boundaries of masculinity are policed; shame is one of the primary goads used to make males into soldiers. To the extent that this is true, the inclusion of those who are by definition “not men” in the military threatens the dynamic. A non-commissioned officer in the United States Army put it this way: having women in the ranks “sort of makes the man to feel like—I’m not really the man I thought I was, I’ve got a female who can do the same job” (Astrachan 1986, 61, quote in Goldstein 2001, 283).

One enthusiastic young German Lieutenant told me, in the wake of a European court ruling (2000) that opened the way for women to serve in the Bundeswehr, that the question is not the performance of women who enlist. Women can be tested and those who don’t measure up to established standards can be rejected. The real problem is that “women make men nervous, if they are thought of as women, in the army.” Most men will accept it, he explained, even though “they believe that women in the army, especially in war, makes it harder for the men.” This thought, he told me, would remain largely unspoken because of “political correctness,” but he thought that male

soldiers wanted, perhaps needed, to see themselves as fighting for something and that women represent that for men. In other words, women threaten the self-image of men as protectors, as well as their egos, when they join the military. Traditionally women are bribes and compensations for the soldierly man—not colleagues.

Nor are these attitudes confined to the rank and file. The move to a volunteer force, with market driven demands for personnel, has led to some changes in the gender composition of the American military in recent years. Nonetheless the U.S. armed forces, like militaries the world over, has been remarkably resistant to change and this reluctance is reflected in the attitudes of senior soldiers—particularly in the years before it became impolite to state such opinions publicly. In 1979 General William Westmoreland, commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, told the Congress, “No man with gumption wants a woman to fight his nation’s battles” (Francke 1997, 23). In 1980 the Marine Corps Commandant put it even more explicitly. Women in combat positions “would be an enormous psychological distraction for the male who wants to think that he’s fighting for that woman somewhere behind.... When you get right down to it, you’ve got to protect the manliness of war” (Enloe 1983, 153-54, quoted in Goldstein 2002, 283). The “manliness of war” is nothing other than an apology for the system by which human beings, born with a multitude of potentials, are systematically trained and prodded to follow a path that ends, for many of them, on the battlefield.

CHAPTER 2
THE WAR SYSTEM, MASCULINITY
AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATION-STATE

It is tempting to describe the 750 year old town of Strausberg as quaint or picturesque, but moody is probably more accurate. It is located at the extreme eastern end of Berlin's justly renowned public transit system—placing it just barely within the orbit of the German Hauptstadt. The trip from downtown, which I took quite often during my two years in the field, takes about an hour—speaking strictly of linear durational time. Subjectively it's more like twenty years. Backward.

The journey is on the S-Bahn, or commuter train, line S-5, which originates at the Zoologischer Garten station and terminates at Strausberg Nord. The contrast could hardly be more marked. The Zoo station (Bahnhof Zoo in local parlance) is a combination commuter, subway and cross country rail nexus located in the heart of the old West Berlin and housing its own shopping mall. The station at Strausberg Nord, if it can even be dignified with that appellation, is a simple dead end. Trains come to the end of the line, stop, and then reverse direction without even a circular turn about. Weeds grow through the cracks in the concrete platform. The black steel and Plexiglas shelters stink of urine and do little to protect travelers from the perpetual winds. Obscenities are scratched into the surfaces. Given that I got off there at all times of year, there must have been many pleasant sunny days—but in my memory the stop is painted gray. Whereas the differences between East and West Berlin are being rapidly erased, such that a naïve traveler would, at this remove, have a hard time discerning any systematic difference in the city

proper, in Strausberg they are palpable.

To be fair, I'm not really speaking of the town proper, but of the small corner of the region near the aforementioned end of the line. To be doubly fair, a good portion of the general gloominess of the place is likely attributable to the usual difference between a thriving, bustling downtown with plenty of shops and pedestrian traffic and a someone isolated suburb.

There is something else, however. During the time of the DDR, the Nationalvolksarmee (NVA), the old East German military, maintained significant military facilities here. Many former NVA officers and their families still reside in the area. Since the Wall came down,¹ the Bundeswehr has taken over these facilities and expanded them significantly. The local population keeps its distance, suspicious if not overtly hostile. When I stepped off the train at Strausberg Nord for the first time and asked for directions to the Bundeswehr facilities, I was met with a long silence followed by a taciturn nod of the head. One former NVA officer who successfully made the transition to the Bundeswehr—a pleasant, mid-level officer in his mid-forties—told me of being called a *Verräter* (traitor).

The Bundeswehr facilities, new and inherited, are about a ten minute walk from the station. The facility itself is open, lacking both guards and fence—the ubiquitous markers of most military installations—inviting approach by the public. Among the agencies housed here are the Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr, section five of the Zentrum

¹ The German phrase is “seit die Wende” or literally, “since the change.” As of this writing, the phrase refers unambiguously to the collapse of the former East Germany and subsequent unification with the West. Like the phrase “post-war,” however, the reference is contextually bound. In the old Federal Republic in 1988, for example, “seit die Wende” would have referred to the shift from SPD led, left-leaning government, to the resurrection of the CDU under Kohl and a right-leaning government.

Innere Führung and a major new military archive that is open to all. Also located here is the Akademie der Bundeswehr für Information und Kommunikation (AIK), housed in a monumental modernist box constructed by the NVA. Officers and NCOs who work in this building delight in demonstrating that “handies” (cell phones) don’t work inside it—“...because the NVA used so much steel in its construction.” I conducted much of my fieldwork inside this building, attending trainings and workshops conducted by the Akademie.

One such course (*Lehrgang*), important to the career non-commissioned officers, is the course for *Wehrdienstberatungsfeldwebel* (lit.: military service advising sergeants, but the effective equivalent of recruiters). This three week course includes training in basic communication skills, Bundeswehr structures and administrative procedures, and career paths and options. The NCOs attending this Lehrgang tended to be of the Hauptfeldwebel and Stabsfeldwebel rank, approximately equal to sergeant first class and master sergeant or first sergeant in the American Army, or in other words senior NCOs with 15 to 20 years of service behind them. Successful completion of the course was essential to their military careers.

I felt a certain kinship with these men. They tended to come from working class backgrounds. For the most part they were within a few years of my age and had begun their service at about the same time I began mine, in the late 1970s or early 1980s. They were holdovers from the cold war. Men of equivalent rank in the American military typically combine professional competence with a hard-bitten, often cynical demeanor. By this point in their careers they would have spent years dealing with the physical, emotional and relentlessly bureaucratic demands of military life. Moreover, they would have spent most of their adult lives closely managing the work of lower enlisted

soldiers, oftentimes young men with short fuses, short attention spans and big chips on their shoulders. All of this takes a toll.

From the first, the Bundeswehr NCOs attending these seminars seemed different. Though they came from socioeconomic and educational backgrounds similar to those of their American counterparts, to my eyes and ears they lacked the penchant for casual brutality and confrontation so common in my experience of the American military. Granted, this was a select group of professionals, but they came from every military specialty, and high ranking American NCOs—first sergeants and sergeant majors—often present the hardest, roughest exteriors.

The difference between the two militaries was brought home to me by an incident that occurred early on in my fieldwork. About two weeks into my first Wehrdeinstberater Lehrgang, after a particularly grueling three-hour lecture on administrative procedure in the Bundeswehr, the instructor called for a break. Worn down by the lecture, the bulk of those in attendance remained in the classroom, standing to stretch in place and commiserate with one another. I ducked out to use the restroom and when I returned a few minutes later, I noted a certain charge in the air, some of the attendees stifling chortles and casting side-long glances in my direction.

“Herr Gardiner,” asked one attendee, “Möchten Sie ein Stück Kaugummi?” (“Mr. Gardiner, would you care for a piece of chewing gum?”)

“Danke,” I said, thank you. It was so obvious that something was up that to decline would have demonstrated conclusively that I wasn’t willing to play. I took the piece from the package, noting that it was a sour apple flavor, unwrapped it and popped it in my mouth.

The group of German NCOs in the room watched with varying levels of

interest as I started to chew. The taste was sour and peppery, fairly strong but not unpleasantly so—at least to my curry and jalapeno-trained palate.

As I started to chew some of the others started to make faces and it became clear that they had previously accepted pieces and were suffering from the experience. One man was actually starting to sweat.

“Wie schmecht?” asked the NCO who had offered the gum—how is it?

“Schmecht gut,” I answered. It’s good.

“Echt?” he asked, slight incredulous—really?

“Ja,” I said, as one of the other victims spat his piece onto a sheet of hastily torn notebook paper. It dawned on me that I was being attributed with either a freakish palate or a surplus of stoicism and perhaps both.

“Americans like spicy foods,” I explained.

The group went on about its business, perhaps slightly disappointed that the sour apple gum hadn’t made a bigger impression on me. But if the gum failed to impress, the incident certainly stuck in my mind. Several hours later, on the long train ride back to Berlin, I realized that I had just been through a kind of hazing incident. It took me a while to recognize it as such, not least because of the almost absurd—by American military standards—mildness of the test. Food related “practical jokes” or hazing at the expense of newcomers is certainly common enough, but for the soldiers I knew a “good” joke would have been far more severe—the sort of raw jalapeno extract in the coffee stunt that would have a one-in-three chance of sending someone to the emergency room.

Of course in many ways the situations are incommensurable—a foreign anthropologist with past military experience is not the same kind of mark as a recruit in basic training or a newbie at his first active duty assignment. My

interpretive frame for the hazing incident, however, is the many interviews I conducted with both active duty and former Bundeswehr soldiers of ranks from draftee to full colonel. Many of these subjects, particularly the former draftees who had spent the minimum amount of time in the military, complained bitterly about their experiences. Yet even the most critical of my interviewees tended to complain about a loss of control, the lack of a serious work ethic, sexual licentiousness and a general lack of purpose, rather than specific incidents of hazing, macho testing, or casual cruelty. By contrast, virtually any American soldier or former soldier would have a grab bag full of such stories to tell, which he (or increasingly she) could tell with varying degrees of good humor depending upon whether he/she was the victim or merely a witness.

The sour apple gum incident came at a crucial moment in my research, though I didn't realize it at the time. Reflecting on it months, and then years later, I recognized it as emblematic of a crucial difference between the German and American militaries (and from the militaries of other Great Power and former Great Power countries such as France, Britain and the Soviet Union). In a nutshell, the contemporary German military—amongst other differences—seems to be relatively lacking in the kinds of official and unofficial rituals of *toughening* found in many other militaries. I say relatively lacking, because of course, like any military, German soldiers are exposed to the elements, experience cross-country road marches and spend time “in the field,” sleeping outdoors. There seems, however, to be little of the celebration of the “hard core,” the demonstratively macho, gratuitously sadistic or intentionally more painful than necessary experience.

As I will discuss below in the historical chapters, this marks a significant change in the construction of German soldierly masculinity. German (and

especially Prussian) armies since the reforms of the Napoleonic era have been known for two things: a goal-oriented, flexible style of battle organization (*Auftragstaktik*) along with a merciless regime of training to obedience for the common soldier (*Kadavergehorsamkeit*—literally, corpse obedience). Young men who aspired to a military career—or even a commission in the reserves—were subjected to extreme forms of hazing and manhood testing in fencing fraternities. Recruits were routinely brutalized by sadistic noncommissioned officers. And all of this was done in the name of producing “superior” men who would have the courage to move on command when they came under fire.

To a certain extent, of course, I had anticipated finding in the Bundeswehr an armed force that was significantly different from German militaries of the past. Even before arriving in Germany, I had read a good bit about the foundational concepts of the Bundeswehr, summarized in the phrases *Innere Führung* and *Staatsbürger in Uniform*.² These concepts, along with the integration of the German armed forces into the Western alliance, the constitutional right to refuse to serve in the military, and the much touted principles of “openness” and integration into the larger society suggested a kinder and gentler military—at least on paper. What I didn’t know is to what extent these democratic reforms were actually practiced. What I began to

² Wolf Graf von Baudissin, a charismatic and controversial figure amongst the team of officers appointed to develop doctrine and policy for the Bundeswehr when it was founded in the 1950s, is generally credited with developing and popularizing the twin concepts “Innere Führung” and “Staatsbürger in Uniform.” *Innere Führung*, literally “inner leadership,” is accounted to be particularly resistant to translation. This is at least partially because even forty years later, the concept remains controversial and its definition is contested. Whereas *Staatsbürger in Uniform*—citizens in uniform—is fairly straightforward, when coupled with *Innere Führung* the two concepts point to the idea of soldiers as citizens first, balancing their military duty with respect for the rule of law as inscribed in the Grundgesetz and universal human rights. *Innere Führung* also means that soldierly obedience must flow from both understanding and commitment to mission and that the individual soldier is always responsible to refuse to obey orders he deems unlawful, mission inappropriate or in contradiction to basic ethical principles (see, for example, Bundeswehr 1997, 94-95). “Innere Führung” in *1000 Stichworte zur Bundeswehr* [Berlin: Verlag E.S. Mittler & Sohn GmbH, 1997, 94-95).

suspect is that the reforms in the context of the institution amounted to an insightful and early codification of changes in German society itself with respect to the construction of normative masculinity.

As I continued with my analysis, I began to wonder about the relationship between the social organization of violence within a society, that society's place in an international war system, and the construction of masculinity. Causality, of course, is a notoriously difficult nut to crack when speaking of any particular human trait or social institution. It is often easy enough to devise a "just-so" story about the present utility of a particular habit, custom or institutional practice. Such a functional description, however, is rarely (if ever) sufficient to explain either how the habit or trait came to be in the first place, or what it means to any particular human subject. In spite of these difficulties, I came to believe that the relations that obtain between organized intergroup conflict and gender are not only significant, but key to understanding changes in constructions of contemporary masculinity. This chapter represents an attempt to begin to trace out some of the historical relationships between gender and war.

Historical Contexts

If the theoretical framework presented in chapter 1 is generally correct and soldierly masculinity is largely a product of what I call the war system, then it seems quite likely that changes in one, should be reflected, sooner or later, in the other. This chapter is an attempt to trace some of the key developments in the relationship between the war system and masculinity in the long nineteenth century. My purpose is to look at some of these shifts as a

way to better understand both their dynamics as they happen and to see the present as shaped by the past.

The timeframe under consideration in this chapter, roughly 1790 to 1914, is historically both too vast and too varied to examine in any detail here. I am consciously mining the past in search of material with which to illuminate the present. My eye has been drawn to the development and proliferation of the nation-state, the shift in political systems from monarchical to liberal/representative ones, and the shift from an economy dominated by agriculture and handicraft to an industrial mode of production. Any historical understanding of shifts in masculinity and their relationship to the war system must, at a minimum, consider these phenomena. Further, I argue that these social, political and economic developments cannot themselves be well understood without reference to war and gender.

Germany makes an almost ideal test case for examining shifting interrelationships between the war system/masculinity, social organization, political systems and economics. In Germany, more than any other Western European nation-state, the military has played a central role in social and political developments. As Gordon Craig put it in his canonical history of the Prussian military:

If, as has often been said, the Prussian army made the Prussian state, it is also true that that the subsequent political development of Prussia and Germany was dependent, to a far greater extent than is true of any other country, upon the organization of the army, its relationship to the sovereign power, and the will of its leaders (Craig 1964, xiv).

This was apparent in the so-called era of reform (1807–1813), when Gerhard

Scharnhorst, along with his followers Gneisenau, Stein and Boyen, remade the Prussian army along “rational” lines, centralizing command and control and democratizing recruitment. These reforms proved critical to the victory in the war of liberation against the forces of Napoleon and were promptly eviscerated in its wake, mainly because of resistance within the officer corps.

As a result of the successful war of liberation, the prospect of a Prussian-led German nation-state gained considerable ground. Arguably the victory over Napoleon signaled both the beginnings of the special relationship between army and state and the viability of Prussian leadership in Germany. In every subsequent crisis of the nineteenth century—1848, the 1860s, the war with Austria and the Franco-Prussian war that led to unification—the military played a key role, always siding with the monarchy and the old order. The pushed Germany into the First World War and quashed the revolution of 1919–1922. Permanent war became the prime orientation of the Third Reich with the active complicity of the military leadership. In short, the influence of the war system on German society has been particularly naked, often directly visible in the political activities of its military. This makes the relationships somewhat easier to study than in cases where the impact of the war system on other social systems is more mediated.

A word of caution, however, is called for. To speak of a single German military is a useful fiction. Even between the declaration of the Second Reich in 1871 and the defeat of the Third in 1945, there were three nominally different forces—the Imperial Army, the Reichswehr and the Wehrmacht. What is more, the various reforms, counter-reforms, innovations and developments within the Prussian and German armed forces has led to what Michael Geyer calls an “excess of meaning.” In the Prussian-German military people have

seen a force that is at once “professional, atavistic, skill-oriented, and heroic” (Geyer 1990, 183)—which is to say, all images of the military rolled into one. Further, Geyer argues that this excess of meaning is not the result of misreadings or different tendencies at different times, but rather it reflects an accurate assessment of an institution that has often been fragmented and divided against itself. The Prussian-German military *has* pursued technical and tactical innovation, recognized the importance of the innovations unleashed by industrial society, and at the same time sided with the most politically conservative forces in the nation.

The very wealth of conflicting images associated with the Prussian-German military and particularly its officer class speaks to its central importance in pre-1945 German history. Officers were “demi-gods” and strutting buffoons; soldiers were drunken thugs and the elite of the nation; the military was a “state within a state” and the state itself. More than one commentator cast the army as the only guarantor of the state. The account that follows takes this centrality as a given—and looks to some of the consequences. The focus is Germany, but in order to make sense of the large-scale phenomena under consideration, I first take a broader view, weaving a discussion of the processes of nation formation, representative politics and industrialization across Europe into a more specifically German story.

The Rise of the Nation-State

In his account of the spread of the nation form, Benedict Anderson emphasizes two factors: the formation of a deep horizontal brotherhood of fellow nationals (what he glosses as an “imagined community”) and the availability of the nation-state, once it emerged, as a model to be copied. The

second point seems fairly uncontroversial. The first has been examined, debated, challenged, questioned and attacked from virtually every possible angle since Anderson first suggested it. It seems to me irrefutable, however, that the nation-form rests on the ability of fellow nationals to imagine some kind of connection to each other—at least if the kind of patriotic feelings that are so important to the war system are to develop. As Anderson puts it, “an American will never meet, or even know the names of more than a handful of his 240,000,000-odd fellow-Americans. He has no idea of what they are up to at any one time. But he has complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity” (Anderson 1983, 30).

Though this is not the place to address Anderson’s argument in detail, I would argue that one way in which it can be usefully extended is to conceive of the development and spread of the nation-state as a possibility imbedded in a pre-existing system of inter-state competition and warfare. The dynastic-state precursors to the nation-states were “always already” (perhaps a rare instance of a historically accurate use of this phrase) faced-off against each other, fighting for territory, resources and to promote particular religious orientations. Given this pre-existing tendency to organized violent conflict, any trend that produced even a modest tendency toward increased social unity and willingness to fight and die would give the state moving in that direction a potential advantage. Thus in the language of chapter 1 both selective and contagious processes are implied as engines to drive the nation-state machine through the transformation of the previous habitus into something that resembles what we now refer to as the “national” mode.³

³ For a variety of reasons, including attacks from both the right (usually on religious grounds) and the left (in objection to biologism and the dubious claims of intellectual fashions such as social Darwinism in the nineteenth century, eugenics in the early twentieth century and

One of the prime needs of the war system is soldiers (as discussed in detail in chapter 1 above), which is to say, human beings who have been thoroughly socialized with the habits, dispositions and capacities useful for fighting wars. If my suggested extension of Anderson is correct, and the interstate war system provided the ultimate impetus toward the creation and spread of the nation-state, and if masculinity has been as historically linked to the war system as I believe it has, then it seems quite likely that the new mode of sociopolitical organization would be connected to a new style of masculinity.

Here the work of anthropologists of the Mediterranean, with their well-known focus on honor and the part it plays in the social dynamics of many Mediterranean communities, is a useful analytical tool. As Julian Pitt-Rivers writes in the introduction to *The Fate of Shechem* (1997), there is a basic distinction between monarchic/aristocratic societies and republican societies

sociobiology more recently), evolutionary thinking remains in a stunted, often distorted form in the contemporary social sciences as well as the population at large. I see the “mid-level” theories of habitus as used by Elias and Bourdieu (and similar formulations by social theorist Anthony Giddens) to be examples of the application of evolutionary thinking forced through a social filter that require the removal of reference to evolutionary ideas.

It should go without saying, but because of the checkered history of making social cum cultural arguments referencing evolution I will say it anyway: *the development of the nation form is not the result of biological evolution*, nor is it the inevitable outcome of genetic predispositions. Rather, the nation form seems like a historical accident, stumbled on not via natural selection, but through a process of sociocultural selection, initially emergent via tendencies toward selection of strategies that produce (relative) unity and the (increased) willingness to make sacrifices for the group, and then shamelessly copied, with varying degrees of success. This process neither requires conscious intent for the development of the first nations, nor does it exclude the possibility of such.

Also—and again it should not require saying but widespread misunderstanding of evolutionary ideas makes it necessary—I am *not* saying that the nation-state is the final, ultimate or best form of political organization, nor implying that some other form might not be better even in the narrow sense of better at fostering victory on the battlefield. I am only claiming that nations were created, partially by intent and partially by accident, and they turned out to be a *relatively* effective way to organize groups of people to fight wars—probably because they also served as ways to legitimate authority, which helped to create national economies, which created further motivations for people to be willing to fight wars and more resources to be used to fight effectively. Another set of self-sustaining, recursive loops emerges at this point, which of course is the other face of a habitus, the steady-state face emphasized by Bourdieu, Elias and company.

with respect to behavioral codes. In short form: honor is the operative ideal in a monarchy and virtue in a republic.

At first blush such a duality seems almost too easy to tell us anything of interest. Not surprisingly it has been hotly disputed ever since its original formulation by Montesquieu, particularly by those who claimed honorable republics on the one hand, and those who insisted, on the other hand, on the possibility of virtuous monarchies. However, as simplistic as an honor/virtue dichotomy may seem, at its heart is a point that distinguishes the modes of loyalty in a dynastic state from those in a nation-state.

The dynastic state is vertically integrated. Allegiance is owed to the sovereign, who is invested with the honor of the group. Pitt-Rivers writes:

The idea that the honour of the group resides in its head was fundamental to the conception of aristocracy and assured the fidelity through the oath of the liegeman to his lord; the inferior in such a relationship participated in the honour of his chief and was therefore interested in defending it (1977, 14).

Thus in a dynastic state the honor of the subordinate is bound up with, indeed derivative of, that of the superordinate and ultimately the sovereign. This is because of the dual nature of honor itself: honor is both derived from appropriate behavior and a quality of social position or precedence. Note that “appropriate” is a loaded modifier—the behaviors appropriate to one person may dishonor another.

A person’s honor as precedence, the honor of his place in society, is an intrinsic quality measuring his distance from the sovereign, the font of honor as precedence.

The confusion between these two meanings of the word honor—honorable behavior on the one hand and precedence on the other—results

from a virtue-oriented perspective favoring the former meaning over the latter. However, in an honor-bound society, the two meanings merge in the person of the monarch, the aristocrat, the gentleman and any other “man of honor,” for

no man of honour ever admits that his honor = precedence is not synonymous with his honour = virtue. To do so would be to admit himself dishonoured. For him there is only one concept, his honour. However far apart the abstract notions of precedence and virtue may be, they come together in the individual at the level of behaviour. Therefore, as we have seen in the instance of the lie, an action *may* be potentially dishonourable, but it is only when this action is publicly condemned that it dishonours. Hence, just as capital assures credit, so the possession of honour guarantees against dishonour, for the simple reason that it places a man (if he has enough of it) in a position in which he cannot be challenged or judged (Pitt-Rivers 1977, 15).

Thus it is impossible for a sovereign to be dishonored, since he himself is the font of honor and what he *is* guarantees him against dishonor.

Yet honor at its core is also a style or attribute of masculinity.⁴ It is, I would argue, a war system adaptation for vertical social integration that functions by linking the masculinity of the subordinate to that of his superior. In this system, the liegeman who does not fight for his sovereign risks emasculation, as Shakespeare’s over-clever Henry V proclaims in his St. Crispin’s day speech:

⁴ As Pitt-Rivers discusses there is also female honor, but it differs significantly from masculine honor. “The honour of a man and of a woman therefore imply quite different modes of conduct. This is so in any society. A woman is dishonoured, loses her *vergüenza*, with the tainting of her sexual purity, but a man does not. While certain conduct is honourable for both sexes, honour = shame requires conduct in other spheres, which is exclusively a virtue of one sex or the other. It obliges a man to defend his honour and that of his family, a woman to conserve her purity” (Pitt-Rivers 1977, 20). Note that female honor, at least in this version, is based in an act of refusal—setting herself against the temptations of physical intimacy or even the appearance of impropriety so as not to dishonor herself and thereby undermine the perceived masculinity of her husband. This point will become important in later chapters where I take up the increased importance of refusal and the masculine self-definition in post-1945 Germany.

This story shall the good man teach his son;
 And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
 From this day to the ending of the world,
 But we in it shall be remembered;
 We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
 For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
 Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
 This day shall gentle his condition:
 And gentlemen in England now a-bed
 Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
 And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
 That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.⁵

That is, though the king cannot himself be dishonored in the usual sense, a threat to the sovereign is a threat to the honor, and hence the masculinity, of the subordinate individual. Any man who fails to answer the sovereign's call to arms risks cheapening his manhood—though, of course, history is replete with examples of reluctant soldiers.

From the ever-competitive point of view of the war system—i.e. a system in which the signal issue is the capacity to resist conquest and annihilation—the problem with the vertically integrated economy of honor is that the further down in the order of precedence an individual is, the less invested in the king's honor he is likely to be. His derivative portion of honor is comparatively so much smaller that his motivation to fight is necessarily diminished.

It is also true that the king as the font of honor and icon of collective masculinity is dependent, in practical terms, on his continuing ability to dispense royal favors, to elevate people within the order of precedence, to arrange or forbid marriages, and to allocate resources that accrue to him

⁵ *Henry V*, act 4, scene 3.

through his power to tax and seize booty through conquest. Such methods of social control function fairly effectively in an economy dominated by agriculture and handcraft. In an industrial society, however, it is much more difficult to view the monarch as the font of all that is good—the ring-giver in the old Anglo-Saxon ballads—when wealth is generated through means not previously conceived of, nor approved by the crown.

The specifically *national* answer to the war-system's need for integration is to rely *relatively* more on horizontal integration. The nation-state tendency toward republican forms—even when such states retain elements of the previous system (as I think inevitable)—is not accidental. The nation-state as a sociopolitical form *required* the de-centering of the sovereign as the font of honor—as was accomplished via the expedient of regicide in both the English Civil War and the French Revolution. This does not mean that a sociopolitical entity recognizable as a nation-state could not subsequently arise with monarchic-aristocratic systems in place. However, without the initial de-centering of the vertically integrated honor system (with the divinely invested monarch as the source of honor and a chain of precedence proceeding from him downward to “the people”), there would have been precious little room for the development of the national state wherein the people, at least in theory, are sovereign.

The point is this: in a nation-state, honor does not flow from the king, but from the idea of the nation itself which is equally close to all citizens.⁶ With

⁶ It is no accident that the age of nationalism and the rise of nation-states followed on the coat-tails of the Protestant Reformation with its radical de-centering of religious authority. The idea that every man should read the sacred texts for himself and develop a personal relationship with God, unmediated by a hierarchically organized church, is a precise analogue of the difference between the order of precedence with the king as the divinely (sacredly) invested source of honor, and the sacred nation with honor arising only from virtuous behavior, especially behavior in defense of the nation.

the disappearance of the sovereign as the font of all honor, honor = precedence tends to recede in importance. Honor is reduced to (or at least strongly reoriented toward) honor = virtue. And yet, if the new national-state is to be capable of effectively waging war, then it must preserve its ability to produce soldiers—which means producing a certain type of masculinity. A situation thus arises where the undermining of the old honor-system in the horizontally integrated nation-state, the loss of honor = precedence, results in the heightened importance of honor = virtue as a component of masculinity. Suddenly, in the new order, anyone can be dishonored. Status is no defense against emasculation, and, in fact, the entire aristocracy is emasculated in the popular imagination as the bourgeoisie comes to power. In this sense, the new “national” masculinity is more fragile than ever—and thus more susceptible to the trumpet-call of the war system.

The Bourgeois Revolution

In the case of England, the de-centering of the monarchic order was accomplished through civil war; in France by what came to be known as revolution. It is no doubt a mistake to consider either instance an ideal case to which other nation-states should be compared and found wanting. However, because the precedent for de-centering the *ancien regime*, as well as for the establishment of representative government, *had* been set, there were consequences of two types for nation-states that developed later. In the first place, such more recent nation-states were faced with the models, positive and negative, of what came before to follow or attempt to avoid. In the second place, more recent nation-states, particularly those that aspired to Great

Power status, found themselves in direct competition with those that came before.

Hence the relevant comparison is not normative. One ought not to speciously consider England, or more commonly France, the “normal” nation and every other as somehow deviant. Rather, the relative analysis is emic on the one hand, looking to how contemporaries understood events in France and England; and, on the other hand, competitive, considering the advantage gained through so-called modern institutions. In the German case it is important to understand the ways in which both the German bourgeoisie and the old order consciously responded to the developments in France, and the results of economic and military competition between the powers.

From the point of view of the German monarchy, of course, any revolutionary activity would inevitably be seen as the possible precedent for regicide. Yet, at the same time, there was clearly something to be said for the specifically military effects of broad social integration. Moreover, ever since the time of the Napoleonic wars, the bourgeoisie was becoming increasingly important in the industrializing economy of the German states and it increasingly desired and advocated for two causes: a liberal constitution with truly representative governance and a unified German nation-state. With their rising economic power, and the increasing importance of industrial potential to warfare, the old order leadership could ill afford to ignore this group, even apart from the threat of a bourgeois-led revolution.

For the bourgeoisie, and especially for the aspirants of the rapidly proliferating professional men, France was both a model for possibilities and a cautionary tale. They wanted, and increasingly advocated, a “modern” representative state in which aristocratic privilege was abolished and barriers

to career paths in the army and the higher echelons of the bureaucracy were smashed, but they also feared that any revolutionary activity ran the risk of getting out of control. Each year that went by resulted in the further development of industrial class relations—in Marx's sense—and in the spread of socialist and anarchist ideas. The result was an increasing fear of the masses, not just on the part of the old order, but also amongst the bourgeoisie.

In the German states, and especially in Prussia, one result of the precedent of de-centering violence in France (and before that in England), was an attempt to replicate aspects of the revolution regarded as positive while avoiding the revolutionary destruction of the old order. Thus the various Prussian governments attempted to work out constitutional compromises with the bourgeoisie even while maintaining key elements of monarchical control and aristocratic privilege—including the independence of the military as an institution not subject to parliamentary control.

During the period when Prussia was engaged in the long constitutional struggle between the monarchy and liberal reformers, a new style of masculinity was developing and spreading along with capitalist labor relations. The new bourgeois man differed from the old aristocratic-warrior ideal in several respects and the changes were linked to the assault upon absolutism.

In the old regime, the order of precedence created a kind of protective bubble around the masculinity of those with sufficient social stature. In the aristocratic order a man's honor—and hence his masculinity—was something he only had to defend to his equals. In pre-revolutionary France, when Voltaire took offense at a slight from the Chevalier de Rohan and challenged him, Rohan ordered his retainers to administer a beating to the upstart. "In addition

to his hurt he was covered in ridicule. He did not forgive the Duc de Sully at whose house the incident occurred. Yet the Chevalier was not apparently dishonoured in the eyes of his peers, even though he evaded the duel to which Voltaire attempted to challenge him by procuring his imprisonment and exile” (Pitt-Rivers 1977, 10). The point is that under an honor system dominated by precedence, it is precisely those highest in the pecking order (with the most honor to lose) who are the most protected from being dishonored. They are born with an honorable position in society and only the most extraordinary behaviors could result in its loss. The result is that masculinity itself, which is an inherently fragile construction (see chapter 1) was, to a certain extent, protected.

By contrast the new bourgeois-dominated order—with its ideal of the “self-made man”⁷— placed a two-fold strain on masculinity. Not only was the inevitability of precedence by birth and the protection of status removed, but the bourgeois order itself required a more flexible version of masculinity. As Goerge Mosse puts it:

... modern masculinity contained a whole series of attributes that reflected both social realities and the hope for the future. Middle class sensibilities, as we shall see, demanded a “quiet strength” that did not conflict with virtues such as fair play, harmony, and order, which an undue display of power must not disrupt (Mosse 1996, 15).

These bourgeois qualities, sometimes glossed as “respectability,” were the

⁷ In German the word *Bildungsbürger* covers much the same ground as the English “self-made man,” but emphasizes the element of self-cultivation through learning, increasing ones understanding and appreciation for *Kultur* (music, art, literature), as well as advancing in the world. As we shall see, the frustrations of the German *Bildungsbürger* due to the continued domination of national politics by the aristocracy and the Kaiser’s court, as well as the stifling of opportunities for advancement, played a critical role in the shape of German nationalism as it developed in the twentieth century.

enactment of an honor = virtue orientation. They supported the ability of men of business to work with each other, each trusting in the honor of the other to fulfill his contracts—and in the power and willingness of the state to intervene to enforce contracts.

The basis of masculine identity thus had to change. In the old, aristocratic-led order, the foundation of masculinity was the willingness, even the duty, of a man to defend his honor, even to the extent of ignoring such niceties as the law when it placed unacceptable constraints upon his will and freedom of action. Without precedence, however, such a foundation for a manly identity is untenable. The main prop to masculinity in the bourgeois world became the separation of public and private spheres, and particularly the intimate or domestic sphere of the home. In the bourgeois world, both the “private” sphere of productive activity (business, trade, manufacturing) and the properly “public” sphere of political debate (Habermas 1962), were defined as exclusively masculine realms. This was in contrast to the home, the realm of nurturance and value formation, which was defined as feminine (Habermas 1989, 28–31). The values of the manly spheres were then defined by honorable competition—meaning competition that honored its contracts, which were specifically excluded from the intimate sphere of the home governed by “softer,” female-identified values—communality, morality, spirituality and nurturance. The home became a retreat from the world and the definitional counter-point to a “man’s world.”

To the extent that the bourgeoisie came to power, then, bourgeois masculinity displaced soldierly-aristocratic masculinity as the socially dominant form. Aggressive displays and the private settling of disputes by violence—in the form of the duel, for example—were discouraged and gradually

disappeared. Thus what Elias calls a *satisfaktionsfähig Gesellschaft* tended to be de-emphasized in the bourgeois order in France and England.⁸

In Germany the bourgeoisie came more slowly and less fully into power. The attempts at bourgeois revolutions in Germany in 1830 and 1848 failed—or at least they failed in their own terms. The monarchical state was not replaced by representational government and Germany was not unified. The revolutionary activity of these years did produce changes. The events of 1848 in particular led to the politicization of segments of the population that had, theretofore, been quiescent. The successes, however, were short-lived; the initial uncertainty of the government lasted only as long as it took to mount an effective military response to revolutionary activities in the cities. The German princes, even the rulers of the smallest, least internationally viable states, were not displaced. And while the initial “capitulation of authority” in March 1848 may have “created a temporary power vacuum which new political institutions and movements filled” (Blackbourn 1997, 143), the old order was quick to reassert itself.

The reassertion of the old order, in both Prussia and Austria, was led by the military—and there is little doubt that if the Prussian army had not sided decisively with the monarchy, the results would have been quite different. In this context it is critical to understand that the forces of revolution were seen not only as a threat to the established order, but to German manhood itself. Revolution meant not just the threat of socialism, but the uncontested spread of what was widely viewed as gender dysphoria—decadence, homosexuality,

⁸ *Satisfaktionsfähig Gesellschaft* is one of those German terms that does not translate easily into English. The sense of it is a society in which “satisfaction” can be sought through dueling for offenses against one’s honor and in which every “man of honor”—the only kind eligible for important office or authority—is expected to defend his honor at the slightest provocation.

effeminacy—and nervous disorders thought to arise from the urban living conditions and factory work (Mosse 1996, 77-84).⁹

With crowds of laborers and journeymen rioting with alarming frequency in Berlin in 1848, not just the administration and its aristocratic supporters, but middle class conservatives began to look to the army as their savior. This moment was the root of what became an unsteady alliance between the aristocracy and critical portions of the German bourgeoisie. The constant threat that revolutionary forces would run beyond the bounds of what was acceptable to the bourgeoisie, and the dependence of the bourgeoisie on the military to put down riots and disorder was what cemented the alliance. In this context I suggest that a critical result of the “late” formation of the German nation-state and the “late” development of German industrialization, is that class culture and class consciousness was relatively more developed than at the time of the English civil war or even the French Revolution. There was, in a real sense, “less room” for a liberal revolution because there was more danger that any revolt against the established order would lead not to a liberal state controlled by the bourgeoisie, but to a socialist revolution and a state controlled by those sympathetic to the workers.

The socialist movement was mature and articulate at the time of German industrialization. The upshot of this was reduced room of maneuver for the bourgeois. Even in 1848, the threat of the revolution being overtaken by the interests of the working class was far greater than it had been in France at the end of the eighteenth century. This resulted in an increased willingness

⁹ Socialists, of course, rejected any connection to gender deviance and attempted to assert their own image of an ideal man—the worker, toughened by physical labor, able to stand up both to the boss and his political enemies. Mosse reproduces a fascinating German SPD poster, circa 1932, in *The Image of Man*. It depicts a bare-chested worker triumphantly holding a defeated Soviet soldier in his right hand and a defeated Nazi soldier in his left (1996, 124).

on the part of the bourgeoisie to cooperate with the old order and a concomitant respect for its most important institution, the military. When the nobleman Albrecht von Roon made reference to “The army, that is now our fatherland” (Craig 1995, 107), he was not only speaking for the Junkers and the monarchists but presaging the valorization of the military and military values by the bourgeoisie. In fact, “[m]ilitary rule in Berlin was greeted with relief by many bourgeois and shopkeepers, the backbone of the Civil Guard which had often clashed with workers and ‘flying units’” (Blackbourn 1997, 156), during the revolutionary period.

All of this reflected a split within the German bourgeoisie between conservatives, who supported the established order as a guarantor against the excesses of revolution—as embodied in communism, socialism and anarchy—and the more progressively oriented who thought it possible and desirable to create a liberal, democratic state in Germany. In this conflict charges of effeminacy were wielded like clubs on all sides of the aisle, but with the conservative nationalists as allies, the old order was able to hold onto power—and this success had a profound impact on the subsequent development of German masculinity. Elias writes

The conservative-nationalist sections of the middle classes in other countries often attempted to fuse humanist and moralist with nationalist ideals. The comparable sections of the German middle classes rejected the compromise. They turned, often with an air of triumph, against the humanist and moral ideals of the rising middle classes as ideals whose falsehood had been unmasked (Elias 1996, 133).

When they turned away from “humanist and moralist” values, the bourgeois conservatives were in effect redefining honor = virtue in exclusively nationalist terms: if it supported the nation as a military power, it was virtuous. They had

no part in the precedence system of the old order, but nonetheless turned toward its court-centered, soldierly values. Or, rather, they attempted to adopt an idealized, romanticized version of those values. This is a key point, for the “honor” that Germany’s middle-class aspirants attempted to earn through dueling, institutional affiliation and the acquisition of a hard, untouchable, unflappable demeanor was not, and could never be, the honor of a man of precedence who was born with his honor and in many cases was immune from challenge.

It is probably less true to speak of the “failure” of a bourgeois revolution in the German states, than to speak of the victory of the conservative-nationalist element thereof and its alliance with the old order. This alliance involved the ascendancy of military masculinity amongst the middle-classes and the rejection of “effeminate” liberalism with its reliance on party politics, debate and compromise. The true man didn’t debate, he demanded—and backed up his demands with the threat of force. This “recruitment” of the bourgeoisie to aristocratic values can be seen, for example, in the increasing number of individuals of middle-class background who entered that bastion of aristocratic-soldierly values known as the Prussian officer corps (Bald 1977, 43).

The aristocracy continued to dominate the highest ranks of the Prussian, and then German, military through the early 1930s, though the numbers continued to drop. In 1932, officers from noble backgrounds accounted for 52 percent of the generals, but only 23.8 percent of the officer corps as a whole, down from 30 percent at the onset of the First World War (Bald 1979, 645–46). By 1890, two years after his installation as Kaiser, Wilhelm II made a speech in which he remarked, “Today, the nobility of birth

can no longer claim primacy in furnishing the army with its officers. The nobility by disposition, however, which has given soul and inspiration to the officer corps throughout time, shall and must remain at its core” (Demeter 1930, 29). In the same speech he referred to the “Christian” qualities of a good officer. Thus his speech reflected what became known as the “desired circles” of recruitment: eliminated from consideration were Jews, those with left-wing or even liberal political views and those from social backgrounds considered insufficiently lofty (Bald 1979, 648).

In this context, it is not insignificant that hand-in-hand with the decrease of absolute domination of the officer corps by the aristocracy, officers were increasingly recruited from the ranks of university graduates and from the sons of the high bureaucracy. German institutions (especially the military, but also the universities and the bureaucracy) became collective reservoirs of honor such that belonging, especially in the military, provided a kind of surrogate precedence.

It is not incidental that it is precisely in these institutional contexts—the university, the student fraternities, the officer corps—that dueling not only persisted but was glorified as a necessary prop to appropriate character formation. Wilhelm II’s “nobility by disposition” equates to those who have been trained to aspire through a ruthless suppression of emotion in the face of discomfort and violence to a status they can never reach, that of nobility.

Industrialization and Class Society

Perhaps the most important theorist of the nation form after Ben Anderson is Ernest Gellner. He proposes an industrialization-driven process of nation-state formation. In Gellner’s view, it is industrialization that is modular,

and the nation-state follows in its wake.

...[T]he age of transition to industrialism was bound, according to our model, also to be an age of nationalism, a period of turbulent readjustment, in which either political boundaries, or cultural ones, or both, were being modified, so as to satisfy the new nationalist imperative which now, for the first time, was making itself felt (Gellner 1983, 40).

Why is this so? Because, in Gellner's account, industrial society requires vastly increased resources for education and communication—resources so costly that only the highest level of social organization, the state, can possibly hope to provide them. Moreover, because language is the chief means for the transmission of both the new skills needed in industrial society (which include not just those of the engineer and mechanic, but increasingly the lawyer, the accountant and the manager), and because multiple languages are a substantial barrier to such transmission, cultural homogeneity across the entire population becomes a key goal of such state-sponsored education. Thus in order to support industrial society, state-supported institutions take over the process of “the manufacture of viable and usable human beings” (Gellner 1983, 38).

However, if industrialization required a certain amount of cultural homogeneity—in the sense that education and communication are fostered by a shared language and shared values—it also was the harbinger of a new kind of division within society: class. In old-order societies each person belonged to both a place—meaning, usually, the place where he or she was born—and to a particular segment of a particular estate. This is what I mean when I speak of the “vertical integration” of the *ancien regime*. In theory at least, any person within the society could be assigned a place in the order of precedence based

on his nearness or distance to a divinely-invested dynast. Even with the rise of absolutism, the reduction of the personal power of the aristocracy, and the general weakening of feudal relationships, the segmented nature of society as a whole, particularly in Germany, did not change that much. In fact, with the withering away of liege-vassal relationships, the rights, privileges and exemptions of each estate—nobles, clergy, guilds, townsfolk, master artisans, peasants, etc.—were all the more important. Moreover, it is important to note that though I list these various estates *as if* they constituted homogeneous groups, that is far from the case. Particularly in the case of Germany before unification, the concessions and rights granted to one town, or the citizens thereof, might be very different from those of another. Even within the same town, it was quite common to have varying levels of citizenship.

In industrial society, however, all of these divisions by estate and caste, with their non-transposable demands for particular goods, services and dispositions become a barrier to economic growth. More specifically, all of these particularistic, non-interchangeable relationships are drags against the development of a society dominated by class relations. A key difference between class society and old order society is that in class societies, at least in the context of the workplace, relationships *are* interchangeable. A worker is not bound to work for a particular employer nor is he limited to doing a particular job. Also, in class society an employer is not bound to hire particular workers, or to abide by traditional work rules, or to continue to employ a worker who is not needed. Class society serves industrial capacity by placing the new employee-worker relationship at the center of social organization. For the new working class, life became oriented to the factory and its needs, its inhuman rhythms effectively governing the daily routine of workers.

As argued above, both the rise of the nation-state, with its horizontal forms of integration, and the rise of the bourgeoisie, with their ethos of *bildung* (refinement), meritocracy, and fairness (in the sense of equality before the law and the disestablishment of precedence), had a major impact on both the war system and masculinity. In some ways industrialization and the concomitant formation of class society had an even more profound impact.

One problem with Gellner's arguments is that in treating the formation of nation-states as an epiphenomena—"... in actual history the effects of nationalism tend to be conflated with the other consequences of industrialism" (Gellner 1993, 40)—he ends up treating industrialization itself as *sui generis*. Of course he is under no particular onus to explain the origins of industrialization—since its historicity is not in doubt the way that the origin of nations has sometimes been taken to be—but it seems that industrialization can be seen as arising from the same kinds of variation plus selection process by which the nation-state habitus came into being.

There is no reason to suppose that the production of the nation form, the production of particular gender forms, and the production of industrial society were not part of the *same* process. The different strands, through the magic of categories, can be conceptually separated, but actual relationships involve gendered bodies, producing material goods in certain ways, socially organized in specific ways. The particular forms, of course, are not inevitable, but in a competitive environment, there will be winners and losers (which may or may not correspond to better and worse systems by any criteria you select) and the winners will tend to be imitated.

To say that the entire system (gender form, sociopolitical form, and mode of production) is oriented *only* toward war and international competition

is to go to far. Even if we allow what seems to me a plausible extension of Clausewitz's dictum and say that "competitive trade is the extension of war by other means," this proposed single system is broad enough that no one factor can dictate its exact shape. The actual variation found in the history of the last two centuries provides sufficient evidence of this. Local forms of competition—between non- or pre-national groups, social classes, races, different industries, families or companies for example—often dictate the strategy and tactics of each such group far more directly than interstate warfare. For that matter, the habitus that develops in response to inter-group conflict and its possibility still allows a wide range of cooperative behaviors. *However*, the demands of the war system end up as the lynch pin in this system—the bottom line of production—and at some level I think that it is the production of particular forms of gender that, as the most basic division of labor, acts as the ground for both sociopolitical organization and economic production.

The murkiness of Gellner's arguments vis-à-vis the relationship of industrialization to nation-state formation disappears, if instead of seeing the one as the engine for the other, we see both as responses to inter-group competition and the war system.¹⁰ As already discussed, the horizontal ties created via national organization support the war system. It should go almost without saying that industrialized production—giving the ability to produce more and more effective weapons—supports such a system. It is obvious that any argument linking industrialization to war production seems almost suspect,

¹⁰ It could be argued, of course, that this is simply a displacement of cause, but I don't think so. I am not arguing that war *causes* gender, industrialization, state-formation, etc., rather that the processes by which people respond to the threat of inter-group conflict—which exists, logically, as soon as there are groups—shape, in the first place, the division of labor by gender, and subsequently the social organization of production, the development of social and political systems, etc.

suggesting, as it seems to, that social forms can be generated via conspiracy.

That is, the link between war fighting capacity and productive capacity is so clear that it would seem unlikely that any industrialist with the ability to do so would have long abstained from using his position as an indispensable producer to manipulate the sociopolitical system in his favor. But then again, this is really saying nothing more than that people with wealth and power will tend to use it to their advantage—not exactly a shock to the man on the street. History as conspiracy only seems shocking if we insist that *everything* comes about because of unconscious, systemic processes. Bourdieu insists that the processes of the habitus must remain unconscious and embodied in habits and practices. I think such a presumption is far too limiting and unnecessary. Both conscious and unconscious forces can contribute to the reproduction of social and cultural forms; both can also lead to shifts in these forms.

Industrialization impacts masculinity and the war system in various, somewhat fragmented ways. In direct terms, the importance of industrial capacity to war-fighting capacity means that in an industrial society, in competition with other industrial societies, the war system requires more *non-combatants* than ever. In theory, these non-combatants—i.e. industrial workers—need not be socialized to the same kinds of masculinity as the potential combatants. In practice, the hierarchical organization of the factory and the demands of factory work promote dispositions not fundamentally dissimilar from those valued by the armed forces. Moreover, the interchangeability of factory workers, and their work with machines, provide a close analogy to the interchangeability of soldiers in modern armies using modern weapons. Since the war-system has always demanded the redundant production of possible soldiers (and large numbers of industrial workers have

in fact ended up as conscripted soldiers in the armies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), industrial workers became, in the war-structure of the industrial era, a ready pool of reserve military manpower, already hardened by work and accustomed to hierarchy and discipline. The factory floor, with its lines of command, clock-watching, and attention to detail, became the training ground for potential frontline soldiers.

In the system of class division that developed concomitantly with industrialization, the worker/owner (or manager) division sorted potential war system recruits in much the same way that the commoner/noble division sorted them in the old order. Especially with the advent of conscription, workers were drafted into the enlisted ranks; owners and managers, when they entered the military, typically did so as officers. In the old order the war system was at the very center of aristocratic male identity. A noble, as a man of honor with a place in the system of precedence, was expected to be able and ready to defend his honor and that of his family with violence. He was also expected to play a part in any war that came along, even if he was not a career officer.

The same expectation does not apply to the bourgeoisie. In bourgeois society the idea of defending one's honor with violence is replaced by a reliance on the police powers of the state and the sanctity of contracts. The logic here is nearly inevitable: in a society where the order of precedence has been shattered, there is nothing to prevent a working class man from violently challenging a man of property. What, indeed, is to prevent him from challenging even his own employer, if, for example he feels cheated, or treated with less respect than he feels his honor deserves? Thus—all other

arguments about the state monopoly on legitimate violence aside—the dueling tradition had to be abolished.

However, if not all of the owning/managing class was expected to be ready for war, the same was not true for the working class. There was a strong expectation that workers should be war ready. Workers also continued to answer personal challenges with threats and violence even if this violence was embodied not in the formal duel, but in the brawl. A working man, as part of the definition of being manly, was expected to answer any threat to his person with his fists, not a call for help from the authorities. To a certain extent such episodes were tolerated by authorities, so long as they remained within the ranks of the workers, not least of all because the habitus of the factory floor was a proving ground for soldierly masculinity.

Finally, industrialization and the technological advancements that came with it put a higher premium on qualities formerly needed only by a few specialists—literacy, mathematical ability, and the ability to follow complex directions. With the advent and eventual dominance of non-infantry soldiers on the battlefield (first cavalry, then artillery, and finally armor and air power), as well as the masses of technicians and specialists needed to support a modern army in the field, the war system itself began to make new requirements on soldiers. This changed the style of masculinity most adapted to war—though the core values of emotional discipline and obedience remained firmly in place.

In fact, the close obedience and attention to detail required of the factory worker was cognate to the so-called *Kadavergehorsamkeit* (unquestioning obedience) that the drill-masters of the German army sought. The reasons were not dissimilar. In both the factory and on the battlefield work

was often dull and repetitive, requiring the worker or soldier to maintain focus under circumstances where failure could mean disaster and the bigger picture, the meaning or importance of the particular job at hand, was not always apparent to the person doing it.

In the soldier's case, training men to Kadavergehorsamkeit was conceived as the only way to keep soldiers advancing when positions were defended by modern weaponry. Nor was this entirely wrong, or wrong-headed. There is a common misunderstanding that the modern battlefield is less stressful and requires less courage to successfully negotiate, than its pre-modern predecessors. This is true only in certain cases. Close-quarter fighting with edged weapons, whether swords or bayonets, requires a particular form of bravery. However, the introduction of firearms and other devastatingly effective projectile weapons presents its own challenges. Soldiers facing fire show a nearly unstoppable tendency to seek cover and are almost impossible to get moving again once they take it. The whole point of the more brutal practices of the drill field was to train soldiers to move and take cover in coordinated ways, not to bunch up, and to work as a group under the direction of an officer. In fact, much of the development of military tactics after World War I involved finding ways to use technology, in the form of tanks, armored infantry vehicles and aircraft, to move soldiers on the battlefield. This was an effort to displace the suicidal discipline required to make soldiers walk into a hail of incoming bullets (Showalter 1983, 599).

As with nation-state formation and de-centering of the old order, the later arrival of industrialization to Germany had consequences for its competition with France and Britain. Yet, when it did come, it came with an organized vengeance and there is no reason to suppose that the same

combination of factors driving the transformation of masculinity in the other industrialized Western powers were not also at work in Germany in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The same kinds of class divisions found in France and England also developed in Germany. Even as German industrial capacity began to overtake that of England toward the fin-de-siecle—making it the most powerful country in Europe by any number of measures—the worker’s movement was coming to maturity and the bourgeoisie was increasingly unwilling to submit to the leadership of the old order. In this environment, the military became the most important institution in society, both in its support for the monarchy and its idolization by the middle class. The adoption of an idealized version of aristocratic-soldierly masculinity by men of the bourgeoisie placed an extraordinary emphasis on manliness as a social value, and a particularly fragile version of masculinity into the bargain. The ongoing threat of revolution, the competition with the other Great Powers, and the uneasy alliance between the bourgeoisie and the old order generated a great deal of pressure that was focused, inevitably, on constructions of masculinity. Various aspects of the social order responded to this pressure, contributing to further shifts in the war system and masculinity (as I will examine in chapter 3).

CHAPTER 3
MASCULINITY IN CRISIS AND CONFLICT
IN WILHELMINE GERMANY AND THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

Although counter-revolutionary forces were victorious in the German states in 1848, the victory did not come without concessions. Particularly in Prussia, under the governments of Frederick Wilhelm IV and his successor Wilhelm I, reforms were enacted and a constitution granted—albeit one that preserved the power of the monarchy. These reforms were granted not just in the aftermath of an upwelling of popular agitation, but during a period of nationalist agitation. The two struggles—for a liberalized political order and for a German nation-state—went hand-in-hand. In this environment, the Prussian leadership attempted to co-opt the nationalist issue and cast itself as the natural leader of a united Germany.

The key point for the development of German masculinity in the latter half of the nineteenth century, particularly with respect to bourgeois masculinity, is the increased importance and prestige of the military. Its increased social capital stems from the fact that while the various national parliaments called into existence during the surge of revolutionary activity in 1848 *failed* to make a viable German state “from below,” Imperial Chancellor Otto von Bismarck did manage to create such a state, as has so often been said, “from above.” The Prussian military played a decisive role in unification. In the process it acquired a sacred aura and became the foremost institution of the nation-state.¹

¹ Prussian militarism is a cliché—but also something more. Though enjoying no special reputation for military excellence before the reign of Frederick II (aka Frederick the Great, first King of Prussia), beginning in the mid-eighteenth century Prussia became known for its army.

As Ben Anderson argues, nationalism has a lot in common with religion. There is a liturgy of the nation. Nationalists develop rites and secular prayers in its praise. At a deeper level, the nation is bound up with continuity. It exists over time, linking ancestors with successors, the dead with the unborn. Those who fight for the nation approach the sacred; those who die for it are sanctified thereby. The armed forces as institution acquire an association with the sacred that is in many ways more robust in a nation-state than in a dynastic state, for in a nation soldiers die not to defend the honor of the king, but for the sacred nation itself (Anderson 1983, 17–19).

The Prussian army was soaked in the sacred blood of the nation during two wars that were the decisive factors in the creation of the unified German nation-state. The first of the two was the war pitting Prussia against Austria plus virtually all of the independent German states. Prussia emerged victorious at the battle of Königrätz in July 1866, leading directly to the annexation of much of northern Germany and the creation of a North German Confederation—which included a parliament elected by universal manhood suffrage. The victory at Königrätz was key not only in the creation of a Prussian Germany, but to crucial developments in Prussia itself. What had been a decades-long constitutional crisis, increasingly acute and nearly leading to the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm I, was abruptly settled after the Königrätz victory. As a result, the Progressive Party, the key party-political

At the turn of the nineteenth century Baron Friedrich Leopold von Schrötter, a senior official in the Prussian government at the time, made the wry comment, “Prussia is not a country with an army, but an army with a country” (Dupuy 1984, 16)—indicative of the Prussian state’s growing association with militarism and the importance of the army within the state as early as beginning of the nineteenth century. Yet the prowess of the Prussian army under the eighteenth century kings did not equate to any popular support for the military or the government. In fact, the clash between Prussia and the armies of Napoleon in the early years of the nineteenth century was met by the population with indifference. Popular identification with the army developed only in the last half of the nineteenth century.

advocate for reform inside Prussia, split. The pro-Bismarck, anti-radical faction became the National Liberal Party, which would play a central role in the evolution of German party politics between unification and the First World War.

The second war, the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71), served to turn what had been an anti-Prussian tide in the new North German parliament in Prussia's favor. When the Prussian military handily defeated the French forces, a new German Empire was proclaimed in Versailles in January 1871. The war, as wars are wont to do, led to an upsurge in nationalist feelings, and the decisive victory ensured Prussian hegemony and earned the Prussian military widespread admiration. Thus Germany was made on the battlefield and the rhetoric of *Blut und Eisen* (blood and iron) was more than a slogan.² Not only did the Prussian victories against Austria and France create the new German Empire and kindle the requisite patriotism to make said empire internally viable, the victories also made the new state viable in international terms. From the point of view of the Great Powers, embedded in the war system, the powerful new state in the middle of Europe *could be* accepted, because it had the demonstrated capacity to force its acceptance.

With the declaration of the German Reich, the military accrued an unprecedented prestige. Bavarian statesman Prince Chlodwig Hohenlohe wrote of a parade he witnessed in May 1870:

The whole garrison of Berlin had turned out. A great show of princes, generals and so forth. I mingled with the crowd and was struck by the interest manifested by the lowest of the people in things military. No trace of the former animosity against the military which used to be noticeable

² After Otto von Bismarck's much quoted comment that "*Die Deutscher Einheit kann nimmer von ein Parlament ausgehen. Es kann nur durch Blut und Eisen Wirklichkeit werden.*" That is: "German unity will never be brought about by a parliament. It can only be made real with blood and iron."

among the lower classes. The commonest working man looked on the troops with the feeling that he belonged or had belonged to them. Everywhere stories of Königgrätz, Düppel & c., by old service men who were among the spectators (Hohenlohe-Schillingfürst 1906, 11, quoted in Craig 1965, 215).

This increased prestige played an important part in the adoption of military values by the Germany bourgeoisie. This is an important point: the celebration of military masculinity in the German middle class was not a vestige of times past, but something eagerly adopted by the bourgeoisie.

The post-unification period, roughly 1871 through 1890, was a time of an important shift in German masculinity away from humane and liberal values and toward a way of being that celebrated hardness, discipline and duty. The values of the military and aristocracy became, increasingly, the values of the middle class. The reasons for this are complex, but the role of the military as institution in the civic life of Germany and the increased social prominence of military men were surely contributing factors. Moreover, military-style hardness was increasingly cast as *the* German way. This was in contrast to the liberal values of the “democracies” (a term of derision in imperial Germany), which were cast as effeminate, decadent and foreign.

The impact of Germany’s relatively late industrialization and unification has been much discussed, and doubtless at times oversimplified. Yet, there *were* consequences to the “late” (compared to France and England) achievement of a unified German state and industrialization, particularly when combined with the failure of the German bourgeoisie to establish itself as a ruling force *independent* of the old order. The most important of these consequences may well be the impact on Germany masculinity and in particular the *relative* value assigned to each distinctive style of manhood. The

military, after all, was an important institution in all of the states aspiring to Great Power status. The war system continued to require the production of appropriately socialized soldiers in redundant quantities. The German difference, to the extent that there was one, was in the *degree* to which the middle classes actively sought to acquire a form of soldierly masculinity.

The already-frustrated German bourgeoisie was, after 1871, faced with a dilemma similar to that faced by liberals and left-liberals in the United States during the Cold War: agitation for increased democracy was decried as the equivalent of support for socialist revolution. Liberal bourgeois politicians unwilling to make common cause with the establishment became isolated. The major political parties, including the National Liberals, came to be deeply mired in *Honoratiorenpolitik* (politics of notables)—a kind of extension of the *ancien regime*—whereby the “chief personages” of a district gathered to select slates of candidates and hammer out party positions, without concerning themselves with such democratic niceties as committee structures, canvassing and open meetings. The masses were distrusted and kept at a distance and the horizontal integration of the nation extended in practice only to notables, or, at most, to that section of the *mittelstand*—successful craftsmen and other *petit-bourgeois*—who identified upward with the bourgeoisie.

This was the situation in Germany after unification. In the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the trend away from liberalism continued. The number of liberal deputies in the Reichstag steadily decreased. The seats lost by the liberal parties went to socialists on the left and to a variety of conservative and nationalist parties on the right, polarizing the Reichstag. This period also marked the establishment of a number of non-party nationalist pressure groups (*nationale Verbände*). These organizations arose in the last

years of the 1890s as “a field of involvement for activists who tended to experience party politics as the closed preserve of notables” (Eley 1980, vi).

These Verbände—most famously the Pan-German League (*Alldeutscher Verbund*), but also the Society for the Easter Marches (*Ostmarkenverein*), the Colonial Society (*Kolonialgesellschaft*), and the Navy League (*Deutscher Flottenbund*), as well as many other, more eccentric groups—offered both a forum for radical nationalist ideas and a field of political opportunity for those who felt shut out from the closed world of Honoratiorenpolitik.

The social-political milieu of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Germany can rightly be described as one of national aspiration. The government of Kaiser Wilhelm II saw a more closely knit Germany as an essential element in its competition with the other Great Powers. The party politicians hitched their star to the idea of the nation as new mode of social organization in which they would govern. The activists in the Pan-German League saw their chance to enter into meaningful political action in fighting for a strong, more militarist nation. Yet for all of the attempts to create a politics that encompassed the interests of both the bourgeoisie and the old aristocracy (*Sammlungspolitik*) and placated the working class, a “deep discrepancy between the social structure and the political system” persisted (Bracher 1968, 119). This discrepancy was the key tension in Wilhelmine politics. The state structure of Imperial Germany continued to guarantee the traditional privileges of the aristocratic landowners “at a time when the capitalist transformation of German society, the diminishing role of agriculture in the economy and the antagonism of capital and labor were all demanding an adaptation of that state to entirely novel situations” (Eley 1989, 8).

There was, then, a fault line between the old order ruling elites and the bourgeoisie. The politics of *Sammlung*, or hanging together, was grounded in a fear of Revolution that was not altogether paranoid—Germany had the strongest socialist movement in Europe in the years before the First World War. During these same years, the government, encouraged by the nationalist groups, pursued an increasingly expansionist foreign policy.

It has been suggested, e.g. by Hans-Ulrich Wehler, that the aggressive foreign and military policy of Wilhelm II's government was used to help stabilize an inherently unstable social structure, as a kind of patriotism-inducing manipulation (Wehler 1970; 1972). This view has been sharply criticized by Geoff Eley as a misunderstanding of the forces at play in social mobilization and ideological formation (1980, 11). Eley's critique is surely just. It is also true, however, that if the anti-revolutionary alliance between the bourgeoisie and aristocratic landowners was key to the politics of the era, *and* there was a deep division in terms of interests between the allies, it is no stretch to imagine the state acting on policies that tended to unite the deeply divided participants in the *Sammlung*.

This highly selective capsule history is meant as a backdrop for some assertions about the state of German masculinity in Wilhelmine Germany. First, I want to argue that the heroic, untouchable, emotionally invulnerable male ideal described so dramatically by Theweleit (1987) as characteristic of the *Freikorps* in the world that emerged after WWI, was not simply a holdover of aristocratic-warrior tradition that survived into the Wilhelmine period along with the state-guaranteed privileges of the landowning class. Rather, masculinity during the Wilhelmine period was hotly contested. Segments of the society did attempt to reject soldierly masculinity. And many establishment

figures—medical men, pundits, popular authors—viewed these attempts to create new masculine identities as a serious threat. The militarists saw themselves as engaged in a battle for the hearts, minds and most of all bodies of the nation’s young men—young men the military needed to fight the next war. And it should not be forgotten, in this context, that the “next war” was on the drawing board of the German General Staff, almost from the time of unification.³

Here, then, was the basis for a serious tension. The military, and its nationalist-traditionalist supporters, saw war, and quite probably a large-scale two front war with France and Russia, as inevitable. To this end, the military itself promoted the growth of sports clubs, the expansion of reserve forces, and other measures calculated to toughen the men of Germany and prepare them for war. At the same time, the economic power of the bourgeoisie continued to increase. This increase supported the possibility of increased bourgeois political influence, as indeed *Sammlungspolitik* indicated: the monarchy and its adherents had not made common cause with the upstart bourgeois because it pleased them to do so, but because they had little choice. Economic production was essential to the state cum war system and this production was in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

The increased status of the bourgeoisie was itself a threat to the ideal of soldierly masculinity. Even with the glorification of the army and the

³ Following the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War that resulted in the declaration of the German Reich and the unification of a “small Germany” under Prussian leadership, many German officers viewed Bismarck’s failure to allow them to “finish the job”—i.e. completely destroy the French army and war-making capabilities—as a serious strategic error. Increasingly the men of the German General Staff saw a new war as inevitable. They developed what became known as the Schlieffen plan, after its creator, which called for a “preventive” war against France, featuring a dramatic and decisive offensive. The thought was to avoid having to fight a prolonged two-front war against France in the West and Russia in the East. A version of this plan was attempted at the beginning of the First World War (Craig 1964, 273–280).

aspirations of the middle class to military-style masculinity, the rise of the bourgeoisie opened social space for alternatives. This space opened because whatever style of masculinity the socially aspirant middle classes may have tried on at university or in the dueling fraternities, their work-a-day world required flexibility, compromise and the ability to come to terms with workers, clients and competitors. What is more, in terms of the nation's ability to fight modern wars, the contribution of the bourgeoisie was *at least as critical* as that of soldiers. The bourgeois elite predictably tended to resent the notion, popular amongst the soldiers at the time, that only the soldiers were capable of the hardheaded politics required by the threats of the modern world.

The wars of the latter half of the nineteenth century gave a fairly decisive answer to the question of industrial verses agrarian society in military conflict. Both the American Civil War and Prussia's own war against Austria demonstrated the undeniable military superiority of industrial society. This does not necessarily translate into the social domination of the bourgeoisie. It did, however, give the bourgeoisie a very powerful argument in their bid for domination.

The conflict in Wilhelmine society, however, was increasingly more than a conflict between the bourgeoisie and the old order. At least from the last quarter of the nineteenth century it became a multi-pronged conflict that also included the working class and the lower ranks of the middle class—that is, those excluded by definition from the rarified air of *Honoratiorenpolitik*. In the conflict between these groups, the worker's movement, glossed as the Revolution, became the boogiemán of the other factions, and the *Verbände* became a kind of nationalist opposition, agitating for a more aggressive, more

imperialist foreign policy and the growth of the German military, particularly the navy, as an instrument thereof.

In this mix, each faction had its own range of masculinities—and no faction could afford to ignore the question of masculinity and its relationship to defense of the nation. The socialists and other left-wing parties not excepted, each group asserted a claim to genuine masculinity and cast aspersions on the adequacy of the masculinities of other groups. It may sound odd to speak of competing masculinities, and it would be wrong to say that masculine identity was the only zone of class/group conflict, but many of these conflicts were cast in just such terms: a *man* fights for his country, a *man* won't bow to the whims of the bosses, a *man* does his duty, a *man* is strong in the face of the enemy, a *man* is the head of his family.

Nietzsche, in many ways the incarnate voice of German masculine anxiety, wrote: "You say it is the good cause that hallows even war? I say unto you: it is the good war that hallows every cause. War and courage have accomplished more great things than love of the neighbor. Not your pity but your courage has so far saved the unfortunate" (Nietzsche 1954, 159).

A more popular version is found in a novel titled *Hanseaten* (Hanseatic Merchants), by Rudolf Herzog, first published in 1909. Herzog focused on entrepreneurial characters who embodied the peculiarly German combination of militarist and bourgeois values. He describes, for example, workplaces organized with military-like hierarchy and discipline, where workers snap to attention when the owner appears. The following scene is from a discussion between shipyard workers, who have lost a day's work because of bad weather, and the owner-protagonist Karl Twersten. The workers have sent a

delegation to complain about the lost wages. The passage opens with Twersten's reply.

"Listen," he began, and eyed them sharply, "you've all been soldiers, haven't you? ... Then in that case you should know full well what discipline means. And you old hands know as well as I do that in a shipyard there must be discipline just like on board a ship. Because here business and political affairs meet. Therefore all I need to do is give in to your demands, and I'll be opening the door to lack of discipline. Why? Now I'm not saying anything about you three. You've got honour in you, and I've known you long enough. But it could occur to hundreds of shirkers every day to use wind and rain as an excuse when they want to come to the shipyard a few hours late. It only has to become known today that it's a good excuse and it works—we're still going to get paid!—and you hard workers who are decent, you'd be the ones taken for a ride.... No, you people, I don't need to say anything more to you. You're not green and know that there must be discipline. Whether it hurts or not it must be so!" (Herzog 1923, 126–27, quoted in Elias 1996, 205).

Of course, given the limits placed on the range of *acceptable* masculinities by the war system, it is not surprising that conflict was often conducted by disparaging the masculinity of the others in the public sphere. Each had its own emphasis. The old aristocratic order claimed both an "honor" that allowed them to stand above the ordinary rules of society and the right to demand satisfaction, and to give it, from and to social equals. The workers' movement emphasized physical endurance and the ability to get the job done. The bourgeoisie celebrated moral steadiness, efficiency and measured, thoughtful responses to provocation.

In this environment of dueling masculinities, something of a crisis of masculinity developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A great deal of attention—scientific, pedagogic, and political—was focused on

the “problem” of making boys into men. As Mosse puts it:

The education to manliness was directed toward making boys hard, sculpting their bodies, and giving them a proper moral posture. Within the constant preoccupation of how to make boys into men, worries about immaturity counted for less than fears of effeminacy: the attainment of a certain standard physical and moral fitness (Mosse 1996, 109).

And, of course, the priority of qualities that fell under the rubric of “moral fitness” could be, and were, debated endlessly.

Given the three-way conflict between the bourgeoisie (and the Liberal parties), the old order (and its conservative supporters), and the workers, it is perhaps not surprising that the group that ended up making the most noise and defining the outer limits of the discursive ranges was none of the three. It was the political outsiders in the nationale Verbände that most explicitly embraced the idealized form of soldierly-aristocratic masculinity. These groups were the ones that most vocally denounced party politics as unmanly and un-German. They most obviously embodied the call for the style of militaristic masculinity that would become the ideal of both the Frei Korps and of the National Socialists. The Verbände best expressed the frustration of the mittelstand in its exclusion from the political process and the determination to adopt the nation as cause and heroic masculinity as form.

Though he would have been deeply offended by the notion, it was precisely the hopes and concerns of these middle-class aspirants to which Nietzsche spoke most directly. He was their poet and their philosopher, even if he would not have considered himself to be one of them. In his valorization of the will to power and in the idea of the *Übermensch* Nietzsche glorified an aristocracy of the will that was the epitome of heroic masculinity. Admiring the

culture of warrior peoples, he wrote, “the unmistakable foundation of all these noble races is the predator, the splendid *blond beast*, voraciously on the trail of plunder and victory.”⁴ Embedded here is an idea of the emotionally invulnerable man, the transcendent warrior fully alive in the undeniable passion of the moment translated into action. Morality breeds hesitation, which is fatal in combat. Here was the aphoristic antidote to bourgeois party politics, so often derided in the German context as ineffectual “debating societies”—and to bourgeois virtue as well, for in Nietzsche’s words, and in the imagination of the nationalist aspirants, “Morality is the herd-instinct embodied.”⁵

Manly Men, Virtuous Order and Popular Literature

If it was Nietzsche above all who was the philosophical voice of *reaction* to the bourgeois world, the discursive universe of the literary public sphere of Wilhelmine Germany was far more deeply penetrated by others. Certainly Nietzsche’s ideas had an important influence on the high modernists, particularly Thomas Mann, but neither Mann nor Nietzsche were anything near as well known as writers such as E. Marlitt, Ludwig Ganghofer, or Karl May.

The themes taken up by these popular authors—virtuous middle class romance by Marlitt, the grandeur of the Germanic mountains and the lives of the peasants who lived in their shadows by Ganghofer, and the encounter

⁴ “Auf dem Grunde aller dieser vornehmen Rassen is das Raubtier, die prachtvolle nach Beute und Sieg lüstern schweifende *blonde Bestie* nicht zu verkennen” (*Zur Genealogie der Moral* [1887], 1st treatise, no. 11). The above translation is mine and “splendid blond beast” is the usually remembered phrase in English translation, often applied to the Nazi ideal. A better translation might actually be something like “magnificently ravenous” or even “beautifully lustful”—though the usual English translation has now developed its own associations.

⁵ “Moralität ist Heerden-Instinkt in Einzelnen” (*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* [1882], book 3, section 116).

between good and evil in the American West for May—all *supported* the bourgeois order. Further, they supported it in a way that made it into a timeless, unchanging and unchangeable reality. May in particular, easily the best-selling German author of his time, is worth a closer look—precisely because an examination of his work reveals a longing for a world in which the bourgeois virtues and masculine honor have been seamlessly melded.⁶

Though it is tempting to place an “adventure” writer like May firmly in the camp of aristocratic-militarist style masculinity, his characters are actually a fusion of the bourgeois and aristocratic ideals of manhood. He presented images of “noble souls” (*Edelmenschen*) in whom the heroic spirit is tempered by law, order, and a solid commonsensical grounding in the timeless bourgeois order.

May’s German hero, Old Shatterhand (*alten Schmetterhand*—though May freely mixes English loan words into his text and his hero’s name is often given in English), is in some ways a typical western-wilderness figure. For example, in one episode early in *Winnetou III*, the hero encounters a man on the prairie. This man tries to pry information from the laconic hero and finally, exasperated, calls him a greenhorn. May’s hero promptly snatches up a rock and throws it high into the air, then shoots it as it reaches its zenith, sending it flying even higher. The exchange between the two men proceeds as follows:

“Heavens, what a shot! Do you always succeed?”

⁶ In fact May’s works continue to be printed, sold and referred to down to present. More than 1.5 million copies of his books were sold between 1892 and 1913. In spite of his characters’ admiration for and tolerance of racial others, he continued to be popular even in the Nazi period, and sales of his collected works had reached 7.5 million volumes by 1938 (Böhm 1955, 3). According to the Karl May Verlag, over 100 million copies of his over 80 books and short stories have been sold worldwide as of 2001 and he is far and away the best-selling German author of all time, outselling such stalwarts as Goethe and Thomas Mann. There is a renewed interest in his writings in the late 1990s and some of his best known works have been re-issued in English translation.

“Nineteen times out of twenty.”

“Then you’re just the sort of man I’m looking for. What’s your name?”

“Old Shatterhand.”

Here we imagine the poor fellow’s discomfiture. Just before demanding proof of ability from the hero, the stranger had lamented that he couldn’t find someone like the famous tracker, Old Shatterhand. The dialogue continues thus:

“Impossible. Old Shattered must be much, much older than you, otherwise people wouldn’t call him *Old* Shatterhand.”

“You’re forgetting that the word *old* often means something other than age.”

“True. But, hm, don’t take this amiss, Sir, but Old Shatterhand once had a run-in with a grizzly bear that surprised him in his sleep. It ripped him open from shoulder to ribs and he was lucky to walk away from it. The scar must be something to see!”

Here we have the by now too-familiar scene of the misrecognized hero who does not look the part of his own legendary deeds—until he uncloaks himself and reveals his true nature. He shows his scars and recounts the story of how he got them.

“It was a near thing. It happened in the Red River country and I lay there with these horrible wounds, next to the river and the carcass of the bear, for two weeks, with no one to help me, until Winnetou, the Apache noble, found me and gave me this name.”⁷

Here the tenor of the story tends more toward folk tale or legend than

⁷ This is my translation from the digitized text provided by the Karl-May-Gesellschaft e.V. The complete German text of most of May’s works, unabridged but in contemporary typography, can be found at <http://karlmay.leo.org/>. The quotations are all from p. 13 of Winnetou III.

adventure novel in its exaggeration. Nonetheless, Old Shatterhand is firmly established as a heroic type, able to endure unthinkable hardship. He is, however, obviously in the mold of a specifically *bourgeois* hero. His deeds make him extraordinary, but his manner is familiar and unassuming. He does not boast, and when the stranger is astounded by the hero's marksmanship, Old Shatterhand merely shrugs and explains, "it was a shot I had practiced hundreds of times" and "it was no big deal" ("*es war kein besonderes Meisterstück*").

So, if May's heroes are typical of a certain kind of masculinity, it is not heroic-aristocratic, but heroic-bourgeois. In an essay dealing with May and fin-de-siècle popular literature in Germany, George Mosse writes:

How did Karl May's heroes conquer the prairie? Certainly not through fire and sword. Although the stable social and political conditions of Germany are absent in the American desert, May's Old Shatterhand throughout the series of novels beginning with *Winnetou* (1893) attempts to exemplify law and order. For, as he tells us constantly, "in the prairies bad palefaces hide from the laws of the good palefaces." When he has conquered the bad men, he does not kill them but brings them before judge and jury. He is apt to preach sermons about the evil of hate and revenge. Punishment must follow sin; that is part of human and divine justice, but cruelty must be avoided and so must the unnecessary spilling of blood" (Mosse 1987, 54).

In other words, in May's works it is the *values* of the virtuous German middle class that win out. Old Shatterhand is the good German who is able to fuse bourgeois virtue and heroic honor. The American West, as imagined by May, was a masculine utopia where such a fusion of the best of aristocratic values and bourgeois stability was possible—precisely because the German institutions are absent. That is, the fusion of aristocratic and bourgeois values

becomes possible because on the prairie, the institutions are absent. The individual becomes the sole embodiment of what they represent. It is only through his actions, and his example, that they are extended to the wilderness. What would be prosaic back in Germany, becomes heroic. May's hero is made heroic by his readiness and capacity to act in the name of German institutions and values, as the unofficial herald of Germanity.

War, Masculinity and Social Organization

With the advent of gender studies, and masculinity studies in particular, it has become commonplace to speak of a “crisis of masculinity” that developed in the final years of the nineteenth century (see, for example, Dykstra 1986, Erhart and Herrmann 1997, Frevert 1995, Gay 1984 and 1993, McClaren 1977, Mosse 1996). Whether or not most men felt an internal crisis of masculine identity, or were themselves threatened by the “new women” and the inhumanity of industrialized work conditions, or by the increasing power of large scale institutions, it is clear that a significant group of normative and nationalist writers were very worried. They fretted at length about the “softening” of society, urban decadence, and the “threat” of a generation that would be unable to meet their country’s call to war (worries that would be repeated, almost verbatim, in the aftermath of both World Wars). That is, the public discourse referencing a “crisis of masculinity” was a crisis of *other people’s* masculinity and was focused on youth.

This crisis should not be confused with what I would describe as the *fragility* of masculinity—something I consider to be a permanent condition bound up with its artificiality. Appropriately gendered individuals have to be produced and, at least from existing evidence, almost no society considers

appropriate masculinity to be something “natural” or easily achieved (Gilmore 1990). It takes a lot of productive activity, in the form of everyday modeling, teaching, training, and the much-studied rites of passage, to turn male children into men (Turner 1966, Bourdieu 1992).⁸ Furthermore, masculinity, especially masculinity after the collapse of precedence, is never established once and for all. Rather it must be continuously proven, eternally defended, and renewed by manly deeds—a single moment of weakness can lead to emasculation.

The fin-de-siecle crisis of masculinity was bound up with changes in the war system. The increased importance of economic production as a prop to war fighting capacity opened social space for the production of alternative masculinities. With the population increasingly concentrated in urban centers, self-conscious gender “deviants”—homosexuals, effeminate men, self-styled degenerates—became increasingly visible (Mosse 1996). This creates the possibility of a backlash—and the vehemence with which critics responded to masculine deviants and the women’s emancipation movement certainly suggests that the element of backlash was present. However, as in the case of the post-Vietnam backlash against feminism in the United States, the roots of the “crisis” have to be found elsewhere, namely in the shifting relationship between the war system, social organization (the nation form) and economic organization (class relations).

For my purposes, two important currents ran through Wilhelmine

⁸ Bourdieu (1992) makes the interesting point that the real *work* accomplished in a rite is not so much the transformation of one class of person into another, e.g. boys to men, but the separation of boys from those who will *never* be so transformed, i.e. girls and women. This proposition, which seems likely enough, does not really contradict my thesis, for at base I consider normative manhood, at least in the vast majority of its incarnations, to be a thoroughly unattractive proposition. If you want men to accept the job of “being a man,” then you have to offer some compensations. These come in various forms including prestige, personal power and the “reward” of avoiding the penalties that accrue to those who default, demur or rebel against normative masculinity (see chapter 1 above).

Germany. The first: the rise of the military man as a national ideal, associated with the glory of unification and with the specifically German virtues of “manliness” and efficiency that led to victory over the French in the Franco-Prussian War. The second: the increasing importance of industry, not just in economic life, but also in warfare. The latter meant that the social organization of warfare, in order to take full advantage of the potentials of industrialization, had to change.

Beginning in the 1890s, the German military, drawing on its prestige and its influence with the Kaiser, increasingly agitated for increased funding and the implementation of truly universal military training. Although nothing like this was ever achieved in peacetime, even the ambition to train every able-bodied man and hold him in reserve, as part of the military capacity of the nation, was extraordinary. It bespoke the attempts of the General Staff, the so-called “demi-gods of violence,” to reorient German society toward warfare. The primary obstacle in this goal, from the military point of view, was party politics in the Reichstag.

The attempt by the military to re-orient society toward war, it should be noted, was not based on some “rational” calculation of war system necessities. It was true, particularly with the warming of relations between the French and the Russians in the 1890s, that Germany would likely face a two-front war in any future conflict. It was also true that Germany would be outnumbered and faced by opponents who collectively controlled vastly superior resources were such a war to develop. But, the German government, following the lead of its military experts, abandoned the kind of Bismarckian diplomacy which had earnestly sought to postpone war and drive wedges between Germany’s potential enemies. The *inevitability* of war, as imagined by the German

General Staff, only makes sense when it is understood that for the General Staff war was *desirable*.

For the military leadership an aggressive policy was attractive for two reasons. First, given enemies with superior manpower and resources, they thought it essential that they be the ones to pick the timing of the war. The feeling was the sooner the better, before their enemies could build more weapons or defenses. Second, and probably more importantly, the dominance of the old order was increasingly in doubt. The threat of Revolution continued to form a basis for the politics of *Sammlung*, but the demands of the bourgeoisie for participation in the ruling coalition were increasingly irksome to the army. For the military leadership, the key issue was its own independence, which it held to be essential to protect Germany from itself—i.e. from the threat of Revolution, either socialist or democratic. Thus War Minister Falkenhayn told the Reichstag in early 1914, “Only by the fact that the Prussian army is protected by the constitution from party struggle and the influence of ambitious party leaders has it become what it is: the essential guarantor of peace” (Schmidt-Bückerburg 1933, 237). Ironic words, unintentionally so to be sure, regarding an institution relentlessly pushing for a war that began mere months after Falkenhayn’s statement.

In the period between 1890 and the dawn of the Great War, rapid industrialization and urbanization led at once to increased affluence and increased worry about the “health” of the nation. Men who spent their days in the unwholesome environment of the factory, it was argued, would inevitably suffer from physical degeneracy, as was evidenced by the discovery by Charcot (seconded by Freud) of the previously unheard of disease of male hysteria. At the same time, the more affluent were victims of their own luxury,

youths tempted away from the bourgeois values of self-discipline, moderation and chastity.

Reaction was widespread but mixed. The German Youth Movement of the early twentieth century, for example, glorified nature and the independence of youth. Journals associated with the movement, e.g. *Der Vortrupp* (*The Vanguard*), regularly depicted and glorified male strength, willpower and military virtue. At the same time adults worried about the potential for homoerotic adventure amongst young men camping together in the woods unsupervised—worries exacerbated when homosexual scandals shook the movement in 1911 (Mosse 1996, 95). Berlin became a center for homosexual and decadent culture on the one hand and on the other for the operation of *Sittlichkeitsvereine* (Purity Leagues), Christian associations dedicated to promoting moral health by opposing prostitution, masturbation, homosexuality and promiscuity.

Thus at the same moment when socialism became a serious challenge to the bourgeois/old order *Sammlung*, manhood itself—the essential prop to militarism—was widely regarded as under attack. The threat came in the form of the multiplication of contrary examples—effeminate men, homosexual men, romantic men—who threatened not just military masculinity, but especially the attempt at bourgeois-military symbiosis. The decadents lived masculinity in ways that were at once “soft” and “excessive,” openly sexual and anti-normative. Though the military establishment rarely deigned to comment directly on this, the near-constant lament that German society was too soft and too undisciplined to make “good material” was indicative of their worries.⁹ As

⁹ Michael Geyer (1980) argues that in the aftermath of the First World War, the Reichswehr attempted to organize all of society to lay the human and economic grounds for total war. This was not, however, a new trend—as Dennis Showalter (1983) points out—in the German

with the crisis in coalition politics, the crisis in masculinity, from their perspective, could best be cured by war—thus a viciously circular logic: we need good German men to fight wars; war makes good German men.

War as Medicine and its Side-Effects

The insistent enthusiasm with which the German military leadership led the way to war in 1914 is too well known for any retelling here. Yet, what is not known quite so well is that on the eve of World War I, “the crucial decisions were made by the soldiers and that, in making them, they displayed an almost complete disregard for political considerations” (Craig 1964, 294). The military leaders believed in the supremacy of strategy in principle and in their own exclusive competence to decide essential questions of security. They did not trust civilian politicians to manage the nation’s interests. In particular they believed in the absolute necessity of preventive war along the lines of what came to be known as the Schieffen plan, after the Chief of Staff who invented it. In the Schieffen plan, German troops would make a bold first strike through Belgium to flank the French and force them to surrender in a matter of weeks, opening the way for the transport of troops by rail to the Eastern front.

The trend of military arrogation of areas of decision-making power traditionally held by the civilian government continued over the course of the war. By the time Field Marshall Hindenburg and General Luddendorf were installed in the High Command in August 1916, the military was dictating not only strategic policy, but economic policy and foreign policy; its leaders stolidly

military. Rather WWI sharpened the focus of what was required. Even before the Reichswehr promoted society-wide physical training and organization (Craig 1964, 397–408), the Imperial Army had encouraged the gymnastic movement and increasingly called for the universal training of German men as reserve soldiers (Mosse 1996, 109; Craig 1964, 251–53).

resisted any attempts at a diplomatic end to the war. In no case were they willing to open negotiations with the enemy, not least because they understood that any negotiated peace would have to be negotiated in terms of the status quo ante. After two years of bloody war and a deluge of propaganda about the allied “war criminals,” they knew that a return to previous borders would leave the way open for democracy and civilian control of the military, if not outright socialist revolution.

The nationalist groups had demanded all along that the only acceptable outcome of the war would be the German annexation of territories in both East and West as well as the establishment of a right to German colonies in Central Africa. However unrealistic these goals were by late summer 1916, Hindenburg and Ludendorff were stuck with pursuing them or presiding over the diminution of the military as an institution. Without a decisive victory, control over the military would likely pass into civilian hands—a fate the officer corps had been fighting for over a hundred years. This was the best case scenario. In the worst case, from the point of view of the military leadership, the government would fall into the hands of anti-military revolutionaries keen on abolishing the prerogatives and prestige of the officer corps. In any case, the lack of decisive victory would lower the social standing of officers as a group and cast serious doubt on any future bids for its leadership of the nation.

The eventual outcome was the collapse of the government in face of an obviously unwinnable war, soldierly mutiny and revolutionary activity among workers. The generals, finally recognizing that military triumph was impossible and that some kind of diplomatic settlement was required if occupation and disarmament was to be avoided, reluctantly formed an alliance with the least radical of the socialist revolutionaries. The military leadership made a deal to

prop up the new government as a vehicle for making peace with the Allies, resulting in the punitive treaty of Versailles.¹⁰ The result, of course, was the “stab in the back” legend whereby civilian authorities were blamed for a “shameful” and unpatriotic capitulation even though the German army was “undefeated in battle.”

The stab-in-the-back myth would haunt the Weimar Republic and eventually be a key component of National Socialist ideology. The most immediate consequences of the defeat and revolution, however, were the drastic troop reductions and disarmament mandated by the Versailles Treaty and the dependence of the new “socialist” government on the military. This latter meant that real democratic reform of the military was practically impossible and the army was, in effect, left to reform itself, albeit under the constraints of the Treaty.

In the case of the mandated troop reductions, the armed forces were reorganized as the Reichswehr under the command of General von Seeckt. Seeckt, known for the conscious formation of the Reichswehr as a “state within a state,” meaning an institution with its own purposes subordinate to the Republic only insofar as this was a practical necessity, also emphasized the creation of an “elite” force. Given the Versailles-mandated need to dismiss the vast majority of both officers and enlisted men, Seeckt was able to focus on retaining both the most able, and especially the most reliable. The limitations

¹⁰ The chaotic final days of the First World War and onset of revolution in Germany is a story too well known to require extensive commentary here. For an account of the dealings of the military’s relationship to the Majority Socialist government of Friedrich Ebert, particularly the role of General Wilhelm Groener in supporting the new Republic, see Craig’s *The Politics of the Prussian Army* (1964), 347–354. Craig argues that in some sense the Weimar Republic was doomed from the moment Ebert accepted the support of the military, since whatever reforms were subsequently enacted, the new German state, like the one that emerged in 1871, owed its existence to the military. It did not help matters, of course, that Groener was intentionally using the new government to distance the military from the terms of the Versailles Treaty (Groener 1972, 466, as cited in Craig 1964, 347).

imposed by the Treaty also led directly to a series of covert moves by the military. The Reichswehr, from the moment of its creation, attempted to violate the limitations on the size and training of the armed forces, and to organize civilian society to promote military fitness.

More immediately, the revolutionary conditions at the end of the war made ordinary troops increasingly unreliable. Men who had marched off to the killing fields of Verdun and lived through the mind-numbing horror of trench warfare without protest mutinied, formed soldiers' councils in their units, or simply vanished into the night when marched back to Germany. Whole units melted away. The generals had little left to offer the new government, the stability of which was threatened by internal divisions and by riots and strikes.

In response to this threat, the army leadership called for the organization of special units of volunteers, men selected for their political reliability and opposition to the revolution. Other such units formed more-or-less spontaneously, under the auspices of successful officers, and attracted anti-Bolshevik fanatics as well as men too conditioned to battle to want to give it up or too adapted to military life to want to risk unemployment. These groups were eventually referred to as *Frei Korps* (Free Corps). The main thing to note about them at this point is that, though they were independent of the military command, initially at least they were conceived of and supported by the military leadership. They were used extensively to put down rioting and break strikes in the early days of the Weimar government and were essential to the pacification of the German cities.

However, the activities of the *Frei Korps* did not stop with putting down the most radical aspects of the revolution at the behest of the army command. Indeed, the goal of many *Frei Korp* units was to overthrow the government, as

nearly happened in March 1920 with the near success of the so-called Kapp Putsch. Given the treasonous neutrality of most of the high command (including Seeckt, who continued in his position after the attempted coup), the only thing that stopped it was a general strike that brought Berlin to a standstill. The enthusiasm for the strike raised new fears of mutiny in the remnants of the regular army and eventually led the coup-leaders to admit defeat at the insistence of officers concerned about the future of the military.

In the aftermath of the Kapp affair, which turned out to be humiliating for the military, Seeckt took steps to disband the *Frei Korps*, operating from the principle that the *Reichswehr* required a monopoly on violence. His attempts were, of course, only partially successful. The largest, most disciplined of the *Frei Korp* units were incorporated into the *Reichswehr*; others continued to operate independently, drilling and training in preparation for a showdown with Bolshevism at home and abroad. Even when they disbanded as private militias, the spirit of the *Frei Korps* lived on. Many former *Frei Korps* members were recruited to political vigilante groups that transformed the landscape of politics in Germany during the twenties. The best known of these groups, of course, is the *Sturmabteilung* (SA), Hitler's storm troopers.

"The First World War," writes Mosse, "added no new feature to the stereotype of modern manhood, but it deepened certain aspects..." (1996, 109). This is not quite correct. Certainly the main characteristics of military masculinity were in place before the war. However, the events at the end of the war in Germany spoke to the break-down of a key component of military masculinity: *Gehorsamkeit*. The mutinous soldiers were the nightmare of the military leaders. The eruption of refusal in the military meant that commanders could no longer command and military planning became a joke. The entire

force had to be reorganized along “voluntary” lines to insure its ability to quell riots in Berlin.

These mutinies went unrecognized in the right-wing propaganda of the 1920s or in the mythology of the stab-in-the-back. Weak-kneed and traitorous politicians were blamed for the German capitulation; mutinous soldiers, increasingly unwilling to fight, were for the most part spared indictment—legal or otherwise. At the same time, the activities of the *Frei Korps*, though in support of tradition, nonetheless also represented a kind of refusal. Neither tendency could be tolerated by the military and yet both erupted into the landscape of potential masculinities. And if neither the mutinous objector nor the militant vigilante were absolutely new types, they represented a significant shift in the German military context of the previous half-century.

Of the particular form of masculinity fostered in the *Frei Korps*, of course, much has been written, whereas concerning the soldiers and sailors who mutinied at the end of the war little was said. Though not as long-lived as the *Frei Korps*, and not as organized, the military resisters in the German army at the end of the war warrant further study, though such study is beyond the scope of the current project.

And if masculinity in the *Frei Korps* did not constitute a break with the prewar past, there was a definitive shift. The distance between the bourgeois lieutenant aping and exaggerating both the virtues and vices of the old aristocratic officer corps and Jünger’s men baptized by flood and fire—the steely-eyed killers of the *Frei Korps*, alienated from civilian and particularly female society—was measured in the heaps of corpses and broken bodies and minds left by the war. Much attention has been focused on the mythopoetic, war-glorifying writings of Jünger (and less famous

autobiographers of the Great War) and his famous descriptions of battle as purifying, intoxicating and renewing. Jünger's post-war reminiscences, in fact, served to reinforce the common prewar fantasy that the coming war would act as a *Stahlbad* (bath of steel) for the men of the nation badly in need of moral and physical renewal (Ulrich 1992). It seems that even the stalling of the German offensive in the West and the onset of trench warfare did not diminish the enthusiasm for war as a cure for nervous conditions in men. Surely, however, it makes more sense to read Jünger's writings against the grain, as suggested by Sabine Kienitz in a recent essay, as a kind of compensation (Kienitz 2002, 181). Jünger may have waxed rhapsodic about the sublime aspects of battle, but the reality of postwar Germany was that of the 11 million men mobilized, 1.7 million were killed or died as a result of the war and an astonishing 4.2 million were wounded over the course of the war.¹¹ These numbers indicate an unprecedented demographic tragedy and an incredible burden not just for the wounded and disabled, but their families and the larger German society struggling to recover from the war under the punitive terms of the Versailles Treaty.¹²

With the masculinity of so many men called into question by their

¹¹ World War I statistics are notoriously slippery. The above numbers are from the statistics page of the online Encyclopedia of First World War (recommended by Encyclopedia Britannica as a reliable source), found at <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWWdeaths.htm>; this casualty number is on the high-side of estimates I have seen, but even the most conservative numbers give a range between 2.2 and 2.7 million German war-disabled requiring social services and rehabilitation.

¹² Rehabilitation of the war-disabled was a significant industry in postwar Germany, and it is significant that an important goal of this industry was to insure that veterans did not present themselves as victims of the war. Like the mutineers and deserters at the end of the war, the war-disabled tended to disappear from public discourse, even as discourses arose in reaction to what they represented that made no sense without tacit reference to them. A surreal trace of the war-disabled can be discovered in the documents of the Holocaust—particularly in the debate about what to do about disabled Jewish war veterans, whom many believed should be treated differently than ordinary Jews. The fact that there were enough of these to suggest a special category to the planners of the “final solution” is a further indication of the extent of the demographic impact of the First World War on Germans, including German Jews.

reduction to the feminized status of dependents by disability, and with the presence of numbers of men—no one knows how many—described as suffering from *Kriegszitterern* (war shakes), or what we would now doubtless classify as post-traumatic stress disorder, Jünger's works take on an entirely different meaning. Instead of men of will, strengthened and toughened by their war experiences, the reality was literal "men of steel," fitted with elaborate metal prosthetics and pushed back into the work force as rapidly as possible in order to prove that the war had not, in fact, destroyed German manhood (Kienitz 2002, 191–92).

There is no doubt that the experiences of the First World War radically transformed the consciousness, and the bodies, of those who fought it. The meaning of this transformation, however, was created discursively in the aftermath. The war-writings of Jünger were an attempt to deny the unmitigated, dehumanizing disaster that was the reality of the modern battlefield. The medical doctors, psychiatrists and prosthetic engineers constituted another interpretive frame. They worked to re-masculinize, and thereby re-humanize, the war-disabled. Through retraining and prosthetics they were to be made invisible, their injuries forgotten.

Another frame can be found in the work of artists like Max Beckmann. He served as a medic in the war and subsequently depicted the war-world not as masculine utopia, but as a grotesque nightmare. He then carried this imagery over into his images of postwar humanity.

The point to take away from this discussion is that during the Weimar era, the battle over masculinity (suppressed during the war years) reasserted itself in manifold ways. The threat to German masculinity posed by "decadents" like Otto Dix became ammunition for the National Socialists and

other right-wing parties. With the reduction of the military forced by the Versailles Treaty and its nominal subordination to civilian authority, alternative masculinities again had room to develop. While militarist writers and artists celebrated war and military manhood, an exuberant culture celebrating deviance flourished in Berlin's cabarets—and both of these trends can be seen, at some level, as reactions to the dehumanizing horror of the war and the literal destruction of German masculinity, mutely proclaimed in the mangled bodies of the war-disabled that no amount of medicalization and rehabilitation could disguise.

CHAPTER 4

DEFEAT, HUMILIATION AND FEMINIZATION

The poster was one of many tacked up around the student center at the Free University of Berlin (FU). It depicted a grainy, black and white image of Wehrmacht soldiers in their characteristic *Feldgrau* (field gray) uniforms. There were three of them, two officers and an enlisted man. One of the officers tightens a hangman's noose around the neck of a raggedly dressed civilian. The victim faces away from the camera. His hands are tied behind his back. The officer-executioner is shown in profile. His nose is prominent, aquiline, aristocratic, proclaiming the "von" in his name. His eyes are closed.

The emphatic caption is in English: "No Wehrmacht: No Holocaust!"

The subtitle reads "Veranstaltung über die ideologische Prämissen des Bilderstreits" ("Gathering concerning the ideological premises of the picture controversy"). The meeting in question was sponsored by the Antifaschistische Hochschulgruppe (College Anti-Fascist Group) and the AusländerInnen gegen Rassismus (Foreign Women against Racism) and was to be held on an upcoming December evening at the FU.

The "Bilderstreits" of the title referred to an ongoing conflict about a traveling photographic exhibit sponsored by the Hamburg Institute for Social Research. The exhibit, titled "Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944" ("War of Genocide: Crimes of the Wehrmacht Between 1941 and 1944"), attracted both large crowds and controversy. As many as 900,000 people flocked to see the exhibit between 1995 and the latter part of 1999,

when it was closed for review and the correction of perceived inaccuracies (Niven 2002, 143).¹

The sponsors of the FU-meeting were left-leaning organizations and I was not surprised that the vast majority of participants held the view that attacks on the exhibit were part of an ongoing attempts to rehabilitate the German national reputation by minimizing or relativizing the crimes of the Nazi era. The essential piece of background here is that the generally accepted view at the time of the exhibit was that it was the SS, and particularly its *Einsatzgruppen* (Special Task Forces), that was primarily responsible for the mass murders behind the eastern front. The exhibit did not challenge this picture, but highlighted the cooperation and participation of ordinary German soldiers in these acts, in accord with the most recent research (Bartov 2000).

Predictably, the exhibit received only a trickle of visitors when it first opened, with average attendance of between 5,000 and 10,000 in Hamburg, Ravensburg and Nuremburg in 1995 and 1996. Then, in 1997 the exhibit came to Munich and more than 90,000 people crowded into the Town Hall to view the photographs. The difference was pre-event media attention. Conservative CSU politician Peter Gauweiler took the extraordinary step of mailing a letter to over 300,000 Munich households pleading with people to avoid the exhibit, and characterizing it as Communist propaganda (FAZ 1997a, 4; Niven 2002, 162). The publicity that erupted in response to the ultra-conservative rejection of the exhibit—much like the public reaction to the Nazi characterization of certain art as “degenerate”—led to many more people viewing the exhibit than otherwise would even have known of its existence.

¹ See chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of the Wehrmacht exhibit and its impact on German society.

In the case of the Wehrmacht exhibit, however, this politicization was probably inevitable. The debate about the exhibit touched on one of the great sore spots of postwar Germany. I was warned by informants that the war and the Wehrmacht were touchy subjects, particularly for older Germans. Touchy, perhaps, but it was certainly not a topic that Germans avoided with me, especially once they found out I was researching the military. Quite to the contrary, as with the other taboo subject, German nationalism, they were eager to speak with me—at least once they ascertained that I was interested in listening.

The reporting on the exhibit in the German media, of which there was a deluge, grappled with the veracity of the message of the exhibit and with public reactions to it. The conservative-leaning, intellectual newspaper, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), for example, while generally accepting the truth of the exhibit, contextualized it like this:

Hoffentlich werden Amerikaner und Engländer eines Tages den Mut haben, ihre Bevölkerung auch über die Kriegsverbrechen an der deutschen Zivilbevölkerung aufzuklären (FAZ 1997b, 59).

(Hopefully the Americans and the English will one day have the courage to explain their role in war crimes against the German population.)

This quote references the tired arguments for the relativization of the Holocaust. The FAZ writer wants to place German crimes side-by-side with the crimes of the British and American military forces during the Second World War. While I would never deny that such an effort would be salutary in the American and British context, its mention in the context of the Wehrmacht crimes seems distracting and irrelevant—and that is part of the understanding

of the exhibit: even for those who do accept it as truth, it is a truth too bitter to swallow without such constant contextualization.

The second bit of “context” references the promising idea of “good Germans.”

Die Ausstellung hätte etwas informativer und umfassender sein können. Man sollte jedoch trotz dieser Horrorgeschichten nicht vergessen, daß es auch Menschen gab, die den Juden geholfen haben und zum Krieg gezwungen wurden (FAZ 1997b, 59).

(The exhibit has something broadly informative to say. One should not forget, however, in spite of this horrific history, that there were also people who helped Jews and opposed the war.)

Which is to say that not *all* Germans were guilty, or equally guilty, of war crimes, which is to state the obvious.

The controversy around the exhibit arose because it transgressed against safe categorical boundaries. Focusing not on Hitler and the SS or other small groups, the exhibit had the potential to touch almost everyone in an intimate way—a way connected to family history. Even amongst the left-leaning activists and university students who gathered at the Freie Universität in December 1999 with the advertised understanding that without the Wehrmacht there could have been no war, and without the war there would have been no Holocaust, there were still words of caution. One man in his mid-twenties rose to say, “You make a mistake if you attack the honor of the entire Wehrmacht. They may not be innocent, but that is not the same as being guilty.”

This is an interesting distinction, and one that is bound up with shifts in the relationship of the military and masculinity in post World War II Germany.

More deeply it is bound up with the possibility of continuity with the past in any form. As Habermas put it with respect to the Historikerstreit of a decade before:

Beneath the debate on the question in what sense the Nazi mass crimes were unique lies the deeper question of what attitude we want to take toward the continuities of German history—whether we can affirm our political existence while maintaining a clear awareness of a break with our more sinister traditions. Can we, and do we want to, give up the comforts and the dangers of a conventional identity that is incompatible with a *critical* appropriation of traditions? Nationalism is as virulent as ever. This question, I am afraid, has not yet come due (Habermas 1989, 193).

With the Wehrmacht exhibit controversy, Habermas' question does begin to come due. The Historikerstreit held open the door on a set of debates about tradition and the way in which the Holocaust ought to be understood and remembered. However, both the passage of time and the persistent belief in a relatively small number of perpetrators tended to protect not only the self-image of contemporary Germans, but also their relationship to a *family* past, to relationships and memories of fathers and grandfathers. In other words, understandings of the role of the Wehrmacht in Nazi crimes were *personal*, linked to memories of fathers, grandfathers and forbidden subjects that form part of the narrative of identity.

The implication of the regular armed forces in the Nazi crimes collapses the distance between ordinary Germans and the Holocaust. As one visitor wrote in the guest book of the Wehrmacht exhibit: "Ich frage mich die ganze Zeit: War mein Vater hier dabei?" ("I asked myself the whole time: would I find my father here [in the photos]?") (FAZ 1997b, 59). Here questions of tradition

and identity meet in the childhood memories of a father's face; here the question of *continuity* comes due.

Yet the question of continuity itself is multifaceted. The continuity of consciously constructed claims about the past or the conscious preservation of traditions (*Traditionspflege*) is a different thing than identity. Identity is constructed through an alchemy of conscious and unconscious processes that include the various stories each person tells about himself, and how these stories position himself with respect to various possible relationships. Each person is also perceived through a grid of classifications—man, woman, Christian, Jew, worker, owner—which tend to limit his identity choices. In this matrix of classification, limitation and desire to belong identity is produced. In this context, history is grist for the identity-making mill. To a certain extent, people chose what stories they will appropriate as part of their own narrative.

Habermas' call for a critical appropriation of tradition requires its own process of bringing to consciousness. I would argue such a process is a necessary part of any identity that could be called post-conventional. Nonetheless, the extended moment of confrontation with the past *and* the self-image made possible by the debate about the Wehrmacht exhibit points back toward various shifts in German self-image, and particularly to the relationship of German manhood to shifts in war-making that have occurred since the end of World War II.

Revolution, Counter-Revolution and the Way Things Change

In Thomas Kuhn's seminal work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), he argues that significant change in scientific theory and associated practices comes not so much through the careful accumulation of

experimental results, as through a fairly dramatic *shift* from one paradigm to another. In his account, scientific paradigms behave a good deal like ideologies in that it is typically very difficult, if not impossible, to convince the bulk of those who have worked successfully under one paradigm to shift to a new one. To make such a shift means far more than changing a set of hypotheses. It means breaking with hard-learned techniques, colleagues (and funders) who have not made the break, and habitual ways of thinking. Both human relationships and material resources are at stake.

Any wholesale importation of Kuhn's theory to considerations of masculinity or the relationship of the war system to masculinity would be suspect. Yet I think there are a couple of his points that should be considered generally applicable to all human endeavor. First, change can be divided between "normal" and "revolutionary" types. The former is characterized by problem-solving using a range of familiar concepts, tools, dispositions and procedures, even if results are in some sense new. The latter is characterized by a new way of looking at the world that calls for a new set of concepts, new tools, new habits and new procedures. Probably the tell-tale sign of a revolution, what Kuhn refers to as the shift to a new paradigm, is a change in *relationships*, by which I mean relationships between people. In fact, in describing the final stages of shift from one paradigm to another, he suggests that it is not so much that the committed adherents of the old paradigm are finally converted to the new, but that with time the influence of the new grows beside the old and the most influential adherents of the old paradigm grow old, retire and die. This last point is a striking one for considering what I see as the shift in masculinity in post-WWII Germany.

Demography as Destiny

The population of the German Reich in 1939—excluding those living in Austria and other annexed areas—was about 69.5 million. Of this population, which had been growing rapidly since the Nazis took power in 1933 and therefore included a large number of young children, about 24.6 million were men aged 15 to 65, which I will take as the outer limits for military service.² Of the men in this age group, an astonishing 17.9 million, or almost 81 percent, served in the German armed forces between the years 1939 and 1945.

Even before any discussion of casualties, this is one of those rare examples of a statistic that really does speak for itself. The content of the message is the success of what Michael Geyer has called the *orientation* of the Third Reich toward war. Even more than conquest, in National Socialist terms, war-making was about centering “state and society in combat, domination, and direct exploitation” (Geyer 1984, 198) as the very core of counterrevolutionary politics. Roger Griffin (1993), in his work on the essence of fascism in power, also points to the orientation toward permanent war and universal mobilization. Both men see Nazi ideology in practice as mobilization to violence—and both see National Socialist ideology as best understood as an ideology of action. War and the preparations for war were not only valorized in propaganda, but more importantly, they were realized. Thus the armed forces played a key role in the enactment of Nazi ideology.

Thus, the military demanded in addition to general conscription premilitary training, postmilitary exercises, an appropriate air raid system and a host of other such

² Unless otherwise attributed, statistics on the Wehrmacht and German population details during the Second World War are from Jason Pipes’ Feldgrau website (<http://www.feldgrau.com/stats.html>) and are compiled from a variety of sources. Exact statistics for Germany during the Nazi period are not available, but Pipe’s numbers are in general accord with other statistical sources.

measures. But most of all it demanded that society not organize on its own and spontaneously, for any such association would have counteracted the pervasive 'domination of everyday life' in the interest of military preparation for war (Geyer 1984, 207).

This mobilization, in turn, was at least partially in response to the National Socialist objection to the dominance of industry in society. For the Nazis, the turn to war was the only possible way to transcend the values of the factory. The point, however, was not to return to a bucolic past, or to do away with industrial production. The effect was to valorize politics. The goals of society, and the orientation of life, they believed, should be determined by the leadership of the NS state, not the captains of industry. And it was "racism with its extreme form of annihilating whole peoples" that "realized and legitimized the extreme form of subjugation that was necessary to establish a German society outside the realm of industrial production" (Geyer 1984, 219).

This unprecedented mobilization of men to warfare resulted in an unprecedented human cost. The millions of victims of the German war machine—11 million soldiers and 7 million civilians in the Soviet Union alone³—as well as the 5 to 6 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust, must, of course, be included in any global assessment. For my purposes the key figures are the German dead and wounded. The numbers are 3.5 million German soldiers killed either in battle or as a direct result of war-related injury and 5 million wounded over the course of the war.⁴ In addition, some 3.4 million were either missing or interned as prisoners at war's end.

The meaning of these numbers is difficult to grasp. From the

³ "Table 7: World War II Casualties." *Encyclopaedia Britannica* from Encyclopaedia Britannica Premium Service. <http://www.Britannica.com/eb/article?eu=126559> [Accessed October 18, 2003].

⁴ *ibid.*

perspective of early twenty-first century America in particular, where U.S. deaths in recent wars have been counted in the hundreds instead of the thousands or millions, the numbers from the Second World War seem particularly surreal.⁵ A useful comparison, both because of its historical proximity and the impact it had on masculinity and war-making capacity in the United States, is with the Vietnam War.⁶

The population of the U.S. in 1970 was about 203 million, compared to about 69 million Germans (or about 80 million including the areas annexed by Hitler) in 1939. Yet in spite of the fact that the U.S. population in the Vietnam era was at least two and half times as large as the German population during the Second World War, the German mobilization of 17.9 million men was nearly seven times as large as the American in the respective conflicts.⁷ In other words, about one in four Germans served on active duty during World

⁵ According to the anti-war website *Antiwar.com*, war related deaths of U.S. soldiers between May 1, 2003 and mid-October 2003 in Iraq are 197. Iraqi casualties, though hard to estimate with any degree of accuracy, especially with the Pentagon adamantly refusing to provide such estimates, are universally presumed to be orders of magnitude higher and direct and indirect consequences of the two American-led wars against Iraq have been accused of causing hundreds of thousands or even millions of deaths in the country, most of them civilians. Though such claims are difficult to verify, there is no doubt that the wars have been devastating for the Iraqis, demographically as well as materially.

⁶ The comparison is meant as a tool for *feeling* the weight of the demographic impact of the death of so many *German* soldiers in Germany; this analysis is not meant to detract from the impact of Allied casualties, especially those suffered by the Soviet Union, nor the even greater impact of the nearly successful genocide of European Jewry on Jews everywhere. Rather, I am pointing to the chauvinistic reality that even as the 500 or so American deaths per week at the height of hostilities in Southeast Asia had a *far* greater impact on the United States than the thousands upon thousands of Vietnamese deaths, so did the German deaths have a greater impact on Germany than the deaths of Allied soldiers or even the non-combatant Jews murdered in the death camps. In fact, it is probably only the fact of Germany's unconditional surrender, and the total collapse of the Nazi regime, that makes it possible for even a genocidal crime as vast as the Holocaust to be talked about at all in the nation descended from that of the perpetrators.

⁷ Statistics on Americans and American casualties in Vietnam are from *VFW Magazine* (March 1993). A total of 2,594,000 American soldiers actually served within the borders of Vietnam between 1965 and 1973; a much larger number, 9,087,000, were on active duty at some point during the war, many of them serving out their entire service inside the United States, or in Korea or Europe.

War II compared to one in seventy-eight Americans who actually served *in* Vietnam.

The gross comparison of numbers served, however, does not really get to the key point, for the impact on those who *did* serve is derived largely from the casualty rates. In the German case this means that of the 17.1 million who served, more than 20 percent were killed as a direct result of the war. This compares to about 2 percent of those sent to Vietnam. If casualties are compared to the respective societies, the disparities are even greater. Thus nearly 5 percent *of the entire German population*, or 1 in 20 Germans, were killed in action during the Second World War; whereas about 1 in 3,500 Americans were killed in Vietnam.

The reason for making these comparisons, of course, is not to suggest that the number of American dead in Vietnam was insignificant. My point is that even at the lesser casualty rates for Vietnam, the impact on masculinity and the war system in the United States was profound. All other factors set aside, try to imagine the impact on American society if, instead of 58 thousand deaths in Vietnam, there had been over 10 million. The difference is between knowing someone who *served*, and having a father, son, brother or husband killed or wounded in the war.

One final word on the demographics of German death during the Second World War, and this point is really the decisive one: the vast majority of the battle deaths recorded in these figures were men. When you add in the wounded (5 million), the number of war casualties reaches well over 8 million, or about *one in three* German men who were killed or wounded during the war. Casualty rates of this level can rightly be called devastating. If we make the assumption that a great many of those who were casualties of the war

were those who identified with soldierly masculinity, then the ground for a revolutionary shift away from militarist-style masculinity, in Kuhn's terms, had been laid. Bluntly put, the leading proponents of soldierly masculinity were killed, devastated by physical and psychological injuries, held as prisoners of war in the immediate postwar period or politically disgraced through connections to the Nazi party.

The Feminization of Postwar Germany

Even today, a German politician looking for a cheap round of applause can slip a reference to the *Trümmerfrauen* (women of the rubble) into a speech. Between 1945 and 1947, at a time when many of those German men who had not been killed or seriously wounded during the war were still held in prisoner-of-war camps, these women laboriously began the rebuilding process in the nation's destroyed cities. They collected, sorted and cleaned bricks and building materials by hand. A fixture in the postwar German imaginary, the *Trümmerfrauen* are depicted in countless documentary photographs and film clips. A web page devoted to *Trümmerfrauen* documentary states:

Die "Trümmerfrauen" sind zum Symbol für den Aufbauwillen und die Überlebenskraft der Deutschen in der Nachkriegszeit geworden. Ohne ihre Schwerstarbeit wären die deutschen Städte lange Zeit Schutthalden geblieben, ohne ihre unermüdliche Tätigkeit das Überleben der Familien nicht gesichert gewesen.⁸

(The "Trümmerfrauen" have become a symbol of the German will to rebuild and survive in the postwar period. Without their hard work the German cities would have remained, for a long time, in ruins; without their tireless

⁸ The web page is sponsored by the Berlin-based Deutsches Historisches Museum as part of its LeMO: Lebendiges virtuelles Museum Online project. The URL for the page is <http://www.dhm.de/lemo/html/Nachkriegsjahre/DasEndeAlsAnfang/truemmerfrauen.html> (accessed October 22, 2003), and includes video clips.

activity the survival of their families could not be assured.)

Which gives something of the flavor of a particularly *female* postwar German public—and the myth-charged language used to refer to this public.

In the text above, which is representative of similar contemporary presentations of the immediate postwar period, the Trümmerfrauen are a “symbol.” They represent the German “will to survive” even after the devastation brought by the war. During the Third Reich these same women had largely been confined to the domestic sphere. They were depicted in Nazi ideology as human brood mares with the particular responsibility of the “racial hygiene” of the Volk (Koonz 1987; Frevert 1990). Even in postwar interpretations, such as the one above, the work of the Trümmerfrauen is understood as a kind of extension of the cooking, cleaning and minding of children—i.e. the work to take care of their families.

In the postwar world, of course, even “ordinary” activities of providing for the basic needs of a family assumed heroic dimensions. “After the war,” writes historian Petra Goedde,

women continued to do what they had done during the war, namely, concentrate their energies on securing food, preparing meals, and keeping house. Yet as the focus shifted from the battlefield to the ruined domestic landscape, women’s work moved to the center of the national consciousness. Because of the food and material shortages of the early postwar period, those ordinary household chores became Herculean tasks. Many women became the main providers for their families. They bore the brunt of social and economic reconstruction, because many German men had died in the war, were interned in POW camps, or had returned physically or psychologically maimed (Goedde 1999, 6).

This new public presence of women in the postwar period had some

specific consequences. As Goedde argues, the *absence* of men, particularly military-aged men, in postwar Germany meant that when the war turned from battle to occupation, the Allied armies primarily encountered women, children and old men.

In the case of American soldiers, who had been spoon-fed a steady diet of anti-German propaganda which emphasized the *male* and *masculine* nature of the enemy, the publicly female character of those with whom they interacted led to an American reconceptualization of occupied Germany. Instead of the (male) Nazi perpetrators, they saw, (female) victims of war cast into a dependent role. The occupiers, who had entered Germany prepared to engage in a ruthless program of denazification, found themselves cast in the role of providers.⁹

Thus both from the point of view of demographics, and in the eyes of the victorious Americans, the immediate postwar period saw a *literal* feminization of Germany. Of course we know well enough that this shift in population and public face did not equate to a dominance of postwar German politics or economics by women. It does, however, form the base from which any discussion of the shift in the nature of postwar German masculinity and its relationship to war-making must begin.

I emphasize this because it is tempting to start an analysis of postwar German masculinity with a focus on the *meaning* of defeat as refracted through masculine identity. John Borneman, for example, writes “one must first

⁹ American soldiers entering Germany were given the *Pocket Guide to Germany* (USASF 1944). This guidebook warned, “during the war, Germany kept 500,000 trained killers at home, the black-uniformed SS Guards.... With the defeat of Germany what are left of these 500,000 will discard their uniforms and disappear into anonymity of civilian clothes, many thousands of other Gestapo men and soldiers as well will do the same. This will not make them *less* dangerous. It will make them *more* dangerous. It will enable them to strike in the dark” (as quote in Goedde 1999, 4).

emphasize the peculiarity of postwar German sovereignty following the ‘unconditional surrender’ of the nation. Given pre-1945 German gender codes, this surrender was a radically feminizing and humiliating act” (Borneman 1998, 303). I do not want to deny the consequences of the defeat. Rather I want to push the analysis back to the existential consequences of the war and the reality of occupation.

The “feminization” of postwar Germany is not only a metaphor. Hans-Gerd Winter asks the question:

It is understandable that the collapse of the National Socialist empire delegitimized the image of masculinity that supported it and delegitimized patriarchal, fascist ideology as a whole. A completely different question, however is the extent to which this could possibly be recognized and comprehended so quickly by the conquered Germans (Winter 2001, 194).

To this question, I offer a two-fold response. First, the German recognition of the downfall of militarist masculinity came nowhere near as fast as the recognition of the downfall of the National Socialist state. The latter case was realized through the presence of the occupiers, and, perhaps even more to the point, the *dependence* of the German population, in the short run, on the occupying forces for basics such as food and medical supplies. Postwar Germany was war-weary and exhausted, but this did not necessarily equate to a revolutionary *shift* in masculine identity.

This was made abundantly clear to me in interviews with older Germans early on in my fieldwork. Han-Erich Zeller was a retired Bundeswehr non-commissioned officer. Former Hauptfeldwebel (First Sergeant) Zeller was from a working class Hamburg family. His father was a mechanic who had served, reluctantly but honorably in Sgt. Zeller’s account, in the Wehrmacht.

Hans-Erich was drafted in the early 60s and never even considered conscientious objection. “In that time,” he said, “one did not do that. A man went to the army, he did his Wehrdienst and got it over with.” This meshes with stories I heard from other older Germans concerning service in the military, as well as the statistics, which saw only a trickle of those refusing to serve in the Bundeswehr in the 1950s and 60s.¹⁰

Secondly, the *recognition*, in the sense of conscious understanding, of the link between soldierly masculinity and Nazi ideology was not necessary to the beginnings of a de-emphasis on militarist masculinity. The changed demographics—both the dead and missing soldiers and disgrace and downfall of the former Nazi leadership—opened literal room in society for the leadership of men who were less soldier-identified. The forced dismemberment of the Wehrmacht, and the physical presence of the occupation forces, left few institutional vehicles for the re-emergence of the types of masculinity celebrated by the Nazis. This was not the same as a self-conscious shift in identity. Only gradually, over the course of decades, would new social movements—for example the 68ers and the anti-nuclear movement—make full use of the link between soldierly masculinity and the Nazis as a device for reorganizing consciousness, and only gradually would the majority of the population have its consciousness shifted.

¹⁰ According to information from the Press- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung (Jan. 1992) the total number of conscientious objectors between 1956 and 1958 was 2,447. In 1963 the number was 2,777. 1972: 33,792. 1982: 59,859. For more recent years numbers from the Bundesamt für den Zivildienst, responsible since 1984 for reviewing and approving applications for conscientious objection, indicate that the trend was upward with objectors per year over 100,000 in the 1990s. For a more detailed discussion of conscientious objection in post-war Germany see chapters 6 and 7.

Amiliebchen

At the close of the Second World War, the American military leadership feared that too-close relationships between allied soldiers and the German population would lead to a breakdown in discipline. This in turn would make the draconian measures originally envisioned impossible to implement.¹¹ This fear was based in the widespread warm relations between American troops who occupied the Rhineland between 1919 and 1923 and the German population, where the official policy against fraternization broke down (Nelson 1975, 3–7). Thus a key component of the occupation policy was a non-fraternization order that the American military command was determined to enforce.

The policy against fraternization, however, quickly proved unrealistic. Whatever the opinions expressed on the editorial pages of the newspapers in the United States—predictably negative—American soldiers sought out the company of German civilians, particularly German women, in significant numbers. This led to the linguistically awkward construction “erotic fraternization.” Relationships, erotic or not, between American soldiers and German women provoked a great deal of concern on the part of the American military authorities. As early as September 1945 General Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, sent a memo to General Omar Bradley of the 12th Army Group complaining about fraternization and demanding a crackdown on the breach of discipline. Shortly

¹¹ The original denazification and demilitarization plan for Germany was far more thorough than what was actually implemented even before the Marshall Plan and the development of the Cold War changed the orientation of American policy. The governing document for the occupation was JCS 1067. For a complete text see “Directive to the Commander in Chief of the United States Forces of Occupation Regarding the Military Government of Germany, May 10, 1945,” in *Documents on Germany, 1945–1985* (Washington, D.C.: Dept. of State), 1–2.

thereafter, then Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall ordered Eisenhower to take steps “to discourage fraternization” and he demanded that photographs of American soldiers acting on friendly terms with German civilians be banned.¹²

Erotic fraternization between German women and American soldiers, or rather the complex of contemporary myth that surrounded such liaisons, resulted in the postwar female stereotype, the *Amiliebchen* (Yank lover). In mythic counterpoint to the sainted Trümmerfrauen, the whorish Amiliebchen filled the role of national scapegoat in the immediate aftermath of the war. In a provocative essay titled “Erotic Fraternization: The Legend of German Women’s Quick Surrender” (2002), Susanne zur Nieden describes an ongoing fascination with these women that she attributes to a massive shifting of guilt. Thus the nearly ubiquitous complaint that “German soldiers fought six years. The German woman, five minutes” (Nieden 2002, 204). In this construction it was not the loyal, hard-fighting German soldiers who were guilty of following a doomed, criminal regime to the bitter end. Instead it was German women who, by taking American lovers, refused to refuse and were judged as guilty of selling themselves cheaply, for food and cigarettes.

This supposed quick and absolute surrender of German women to the American occupiers gave rise to a plethora of anecdotes, dirty jokes, popular denouncements and stereotyped images collectively referred to as Fräulein stories. The following account is typical of the genre. It is from an unsigned

¹² Eisenhower’s message to Bradley is dated September 17, 1944 (RG 311, file 9– [Germany], Adjutant General’s Records, 1944, SHAEF). Marshall’s orders to Eisenhower are dated September 21, 1944 (RG 331, file 9– [Germany], Adjutant General’s Records, 1944, SHAEF). Both are quoted in Goedde 1999, 13.

letter sent to a woman in Hamburg in the late 1940s. A notice had been placed in the paper announcing her engagement to an American.

Dead tired, after weeks so long
 the soldiers are crawling home...
 She's living it up, the German woman,
 in the worst possible way, we know for a fact.
 In pairs or on their own we see them walk along
 or stand longingly in doorways, in front of houses,
 a seductive smile on a cheery face,
 oh, German women, have you no shame?
 The German soldiers, armless and legless,
 you obviously don't care for them.
 They have neither coffee nor butter,
 the foreigners have the lot, yes, even sugar.
 And if one brings along some chocolate,
 the color of his skin doesn't matter at all;
 five years they needed to besiege us,
 but you, they got around in five minutes....
 You're dragging, and you know it, too,
 the honor of German woman through the dirt.
 (Domentat 1998, 18–19).

The words are stereotypical and often repeated, found in placards and short stories. According to Hans Werner Richter, editor of the magazine *Der Ruf* and co-founder of the postwar German writers organization Gruppe 47, Amiliebchen were the hottest topic for casual conversation in the post-war period (Richter 1946/47, 6).

The often racially-charged myth of the quick and easy sexual surrender of German women, I argue, played an important role in the reconstruction of postwar German masculinity. Guilt is certainly a central issue in this reconstruction, and a particular kind of guilt: failure of refusal. Traditionally, women's honor, as discussed briefly above in chapter 2, is all about refusal, specifically sexual refusal. That is, male honor is largely an instrument of support and conditioning useful in the social production of soldiers. Men

defend their honor by avenging insults and demanding their rights. Women protect their honor by guarding their sexual virtue, remaining chaste until married and faithful in marriage—by refusing the sexual attentions of unauthorized men (and relying on men to defend them).

The Third Reich was a period in which traditional male honor revolved around the ideal of loyalty. The National Socialist state even proposed, in its so-called *Volksgemeinschaft*, a substitute for old order honor as precedence. A true German was promised his proper place in the social order via his blood-based membership in the German *Volk*, which was confirmed through his admittance to important institutions like the Wehrmacht and the Nazi Party. These institutions bestowed a collective honor that bound the individual to them as members. Yet as the war years dragged on and defeat became more and more certain, even traditionalists such as those involved in the July 20, 1944 assassination attempt against Hitler came to see the NS state as bankrupt. The possibility of refusal, the most feminine of virtues, opened up—if only just—within the male universe.

For the most part, however, German men *failed* to refuse and held on to an identity and a mode of honor disgraced by the Nazis. The scorn directed against the Amiliebschen reflected an attempt at an ex post facto construction of moral superiority. The *manly* thing to do was to fight on, even in a lost cause for a criminal regime (“five years they needed to besiege us”); the appropriately female thing to do would have been *to refuse* the cigarette-and-chocolate-sweetened advances of American servicemen and thereby avoid dragging “the honor of German woman through the dirt.”

I would argue further, however, that this continuing attack on the failure of erotic refusal in the Amiliebschen went hand-in-hand with a gradual shift in

masculine identity. The initial divide between heroic/loyal men and whorish/betraying women gives way, over time. The Amiliebchen is never forgiven, but gradually, through the activities of social movements and the reaction of public discourse to the post-war changes in the war system a new German man is made who is empowered to refuse.

Resistant Sons

In her essay “Techno-Muscularity and the ‘Boy Eternal’: From the Quagmire to the Gulf” (1993), Lynda Boose discusses the road from Vietnam to the first Persian Gulf War in terms of the (re-)construction of American masculinity. In this thoughtful account she points out that much of the sociocultural impact of protest against the Vietnam War was provided by the participation of the draft-age sons of the middle class—and not just by active protest, but by a quiet refusal of “future leaders” like J. Danforth Quayle—to put themselves in harm’s way for the sake of a war that no one could adequately explain. When, doubtless with an eye toward their own futures, they didn’t actually speak out against the war, they fled into protected statuses that allowed them to maintain a pretense of supporting the war, without actually having to fight it.

Thus, in Boose’s account, “in each of the mini wars staged in the decade before the Persian Gulf crisis, America’s primary goal was not, as had earlier been suspected, merely to undo defeat in Vietnam: It was to put to rest the legacy of resistant sons bequeathed by that conflict” (68).

This legacy of “resistant sons” indicated a significant intergenerational breach, a rupture in the every-twenty-year march to war which had served as much or more to justify a certain style of masculinity as to “defend” or expand

the boundaries of American hegemony. For the generation of men who came of age between 1964 and 1973, the Vietnam War represented the possibility of *refusal*—specifically the refusal to take up the torch of militarism and be proved “under fire” as worthy heirs to American masculinity. Moreover, this refusal differed from traditional conscientious objection—though certainly many philosophical pacifists opposed the Vietnam War—in that it was grounded not in a categorical refusal to fight under any circumstances, but in an ideologically contested milieu that included the notion that this specific war was “an unjustified act of political imperialism” (Boose 1993, 70).

From the point of view of the American ruling elite, pacifism has been viewed historically with a combination of amused disdain and reluctant tolerance—a tolerance based in the recognition that the rigors of the position will rarely attract more than a small fraction of the population and the firm belief that most avowed pacifists will do a rapid about-face if confronted with a little officially-sanctioned sadism.¹³ What might be called *situational pacifism*, based in a critique of the politics of a particular war, however, is an entirely different matter. In such a case it is not war and violence per se that are questioned—an important point to be sure, but ultimately one that most militarists don’t take seriously—but the authority of the powers that be and their competence to lead. Obviously, over the long term, such a challenge is intolerable. The legacy of resistant sons had to be overcome and both the powers-that-be and the American culture industry went into overdrive

¹³ The only significant exception to this trend of which I am aware is the consistent refusal of members of certain religious communities, Quakers for example, to fight in all wars. Thus in the United States, at least, obtaining recognized conscientious objector status has virtually required the petitioner be a long-term member of such an avowedly pacifist religious order. This is not the case in contemporary Germany, where (as we will see), conscientious objector status is routinely granted to individuals based on a more-or-less unexamined statement of personal belief.

providing counter-examples of small scale “good wars” on the one hand and whole-scale reinterpretations of the Vietnam experience on the other. In retrospect, all of this may have been unnecessary. With the removal of the primary impetus to war resistance on the part of young men—i.e. the draft—the pool of potential war resisters and anti-war activists promptly decreased to a manageable size.

Nonetheless, for a brief period—perhaps the span of a generation—“what the debacle of America’s masculinized, militarized policies on both fronts of the Vietnam War had opened up was the sudden space in American culture for an alternative to the mythology of a national self born in and valorized by a history of conquest and dominance” (Boose 1993, 71).

In the German context, there was no specific legacy of “resistant sons” that developed during the Second World War. Rather, as discussed above, soldierly masculinity was destroyed, literally and figuratively. Then, over the next several decades, various new social movements, particularly the anti-rearmament movement (*ohne mich Bewegung*), the student movement of the late 1960s, and the anti-nuclear peace movement of the early 1980s made strategic use of the link between Nazism, militarism and heroic soldierly masculinity. This resulted in a shifted understanding of what it means to be a man.

Perhaps the most crucial shift has to do with the normalization of refusal. As John Borneman writes of Germany in the 1990s:

Based on my own ethnographic work over the last ten years, it is apparent that fantasies and self-conceptions, across the political spectrum and irrespective of gender or sexuality, have indeed changed dramatically among men and women in Germany....

With respect to the war in Yugoslavia, this change is

expressed, for example, in how both German men and women seem to have accepted all of the male refugees from the various groups in Bosnia without accusations of “cowardice” or “effeminacy.” Although the debate on the German role in Bosnia generated many different positions, there is a strong private commitment to the belief that men (German and “Yugoslavian”) have the right to refuse to fight in war (Borneman 1998a, 302).

This right of refusal, enshrined in the Basic Law of the Federal Republic,¹⁴ has, in my analysis, become something more than an honorable option. In fact, I would argue that *in order for* refusal to become a viable option, the stigma associated with it had to be *displaced*.

That such stigma did exist in the post-Nazi period, during the early years of the reinstatement of the draft, is clear from the contemporary opinion polling, the conscientious objector statistics, and interviews with German men who came of draft age between the late 1950s and early 1980s.¹⁵ In contrast to young men who came of age in the mid- to late-1980s, and especially during the 1990s, men of the “older” generations, including those who came of age in the early 1980s, saw a significant stigma associated with *Kriegsdienstverweigerung* (war service refusal).

One man, Fritz Ostweldt, who served in the German Air Force as a draftee (*Wehrdienstleister*), told me that amongst his circle of friends there was little discussion about whether or not to refuse military service. This was

¹⁴ Article IV, Section 3. See chapter 6 for a closer examination of the Basic Law and the right to conscientious objection in the Federal Republic and post-unification Germany.

¹⁵ Between 1953 and 1955, at a time when there was a significant movement against German rearmament, Germans were asked the following question: “It will also have to be decided whether it should be permissible to object to military service. Do you think those called up should, or should not, be allowed to object to military service?” In March 1955 just under half of those questioned, 48%, thought young men should be allowed to refuse and 35%—a striking statistic given that about half the population was against rearmament in any form—of those questioned thought those called up should not be allowed to refuse (Noelle-Neumann 1967,449).

in spite of the fact that Ostweldt attended a Gymnasium, one of the elite college preparatory high schools most likely to produce conscientious objectors. He saw his military service (*Wehrdienst*) as something to be endured and gotten through as quickly as possible. In spite of his assertion that there was “little discussion” about military service, he told me that many of his friends, particularly those who were “technically oriented” like him, feared that refusing service would be a mark against them with the higher ups in Germany’s major corporations. The argument was that since most of the men who now ran Germany’s largest companies would have served in the military, they would probably have a preference for hiring veterans.

When I asked him directly about the military and masculinity, Ostweldt told story after story. The notes of my conversations with him, spanning several hours- long sessions, runs to thirty-eight pages, single-spaced. Again and again he returned to the topic of the specifically erotic context of military life, and the pressure to live a life dominated by pornography and visiting prostitutes. Possessed of a particularly bourgeois sense of virtue, Fritz told me, “People said, ‘go to the Bundeswehr’ and you’ll be a real man. I don’t think this was true. There were no regulations, only the examples they [the officers and non-commissioned officers] set.”

As we sat drinking coffee in a smoky Kneipe near the Neukölln subway stop, Fritz told the story of one of his training NCOs. The trainer was a young man not much older than Fritz, but who held a position of considerable institutional authority vis-à-vis the conscripts. As Ostweldt put it, “he was always trying to be your friend.” One evening he brought some videos into the barracks and the trainees gathered to watch them. Even fifteen years later, it was clear that Fritz was still upset, angry even, about the incident. The videos

were pornographic, and Fritz felt offended by the content, but even more, he felt betrayed by the fact that it was someone in authority who had introduced the material. The implication, he told me, was that anyone who complained would be a *schweinhund* (literally, a pig-dog). For Fritz this created feelings of alienation with the men in his platoon, most of whom were eager to follow the example of the NCO. Ostweldt considered this incident to be typical of military life and attributed it to the lack of definite separation between “work life” and “private life” in the military.

Fritz Ostweldt’s biggest critique of life inside the Bundeswehr was that it *lacked* the order and regimentation that he expected of military life. He told me that *people think* the military will “teach you to be a real man,” but it does not, in fact, do so. The non-commissioned officers, in his view, were undisciplined. People did not learn good work habits nor were such habits role-modeled by the NCOs. The constant preoccupation was a juvenile obsession with sex for sale. For Ostweldt at least, macho displays and erotic adventures were not “manly” but thuggish, associated with a degraded world without the clean lines separating public and private found in civilian life. These critiques, however, were from a distance of fifteen years. Prior to his service, he had no doubt that military service was the expedient choice and he believed the then commonly-held notion that it was also the manly one.

Contrast this with the view of young men approaching draft age in 2001. I had the opportunity to interact with a number of such men at several training sessions held at the Akademie der Bundeswehr für Information und Kommunikation (AIK), where I did much of my fieldwork. The Akademie conducts trainings for Bundeswehr officers and NCOs on particular career paths—Youth Officer, Recruiter and Press Officer—as well as for more senior

officers faced with media and public speaking chores. As part of the training of non-commissioned officers as recruiters (*Wehrdienstberater*), AIK holds a mock “open house” at the end of each training cycle. These training events simulate the kind of environment recruiters encounter at job fairs and other situations in which the Bundeswehr often sets up recruiting and information stations. The target audience, of course, is young people, but recruiters inevitably face questions from an often skeptical civilian population. On several occasions I was invited to act the part of such a civilian skeptic and encouraged by the trainers to ask difficult and embarrassing questions of the recruiters.

Besides giving me the opportunity to ask loaded, unfair questions of active duty soldiers—e.g. “Isn’t it true that most Bundeswehr recruits are right wing extremists?” and “Since the Cold War is over, isn’t maintaining a large military a waste of resources that could be better spent improving the lives of German citizens?”—these training events also gave me the chance to speak informally to high school aged Germans who regularly made fieldtrips to AIK just for these occasions.

I asked one group of three young men, recent Gymnasium graduates, what they were going to do about their social service responsibilities. Of the three, one said right away that he had already filed for conscientious objector status and planned to do *Zivildienst* (the required substitute service for those who refuse military service). A second said that he didn’t want to do either, regarding both as a waste of his time. He planned to try to get into an extended overseas program that would, he hoped, prevent him from being mustered at all. If he was mustered, he said that he would probably do the military service, because it was shorter. The third said (this was after speaking

to the recruiters, who tended to be fairly effective) that he thought he might volunteer for military service—meaning that rather than just allowing himself to be drafted, he would enlist for a specific branch and type of training. None of the three saw either military or civilian services as carrying a particular stigma—though two of the three saw service of either type as an infringement upon their lives. Asked which type of service was more important to society, all three agreed that Zivildienst did more social good, but they also thought that it should be strictly voluntary.

Nor should this be interpreted as anti-military sentiment. The majority of young people with whom I talked, both those just of draft age and those who had recently completed military service, were anti-draft, but not anti-Bundeswehr. My perceptions are in accord with the results of a 1998 EMNID poll, wherein the Bundeswehr was ranked as one of the most trusted institutions in society, as well as with results of more in-depth research on the attitudes of German youth toward service undertaken in the 1990s (Böhne 1998, 57). Attitudes toward conscientious objection have obviously changed and refusing to serve in the military is now in no way thought of as a negative, neither as a diminution of masculinity nor a mark against future employment.

This normalization of conscientious objection goes hand-in-hand with changes in attitudes toward *Gehorsamkeit* (obedience) as a value in the society as a whole. Germany has long been stereotyped as a society obsessed with rules and obedience. The ethos traditionally required of soldiers, as discussed in chapters 2 and 3, was idealized and imitated in the larger society in the latter years of the nineteenth century. Young men were prepared for life in the army in dueling fraternities and then in later years in the *Jungdeutschlandbund*, a Boy Scout like organization where paramilitary training was instituted in the early years of the twentieth century.

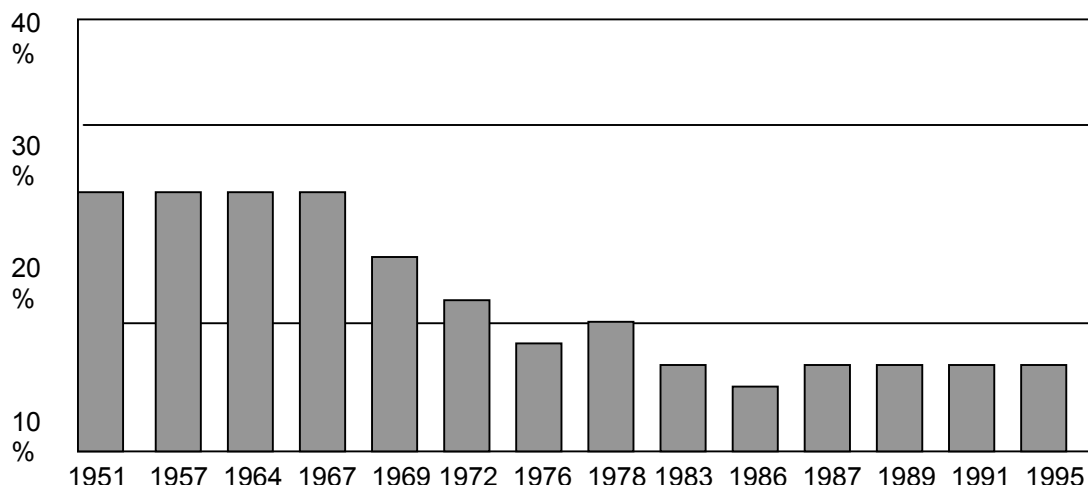


Figure 4.1 – Importance of Obedience in Children*

* Data derived from a 1995 EMNID poll.

Starting from the period just before the First World War, the last vestiges of aristocratic refinement and bourgeois restraint were jettisoned from the image of ideal German manhood. Particularly for the National Socialists hardness, driven by the will to power, was the quintessential feature of manhood (Funck 2002, 57–8). The development of such hardness required

discipline and training, which in turn required obedience. Hence the fin-de-siècle “crisis of masculinity” (see chapter 3), was bound up with debates about the raising and education of children. In order to prepare them for their future roles—men to serve in the military and women to order the domestic sphere and refuse the sexual advances of unauthorized men—children had to be taught to obey. A belief in the overriding importance of teaching children to obey lingered even after the Second World War, with attitudinal shifts on this count mirroring changes in the construction of ideal manhood.

As Figure 4.1 shows, when asked the question: “What are the most important character traits toward which the education of children should be directed: obedience and subordination, orderliness and diligence, or autonomy and free will?”—the percentage of people ranking obedience first declined steadily between the late-1960s and mid-1980s.¹⁶ The declining importance of obedience reflects, among other things, the new possibility of refusal as a component of masculinity. With the declining value of hardness, at least relative to other qualities, the need for obedience training is lessened and room opened in the culture for alternatives. Boys no longer had to be pre-defined as fodder for the army.

To summarize: the shift in the content of masculinity—the increased importance of refusal and the decreased importance of obedience and subordination—is not just in reaction to the humiliation of the loss in the Second World War. The place of Germany vis-à-vis the international war

¹⁶ “Auf welche Eigenschaften sollte die Erziehung der Kinder vor allem hinzielen: Gehorsam und Unterordnung, Ordnungsliebe und Fleiss, or Selbständigkeit und Freier Wille?” (Hoffmann 1998, 88). Note that during the same period the rank of Selbständigkeit und freier Wille (autonomy and free will) rose steadily from 28% ranking them of most importance in 1951 to 62% in 1995. The second set of characteristics, Ordnungsliebe und Fleiss (orderliness and diligence), remained stable at about 40%.

system has changed dramatically. Between 1945 and 1990, Germany remained a nation both divided and occupied. This, combined with the literal feminization of German society in the immediate post-war period, led to the valorization of refusal. In effect, in an occupied society, the relationship of masculinity to nation-state is shifted. At the same time, of course, market pressures have led to a more individuated society—yet it is important to point out that though refusal has become much more common in all Western societies, in none of the traditional Great Powers has the culture of the military itself become so accommodating to the idea of refusal. This shift, I think, can be attributed to the institutionalization of refusal within the Bundeswehr, and its valorization in German society as a whole. As subsequent post-war generations have encountered the historic failure of Germans to refuse during the Nazi period, in a war system context that has isolated the German military from deadly combat, there was room in the system for the assertion of different values. Of course, even as I write this, Germany's position in the wars system continues to change. There are no guarantees. The future, however, will not be a simple repetition of the past—it never is.

CHAPTER 5

MASCULINITY, REFUSAL AND THE BURDEN OF HISTORY

As discussed in chapter 4, one of the most significant phenomena that developed from the reaction to the Vietnam War in the United States was what Lynda Boose calls the “legacy of resistant sons” (Boose 1993, 68). It is doubtful that the number of resisters ever amounted to anything like a majority of the population of young American men. However, much the same thing can be said about other perceived crises in masculinity. The “new women,” self-styled decadents and gender-bending homosexuals of late nineteenth century Europe never constituted a *numerical* threat to normative masculinity. Rather, they represented that most difficult of ideological challenges: the living counter-example. As in post-Vietnam America, the reaction to Wilhelmine gender deviance was distinctly out of proportion to any actual threat to masculine prerogatives—unless we take into account the twin factors of the fragility of soldierly masculinity and its presumed importance to the war system.

The legacy of World War II, however, must be thought through in slightly different terms. The key point is still resistance—or rather, translating more directly from the word I heard so many times from German informants, refusal (*Verweigerung*). The starting place for considering what I view as the importance of refusal in shaping post-war German masculinity is the collective *failure* of refusal during the Nazi era. Nor is it particularly useful to fob off the stereotyped German penchant for following orders as an explanation for this failure. German men, no doubt with widely varying degrees of enthusiasm, joined the military and various National Socialist organizations, paramilitary

and otherwise. There was no wide-spread contemporary movement supporting refusal. The reasons for this failure are complex. But however the failure of refusal was understood during the Nazi era, in the years after 1945 it was increasingly interpreted as a lack.

The consequences are enormous. Since the war was lost in spite of the lack of any significant internal opposition—since the Jews and democrats and socialists who had been blamed for the German loss in World War I had all been imprisoned, killed or driven into exile—there remained no one to blame but the German *Volk* itself. Not surprisingly the bulk of the guilt was laid at the feet of Hitler, the SS and the Nazi Party, which was re-characterized as a gang of criminals and thugs who had led Germany astray. In this construction, the majority of Germans never accepted the Hitler government and tended to go along with the Nazis, to the extent they did, out of a combination of fear and ignorance of the extent of its crimes.

Officers and enlisted men who served in the World War II era German military, the Wehrmacht, remained “men of honor” who had served their country out of duty. Even Konrad Adenauer, the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, who tended to blame National Socialism on the Prussian military tradition, maintained this position. In a speech to the Bundestag in April 1951, as Jeffrey Neff reports, Adenauer told the representatives of the German people that “the number of soldiers who had committed crimes was ‘so extraordinarily minor and so extraordinarily small’ (Deutscher Bundestag 1951, 4,938) that the honor of the German military had not been injured” (Neff 1997, 292).

Nor was this opinion necessarily extinguished with time, in spite of mounting evidence. It is true that in the years since the Adenauer era a

generalized distrust of all things military has developed amongst the German population, but the idea of widespread guilt in the Wehrmacht remains unpalatable. Beginning in 1995 an exhibit of World War II-era military crimes, “War of Genocide: Crimes of the Wehrmacht Between 1941 and 1944” (“Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944”) put together by the independent, highly regarded Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, began to tour Germany. Almost immediately it generated controversy in the German press. The exhibit became a nearly obligatory topic of conversation for me with any German who discovered that I was researching the military.

I spent a long afternoon discussing the exhibit with one mid-career Bundeswehr officer, Major Wolfgang Heinz. Articulate and personable, Major Heinz was eager to speak about the future of the Bundeswehr—a hot topic at the time (May 2000), since the report of the Weizsäcker commission was hot off the press.¹ Toward the end of our talk, I asked what he thought about the controversy surrounding the Wehrmacht exhibit. He frowned slightly at the question.

“Yes,” he said, “I know about that exhibit. There are some.... problems with it. There was a photograph. It was supposed to show victims of the Wehrmacht, but it turns out that the bodies in the photograph were Germans. When they make mistakes like that, it undermines everything that the exhibit is trying to say.”

¹ The commission was chaired by former Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker. It's report, *Gemeinsame Sicherheit und Zukunft der Bundeswehr, Bericht der Kommission an die Bundesregierung* (May 23, 2000), stirred up a controversy spurred by the criticism of Defense Minister Rudolf Scharping (FAZ 2000a, 2). The Ministry released its own, much less radical, reform plan only days after the publication of the Weizsäcker report. This was seen by many as a slap in the face to the long, hard work of the commission (FAZ 2000b, 2). Among other differences in the plans, the Weizsäcker Commission called for a smaller force of about 140,000 professional soldiers augmented by draftees that would raise the peacetime strength to 240,000. The plan called for drafting 30,000 men a year for ten months of service. The Scharping plan called for a 277,000 man force and 100,000 draftees per year.

Here I get to engage in one of the strange pleasures of ethnographic fieldwork and point out an informant's error—and then consider what it means. Major Heinz was correct to an extent. There had been accusations that certain photographs in the exhibit, labeled as if they depicted victims of the Wehrmacht, might in fact have been victims of the Soviet NKVD. In no case, however, could the victims be construed as Germans.

In Major Heinz's version of the controversy, Germans are transformed from perpetrators into victims. The tone he took was not aggressive. Somber and earnest, his demeanor suggested patient suffering; he seemed to be doubtful that his complaints, the German complaints, would receive a fair hearing. On the surface his concerns—and the concerns of all of those who critiqued the exhibit for a lack of historical accuracy—had merit. A careful examination of the controversy, however, even as it was covered in the press, does not exactly show the Wehrmacht in an exemplary light. The initial questions came from historian Bogdan Musial. He charged that a row of photographs depicting supposed victims of the Wehrmacht were actually Ukrainian nationalists killed by the Soviets. There is, however, a *relevant* context for viewing these particular photographs.

Yes, the German army, as it advanced into the Ukraine in 1941, did discover a mass grave of victims of the Soviet NKVD. It then forced the local Jewish community to exhume the bodies so that photographs could be taken and used as anti-Soviet propaganda. According to eyewitness testimony, in the days following the exhumation, the Wehrmacht and the Waffen-SS murdered some 3,000 Jews and blamed the Soviets for that as well.² It seems

² The following account is from a press release put out by the Hamburger Institute, dated March 1999 (my translation): "By way of explanation: It has been known, for a long time, that in the period immediately preceding the German advance into the Galician region that the

quite likely that the surviving photographs are the ones taken by the German propaganda corps, depicting victims of the Soviets—a fact that should be respected and clarified—but in a surreal way the same photographs, combined with the knowledge of what happened so shortly after they were taken, also document the Wehrmacht crime.

For this particular informant, the bigger story was elided in favor of a call for “accuracy,” ostensibly so that the point of the exhibit would not be undermined by dubious material, but fact here seems to be at odds with truth.

The process of identity-formation is revealed in “mistakes” of this kind. Even more than the various CDU-led efforts to reject the exhibit, this informant’s transposition of victims—that is, the misidentification of the Wehrmacht as perpetrators equals German victims—indicates an *ambivalent* longing. Like many Germans to whom I spoke, Major Heinz regretted the fact that it was *unmöglich* (impossible) for the Bundeswehr to “act like a normal army” with “normal national pride.” Yet his acknowledgement of the impossibility, however bitter, was genuine. He did not deny that Wehrmacht soldiers, perhaps whole units, were guilty of atrocities; nor did he deny that the very efficiency of the Wehrmacht and the loyalty of its officers prolonged the war with disastrous consequences. Rather, he longed for a way to move past

NKVD murdered many Ukrainian nationalists. This was illustrated, for example, by the Tarnopol Exhibit. The massacre in Zloczow [where the photos are thought to be from] is an analogous case: the corpses had to be exhumed by the Jewish population after German troops entered the area in July 1941. In the following days some 3,000 Jews were murdered as Ukrainian collaborators by the German Waffen-SS and soldiers of the Wehrmacht, supposedly because they were implicated in the the NKVD murders. On July 7, 1941 the local commandant (*Stadtkommandant*) wrote a letter of protest against the murders and posted guards to keep the curious away from the crime scene. Furthermore, reporters and photographers from the Wehrmacht Propaganda Company 666 converged on the site in search of radical anti-semitic material for the press back home. This is no doubt the reason why the photos exist. An NCO named Worbs had them in his possession since 1944.”

it and hoped for, but did not expect, a sympathetic hearing from the outside world. Though he did not use the words, the refrain has been familiar since the earliest days of the old Federal Republic: the Germans too were victims of the Nazis, don't hold us all equally accountable.

The Wehrmacht exhibit, even more than the Historikerstreit, generated widespread dialogue about the role of "ordinary Germans" in the Nazi crimes. I attended a number of public meetings in Berlin on the topic. The format of the meetings was the professorial lecture followed by questions and discussion from and with the audience. It was the discussion segment that usually proved most interesting. Whatever the particular emphasis of the lecture, the questions and discussions uniformly revealed the dissonance of irreconcilable feelings. On the one hand, the participants, typically left-leaning students and activists, voiced suspicion, even hostility, toward the Wehrmacht and all things military; on the other hand, there were always those who would rise to caution against going "too far" with blanket indictments against German soldiers, the vast majority of whom had done no worse than soldiers in other armies.

I was drawn to investigate this emotional dilemma: two seemingly irreconcilable positions—fundamental distrust of the military (particularly the pre-1945 military) and visceral recoil from the categorical indictment of the Wehrmacht—somehow merged to form a seamless totality of denial. Many of my informants brought up the exhibit and were eager to talk about it. One of the most interesting responses came from a friend of a friend who is a university professor and reserve officer in the Bundeswehr. He was the one who originally told me about the Wehrmacht exhibit controversy (correctly identifying its nature). I had several conversations with him about the Bundeswehr, military service, duty, honor and violence. At one point I asked

him directly: “Why do you think it’s so hard for Germans to accept the guilt of the Wehrmacht? Why the strong reaction to the idea that ordinary German soldiers participated in the Nazi crimes?”

“Well, yes,” he answered, “as we’ve discussed—there is the element of the identification of the army and the nation, a kind of symbolism, but that’s mostly bullshit (*Scheisse*). The truth is that most Germans, when we talked to our fathers and grandfathers, didn’t talk about the war. We just know that they are decent men. We knew them. They weren’t criminals. And as soon as you say that the Wehrmacht was guilty of these *Greuelthaten* (atrocities), these crimes against humanity, then you start to imply that even to have served was already to be guilty.”

This analysis from the former Cpt. Klassmann followed on the heels of a conversation about pacifism and responsibility. He explained that it was an issue that had come up when he had done political education in his unit—not an unusual duty for officers in the Bundeswehr. Sometimes it would happen that a soldier with a “non-combatant” military occupation—cooks, clerks, mechanics and the like—would say to him: “I could never shoot anyone.” He responded,

“An army is a machine, a killing machine. It is a machine that you keep oiled and in tune and hope you never have to use, but it is a machine. It makes no sense to place disproportionate blame on the part of the machine that makes physical contact with the enemy. Without cooks, without truck drivers, without logistics officers, the machine would never make contact with the enemy. If there is war, you will not be less guilty for not having pulled the trigger.”

I hasten to point out that in spite of this rather stark, unblinking analysis,

Professor Klassmann is a life-long member of the Social Democrats with a thoroughly liberal, even progressive outlook—to the extent that these labels are transferable from the American to the German context. He was, however, exquisitely tuned to the exigencies of the war system. He believed that even if armies, which he knows to be killing machines, are all too often used aggressively in ways that lead to suffering and death, this very possibility requires a responsible society to maintain military strength in order to defend itself from such tendencies.

The point is that Professor Klassmann thoroughly understood the nature of collective guilt in a cooperative system. He had, as noted above, taught classes to soldiers on the subject. Yet even for him, a man of passionate logic and stark judgments, it was difficult to attribute to his own father, his own grandfather, a place in the Nazi killing machine. He was quite conscious of this contradiction.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, when it was still unclear what level of collaboration with the Hitler-regime would be punished in what way, the idea that “even to have served was already to be guilty” was virtually unspeakable. In the Adenauer years the reintegration of those who had been part of the Nazi regime or actively supported it was considered by many to be more important than justice. The new Germany would never thrive, the Chancellor told the nation in his first *Regierungserklärung* (the equivalent of a state-of-the-union address), if people continued to be divided into “die politisch Einwandfrei und die Nichteinwandfreien,” (“the politically pure and impure” [Schwarz 1975, 163]).

Yet the very notion of justice requires a division between the guilty and the innocent. Both the clamor of the outside world, including the voices of

many German émigrés, and the need to blame and punish *someone* for the catastrophe which had befallen Germany also pushed toward some kind of reckoning. The political climate, however, was very sensitive in the early years of the Bundesrepublik and it was by no means a forgone conclusion that the new West German state would be successfully integrated into the West. Adenauer's government walked a fine line between widespread calls for a general amnesty and the desire of a small but vocal group of outsiders, supported at times by the international community, for vigorous prosecution, investigation and denazification. The upshot *was* a hard and necessary division into the pure and impure. A razor-sharp line was drawn between the small number of "actual perpetrators" and the broad masses who would henceforth be considered innocent.

In this view of things, the actual group of perpetrators, the men who had so led Germany astray deserved to be punished. This group, however, consisted primarily of a handful of evil Nazi masterminds—Hitler, Himmler, Heydrich and a few others who were for the most part already conveniently dead—along with the frontline workers in the death camps, characterized as lower-class habitual criminals and sadists.

Conspicuously absent from the ranks of the guilty, in this view, were the bulk of the professional men—railroad executives, contractors, engineers, lawyers, doctors and accountants—who had followed orders and thereby facilitated the machinery of death, but who had neither willed the Nazi crimes in the first place, nor carried them out in the last. In German the word used to refer to such individuals is *Schreibtischtäter* (criminals of the desk).³ They

³ Another of the words that is impossible to translate conveniently into English, *Schreibtischtäter* is used to refer to both those who participated in planning the Holocaust—the "architects of genocide"—as well as the functionaries who carried out the logistical aspects

typically belonged to the social elite and were able to exert considerable pressure on the new government, not least of all because it would have been virtually impossible to run the post-war bureaucracies without their help.

In the context of military occupation and the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, widely regarded by Germans as a show trial, the concept of “victor’s justice” (*Siegerjustiz*) gained a good bit of political viability. Men of the Schreibischtäter class were able to use it to argue that they “were unjustly being accused on political grounds of having committed acts which were not in themselves criminal, but were perfectly ‘normal’ aspects of the conduct of warfare, in the interests of a perfectly proper political cause” (Fullbrook 1999, 60).

Here we see the first efforts at constructing *refusal* after the fact. It hardly takes a detour into psychoanalysis to understand why this was felt to be important. If Hitler and the Nazis—a few ringleaders and a small band of thugs and criminals—were to be blamed both for the humiliating defeat of the German nation and the crimes committed in its name, then it would not do to posit widespread support for the National Socialist regime. Logically, blaming the few required the de facto innocence of the many. To be innocent meant that the many must not have actually been attracted to, loyal to, or otherwise in active collaboration with, the National Socialist regime. In effect, the constructed claim was the fiction that the bulk of the German population had refused to go along with the Nazis. The unsavory alternative was to say that it was the German nation that had been defeated and the German people who were guilty.

of deportation, accounting, scheduling, etc., with varying degrees of knowledge and enthusiasm.

This initial effort to put some distance between the German people and the deeds of the Nazis (and to deny the degree to which ordinary Germans had identified with key aspects of the National Socialist program) may very well have been necessary in both psychological and practical terms. An obsessive dwelling on the enormity of the German defeat and the abhorrent nature of the collective crimes committed by the National Socialist state was not liable to lead to re-building the country, physically or morally. The demographics here must be kept in mind—a great many of the people who had fought for the Nazi state were dead or permanently disabled in the aftermath of the war. Moreover, from the point of view of running the country, most of the men with any experience had cooperated with the Nazis in one way or another. When the guilty outnumber the innocent, justice is a hard sell.

Thus the initial strategy for constructing refusal to the Nazi phenomenon was denial. “It didn’t happen that way. We didn’t know. We were never really with Hitler. We were afraid that if we said anything or did anything we would lose our jobs, be imprisoned, face a firing squad.”⁴ To a certain extent, of course, denials of this sort were emasculating, admitting as they did both ineffectuality and cowardice in the face of danger, the very opposite of manly prowess, self-determination and strength of character. Such denials

⁴ During my two years living in Berlin with my wife, from September 1999 through October 2001, we had a number of visitors from the United States. Besides the monuments, cafes and opera houses, one of the places we invariably would take people was the Gedenkstätte Haus der Wannsee-Konferenz, the one-time SS officers’ retreat where the details of the Holocaust were actually hammered out by top National Socialist bureaucrats in January 1942. The materials there run the range from the horrific to the Kafkaesque, but invariably the one that would draw peoples’ attention was a simple printed statement, available in several languages, from a former lance corporal of the 322nd Police Battalion. “Buddies [of mine] sometimes refused to participate in executions. A few times I was also among these. And just as nothing was done to me by those in command, nothing was done to the others either after they had refused to carry our such orders. We were simply given different assignments. Thus we were not threatened with punitive measures, let alone a firing squad” (Gedenkstätte n.d., 46). The consequences of refusal are not necessarily predictable and the impetus to obedience is not necessarily fear of harsh punishment, even in extreme cases.

were formulated by men like Adenauer who were identified with both bourgeois and Christian values—men who could plausibly express contempt for Nazi militarism and heroic masculinity.⁵

For those men whose relationship to the heroic form of masculinity celebrated during the Third Reich was more ambivalent, such blanket denunciations were more difficult. The majority had not been SS members or Nazi Party insiders, but nearly half of all men (about 22 percent of the entire population) served in the military during the war. Since nearly 1-in-3 German men were either killed or wounded on the battlefield, virtually everyone in the society was closely related to someone who was a casualty (see chapter 4). To say the least, this experience of personal loss—the death or permanent crippling of a husband, son, brother or father—created a deep and quite possibly irremediable ambivalence toward the regime and cause that called for this sacrifice. On the one hand, it would certainly be possible to blame the regime for injuries and suffering—as the literary spokesmen of the so-called Young Generation discussed below did—but on the other hand, to believe the regime completely evil and without redeeming qualities, would be to conceive of horrible sacrifices made pointless and even criminal.

What is more, especially in the early years of the Nazi movement, the National Socialists created a form of public representation, in the form of its rituals, iconography and propaganda—however crude and ludicrous it may have seemed to its detractors—that engaged many Germans in a national consciousness that had theretofore been lacking. As George Mosse argues,

⁵ The story of post-war Germany I am telling here is very much a West German story. Events developed quite differently in the East and if I had a pretense to tell *the* story of post-war German masculinity and militarism, it would necessarily have to include the DDR. That larger story, however, is beyond the scope of this project, focusing as it does specifically on West Germany and the subsequent Berlin Republic.

Nazism was a mass movement that took full advantage of a symbolic politics designed to engage people at an emotional level. It took as its model the secular religion of nationalism and as its style a triumphant, militarist masculinity. Though the Nazi style may never have appealed to some, and probably wore thin after the long years of war and privation, it obviously held a great many in thrall in the beginning. Brushing aside both the atomization of the bourgeois world for *communitas* in the *volksgemeinschaft* and the insipid compromises of party politics for identification with the *leader*, the Nazis “successfully adapted a tradition which had presented an alternative to parliamentary democracy for over a century before the fascist movements themselves became a political reality” (Mosse 1975, 9).

And again, even Adenauer, who would for most of his post-war career take care to emphasize that only a few “criminals” were really responsible for the Nazi crimes, nonetheless understood that the Nazis appealed to the German people. “National Socialism could not have come to power if it had not found in broad layers of the population soil well prepared for its poison” (Schwarz 1975, 85).

Even those who had not been particularly sympathetic to the Nazi party, its rituals and symbols, or its glorification of heroic masculinity, still had painful memories of silence or even complicity in the face of National Socialist crimes. Given such a record, and with an initially vengeful military government of occupiers in power, silence was the order of the day.

As the philosopher Karl Jaspers, the first prominent German intellectual to give voice to the need for Germans to face their guilt, individually and collectively, in the post-war world, put it in a public lecture in 1946:

A proudly silent bearing may for a short time be a justified mask, to catch one's breath and clear one's head behind it. But it becomes self-deception, and a trap for the other, if it permits us to hide defiantly within ourselves, to bar enlightenment, to elude the grasp of reality. We must guard against evasion. From such a bearing there arises a mood which is discharged in private, safe abuse, a mood of heartless frigidity, rabid indignation and facial distortions, leading to barren self-corrosion. A pride that falsely deems itself masculine, while in fact evading the issue, takes even silence as an act of combat, a final one that remains impotent (Jaspers 2000, 11).

Jaspers, however, was virtually alone in pointing out the nature of the silence and the need to move beyond it. As Moses Moskowitz, reporting for *Commentary* in the immediate aftermath of the war wrote "To date no one (except the philosopher Jaspers) has arisen in Germany to exhort his people to repentance and expiation for the mass graves of Jews dotting the European continent" (quoted in Rabinbach 1997, 130).

Of course many Germans were unrepentant. They saw the crimes of the Nazi state as separated from those of the Allies only by the purifying power of victory. Martin Heidegger, for example, is now probably even better known to the general public for his collaboration with the National Socialist regime than for his immensely influential philosophical writings—at least since the controversy erupted on the pages of *The New York Review of Books*.⁶

Heidegger's career thrived under the Nazis. He was dismissed from his teaching position during the denazification period. Jaspers, by contrast, was

⁶ In the United States at least controversies in the humanities and social sciences typically first move beyond the confines of academia when they reach the pages of *The New York Review of Books*. Two essay reviews, both by Thomas Sheehan (1988, 1993), brought the issue to a wider public. The first was published in June 1988 dealing primarily with Victor Farias' *Heidegger and Nazism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989) and the second in January 1993 in the wake of the publication of prominent German historian Ernst Nolte' *Martin Heidegger: Politik und Geschichte im Leben und Denken* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1992) and the collection *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, edited by Richard Wolin (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1993, earlier edition by Columbia University Press, 1991).

dismissed during the Third Reich and reinstated after the occupation.

Less well known are the attitudes of the former leaders of the German military. It is not just in Germany that the Wehrmacht has been treated as relatively innocent in Nazi crimes, with the bulk of the blame being leveled at more ideologically suspect organizations like the SS. General Alfred Jodl, former Chief of the Armed Forces Operations Staff in the Army High Command, made his feelings known in a sixteen page letter sent to the War Crimes Commission. In this letter, dated September 6, 1946, the man who was one of the highest ranking military officers in the Third Reich writes:

Of course, in history and especially in times of war success alone decides at the end. And this speaks against him [Hitler]. What is true, and what was right or wrong is decided by the victor. He will strive to picture Adolf Hitler as a ferocious beast, as had once also been done erroneously with Nero. But he was no such thing. He was much more a true German and despite all skepticism which mostly arose from a lack of sense of justice, he was an idealist and a visionary, an artistic nature. I can show through dozens of examples that it is only under the action of many disillusionments of the unscrupulous fighting methods and threats of annihilation from our enemies that he became a fanatic and merciless fighter for his people as the enemy propaganda represented him from the beginning (Office of United States Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality 1946, 665).

Rather than repentance and acceptance of guilt, the tone is equivocal, citing a need to see even Hitler as a man driven by a desire to protect his country from foreign aggressors, including, as he emphasizes elsewhere in his letter, the grave threat posed by the prospect of “revolution” within Germany and the Soviet threat to the East.

With denazification, the Nuremberg trials and the creation of a new westward leaning government, voices such as Jodl’s were drowned out in the

post-war years, only to re-emerge with a vengeance in the Historians' Debate (*Historikerstreit*) in the 1980s. In fact Jodl's letter could virtually be a blunt abstract of Nolte's revisionist writings. Both place the blame for the rise of the National Socialists on the Western powers and the Versailles Treaty; both invoke the Bolshevik threat as justification for World War; both relativize Nazi crimes, comparing them with the crimes of the other states and lament—Jodl somewhat more honestly than Nolte—the reality of victor's justice.

Enter the Young Generation: Refusal and Literary Blame Shifting

The response to the problem of refusal, or rather its failure, during the Nazi-era, had many valences and trajectories that have continued to shift over time. Thus the responses of men like Jodl, Heidegger, Jaspers and Adenauer, while differing significantly each from the other, still formed a generational piece. They were all men of the older generation, in Adenauer's case an elder statesman even when the Nazis came to power in 1933.⁷ Some of these men, Jaspers perhaps most eloquently, and men of the left like Kurt Schumacher who suffered imprisonment and exile did speak up and speak out, but the ascendant modality was Adenauer's carefully nuanced elisions.

In response to the official balancing act of the "older" generation—

⁷ Here I am taking the probably unforgivable shortcut of allowing Adenauer to stand in not just for the German conservatives and the Christian Democratic Union that he helped found, but for the post-war German establishment as a whole, at least in the long years of his tenure—fourteen years (1949-1963), two years longer than the duration of the Third Reich and as long as the Weimar Republic. This ignores the perspective of men like Kurt Schumacher, the post-war leader of the Social Democrats, who refused to be part of the world the Nazis were making, who earned the hatred of Nazi elites and ended up in a concentration camp. As a committed "man of the left," however, Schumacher understood that his ship was sunk, as much if not as fatally as if had been a Jew, when the Nazis came to power. In fact, he was imprisoned for virtually all of the 12 years of National Socialist rule. His opinions, and those of other men of the left who opposed Hitler from the beginning, had an impact on post-war German society, but the inauguration of the Cold War put more conservative forces in power in the early years of the Bonn Republic.

wherein refusal meant either denial of any guilt (Jodl, Heidegger) or a carefully focused guilt, separating the Nazi leadership from the mass of innocent Germans (Adenauer)—a cadre of writers known as the Young Generation developed their own take on refusal. Their writings, coated in the dust of bomb craters and broken buildings, came to be referred to as rubble literature (*Trummerliteratur*). They focused on military de-mobilization and the homecoming of defeated soldiers to a shattered world. The literary representatives of the generation that had come of age during the Third Reich focused on the ordinary soldier's attempt to reconstitute himself as a viable human being in the aftermath of a catastrophic war—and on the indictment of the older generation for betraying them to a lost cause. For men like Wolfgang Borchert, Hans Werner Richter, Alfred Andersch and Heinrich Böll, refusal meant an attempt to escape from under the weight of collective guilt. They passed that unwanted baggage up the chain-of-command to the older generation, and attempted thereby to establish themselves as fully autonomous human beings.

In a symptomatic work titled "*Das ist unser Manifest*" ("This is Our Manifesto"), Borchert declares:

Denn wir sind Neinsager. Aber wir sagen nicht nein aus Verzweiflung. Unser Nein ist Protest. Und wir haben keine Ruhe beim Küssen, wir Nihilisten. Denn wir müssen in das Nichts hinein wieder ein Ja bauen. Häuser müssen wir bauen in die freie Luft unseres Neins, über den Schlünden, den Trichtern und Erdlöchern und den offenen Mündern der Toten: Häuser bauen in die reingefegte Luft der Nihilisten, Häuser aus Holz und Gehirn und aus Stein und Gedanken (Borchert 1949a, 313).

Or in my translation:

For we are the nay-sayers. But ours is not the no of despair. Our no is a protest. And we find no peace in kisses, we nihilists. For from out of the nothingness we must build up a yes. In the free air of our negation we must build houses above the sucking abyss of the craters and over the gaping mouths of the dead; build houses in the liberated air of the nihilists, houses out of wood and brains and out of stone and mind.

Here the refusal, the nay-saying, is still not the refusal to fight, to be part of the Nazi war machine, but it is a kind of refusal of guilt bound up with the idea of a “zero-hour” (*Stunde Null*) in which the old order is obliterated and an entirely new society is poised to rise phoenix-like from the ashes. The writings of the Young Generation refuse identification with the father and with the National Socialist world made by their elders. Instead of “men of honor” who had fought to “the bitter end” for the Fatherland, the anti-heroes of their writings tended to be overwhelmed adolescents decrying the hardness of the world. The specificity of the Nazi crimes, the murder of the European Jews, the war of aggression, the political repression is, at most, a sideline.

These writings strike me as elegiac and at times self-pitying. In this respect they are similar to the refrain of Vietnam veterans decrying lack of civilian support: “You weren’t there, man, you don’t know what it was like.” The army and the brotherhood of the army is gone. In the opening stanza of “Das ist unser Manifest” Bochert writes, “Die Kompanien sind auseinandergelaufen. Die Kompanien, Bataillone, Armeen. Die grossen Armeen. Nur die Heere der Toten, die stehn noch.” (“The companies are disbanded. The companies, battalions, armies. The great armies. Only the Army of the Dead still stands” [308]). The erstwhile soldier finds himself severed from his comrades, from the companionship of arms and blood and fear and the horrible elation of battle, alone, perhaps for the first time, his own way to follow. Borchert finds this

bittersweet, ambivalent: “Das ist schön. Das ist schwer” (“That’s beautiful. That’s hard.” [308]).

The curious epigram at the beginning of Borchert’s play, “Draussen vor der Tür” (“The Man Outside”) reads, “A play that no theater wants to stage and no audience wants to see” (“Ein Stück, das kein Theater spielen und kein Publikum sehen will”). The epigram is curious because the play, written by Borchert over the course of just a few days in the Autumn of 1946, went on to achieve outstanding success. Its broadcast by Northwest German Radio (*Nordwestdeutschen Rundfunk*) on February 13, 1947—and subsequent re-broadcasts by that station and others—was electrifying. Years later, the writer Dieter Wellershoff, twenty-two at the time of the broadcast, would tell the story of his memory of the event thus:

An einen dieser Abende habe ich eine herausragende Erinnerung. Ich war mit drei anderen allein auf der Bude, als Bodo S., einer von den beiden Leuten, mit denen ich mich manchmal über Literatur unterhielt—später wurde er Manger bei der Lufthansa—aufgeregt hereinstürzte und rief: “Kommt mal schnell rüber! Da is was Tolles im Radio!” Nur in der Nebenstube gab es ein Radio. Dort Sassen schon mehrere und gaben uns mit einer schnellen Handbewegung zu verstehen, wir sollten uns still dazusetzen. Es war der Abend des 13. Februar 1947, wie ich aus der Literaturgeschichte weiss. Für mich ist es das Initiationsdatum der deutschen Nachkriegsliteratur. Das Stück, vom Norddeutschen Rundfunk aus Hamburg gesendet, sprach auf eine bisher ungehörte, leidenschaftliche Weise von den Verheerungen des Krieges, von der Verlorenheit der Überlebenden und von heimatloser Heimkehr. Es stellte den Alptraum eines Heimkehrers dar, der seinen Erinnerungen nicht entkommt und überall vor verschlossenen Türen steht, under zum Schluss, als er erwacht, die ins Leere verhallende Frage schreit, wozu er den leben soll? (Wellershoff 1985, 201-02).

Translated into English:

Of one of these [post-war] evenings I have a prominent memory. I was with three others in the shack when Bodo S., one of the two people I sometimes talked literature with—later he would become a manager for Lufthansa—rushed over in a high state of agitation and called: “Get over here, quick! There’s something fantastic on the radio!” The only radio was at the neighbors. There were already several people there and they gave us to understand with emphatic hand-signals that we should sit down and be quiet. It was the evening of February 13, 1947, a key moment in literary history. For me it is the initiation date of post-war German literature. The play, broadcast by the Hamburg-based North German Radio, spoke in a passionate, theretofore unheard of manner of the horrors of war, of the desolation of the survivors, and of the homeless homecoming. It depicts the extended dream of a returning soldier who cannot escape his memories and stands everywhere before closed doors, and who, when he finally awakes, cries out the question that echoes into the nothingness, why should he continue living?

Borchert’s protagonist, Beckmann, spends the bulk of the play lamenting and complaining about what had been done to him and it is only in the end that he is able to “overcome his fruitless attitude of denunciation, in which he sees himself only as a victim. In that he finally recognizes his own role in the murderous violence of the war, his own readiness to fight at the command of the officers and fathers who sent him to war, he becomes a man with ‘bitter knowledge’” (Winter 2001, 206).

This knowledge, hard-won and coming only after much working through of the experience of war and what it does to the soldier, creates an irredeemable divide between those who were there and saw, and felt, and those who weren’t. It is as if combat veterans, like Wittgenstein’s lions, have nothing to say. An ethical-experiential chasm opens between the combat soldier and those who “weren’t there,” resulting in a morbid silence. A similar divide in American culture has been attributed to Vietnam veterans. Of course

the refrain, “You weren’t there, man,” was never the property of the vets themselves, but of late night TV comedians and their cocktail party imitators. Humor is a distancing device and in this case it is used to diminish the divide itself—get over yourself, man, there’s still life to live.

I experienced a mild version of this phenomena when I returned to the U.S. after being stationed for two years in a nuclear missile unit in Germany. This was 1982–84, at the height of the European peace movement during the first Reagan administration. My experience of “field service” in a nuclear missile unit, though by no means equivalent to combat duty, none-the-less left a strong enough impression that both I and the bulk of my comrades-in-arms had difficulty talking about it—or when we did talk about it, we spoke in terms that were raw and resentful. Our fellow soldiers who had never been stationed overseas or experienced the adrenaline-charged environment of a deployed missile unit under threat—albeit by peace protesters instead of “the enemy”—took to parodying our attitudes and complaints, blending them with the fabled combat-hardened attitudes of war vets. A couple of them worked up their own comedy routine, the gist of which I remember clearly even twenty years later.

“Yeah, we’d been in the field eleven weeks, man, and we had no fucking shoes and they didn’t feed us, but it wasn’t so bad.”

“Sounds pretty bad, man. What’d you do?”

“Well there were protesters and shit, so we never got to sleep. But it was okay, they were everywhere and we had to keep them out, but one got in.”

“What’d you do? I bet you were in deep fucking shit!”

“No, man, it was okay, because it was really cold. I mean really fucking cold, and we found the guy frozen to the EL [erector-launcher].”

“Wow. Like frozen, frozen?”

“Yeah, frozen solid. It was fucking cold.”

“So, what’d you do?”

“Well, we were hungry, but it was okay, because we had this frozen protester, and we ate him.”

They would trot out this routine as a kind of prophylactic, pre-empting any war stories we might be inclined to tell after the lubrication of a few drinks. It was, to say the least, disconcerting to have our attitudes mirrored back to us in this way, not least of all because we understood that at some level our own “war stories” were judged and found wanting. We had not been in a real war, a shooting war. Our war was cold and besides the ordinary hazards of military life—bureaucracy, bad weather and boredom—our actual conflict was limited to confrontations with peace protesters who were not considered a credible threat to men with M-16 assault rifles. The confrontation with our own consciences as we waited for orders to blow up the world was considered irrelevant. “You weren’t there, man. You don’t know what it was like.”

In the short story “In May, in May Cried the Cuckoo” (“Im Mai, im Mai schrie der Kuchuck”), Borchert puts it like this:

Was heisst denn la guerre oder the war oder Krieg?
 Armseliges Geschwätz, vor dem Tiergebrüll seiner
 glühenden Mündern, der Kanonenmündern. Und Verrat vor
 den glühenden Mündern der verratenen Helden. An das
 Metall, an den Phosphor, an den Hunger und Eisturm und
 Wüstensand erbärmlich verraten. Und nun sagen wir wieder
 the war und la guerre und der Krieg und kein Schauer
 ergreift uns, kein Schrei und kein Grausen. Heute sagen wir
 einfach wieder: C’était la guerre—das war der Krieg. Mehr
 sagen wir heute nicht mehr, denn uns fehlen die Vokabeln,
 um nur eine Sekunde von ihm wiederzugeben, nur für eine
 Sekunde, und wir sagen einfach wieder: Oh ja, so war es.
 Denn alles andere ist nur Geschwätz, denn es gibt keine

Vokabel, keinen Reim und kein Versmass für ihn und keine Ode und kein Drama und keinen psychologischen Roman, die ihn ertragen, die nicht platzen vor seinem zinnoberroten Gebrüll (Borchert 1949, 240).

Once again, in my translation:

What is *la guerre* or *Krieg* or the war? The babble of inadequate memory in the face of the bestial roar of the red hot mouths, the cannon mouths. And betrayal before the glowing mouths of the betrayed heroes. By metal and phosphorous, by hunger and storms of ice and desert sand horribly betrayed. And now we say again *der Krieg* and *la guerre* and the war and no thrill seizes us, no cry and no horror. Today we just say: *C'était la guerre*—it was the war. Today we don't have anything more to say, our words fail us, only for a second then it reasserts itself, only for a second, and we say yet again: so it was. For anything else is just babbling; for there are no words, no rhyme and no rhythm for it and no ode and no drama and no psychological novels that can tell it that won't disintegrate in the face of its blood-red howl.

A more eloquent version (at least in the original German) of “you weren't there, man, you don't know.” Words fail, yet the writer puts into words the unsayable, tells us he can't tell us what he's telling us. The divide between those who were there, and those who weren't, is absolute. The returning soldiers, who had been cheered on departure, return to a ruined world which they can only see through aged eyes—in everything they tend to see the possibility of murder, of deadly danger and powerless terror.

The “bitterness” of the soldier's knowledge, in Winter's phrase, flows partially from the ineradicable memory of his own fear and impotence, exacerbated by the loss of the anonymous camaraderie of the front lines. But more specifically it flows from a realization of betrayal. The metaphorical betrayal of exploding cannons and bad weather and terror, but also the literal

betrayal of the fathers. In “*Draussen vor der Tür*” Borchert’s character tells the men of elder generation:

Sie haben uns verraten. So furchtbar verraten. Wie wir noch ganz klein waren, da haben sie Krieg gemacht. Und als wir grosser waren, da haben sie vom Krieg erzählt. Begeistert. Immer waren sie begeistert. Und als wir dann noch grosser waren, da haben sie sich auch für uns einen Krieg ausgedacht. Und da haben sie uns dann hingeschickt. Und sie waren begeistert. Immer waren sie begeistert. Und keiner hat uns gesagt, wo wir hingingen. Keiner hat uns gesagt, ihr geht in die Hölle (Borchert 1949, 157-58).

They betrayed us. A terrible betrayal. When we were still very young, they made war. And when we were older, they told war stories. Enthusiastically. They were always enthusiastic. And when we were older still, they thought up a war for us. And then they sent us off to it. And they were enthusiastic. They were always enthusiastic. No one told us where we were going. No one told us, you’re going to hell.

It may seem an odd comparison, but sentiments expressed in Borchert’s play are not very different from those found at the end of the film *First Blood*, the original Rambo movie. I proffer the comparison because the Rambo character—or rather his rejection—came up many times in my interviews with Bundeswehr soldiers. In describing the Bundeswehr, they told me “we’re not Rambos”—a decidedly odd thing to say. Yet the Rambo character represents a specific kind of resurgent American militarism and a specific image of masculinity, not the military ideal of soldierly masculinity. It is instructive to take a closer look at Rambo in order to understand what my informants were so eager to reject.

In the climactic scene decorated Vietnam Veteran John Rambo, played by Sylvester Stallone, is confronted by the older generation in the person of various law enforcement officers and the Special Forces Colonel who

commanded him during the war. “In Vietnam,” shouts Rambo near the end of the movie, “I could drive a tank, fly an airplane, operate a million dollar piece of equipment, and now I can’t get a job parking cars.” He tearfully recounts (tears made permissible by the string of corpses he leaves behind earlier in the movie) trying to hold a friend’s body together with his bare hands after he is blown in half by a land mine. John Rambo, like Borchert’s character Beckmann, is “a man outside.” The civilian world is foreign to him. The powers that be have rejected him. In many ways both characters are part of a similar narrative—though the societal contexts imbue the two stories with different meanings.

Beckmann is part of a story in which the soldier, who had not refused to serve during the war (on Beckmann’s account because he had been brainwashed by his elders into military enthusiasm), learns to become his own person in its aftermath. Part of that process involves the indictment of powers that be. Rambo’s story is not much different. He too never refused during the war, but learns refusal in its wake. He too condemns the powers that be for betraying soldiers like himself. The primary difference is that the meta-narrative context of Rambo is one that suggests the particular betrayal in question was a failure to “support the troops” in the field, or upon return home. In the case of Beckmann, the betrayal was to have goaded and cheered the young men off to war in the first place. At the end of Borchert’s play Beckmann accepts his own role as perpetrator—a knowledge that eludes John Rambo.⁸

⁸ Instead of accepting responsibility for his past as soldier-perpetrator, Rambo continues to blame the older generation of “soft” bureaucrats who didn’t support him in war. In *Rambo II*, granted a much more reactionary vehicle, he is sent back to Vietnam in search of American POWs, still supposedly held by the Vietnamese. He asks his commander, “Do we get to win this time?” And then goes on to re-fight the war with a more satisfactory outcome, at least from the point of view of American military pride.

This crucial difference makes the attitudinal similarity between the two protagonists along the way even more striking, as if “the soldier betrayed” were an invariant archetype.

Borchert’s generation, as represented in the writings of the Young Generation, contains a crucial elision. The soldier/anti-heroes of these works tend to be human puppets, dehumanized by their removal from their homes and indoctrination into military life. On the front lines, in the company of other men, they experience the adrenaline rush of battle, the dissolution of personal responsibility that occurs when a great number of people are doing the same extraordinary thing. Their will, dissolved into the killing machine, is for the moment obliterated and with it their sense of responsibility. Someone else, at the field headquarters or off in Berlin, pulls the strings that move the machine. Thus responsibility, and with it guilt, is at least partially displaced. This literature tries to bridge the gap between the experiences of the front and normal existence, giving voice to emotions that are almost inexpressible, yet leaves, even exacerbates, the problem of refusal by shining a light on its lack. It also reflects something of the emotional, experiential rejection of militarism that would find political expression in the *ohne mich* (without me) movement against German rearmament.

The Politics of Widerstand

The literature on the German resistance (*Widerstand*) against Hitler, its modalities, extent, and post-war uses in both the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) is now vast. It includes the testimony of participants, journalistic commentary and political

commemoration, myth-making and myth debunking.⁹ In the early years of both Germanys there was a desperate need to salvage *something* from the twelve years of National Socialist rule, some legacy to which the new regimes could point with pride. In the former East Germany the emphasis was on the resistance of the German communists. The German Democratic Republic legitimized itself as “the anti-fascist state,” claiming the legacy of all meaningful resistance to the Nazis, and accusing the Federal Republic of being little more than a continuation of fascism under slightly changed leadership.

In the West, the politics of Widerstand took a different turn. Both the division of Germany and concurrent onset of the Cold War, as well as the generally conservative politics of the time, led to the exclusion of most resistance from the Left from the pantheon of anti-Nazi fighters. Particularly those who had aligned themselves with the Soviet Union were seen as beyond the pale. This left the resistance of traditional groups, particularly those associated with the attempt to assassinate Hitler on July 20, 1944.

⁹ A useful starting point in English is the collection of essays *Resistance Against the Third Reich: 1933-1990*, edited by Michael Geyer and John Boyer (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994). Peter Hoffmann's *The history of the German resistance, 1933-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T Press, 1977) and *German Resistance to Hitler* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), both contain useful bibliographies. Eberhard Zeller's *Geist der Freiheit* (Munich: H. Rinn, 1956) is one of the first works in German to try to understand the meaning of the resistance. More recent works of interest include the essay collections *Widerstand und Verweigerung in Deutschland, 1933-1945*, edited by Richard Löwnthal and Patrick von zur Mühlen (Berlin: Deitz, 1982); *Der Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus: Die deutsche Gesellschaft und der Widerstand gegen Hitler* edited by Jürgen Schmäddecke and Peter Steinback (Munich: R. Piper, 1985); *Gegner des Nationalsozialismus: Wissenschaftler und Widerstandskämpfer auf der Suche nach der historischen Wirklichkeit* edited by Christoph Klessmann and Falk Pingel (Frankfurt: Campus-Verlag, 1980); *Widerstand im Dritten Reich: Probleme, Ereignisse, Gestalten* edited by Hermann Graml (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1984); and *Der deutsche Widerstand, 1933-1945* edited by Klaus-Jürgen Müller (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1986). Also of interest is *Der deutsche Widerstand gegen Hitler: Vier historisch-kritische Studien von Hermann Graml, Hans Mommsen, Hans-Joachim Reichhardt und Ernst Wolf* edited by Walter Schmitthenner and Hans Buchheim (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1966).

Even the conservative resisters around Count von Stauffenberg—the Wehrmacht officer who actually attempted the July 20 assassination—remained controversial. Post-war opinion was deeply divided concerning how their actions should be interpreted. A 1952 opinion poll indicated that only 20 percent of those responding thought the actions of Hitler’s wartime opponents were justified. Asked the question: “How should the men of the Twentieth of July be judged?” less than half, some 40 percent answered in the positive; 30 percent thought they should be judged negatively with the remaining 30 percent expressing no opinion. This last statistic is itself fantastic—a third of Germans were not willing to express an opinion on whether those involved in an assassination plot against the erstwhile leader of the country should be judged positively or negatively. A third of Germans, 34 percent, thought that any resistance should have waited until after the war and 15 percent believed, even in 1952, that there should have been no resistance under any circumstances to the National Socialist government (Neumann and Noelle 1956, 138).

Not surprisingly in the climate of the times, both conservative and extreme right politicians and activists continued to characterize German resisters as traitors and their actions as treasonous. For example Sozialistische Reichspartei (SRP) politician Otto-Ernst Remer, an unreconstructed enthusiast of the Hitler government who helped to foil the July 20, 1944 coup attempt, asserted that the men of the July Twentieth circle were traitors in the pay of foreign (read Soviet) governments (Schmollinger 1984, 2,275). Remer, who would become the grand old man of the neo-Nazi and Holocaust denial movements in the 1970s and 1980s (a Google search turns up hundreds of references, the vast majority of which are Remer-positive

articles on pro-Nazi pages like those of the Institute for Historical Review), was hardly representative of the German mainstream, but it is worth noting that the “fringe” with which he was associated still attracted the support, or at least the sympathy, of relatively large percentages of the population, as indicated by the 15 percent of Germans who in 1952 thought that resistance against Hitler and the Nazis would never have been justified.

The ambivalence toward resistance in the early post-war years was clear, not only in the rhetoric of a life-long Nazi-sympathizer like Remer, but for example in the formal position of the nominally liberal *Frei Demokratische Partei* (FDP). Attuned to the feelings of its membership, the FDP officially accorded equal respect to those who had resisted the National Socialist government and those who had served loyally to the end of the regime. Moreover, the FDP’s military specialist, “former General Hasso von Manteuffel, declared that he was proud not to have been belonged to the Twentieth of July circle and to have done his duty to the bitter end” (Large 1994, 250).

Condemnation of the resisters, however, was not uniform and the new West German government was eager to lay claim to the legacy of resistance, even if it was equally eager to define what it meant. Remer was taken to court by the CDU Minister of the Interior Robert Lehr for his defamatory comments about the July 20 conspirators. The trial was widely publicized and Remer was eventually sentenced to three months in prison. The trial itself also acted as one of the first important public focal points for discussion of the meaning of the anti-Nazi resistance. Friend-of-the-court briefs (*gutachten*) poured in from professional jurists, historians and theologians and the judges acknowledged

that the resisters could not be branded as traitors since their actions were intended to help Germany, not to injure it (Niven 2002, 69; Large 1994, 245).

The ten-year anniversary of the 20 July, 1944 assassination attempt was the occasion not just of commemoration of the deeds and spirit of the resisters, but also to extract some political capital. Adenauer and his CDU colleague Eugen Gerstenmaier used the occasion to point out that many of the conspirators had belonged to the German Foreign Office, characterizing the office as a stronghold of the so-called other Germany, implying at the same time that if the West had stood up to Hitler at Munich, as urged by Ernst von Weizsäcker of the Foreign Office, the German people might well have overthrown the Nazi regime (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 1954, 1,211). President Theodor Heuss, in a speech given at the newly founded Free University of Berlin, claimed the resisters unambivalently, proclaiming, "Through their blood, the shame Hitler visited upon us Germans has been blunted, our sullied German name cleansed" (Heuss 1965, 262).

Shortly after Heuss's celebratory statement, Walter Huppenkothen, the Nazi-era prosecutor who had demanded the death penalty for key figures in the resistance, including Wilhelm Canaris and Hans von Dohnanyi, faced charges of murder in a Munich court. The court acquitted him, stating that he had acted in accord with then existing law (Friedrick 1985, 286). The German Federal court (Bundesgerichtshof), however, refused to validate the innocent verdict and sent Huppenkothen to Augsburg to be retried. In 1955 the Augsburg court ruled that Nazi-era courts existed largely to provide a legal cover story ("*Schein der Berechtigung*") for what was, in effect, political murder. This court sentenced Huppenkothen to seven years in prison and Dr.

Otto Thorbeck, an SS Judge who presided over a concentration camp court that had condemned some of the resisters to death, to four years.

Both men subsequently appealed their sentences back to the Bundesgerichtshof on the grounds that the judge who had convicted them in Augsburg had himself been persecuted by the Nazis and therefore must be considered biased. This time the Federal Court sympathized with the convicted former Nazis. Thorbeck was acquitted, the court ruling that “Jeder Staat hat aber um der von ihm vollbrachten Ordnungsfunktionen willen grundsätzlich das Recht, sich durch Strafandrohungen gegen gewalttätige Angriffe auf seinen inneren und äusseren Bestand zu schützen” (“Every state has the fundamental right to secure order and to indict those who engage in acts of warlike violence against it in order to protect itself internally and externally” [Friedrick 1985, 285]). This verdict was handed down after Hermann Weinkauff, who himself had been a member of the *Reichsgericht*, the German court system during the Third Reich, from 1937-1945, became the new president of the Bundesgerichtshof (Friedrick 1985, 288).

The conceptual defense of the acts of the conspirators, at least in legal terms, hung on the distinction in German law between high treason (*Hochverrat*, betrayal of the government) and treason to the country (*Landsverrat*). The former implies that that even if guilty a perpetrator could have been acting in what he considered at the time to be the best interests of the nation. The latter usually implies a transfer of first allegiance to something other than the nation. This distinction was key in the rehabilitation of the resisters—particularly in the context of a young German state on the brink of rearmament. The Federal Court under Weinkauff eventually ruled that under existing law during the Third Reich the judges and prosecutors who

condemned the conspirators were justified—that is, they followed proper legal procedure—in ordering the resisters executed. The trials also made it clear that from the post-war point of view that even though the conspirators were obviously guilty of Hochverrat, it was high treason against a government that had itself betrayed the German nation, in effect a treasonous, criminal regime.

All of the above is part of the political context of the politics of Widerstand in post-war Germany. Resistance to the Nazi regime, especially during war time, remained controversial. It was sometimes embraced, especially by the powers-that-be at appropriate memorial occasions, sometimes condemned, especially by former military men and right-wingers who had never resisted. Surviving resistance figures were a living rejoinder to those who did not resist, who did nothing, of their complicity with a regime increasingly cast as the epitome of evil in human history.

Ohne Mich

In the context of continuing controversy concerning the meaning of German anti-Nazi resistance the Federal Republic faced one of its most explosive public debates: rearmament (*Wiederbewaffnung*). The five volume *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, puts it this way: “No political theme since the Second World War had the West Germans so passionately angry with each other as rearmament” (“*Kein politisches Thema seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg hat die Westdeutschen so aufgewühlt wie die Auseinandersetzung über die Wiederbewaffnung*” [Schwarz 1981, 119]). Strong words for a semi-official encyclopedic history, but probably justified.

According to Joachim Joesten, a one-time member of the German Communist Party, writing in a series of post-war monographs:

Whoever I spoke to, manual laborer, white collar worker, civil service employee, farmer, businessman or professional; family father, housewife or draft-age youngster; whenever the question of remilitarization was brought up, they would answer as with one voice: "*Ohne mich!*" ("Without me!") [Joesten 1952, 4].

And if Joesten's somewhat breathless style has the feel of left-wing conspiracy theory of the sort that—correctly or not—was liable to be attributed to Soviet allegiances, he was far from the only person to express such opinions. An editorial published in the December 5, 1951 issue of the mainstream German newsmagazine, *Der Spiegel*, for example, stated, "Die überwiegende Mehrheit der Deutschen halt in der jetzigen Situation ebenfalls nichts von deutschen Divisionen, da sie, abgesehen von allen anderen Bedenken, die deutsche Spaltung verschärfen müssen" (18). "The vast majority of Germans doesn't hold with German divisions [military units], which they see, apart from any other consideration, as exacerbating German division [into West and East]."

The numbers are not quite so one-sided. Polls taken at the time do not indicate "vast majorities" against rearmament, but a population deeply, and almost evenly, divided on the issue. One survey, comparing support and opposition as divided by religious confession found that the percentage of Protestants favoring rearmament declined steadily from 64 percent in October 1950 to only 47 percent in February 1952. Protestants opposed to rearmament peaked at 39 percent in March 1951 and hovered in the mid-30% through the debate. Catholic opinion deviated slightly from Protestant, starting with 60 percent pro- and 33 percent anti-rearmament in October 1950 and ending with 52 percent in favor and 28 percent opposed (Schwarz 1981, 122).

It is not too difficult to see how after the catastrophe of the Second World War, many ordinary Germans would reject *any* further military

entanglements. Contrariwise, the number of people who could readily accept Karl Jasper's insistence that Germany was and should be a stateless, pariah nation was also small (Rabinbach 1997, 139). Moreover, while the German people were attempting to adapt to the post-war realities, the machinations of other states in response to the incessant demands of the war system were still in play. There was increasing fear of the development of a Korea-like crisis in divided Germany and with it the American insistence on German rearmament in response to the perceived Soviet threat.

Though the understandable nervousness of Germany's European neighbors— particularly France—led to tense negotiations, arguably the international situation made rearmament a foregone conclusion. One consequence of this was a kind of uneasy bifurcation of identity in Germany between how many Germans thought of themselves—something closer to Jasper's vision—and how the FRG actually did business, which is much more like a "normal" nation-state, albeit one thoroughly embedded in an international economic and defense system and beholden to the U.S.

Rearmament, or even its possibility, also re-opened the possibility of *refusal*. For those who had been too young to serve in Hitler's army, here was the opportunity to say no, ostensibly to current rearmament, but at a deeper level to an ex post facto construction of National Socialism. The younger German generations faced a dilemma: on the one hand they were tainted with a guilt they had not earned, and therefore could never accept; on the other hand they were also denied by pure generational luck from even the opportunity of refusal. The question would rise, again and again: what would I have done? It also led, famously, to endless explorations of the origins of fascism. Even more it led to a fascination with the seeming lack of resistance

to even the most extreme Nazi crimes. Famous explorations of these issues include Stanley Milgram's obedience experiments (1974) and the "authoritarian personality" studies headed up by Theodore Adorno (1950), as well as stories, novels and popular essays, ultimately including the deep background for my own motivations in undertaking this particular research.

To a certain extent, of course, the "without me" movement ("ohne mich Bewegung") of the early 1950s was based in a facile logic: refusal to endorse or participate in Germany's remilitarization after the war equals the notional refusal of the Nazi militarism and the National Socialist legacy.

Notwithstanding the fact that there was a strong neutralist urge in post-war Germany, and that many saw polarization into Western-allied and Soviet-allied blocs as a recipe for the permanent division of Germany, the movement nonetheless harkened back—as would all subsequent peace and justice movements in Germany—to *what ought to have been done*, as if *refusal* in the present helped to expiate for its *lack* in the past.

Shift and Flow: Militarism and Masculinity in Post-War Germany

In the ex post facto valorization of refusal in the present, *as if* what were being refused was the Nazi past, the basic principles of masculinity, as much as the idea of human decency, are mobilized and to a certain extent, *shifted*. Whenever post-war Germany is discussed—whether by academic historians or the lay public, inside or outside of Germany—a key point of interest is always whether, and to what extent, there has been a break with "the past." In many discussions with casual visitors to Germany, I have heard words to the effect that "they haven't changed," usually delivered in an ominous tone.

Of course the German past is not a monolithic, singular entity, but a

plenitude of cultural, national, Marxist, linguistic, artistic, criminal, poetic, musical, feminist, industrial, military, agrarian, aristocratic, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, National Socialist, absolutist, Prussian and Bavarian (to name just a few) tendencies, traditions and practices. Thus when a white-collar worker in the American Midwest, on the strength of a ten-day guided tour, makes the pronouncement: “they haven’t changed,” one has to read a good bit into it. The proposition that they haven’t changed is shorthand for *they are still dangerous, they still hate Jews, given a chance they might just launch another world war or murder another people*. This is, no doubt, a harsh interpretation that in most cases would be somewhat weakened by the concomitant belief that such a repeat isn’t particularly likely, given current political configurations and so on.

Nor is the issue limited to such casual milieus. No point has been more hotly debated by German historians—and historians of Germany—than that of rupture verses continuity. Do the liberal, parliamentary institutions of the old Federal Republic and its successor state, unified Germany, constitute a radical break not just with Nazism, but with the illiberal German past?¹⁰ Given the continuity of personnel, of custom, and basic worldview between pre- and post-1945 Germany, in what sense is it reasonable to speak of a rupture? Does accepting the idea of a radical break cut Germany off from the unifying strength to be found in tradition? Does the pretense of a break unjustifiably exonerate the guilty? These were some of the questions addressed in the *Historikerstreit* (historian’s debate) of the mid-1980s and that erupted again in

¹⁰ The same questions can be asked about the DDR but are beyond the scope of the current project—and to a certain extent, irrelevant to it. Or, that is, it would be if so much political form and discourse in the old BRD hadn’t evolved in response to developments in the DDR and vice versa. A thorough investigation of the ways in which the two states mirrored each other during the years of the Cold War is no doubt in order.

the mid-1990s in the reception of Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (Knopf, 1996) and the controversy surrounding the Hamburg Institute's Wehrmacht exhibit ("Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944").

Jürgen Habermas, whose stature as a public intellectual in contemporary Germany allowed him to provoke the Historikerstreit in such a way that it was conducted at least partially in *public*, in the pages of daily newspapers instead of obscure journals, glosses the question of (dis)continuity this way:

Historians write texts. The grammar of the narrative itself forces them to organize their sentences so that the succession of narrative events is articulated by comas, periods and paragraphs, and chapter divisions. This inevitably creates more-or-less deep ruptures, more-or-less close connections. Such retrospective divisions are relative—there are radically new beginnings only in art, not in history. But for the self-understanding of those who stand within traditions and who say "yes," or "no," and thus continue or interrupt these traditions, historical markers sometimes acquire the action-oriented quality of pivot points" (Habermas 1997, 165-66).

He is surely correct in the gist of his analysis: historical moments acquire currency as they are mobilized for present use.

This perspective of instrumental pivot points constructed *ex post facto* does not erase the possibility of shifts—as opposed to discontinuities or ruptures—in post-war German identity, and in particular in the articulation of masculinity and the place of the military in society. This emphasis is itself an example of a claim on history, but one that I hope will be enlightening.

By *shifts* I mean a change in emphasis, or balance, as when a person shifts his weight from one leg to another. The metaphor is consciously meant

to encompass both a process that could be either gradual or abrupt and one that includes the possibility of reversals. Rupture implies something broken and in some sense irretrievable; discontinuity likewise implies a break between what was and what is. Shift is meant to connote a particular kind of continuity with the past. The shift, however, is in many ways a radical one in that it valorized tendencies which had been fully disempowered in National Socialist Germany.

The point is not simply to settle on a personally satisfying vocabulary, but to show evidence of the shifts of which I speak and speak to their meaning. At the heart of the shift is the idea of refusal. The shifting meaning of refusal is put to use in a variety of ways in the creation of post-war German identities, particularly as the line of engagement between masculinity and the military. This plays itself out in changing valuations of refusal (*Verweigerung*) as compared to obedience (*Gehorsamkeit*).

Yes, loyalty and courage to “the bitter end” are valued characteristics of militarist masculinity—but there is also another valence, the one addressed in Borchert’s writings, the will to autonomy. Writing of the Protestant resister Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Klemens von Klemperer puts it this way:

I should add here that in Germany in particular, where the doctrine of natural law never really had found a home, there has always prevailed a presumption in favor of obedience. Bonhoeffer addressed himself to this proposition.... In his chapter on “civil courage” he pointed to the fact that in their history the Germans had learned the need for and the strength of obedience, but in so doing they had come to misjudge the world. They did not realize that their submissiveness and self-sacrifice could be exploited for evil ends. Only now, Bonhoeffer concluded, were the Germans beginning to discover the meaning of what he called “free and responsible action” (Klemperer 1992, 144).

Refusal thus becomes the counter-narrative to the proverbial German obedience (*Gehorsamkeit*).

Much of Germany's famous post-war search for identity has been about coming to terms with the failure of refusal during the Third Reich. This failure is still viewed with a certain ambivalence. What is almost unspeakable is that the fractured German identity is probably more about the humiliating defeat in the war than it is about the lingering guilt associated above all with the Holocaust. Even while refusal has become a central value to many Germans, and a central component of an *acceptable* form of heroic masculinity, two temporal impossibilities continue to haunt contemporary German thinking about the past and have a substantial, though not always explicit, impact on the politics of the German present.

The first is the impossibility of those born after to atone for the failed refusal of those who lived through the Nazi era. The second is the fact that the occupation *could not* be refused. It was forced upon a conquered nation. Those who failed to refuse the Nazis and their crimes, also failed to refuse the occupiers and the relentless waves of Americanization. The tendency continues to this day. It can be seen in the "professionalization" of the Bundeswehr along American lines and the seemingly unstoppable placement of a giant new Wal-Mart store in the Neukölln neighborhood of Berlin, with the inevitable displacement of corner stores and family housing, only a short distance from where the Wall once stood.

CHAPTER 6
THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF
REFUSAL AND THE FOUNDING OF THE BUNDESWEHR

Many of the Germans with whom I spoke during my fieldwork (1999–2002) were in their late thirties, men roughly my own age, who had done their military service (or refused to serve in the military and did civilian service instead) in the early 80s. This was during the first Reagan administration in the United States and the beginning of the Kohl-CDU dominance in the old Federal Republic. It is also the period during which I was stationed in Germany as a soldier in the United States Army. My own memories of the time, of serving in a nuclear missile unit and seeing the crowds of protestors outside the gates, inevitably color my reception of their stories. Prominent in my memories of the time are late-night launch drills during which we practiced raining thermonuclear devastation down on Eastern Europe and imagined how short a time we would live after launching our missiles. We talked about what we would do in the brief interval before the inevitable retaliation.

My experiences, of course, were in an all-volunteer army and I, like all of my colleagues, had signed up for service in a missile unit. My reason, and that of most of my colleagues, was economic. I was looking for money for college and serving in a part of the Army designated “combat arms” paid a significant bonus. My less than 20–20 vision disqualified me from the infantry and my high test scores made me a “natural” candidate for nuclear service.

All of the soldiers in my unit were investigated and given a security clearance, as the phrase went, of “the appropriate level.” We were considered reliable. Though a certain amount of thought about nuclear Armageddon is

probably inevitable in a missile unit, what strikes me in retrospect is how little I thought about my part at the time. It was really not until an unannounced drill on a lovely Autumn day in 1983, when Cold War tensions were running high, that I had occasion to think about refusal.

It happened when we were “on pad,” where our missiles were mated to live nuclear warheads and sat ready, twenty-four hours a day, for launch. My job at the time was launcher operator. This meant that I stood at the side of the launcher wearing a headset and pushed various buttons in response to messages on an integrated LED display, upon orders from higher up. It was a fine afternoon when the klaxon blew, signaling us to hurry to our missiles and begin a countdown. Such drills were common. They happened every day or two while we were on pad. This one, however, had a different feel to it. The orders from our platoon leader, passed along via the headset, were sharper than usual, tenser.

Now, to arm a nuclear warhead prior to launch requires the use of a very secure code. As launcher operators we did not have access to these codes, but at a certain point in the launch countdown an LED message would come up on our screens prompting us to “press enter” in order to have this code entered by our superiors. I and my fellow launcher operators would dutifully speak the words “enable PAL press enter” into our microphone. Inevitably the response from the higher ups would be, “press option.” That is, instead of pressing enter to arm the warhead, press the option button to continue the practice countdown *without* arming the warhead. But this time we were told to press enter.

There were three missiles for each platoon, and at each launcher stood an operator and a non-commissioned officer assigned to supervise him. The

communication channel is an open one, such that all of these operators and supervisors can hear the progress of the other countdowns. Three curious things happened when I was told to enable the mode for arming the warhead. First, the launcher operators all simultaneously took a step back and looked at each other; it was obvious that we were startled out of our wits. Second, all three of us asked for a confirmation of the order to press enter. “Say again.” And third, all three of the supervising NCOs frantically began to ask us what was wrong—demonstrating that they had not, in fact, been following the count as closely as they were supposed to or that they really didn’t understand the significance of what had just happened.

After confirming the order to press enter, to enable the possibility of arming the nuclear warheads with the security code back at command and control, I pressed enter. So did my colleagues.

Since the world was not, in fact, blown to bits on that fine October afternoon, there is no more suspense to my story. The warheads never were armed. The missiles never were launched. It turned out that, unbeknownst to us, there was an evaluation team on site. To the best of my understanding they did not specifically intend to test our responses to “going live”—but by asking the command and control people to run a certain diagnostic, without informing the launcher operators and other personnel, the effect was as if they were testing our willingness to launch. The answer, in that moment, was yes. I would have done it; I *did* do it. As did my colleagues. I doubt that anyone who had been trained and screened for the positions we were in would have refused. We had some sense that it *had to be* some kind of drill, but for all we *knew*, we were about to start World War III.

Another set of experiences from the same period also sticks in my

memory. The deployment of the Pershing II intermediate range nuclear missiles was very controversial in Germany. It sparked large scale anti-nuclear peace protests and re-invigorated the European peace movement. As a soldier in a nuclear unit, in fact the very first Pershing II unit in Germany, my primary interaction with German peace protestors was as a guard. On guard duty my mission was to prevent protestors, or anyone else, from getting near a missile (whether or not it happened to have a nuclear warhead attached).

During the course of many interactions with these protestors, sometimes thousands of them at a time, I had another set of encounters with refusal, or rather with its failure. On the one hand, the command structure in my unit made it clear to us that to every extent possible we were to let the German police deal with German protestors. On the other hand, we were routinely assigned crowd control and defensive duties for which we were neither trained nor equipped. One particularly tense day, returning from the field, cold, wet, hungry and exhausted, we encountered several thousand protestors blocking our route. The Polizei were not yet on the scene and the protestors were attempting to barricade the road—all in all, perhaps not the wisest choice of tactics. Fortunately for them and for us, we didn't have any warheads with us and therefore had not been issued live ammunition.

As we pushed our way through the throng of protestors, many of the activists attempted to infiltrate the convoy and climb up onto the erector-launchers (mounted on flat-bed trailers). Several of my fellow soldiers took it upon themselves to go beyond the requirements of duty. They pursued protestors out across the fields and assaulted them. One slight, red-headed nineteen-year-old from Paris, Texas bent the barrel of his weapon over the

head of a young woman in her mid-teens. She had been standing, holding a sign and screaming, a good thirty feet from our missile.

Even at the time I wondered about this, about the lack of institutional support for finding less violent ways to interact with activists who were, after all, exercising their democratic rights. Our brigade public relations officer made the appropriate noises to the German media, supporting the right of free speech and peaceful protest. Our orders, however, though not quite “shoot to kill,” did little to support peaceful interaction with the protesters, and our training was completely inadequate to the situation described above. Though we were not encouraged to act aggressively the institutional context was clear: our training was to follow orders without thinking. The constant refrain of our non-commissioned officers was “you are not paid to think.”

The possibility of going to the unit commander, or working the chain of command, and saying, “maybe it isn’t such a good idea to try to muscle this convey of missiles through this close-packed crowd of protestors,” never even occurred to me. Apparently it didn’t occur to anyone else, either, even though the necessity for such communication must have been clear to anyone who wasn’t more concerned with demonstrating manly resolve than preserving the peace and keeping everyone, soldiers and civilians alike, safe. Moreover, there was a presumption at the time of this incident, (the early days of Pershing II), that the missiles themselves were reasonably stable and unlikely to combust. This assumption proved to be false when several American soldiers were burned alive by solid rocket propellant a few months later after their missile was struck by an aluminum tent pole (in the official account), or (as many of us believe) a round from a sniper rifle fired from several hundred yards away.

We were very lucky that day.

In understanding the stories of my informants, and the importance that refusal seems to have in Germany with respect to all things military, these memories come back to me. I remind myself that the stories I heard from my informants, though data for me, were memories for them. It also strikes me, as I remember my own interactions with military authority, that the institutional culture of an organization will go a long way toward determining what kinds of decisions people will make when faced with morally difficult choices. I will now turn my attention to the founding of the Bundeswehr as an institution.

Wehrdienstverweigerung

The German word for what in English is referred to as a conscientious objector is *Wehrdienstverweigerer* (“defense service refuser”) or *Kriegsdienstverweigerer* (“war service refuser”), often abbreviated as KDV. Conscription is *Wehrpflicht* (defense duty) and someone doing service as a conscript is a *Wehrdienstleister*. I hesitate to use the word “draftee” because the social and historical context of mandatory military service is so different in contemporary Germany than those associated with the idea of a “draft” in the United States. This is not to say there are no commonalities, there are many, but oftentimes minor differences in context can lead to major misunderstandings. In order to set the stage for an understanding of both military service and refusal in post-Cold War Germany, I will start with an historical exploration of German rearmament after World War II, the founding of the Bundeswehr, and the reintroduction of conscription.

In May 1949, a full six years before the re-founding of the German military, at a time when it was unclear if Germany would ever be allowed to

rearm, the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) of the old Federal Republic guaranteed a right to conscientious objection. The relevant portion is Article 4, Section 3: “Niemand darf gegen sein Gewissen zum Kriegsdienst mit der Waffe gezwungen werden. Das Nähere regelt ein Bundesgesetz.” In the English translation provided on the website of the German government: “No person shall be compelled against his conscience to render military service involving the use of arms. Details shall be regulated by a federal law.” Not a precise translation, since “Kriegsdienst” literally means “war service” which is theoretically slightly different than “military service.” The wording did lead to some contention in the early years of conscription, until a court ruled that the right of conscience established in the *Grundgesetz* extended to mandatory service in the peacetime military (Kuhlmann and Lippert 1993, 98).

Thus the *Grundgesetz* held the refusal to serve in the military to be a basic right, even though it contained no explicit provision for a military force, a defense ministry, a military command structure or military law. Yet, at the same time that conscientious objection was inscribed in the German Basic Law there was widespread consensus that if there had to be an army, it had best include a strong conscript component. From the point when the Adenauer administration out-maneuvered the opposition Social Democrats and the *ohne mich* movement, setting the Federal Republic on the road to rearmament, the *right* to conscientious objection and conscription became linked in German political culture and “both were always regarded as salient ingredients of the new, democratic Germany” (Bredow 1992, 290).

The link is not without its internal paradoxes. Democracy in the liberal tradition means something more than majority rule—it means the guarantee of the rights of minorities, and in particular that smallest of all minorities, the

individual, even when those rights are inconvenient for the majority. Conscription, by its very nature, takes away the most basic autonomy of the individual. Conscription into the armed forces dictates, under threat of legal punishment, where the soldier will live, the work he will do, the manner of his comportment toward “superiors,” etc. This involuntary induction into a total institution is exactly what Borchert and the writers of the Young Generation reacted to so strongly, when the theretofore previously impenetrable armor of military prestige was blasted away by the disaster of the Second World War. It is this theft of personal autonomy that many young soldiers, whether draftees or volunteers, find hard to endure. In the U.S. Army of the mid-1980s, this loss of personal autonomy was often labeled “communist.” Amongst the more critical of the Bundeswehr conscripts whom I interviewed, the lack of freedom was referred to, perhaps inevitably, as “*Faschismus*” (“Fascism”).

Nor does a right to conscientious objection, even one written into the constitution, obviate the two-fold attack on the liberal idea of personhood and democracy embodied in conscription. In the first place, quite apart from the right to insist on pacifist beliefs, involuntary service impinges on the most basic right of the individual to go his own way, chose his own work and make his own decisions regarding the ordinary business of daily life. This impingement is nowhere considered a valid grounds for refusal. In the second place, insofar as the state claims the right to conscription, it places itself above the citizens as the arbiter of life and death.¹

Conscription, of course, is not unique to post-war Germany. The

¹ The sacred qualities of the nation-state are bound up with its monopolization of legitimate violence and particularly with its holding the right to take life, as in the imposition of the death penalty as well as in connection with the use of military force. See chapter 2 above for a discussion of the connection between violence and the sacred.

majority of post-World War II states have had a draft, though the tendency in the last thirty years, following the lead of the United States, has been toward an all-volunteer armed forces.² As Habermas puts it in one of his essays: “General military duty has been the flip side of citizens’ rights ever since the French Revolution; the willingness to fight and die for the fatherland is supposed to prove both national consciousness and republican consensus” (1997, 173).³ In post-World War II Germany, however, universal conscription has been considered to be far more than a necessary evil. As Bundespräsident Theodor Heuss put it in a speech to the Bundestag, it is “a legitimate child of democracy” (Winter 1983, 186).

The Past as Present

Given the rather obvious tension between compulsory military service and a democratic society grounded in the rights of the individual, the question is this: how did the institution of conscription come to be considered essential to democracy? In the German case, the link is considered to be a negative one, grounded in reaction to the history of the German military. Specifically, conscription has been considered a kind of inoculation against the development of the military as a “state within a state” (*Staat im Staat*). The reference is to German armed forces of the past, especially the Reichswehr, wherein the military became so disconnected from the official democratic values of the larger society that it lacked any real investment in its values and embraced National Socialism as an ally against revolution from the left.

² The “all-volunteer” military is sometimes referred to as the “economic draft,” meaning that for many young men, and for a growing number of young women, enlistment in the armed forces is the best economic opportunity available to them.

³ See chapter 2 for a discussion of the link of the nation, liberal democratic forms and the war system.

The particular source of this fear is an understanding of German (and particularly Prussian) armed forces of the past and their ominous preference for the rule of conservative, nationalist factions. In the words of historian Craig Gordon the Prussian army was

...the main pillar of absolutism in Prussia and in the German Empire that Prussia founded in 1871 and the chief barrier to effective parliamentary government and progress toward democracy. If it can be argued that modern German history was a prolonged constitutional struggle between conservative and liberal forces, it was clear that in the critical moments in that process, it was the army that played the decisive role, throwing its weight in every instance against the cause of popular sovereignty” (Craig 1982, 238).

Nor was the Prussian military simply separate. It saw itself, and was widely seen as, the elite of the German nation. “Die insbesondere in bürgerlichen Kreisen weit verbreitete Bewunderung für das Offizierskorps ging soweit, dass die Erwerbung eines Reserveoffizierspatents zu den höchsten gesellschaftlichen Weihen gehörte.” (“Particularly in bourgeois circles admiration for the officer corps was so strong that attainment of a reserve officer’s commission granted admission to the highest social circles” (Förster 1999, 23). Or as a rather standard pre-1945 joke went, “any German mayor would snap to attention if addressed by an officer” (Nelson 1972, 19).

From the post-Cold War perspective the swaggering, arrogant, Prussian officer—like the officious, inflexible, unimaginative Prussian bureaucrat (*Beamter*)—carries a grotesque mythological weight, like a figure out of Kafka. Both have become stock comic figures. Separated from times present by the far more menacing figures of the Waffen-SS and the Schreibtischtäter of the Nazi period, and with large parts of old Prussia now ceded to Poland, there would seem to be little left to fear. Yet at least for the

officer corps of the Bundeswehr, *concern* with the development of an elite Staat im Staat mentality in the military is still current.

In a lengthy interview with me in November 2000, *Oberst* (Colonel) Jürgen Weidemaier, then commander of the Zentrum Innere Führung, Bereich 5 (Center for Innere Führung, Section 5) located in Strausberg—a subsidiary institution of the main Center in Koblenz—spoke to me about the principles of organization of the Bundeswehr. In response to my question on the matter, he said, “Die Bundeswehr ist *kein* Staat im Staat” (“The Bundeswehr is *not* a state within a state.”) “Soldaten sind *Staatsbürger* zuerst.” (“Soldiers are *citizens* first.”) The emphases were eloquent, and if he, like many of the Bundeswehr officers of all ranks with whom I spoke, tended to quote official Ministry of Defense literature when questioned, his commitment to the principles he expressed seemed genuine.

He wrote in a conference paper for a meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) that he was kind enough to give to me: “By committing themselves to a conscript army, government and parliament intended to emphasize that one of the self evident obligations of all citizens is the duty to defend the state against any attack from outside. In addition, conscription contributes to a permanent exchange with society and is thus regarded as an essential element for the integration of the armed forces into state and society” (Weidemaier n.d., 2, original in English).

Oberst Weidemaier’s rhetoric is virtually identical to that which has been used to describe and defend the political orientation and principles of the Bundeswehr since its founding. These principles, centered on the idea of citizen-soldiers (*Staatsbürger in Uniform*), informed by the doctrine of individual moral responsibility, civic integration and priority of conscience,

collectively referred to as *Innere Führung* amount to a double *doctrine of refusal*.⁴

On the one hand, the reform called for a *refusal of tradition* that sought to break not only with the immediate Wehrmacht past, but with the very idea of *Traditionspflege* (preservation of tradition) so associated with German armed forces of the past (Abenheim 1988, 28–30; Demeter 1962, 135–141). On the other hand, the *duty to refuse* was integral to the idea of *Innere Führung*. Thus when Elmar Branstetter, the legal expert of the administrative group responsible for inventing the new military (the so-called Dienststelle Blank), briefed the members of the Security Committee of the Bundestag, he told them that *Kadavergehorsam* (blind obedience) would play no part in the new military. Moreover, he said, that it was a soldier's duty to disobey orders that violated international law or undermined fundamental human rights.⁵

The immediate context of this proposal, as noted by parliamentarians present in the session, was the Nuremberg trials. These trials had established that, whatever the difficulties faced by a soldier in the field, it was ultimately and unavoidably his responsibility to judge the legality, moral appropriateness and military necessity of his orders. In the aftermath of the Nuremberg trials, and in the proposals of the Bundeswehr reformers, no soldier would ever again be able to fall back on a legal defense of “just following orders.”

Theodore Blank, the head of the Dienststelle, was present at this same

⁴ *Innere Führung* is another German term that proves difficult to translate with any economy. Most authors, including Large (1996) and Abenheim (1988) offer footnotes stating as much and use the German expression whenever possible. The difficulty of translation comes not least of all from the controversy that has surrounded the phrase, and the attitudes it is supposed to represent, since its inception. In short, it is a piece of contested military jargon that refers to the appropriate attitude of soldiers in the Bundeswehr, emphasizing self-directed, ethically informed action and “normalized” relationships between officers and common soldiers.

⁵ Stenographische Protokolle, Sonderausschuss zur Mitberatung der EVG Vertrages, PA, 8. Sitzung, 128-31 (as cited in Large 1996, 195).

session and echoed this view. He told the parliamentarians that soldiers, like every citizen in a democracy, are responsible for their actions and would be held accountable for their legality. Faced with the objection that a soldier in wartime might face summary execution for failing to carry out an order, Blank countered that the first requirement of duty is obedience to a “higher law” regardless of consequences.⁶

Although the idea that a soldier only has the responsibility to obey “lawful orders” was not radically new, the duty to *disobey*—to refuse to obey orders that conflicted not just with the national, constitutional order but with notions of international law and human rights—was both new and unsettling. For someone who has never served in a traditional military, including that of the United States, it is hard to convey just how bizarre this idea is from the military perspective—even fifty years later. The vast bulk of the professional military men I knew as a soldier in the United States Army were a far cry from being either the vainglorious martinets or fanatic ideologues of military caricature. I have no doubt, however, that the vast majority would uphold the traditional principles of obedience, hierarchy, toughening and the basic separation of the military from society as *necessary* to the coherence and function of the army—without reflecting on the function of such principles. Arguably, in an era when technological advancement and technical proficiency has become more important to success in war than toughness and discipline, such traditions have become at least somewhat anachronistic— supporting not military success, but soldierly identity.⁷

⁶ *ibid.*, 135 (as cited in Large 1996, 195).

⁷ The preservation of a good bit of military tradition, particular traditions around “toughness” and “separation” have everything to do with masculinity. In 1980, for example, the commandant of the Marine Corps testified to Congress that if women were allowed a role in combat it would be a devastating psychological blow to men who like to conceive of

Whether or not contemporary American officers generally support a kind of traditional militarism, what is certain is that such traditions were embedded in the training and daily life of soldiers in the Imperial Army of the Kaiserreich, the Reichswehr and the Wehrmacht—the three German armies that immediately preceded the Bundeswehr (e.g., Abenheim 1988; Craig 1964; Demeter 1962; Frevert 1991; Messerschmidt 1975). The conservative resistance to the Staatsbürger in Uniform and Innere Führung reforms, was focused in the veterans groups. The groups complained that the “überreformer” in the Dienststelle were endangering the distinctiveness of the military profession. Otto Mosbach of the umbrella group Verband deutscher Soldaten (VdS), for example, wrote that the Bonn government was “giving young people the impression that military service was just another job, complete with an eight-hour day.”⁸

This, of course, was exactly what the reformers intended. In fact, when a group of experts met in September 1954 at Bad Tönningstein to lay the groundwork for the *Personalgutachterausschuss* or PGA (Personnel Screening Board—the group responsible for selecting officers for the new military), the major topic of discussion was Innere Führung—and this discussion emphasized the similarities between what Baudissin was proposing

themselves as defending women. “When you get right down to it,” he said, “you’ve got to protect the manliness of war” (Enloe 1983, 154). And the manliness of war has to do with far more than the inclusion of women in combat roles—it also demands a morbid conditioning in misery. To the extent that such conditioning is no longer necessary to the war system per se, but a prop to military masculine identity, it will quite likely be swept aside by capitalist processes that demand increasing specialization. Tradition is a source of resistance to these processes—and tradition is probably strengthened in militaries, such as that of the United States, with a high profile, neo-imperialist mission—but the increasing presence of women in the military, even in combat roles, shows that it is breaking down. In this context it is interesting to note that the second face of Innere Führung, beyond the idea of citizen soldiers, is a normalization of soldierly life to make it more like employee-like.

⁸ Mosbach to Deutsche Press-Agentur, 22 June 1953, BA-MA, BW 9/757 (as cited in Large 1996, 190).

and modern management theory. Soldiers, in the new model, were to be treated like employees and officers like managers, called upon to maximize efficiency (Genschel 1972, 208).

Thus the intended reforms were multifaceted. They were, in the first place, intended to normalize military life. The daily life of soldiers was to be conducted much as civilian economic life, without the constant drills, inspections, and petty exercises of arbitrary authority common to the armed forces in most societies. In the second place, the reforms were meant to create a military “without pathos”—one in which the concepts like “duty” and “honor” were redefined and effectively stripped of the trappings of the sacred. Even though the profession of arms necessarily brings the soldier into contact with the extraordinary prospect of killing and facing death, duty was not to be so much drilled into him, but something that he understood as important to the defense of a society in which he himself lived. And in the third place, soldiers in the new army would be expected to accept full responsibility for their actions—a test of which was their ability to understand and respect the decision of the 20th of July conspirators (Abenheim 1988, 140–145).

As extensive as the Bundeswehr reforms were, however—and to be clear, many were actually instituted only years after the founding—their impact went beyond what was intended. Focused on the problem of creating a military structure that would both be appropriate to a democratic state and prevent a return to the nationalistic militarism of old, the Bundeswehr reforms both reflected and helped to create a significant shift in German masculinity.

The vehemence of the opposition to the reforms—both before the Bundeswehr was established and in the new officer corps after its founding—speaks to the emotional attachment to the old ways. Veterans of previous

German militaries, who numbered in the millions, had been trained in the often brutal traditions of military manhood. These traditional military values were central to the self-definition of military men, i.e. to their identity as not just any kind of men, but men of honor (*Ehrenmänner*). In an elegiac tract written in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, prominent German historian Gerhard Ritter defines these values, those of “Echtes Soldatentum,” (“real soldiers”) as including four essentials: “*Gehorsam, männliche Selbstbeherrschung, Willensstärke und ritterliche Tapferkeit*” (“Obedience, manly self-control, strength of will and knightly valor.” And it was thought that only those soldiers possessed of these values would be able to “manfully meet the challenge” of war (“...*männlich ins Auge sehen*” [Ritter 1947, 26]).

Baudissin’s view could not be more antithetical. In a radio address broadcast November 8, 1954, he stated, “A secularized ‘soldier’s honor’ that enshrines obedience, duty, hardihood, and readiness for action as unquestioned and absolute principles, leaves the soldier blind and helpless against the whims of criminals and charlatans” (as cited in Large 1996, 182). Yet in downplaying the cult of the military-masculine tradition in favor of politically informed self-consciousness and *efficiency*—in the spirit of the emergent theories of labor-management relations—he and the other reformers were not just asking a lot from soldiers and officers, they were asking them to give up the distinguished status of an elite estate (*Stand*) grounded in a particularly difficult and disciplined form of masculinity. Central to this masculine identity was the necessity of its difficulty—its *hardness*—and its glorification of sacrifice (*Opfer*). The soldier was called upon to be willing not only to kill, but to risk his life and even die to defend his country. This was a sacred mission, the importance of which was deemed to justify the subjection

of the soldier to constant training and a strict code of unquestioning obedience—so that, in the heat of battle, he would do as ordered.

Verweigerung became integral to a new, shifted self-image, and much desired social image, of the Bundeswehr. Though refusal contradicts the tradition of obedience, it nonetheless supports a masculine self-image as strong-willed, independent and courageous. The increased valuation of refusal indicates an important shift in masculine cum military identity. Obedience, of course, is not thrown completely out the window in its everyday sense, but in the new order the connection to the sacred comes less from obedience unto death and more from the manly will to stand firm and judge for oneself—all the more important in a society about which jokes are still routinely told about a slavish penchant for rules and blind obedience.⁹

The historical precedent for the rising importance of refusal, of course, is the Reformation and Protestantism, both of which Germans claim as their own. Pietism in particular calls on its adherents to practice conscience-driven disobedience, construed as *true obedience* to a higher duty. Baudissin himself was influenced by his experiences as a volunteer for the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD), the Evangelical Church of Germany. In the immediate post-war period he was involved with an EKD-sponsored labor relations counseling program. As part of this program he worked as a lay counselor in the mining industry where he began to develop the management ideas that

⁹ One such joke I have heard on numerous occasions, usually told in the first person but with something of the air of an urban legend, goes like this: While crossing the street in a quiet part of town I stopped at the curb and carefully looked both ways, then proceeded to cross. A German citizen immediately stopped me, pointing out vehemently that the walk light was still red. I responded that there were no cars coming. His livid reaction was to say “Regeln sind Regeln!” (Rules are rules!). I heard this story once from an anthropologist, once from a British ex-patriot living in Berlin and read it in a popular ersatz ethnography of German culture. I was doubtful until something similar happened to me. Most Germans to whom I relate the story, however, respond dismissively, accusing me of spreading stereotypes. They don’t think it to be the slightest bit amusing.

would become the working core of Innere Führung. As a result of his experiences with the EKD, he also became convinced “of the need to infuse all public institutions, including the military, with Christian ethical principles” (Large 1996, 179).

The context here is not just the memory of the vulnerability of soldiers to the allure of National Socialism, but the supposed attraction of communism, particularly for Germans, given the division of Germany and the proximity of the East. Nor were these worries entirely unsupported by experience. The so-called “John Affair” in which Otto John, a well-known survivor of the July 20, 1944 plot against Hitler, defected to the East, casting doubt on the wisdom of honoring, or even trusting the resisters. John’s defection was particularly inauspicious in that he publicly accused the Bonn government of disgracing the legacy of the Widerstand. His criticism was directed against the Amt Blank (which would become the Ministry of Defense) and the Gehlen Organization (which would become the Bundesnachrichtendienst, or Federal Intelligence Agency, equivalent to the CIA). Nor had John been shut out of the leadership in the West, as so many of the resisters had. He was, ironically, head of the new Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, or Federal Domestic Intelligence Agency, roughly equivalent to the FBI (Schwarz 1981, 236–39). As reported in the December 21, 1954 issue of *Der Spiegel* magazine, Reinhard Gehlen, a long-time opponent and rival of John’s who would become head of the Bundesnachrichtendienst, echoed the feelings of many when he said, “Once a traitor, always a traitor” (11).

In this context, the reformers felt the need to inculcate principles that would both provide an ideological grounding for acting on principle and counteract the attractiveness of communism. They chose the values of

Christian chivalry. Here is an excerpt from a training manual for Innere Führung (my translation):

Concerning Western tradition—it can refer to nothing other than the Christian tradition. Those who want to deny this, even in the face of the treat of Soviet materialism, deny Europe itself. But whoever affirms the Christian tradition, regardless of denominational profession, also affirms the archetype of the Western soldier: the “*Miles Christianus*,” the knight (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 1957, 76, cited in Bald 1999, 61).

Ironies abound here, of course, in that the *Miles Christianus* (Christian Soldier) is actually a fairly late doctrine promulgated by the Catholic Church at least in part to insure a hierarchy of virtues culminating in obedience to the church. In Germany, and in Protestantism more generally (as in the hymn, “Onward Christian Soldier”), the notion became fused with the ideal of service to God as interpreted by the individual. In the tradition debate with respect to the Bundeswehr it is referenced as part of the “knightly tradition” of the German officer class as evidenced in the actions of the men of the Twentieth of July. Of course it leaves out a discussion of just how ineffective this tradition proved to be as a source of inspiration within the military during the Third Reich—that is, just how few ordinary soldiers of whatever rank did refuse, resist even when they witnessed or were ordered to participate in crimes against humanity.

Yet the context had changed—or rather, it was changing. Baudissin and the Bundeswehr reformers were, in many ways, in front of the larger society. No other group in German society has so systematically examined its own failure—in its previous incarnation as the Wehrmacht—as the new military. Nor has any other group in German society attempted to break with the past in quite so radical a manner. The winning slogan of Adenauer’s CDU was “no

experiments!” and most of the major social institutions reflect this attitude. The Bundeswehr reforms were not fully implemented until the 1970s, indicating a significant lag between what the reformers could imagine and what the Wehrmacht-trained officer corps of the new military could realize, particularly with pressure from the United States for rapid rearmament. Yet the gist of the reforms reflected an understanding of the implication of soldierly manhood in its previous heroic incarnation as a central problem for the military. The valorization and institutionalization of refusal reflected this understanding.

Development of Wehrdienstverweigerung

In 1955–56 when the Bundeswehr was founded, German society as a whole remained deeply divided between those in favor of rearmament and those opposed, and public opinion on the matter fluctuated monthly. When SPD parliamentarian Carlo Schmid proclaimed, in the immediate aftermath of the war, “Should this insanity of war break out again somewhere, and if fate should have it that our land becomes a battlefield, then we shall simply perish knowing at least that we neither committed the crime nor encouraged it” (Schmid 1979, 490), he spoke for many war-weary Germans. In March 1950, one poll reported 52 percent of all Germans against rearmament, even in the context of a European Army, and only 33 percent in favor. By July 1954 those numbers had nearly reversed with 43 percent in favor and only 34 percent against, even if it meant building up an independent national force. The numbers, however, continued to fluctuate. The percentage of the population who considered it a good thing that a new German army was being built dropped from 42 percent in January 1956 to 31 percent in June 1956, as the new military was formed (Noelle-Neumann 1967, 436–438).

With respect to the question of conscription, those generally in favor of it—once it became clear that Germany would rearm—rose from only 30 percent in March 1950 to 51 percent in March 1956, presumably in response to the dispersion of the idea of citizen soldiers promoted by the reformers (Noelle-Neumann 1967, 443). And, in spite of the constitutionally guaranteed right to refuse to do military service, in March 1955 only about half of the population (48 percent) thought that draftees should be allowed to refuse to serve and over a third of the population thought they should not be allowed to refuse (35 percent) with the remainder undecided (Noelle-Neumann 1967, 449).

Even with public opinion divided on rearmament and conscientious objection, there had clearly been a historically significant shift. Conscientious objectors during the First World War were routinely declared to be mentally incompetent or sentenced to prison terms. During the Third Reich, when conscription was reinstated, those who refused were subject to imprisonment, or, after 1938, the death penalty (Kulmann and Lippert 1993, 98–99).

The numbers indicate that, for many Germans, identification with the military tradition remained strong in the early years of the Federal Republic. However, the constitutional guarantee of a right to refuse military service and the orientation of prominent Bundeswehr reformers towards a more humane organization of military labor power was indicative of a shift. It was, however, a shift that did not happen overnight. Again, taking the case of conscientious objectors as a social indicator of shifting attitudes toward the military and appropriate masculinity, a clear pattern emerges wherein both the absolute and relative number of those refusing to serve increases over time. When the draft was reintroduced in the mid-1950s objectors were a tiny minority,

constituting only 2,447 individuals between 1956 and 1958, compared to tens of thousands of draftees. Nor did the number or percentage of Verweigerer change very much until the mid-1960s, when the number of objectors climbed nearly every year until it reached a level of over 70,000 a year in the late 1980s and then jumped to over 150,000 per year in 1991, after the end of the Cold War and with the beginnings of a push for the use of German troops outside of Germany.¹⁰ In the 1990s the number of applications filed continued at a high level, with 135,000 in 1995, 152,381 in 1998 and 155,929 in 1999. In 2000 the number dropped to 87,203, coincident with the reduction of the total number of draftees required for the Bundeswehr and the decision of many potential Verweigerer to wait to see if they were mustered at all before filing a conscientious objector petition that would obligate them to Zivildienst.¹¹

The growing number of conscientious objectors, beginning in the mid-1960s, reflects a shift in the societal view of the military. The student movement of the 1960s, as it began to confront the older generation about the German past, also objected to military service in the present. It is important to understand, however, that the ground for such a shift had been laid in the Basic Law of the Federal Republic, the ideals of the Bundeswehr reformers, and, perhaps most of all, in the integration of Germany into an international system of defense following the post-World War II occupation. The Cold War provided a context of refusal in which the German military was insulated from

¹⁰ These statistics are from the Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung from January 1992 (Bredow 1992, 297).

¹¹ Statistics from Bundesamt für den Zivildienst available at <http://www.zivildienst.de/> under Kriegsdeinstverweigerung, Daten und Fakten, in a table titled "Anerkennungsverfahren des Bundesamtes (Anträge und Entscheidungen)" and dated June 30, 2000. Note that statistics from the Bundesamt für den Zivildienst records applications for conscientious objector status since 1984 when responsibility for determinations was transferred there. The previous statistics from the Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung are compiled from unstated sources and differ slightly, though they do not impact the general trend.

actual conflict by the doctrine of mutually assured destruction and the massive presence of American and other foreign troops on German soil. In this context a system of conscription and refusal had the social space to grow up without having to meet the demands for either war or international peacekeeping.

Though such language always tends to obscure, it is not unfair to say that between the founding of the Bundeswehr in 1955–56 and the end of the Cold War in 1989–90, Germany was structurally insulated from the demands of the war system. Under such circumstances the main obstacle to Wehrdienstverweigerung was the damage such an act would cause to an objector's self-image and in some cases to his career prospects.¹² Even if the old-style military manliness was no longer needed, or even wanted, by the military itself, social expectations took time and political agitation to reflect this change. As Kuhlmann and Lippert, two researchers associated with the Sozialwissenschaftlichen Institut der Bundeswehr who have studied the phenomena put it: "Conscientious objection in Germany was considered, for a long time, to be an aberrant (*abweichend*) behavior. This was particularly true of those over 50 with previous military experience who took every chance to see objectors as draft dodgers ('*Drückebergers*')" (Kuhlmann and Lippert 1991b, 14; see also Bredow 1992, 294).

The word *abweichend*, usually translated as deviant or aberrant, is an interesting characterization, offering a clue to the sort of "deviance" in question. The root *weich* means soft (or weak) and is a typical German cut at someone's masculinity, as in *Weicheier* (soft eggs) with the understanding that

¹² Older informants report fear of discrimination from employers if they refused to do their Wehrdienst. Younger informants no longer considered such matters and recent surveys of business report, predictably, that industries close to the military—arms manufacturers and heavy industry for example—prefer employees who did military service, whereas the health and human services industries prefer those who did Zivildienst.

the euphemism for testes in German—balls, nuts, stones in English—is eggs. A *Weicheier* is a wimpy man, lacking in physical courage, will power and personal drive, an *un-*masculine man. He is a fragile man, easily devastated by opposition.

Abweichend, in the case of *Wehrdienstverweigerung*, means deviation from one's duty to the Fatherland, community and family. It is also, fundamentally, gender deviance. Gerhard Scharnhorst, one of the early nineteenth century Prussian reformers, stated that every citizen, meaning, of course, every male citizen, is “a born defender of his state” (Kuhlmann and Lippert 1991a, 21). A man who refuses to defend himself, his family, and his nation is not so much seen as “unnatural” but as “unmanly”—for unlike femininity, which is widely associated with the natural, true masculinity is regarded as a necessary artificiality, a willed construct created through the systematic training of mind and body.¹³ The failed man is one who lacks the capacity and will to fight.

The institutionalisation of refusal in post-World War II Germany, however, opened up space in the West German culture for the acceptance of deviant masculinity. Neologisms like *Schlaffi* (literally “sleepy” or “drowsy” but sometimes “wimpy”) and *Softi* (softy) carry an ambivalence in contemporary German culture. Instead of failed masculinity, they indicate a new kind of maleness informed by sensitivity and an ability to talk about oneself and be

¹³ Though Scharnhorst used the phrase “born defender” indicating a “natural” manhood this should be seen as a piece of rhetoric, like Jefferson’s felicitous phrase (actually from Franklin) about self-evident truths. The need to “make men” has been central to thinking about the military experience as in the idea that joining the army with “make a man out of ...” someone. I take up this discussion in Chapter 2, following the work of Gilmore (1990) and, in particular, Goldstein (2001).

emotionally open, the equivalent of the American “sensitive new-age guy” (“SNAG”).

Even with the shift towards the increased valuation of refusal and less militarist forms of masculinity, the term “Wehrdienstverweigerer” still makes its appearance on a humorous website that lists more than a hundred “synonyms” for *Weicheier*.¹⁴ Nonetheless the humour has become something less than vicious and the numbers tell their own story.

The percentage of the population holding a positive image of those who refuse military service, and more particularly those participating in the alternative civilian service, has steadily climbed, particularly since 1984 when the procedure for refusal was reformed. Previously objectors had to appear in person before a review board appointed by the Ministry of Defence. The board ruled on the sincerity of the applicant and the validity of his grounds. Obviously an appearance before such a board was an intimidating prospect. What is more, having the Defence Ministry review applications for conscientious objection, if not quite like setting the fox to guard the chickens, was a clear conflict of interest.

In 1984 decisions regarding refusal were moved to the Office of Civilian Service (Bundesamt für den Zivildienst), which is housed in the Federal Ministry for Families, Senior Citizens, Women and Children. Simultaneously, the appearance before a review board was replaced with the submission of a written statement which is examined for completeness and legal grounds but not investigated as to its sincerity (Kuhlmann and Lippert 1991b, 5).

¹⁴ See <http://www.witzbank.de/weichei.htm> and note that the antonym, *Harteier* (hard eggs), also rates its own joke page (<http://www.witzbank.de/>) that includes such attributive gems as “Bank-ohne-Maske-Überfaller” (“Without-a-mask-bank-robber”), “E-mail-vom-Chef-ungelesen-Löscher” (“Guy who deletes E-mails from his boss without looking”), and “Minenfeld-ohne-Suchgerät-Räumer” (“Minefield-without-a-mine-detector-wanderer”).

In the wake of these institutional changes, both the number of objectors and the positive public perception thereof increased dramatically. Refusal, originally thought of by many as deviant and by virtually all as exceptional, something outside of the ordinary run of things, had by the late 1980s become ordinary, particularly amongst *Abiturienten*—university track high school students and graduates therefrom. Of course the very meaning of refusal changes in a cultural context where, in certain circumstances, it is not only accepted, but even expected.

“When I told my high school friends that I was joining the Bundeswehr,” one informant reported, “they were shocked. They asked me why I would do something so stupid and wanted to know if I had gone crazy.”

This was in 1982, two years before the reforms. The man in question, Hans-Georg Lutz, attended a *Gymnasium* (university preparatory high school) in the Ruhr region. Informants from similar backgrounds—the middle-class sons of professionals and university graduates—who elected not to refuse, or even more so, those like Hans-Georg who volunteered for service without being drafted, report similar reactions throughout the 1980s and 1990s. A common accusation—and a common complaint—is that military service in particular is a waste of time. Though civilian service is also seen as an unwanted life-interruption, it is considered to have some redeeming social value. Military service, contrariwise, is widely thought to be pointless and useless, especially in the post-1989 world where I heard the refrain, many times, “es gibt kein Feind” (“there is no enemy”). Also, to the extent that a standing army is considered necessary, people both inside and outside the military increasingly consider draftees to be completely superfluous to the “real army”—a kind of anachronistic remnant of the Cold War. As one circa 1999–

2000 draftee told me, “We are just there to drink beer and watch porno movies and if anything happens, we wait for the real soldiers to arrive.”

It is easy, however, to overdraw the extent to which refusal, at least in the form of *Wehrdienstverweigerung*, has become normal. Decisions on this matter continue to be class-constrained and conscientious objection has been ironically referred to as the “*Abiturientengrundrecht*” (“fundamental right of the college bound”) (Krölls 1980, 51). Dieter Kreutz, a man about the same age as the aforementioned Hans-Georg Lutz, came under intense pressure from friends and family, particularly his parents, when he announced that he was going to file an application for conscientious objection. After months of having his manhood impugned by friends and compared to those filthy (*dreckig*) conscientious objectors, he finally capitulated and agreed to be drafted, telling his mother: “Okay, if this is what you want, I’ll do this shit.” Unlike Hans-Georg, Dieter came from a working class background and was attending a vocationally-oriented high school (*Fachoberschule*) at the time his decision vis-à-vis *Wehrdienst* came due.

Verweigerung continues to be weighted toward the university bound, even since the 1984 reforms went into effect. By the mid-1980s, just a few years after Dieter felt so much pressure to serve in the military, the percentage of non-Abiturienten (Hauptschüler and Realschüler) who filed for conscientious objectors status rose to over 57 percent of all petitions. In the same period the relative percentage of Abiturienten petitioners dropped to 39 percent—still a strong overrepresentation, given that Gymnasium students make up only 15 to 20 percent of the affected population, but nonetheless indicative of an increasing acceptance of *Wehrdienstverweigerung* across German society (Kuhlmann and Lippert 1991b).

By 1990 Wehrdienstverweigerung had become so common, and so normalized, that close to 99 percent of all applications were approved and about one half of all potential draftees were refusing (Kuhlmann and Lippert 1993, 100). A willingness to do Zivildienst has become the only real qualification for the pro forma acceptance of an application. By the late 1990s attitudes toward objection have become cavalier. According to several informants, standardized statements of conscience are circulated on the internet and routinely accepted by authorities.

One Verweigerer who did his Zivildienst in the late 1990s had just begun an internship at a major electronics firm in Berlin when I interviewed him and a colleague who had done his Wehrdienst at the same time. When asked if he felt there was any stigma attached to conscientious objection or doing Zivildienst—which had previously been associated with “women’s work”—he laughed. “You mean,” he asked, “was I afraid people would think I was one of these... Schlaffis?”

Yes, that’s exactly what I was interested in.

“No,” he answered, “it was no big deal.”

His colleague, who had done Wehrdienst, likewise reported that his decision was a pragmatic one—military service lasts three months less than civilian, he told me, and he wanted to hurry up and get on with his life.

The Verweigerer, a friendly young man who had done his Zivildienst as a counselor for a church-based youth group, enthusiastically offered to give me a copy of his *Begründung* (grounds), his personal statement of conscience submitted to the Bundesamt für den Zivildienst. I told him that I was very interested in seeing it and that he need have no fears about my failing to

protect his confidentiality. He had no worries on these grounds and gave me permission to use it as I saw fit.

A few days later he sent it along to me and I have to admit that it was something of a disappointment. Less than 500 words in length, it is a far cry from an impassioned plea of carefully considered conscience. He states that “Armed conflict is, for me, unthinkable” but goes on to reference, in one improbable sentence, Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi, the Dalai Lama and Nelson Mandela. To me, at least, this hardly indicated a sturdy grounding in a pacifist worldview or even an orientation towards a self-willed refusal to engage in state-sponsored violence. Yet such a reading misses the point. The young man’s statement is a virtuoso demonstration of refusal by conformity, through a carefully worded statement pushing all of the correct bureaucratic buttons. In its institutionalization through Zivildienst, and in the changing social perception of what it means to be a man, refusal has become institutionalized.

An Interlude: War, Death and Manhood

One of the spookiest places in Berlin is the Soviet War Memorial in Treptower Park. The memorial stands in what used to be the heart of East Berlin and, as far as I know, is unique in that it is a major war monument that stands on foreign soil. Its presence reflects the “special relationship” between the former German Democratic Republic and the former Soviet Union. The monument itself depicts a gargantuan Russian soldier—looking suspiciously like a Teutonic knight in cape and medieval arms—carrying a child in his arms and stamping on a shattered swastika (see figure 6.1). You approach the monument through a garden and it is surrounded by dozens of sub-monuments. The inscription over the triumphal arch-entry way proclaims that

the purpose of the memorial is so that the heroic sacrifice of Soviet soldiers in the fight against fascism will never be forgotten.



Figure 6.1 – Soviet War Memorial

In many ways the memorial is akin to the tombs erected to Unknown Soldiers that Benedict Anderson talks about in *Imagined Communities*. Anderson references the peculiarly “national,” and therefore “modern,” character of such tombs. He takes such monuments as paradigmatic of a certain aspect of nationhood—its peculiar givenness. “Void as these tombs are of identifiable mortal remains or immortal souls,” he writes, “they are nonetheless saturated with ghostly *national* imaginings,” adding the parenthetical comment: “This is why so many different nations have such

tombs without feeling any need to specify the nationality of their absent occupants. What else would they be *but* Germans, Americans, Argentinians...?" (Anderson 1983, 16).

While Anderson points to the paradigmatic and abstract—some unspecified tombs of The Unknown Soldier—I find that the eccentric and particular can be more instructive. The Soviet War Memorial is anything but an ideal exemplar of Anderson's point. Though it commemorates unspecified war dead, it is also a monument erected by an imperial state upon the soil of a conquered, satellite state, neither of which could claim "national" status and both of which have ceased to exist. Built atop a grass-covered mound constructed of the rubble of Hitler's Reich Chancellery, it can hardly be interpreted as a transparent symbol of German national sacrifice and continuity. Yet still it stands, an anomalous (at least in the nationalist logic of the sort of cenotaphs Anderson refers to) reminder of a bitter history, on the territory of a now sovereign united Germany.

I spent a good bit of time at the memorial during my stay in Berlin. In the time before the Wall came down, they took East German school children to the monument, to teach them about the "unbreakable friendship of the people of the GDR and the USSR."¹⁵ Now it is usually quiet, at least when the weather is cold and damp, as it so often is. It felt to me like a refuge from Berlin. But it was also something else—a towering symbol of heroic military masculinity, undaunted, seemingly even untouched, even after the unspeakable sacrifices of the Red Army. This meaning becomes all the more apparent if one takes the time to walk the entire grounds and discover the matching feminine counterpart to the Soviet hero. Instead of a sixty-foot tall

¹⁵ A buzz-phrase of the East German government.

figure of copper sheeting on a giant pedestal, she is life-sized, close to the ground, and is meant to depict the sorrow of Mother Russia for her lost children. She looks off to the giant in the distance, as if for rescue.

What can this mean? The question is worth considering in terms of Anderson's argument that the affective appeal of the nation-form has to do with the idea of continuity. The nation, he contends, has in common with religion a concern with issues of mortality, immortality and the contingency of life. As I once heard one of his seminar students remark somewhat sardonically, the patented answer to one of Professor Anderson's sphinx-like questions was always: "Does it have something to do with the dead?" The national imagination, like religion, "concerns itself with the links between the dead and the yet unborn, the mystery of re-generation" (Anderson 1983, 18).

The Soviet War Memorial clearly has to do with the dead, with the idea of memory and immortality. The soldier-hero stands boldly on the ruins of Nazism, clutching a child to his breast whom he has rescued at a cost in lives and suffering probably unprecedented. The lives memorialized, however, are those of the Red Army. At least at first glance, this fits uncomfortably into a tale of a specifically national continuity. Likewise the rescued child, though doubtless representing the future, is also ambivalent. Given the location of the moment both geographically and symbolically, it is difficult to see this future as other than a German future.

Can this interpretation possibly be correct? Does the monument to the heroism of the Red Army depict the rescue of the German future? The short answer is yes. The qualified answer is that the memorial is a sediment of a specific time and a specific place. It embodies not national continuity per se, but a *claim* to an identity—that of hero, but not so much a conquering hero, as

a liberating one. Resting on German soil, at the center of what had been imperial Prussia, the monument is also a reminder. Germany under the Nazis had “sowed the wind” in the murderous brutality of its war in the East, now it would “reap the whirlwind” of Soviet occupation.

The distance, however, between a liberating Soviet hero and a conquering Nazi hero is not something that could easily be derived from the monument itself—at least not without a good knowledge of history and notice of the shattered swastika. Visually the heroic Soviet could as easily be an idealized German soldier of the precise type so admired by the Nazis. This should not surprise us, for the image of a soldierly man—in many times and places the world round the very ideal of manhood—has always been, like the nation-form, available for imitation. Moreover, the qualities most useful in warfare—courage, discipline and strength—are very nearly universally regarded as the essential characteristics of manhood. The male figure looming over the gardens has these characteristics. In spades.

CHAPTER 7
REFUSAL AND THE SELF-IMAGE OF SOLDIERS

At least from the point of view of the legalities involved, conscientious objectors can be divided into four categories: the civilian facing conscription, active duty military personnel, total objectors (pacifists), and selective objectors (e.g. to a particular war or a particular type of weapon). The vast majority of existing commentary refers to the relatively clear-cut case of the pacifist civilian facing conscription (Noone 1993, 178). In many ways, however, selective objection and active military refusal are socially and politically more interesting phenomena. Though the primary complaint of most active-duty soldiers, the loss of personal autonomy, is nowhere considered grounds for conscientious objection, the willed refusal of actually serving soldiers has a powerful potential impact on the ability of any military to maintain discipline and predict combat effectiveness.

Civilian		Military	
Total Objection (Pacifism)	Selective Objection	Total Objection (Pacifism)	Selective Objection

Figure 7.1 – Typology of Conscientious Objectors

The four-fold division actually parses out into six categories, as represented in figure 7.1. The dark vertical line in the center of the chart represents the strong division traditionally drawn between civilian and military life. This separation, grounded in the connection of soldiers with “sacred violence” and brutal necessity, creates a distinction that is, in the words of a former German infantry general, “Unchanged and unchangeable in the

soldier's world, but that plays no part in the world of civilians (Bürgers)" (Sondenstern 1952, 244). Though this division is much less discussed than the one between public and private spheres of activity, in terms of the social organization of violence, and arguably social organization itself, it is of a similar level of importance. True, the civilian/military division directly impacts only a minority of the population. However, the ramifications of things military—economic, social organizational, demographic, cultural—extend far beyond the barracks.

Within each main category there are two potential grounds for conscientious objection to military service. These are logically the same, if practically different, for soldiers and civilians alike. Looking at the chart, categories further to the left are traditionally more acceptable grounds for objection than those to the right. The hard division between civilian and military is a key factor here, creating separate categories of legal personhood for those inside and outside of the armed forces. Even countries that have fairly "liberal" laws pertaining to civilian conscripts—e.g., Austria, Belgium, France, Italy and the Netherlands—accept no applications for refusal from soldiers. Both Britain and the United States have procedures in place to deal with military conscientious objectors, but both countries require soldiers on active duty to jump through hoops that make objection within the military an ordeal (Noone 1993, 189; WRI 2000).

Under the 1983 German *Kriegsdienstverweigerungsgesetz* (Act on Refusal to Render War Service involving the Use of Arms on Grounds of Conscience) both reservists and active duty soldiers are allowed to file for conscientious objector status. The reasoning behind this is clear-cut; the legal precedent is straightforward: the law commonly recognizes that people can change their minds on matters of conscience.

The procedure calls for soldiers in the Bundeswehr who refuse further service to appear before a review board convened by the Ministry of Defense while reservists appear before a panel convened by local political authorities (Noone 1993, 189). Though more onerous than the now largely pro forma written statement required of civilian conscripts, the procedure is not prohibitively difficult. In fact one of my informants actually went through the process. Originally drafted, he found military life particularly uncongenial and increasingly found that he objected to the idea of taking life, and especially to state-sponsored violence, abhorrent. Consequently, when he was called to do reserve duty, he filed for conscientious objection. As he put it, “there was a group that helped me, the KDV organization”¹ and “by then I had friends who supported me.” But, he added, that he was older and less susceptible to social pressures and would have made the application even if he had been all alone. Though the preparation was stressful, his actual appearance before the board was, as he put it, “not so bad” (“nicht so schwer”). His application was granted.

The reservist in question is the same Dieter Kreuz reluctant draftee described in chapter 6. A closer look at his military experience is a good place to start with an examination of the meaning of refusal inside the Bundeswehr. As previously noted, Dieter elected, in the face of pressure from friends and family, not to file for Wehrdienstverweigerer status. Once drafted, however, he was faced again and again, with decisions of obedience and refusal. Unlike many, perhaps most, conscripts in the Bundeswehr (or in any military), Dieter’s decision to allow himself to be drafted and inducted into the military did not equate to a final decision to follow orders and “go along to get along.”

He cited, for example, the painful absurdity of marching in formation, particularly in one case where his platoon was directed by an inept or sadistic

¹ Zentralstelle für Recht und Schutz der Kriegsdienstverweigerer aus Gewissensgründen e.V., one of several private organizations that provide legal advice to conscientious objectors and help them to prepare to go before the review board or compose written statements.

(Dieter suspected the latter) trainer to march straight into a wall. This resulted in an odd fiction. The platoon pretended to be marching forward as it bunched up against the wall, the soldiers moving their feet in place. No doubt the effect was comic to anyone watching, but disconcerting to those involved.

It is possible, of course, that such an exercise could have been intended as a demonstration of what can happen when soldiers follow orders blindly. (Dieter was not the only Bundeswehr soldier to report similar experiences to me.) He did not, however, experience it as a lesson, other than a lesson in futility and humiliation leaving him disgusted with the military.

Such demonstrations are not uncommon in the military and by standards with which I am familiar the incident in question is relatively mild. I vividly remember something called “rock patrol” from my own days in basic training. The incident occurred about eight weeks into training, when some of the most stringent disciplinary provisions of the first weeks had been slightly relaxed. The pretext for the incident was the disgruntlement of the Senior Drill Instructor over the loss of a pocket knife, which he presumed to have been stolen by one of the trainees. He called the entire training company, about 200 soldiers, into formation. We gathered in a large, plowed field where he announced that every soldier would crawl around, picking rocks out of the dirt and carrying them to the edge of the field until someone confessed to stealing his knife. This went on for several hours, until late at night—after a full day of strenuous training activities and with wake-up call at 5:00 the next morning. Finally, long after dark, he dismissed the company, stating that we would pick it up again the next night if no one had confessed.

The upshot of the incident was that the next day a large number of pocket knives, some of them fairly similar to the missing one, were anonymously dropped in the company commander’s mailbox—after which the Senior Drill Instructor relented. He seemed amused by the whole incident.

Nor was this incident extreme by military standards. Recruits have traditionally suffered beatings, physical training to the point of exhaustion—until significant numbers of the participants pass out—as well as other kinds of physical or emotional pain and disgust. Though post-Vietnam era reforms have largely de-legitimized the more extreme forms of informal training in the United States military, incidents such as the rock patrol described above remain fairly common.

From its founding the Bundeswehr set out to eliminate, or at least minimize, such informal and often brutal training styles (*Kommissköpfen*) directed by NCOs against soldiers, particularly fresh recruits. None of the Bundeswehr or former Bundeswehr soldiers with whom I spoke reported the kinds of extreme hazing or abusive training incidents that I witnessed or experienced in the United States Army. However, even in the normal course of training soldiers are called upon to do things that are, from the civilian point of view, extraordinary. For example, proficiency in the use of various weapons is integral to the job of a combat soldier and weapons practice is typically required of all soldiers, at least during their initial training. This can be done in a variety of ways, more-or-less technologically assisted, but requires, at some point, firing live ammunition at a target of some kind.

As Dieter Kreutz tells of his experience, his initial weapons training was done on standard circular targets marked with concentric rings. The targets were affixed to a frame which could be lowered down into an underground bunker to be scored and then raised again. Soldiers would take a specified number of shots from a specific distance in various firing positions (standing, supported, prone) and then back up to another specified distance and shoot again.

“It was no problem for me,” Dieter explained, “to shoot at the paper targets that were just targets. I hit every time—didn’t miss. But then they

replaced the paper targets with targets shaped like people. And I was looking through my sights, looking on the target painted to look like a person, and I thought, 'I can't shoot at this. It's not for me.'"

Human silhouette targets are regularly used in military and police training. They are designed to simulate a combat target as closely as possible. Shooting at a silhouette, as Dieter understood, has nothing to do with improving accuracy, but with desensitizing the shooter to the possibility of targeting an actual person. Instead of aiming at the proverbial bulls-eye, the center of the circular target, in silhouette practice the shooter is forced to target isomorphically mapped human body parts—the torso, the head, etc.

"So I put my gun away and went to the *Unteroffizier* (sergeant) and said, 'I can't do this, it's not possible for me.'"

The NCO in question asked Dieter why and he answered that he didn't want to shoot at the image of a person unless he was forced to. The sergeant told him that if he didn't do it he would be subject to arrest for disobeying an order.

Dieter asked to speak to the officer in charge, a First Lieutenant (*Oberleutnant*). This officer asked Dieter what was wrong and he explained the situation, saying that he didn't want to shoot at the human silhouettes. The officer told him that he had no choice. Dieter responded, "Okay, then every day that we shoot at the human-shaped targets, I'll go on sick call." The officer in question responded, "Well, okay, I didn't hear you say that, but I accept it."

Here is an extraordinary moment of complicity between an enlisted draftee and an officer in the Bundeswehr. Though in Dieter's account, told many years after, he didn't think of it that way, he and the Oberleutnant engaged in a collaborative act of refusal. By a strict definition of duty, the officer ought to have reported Dieter and arranged punishment for his twin acts of disobedience: refusing to shoot at the human-shaped targets and

threatening to go on sick-call when he wasn't sick, known in military parlance as malingering. Instead, the officer went along with Dieter's refusal in a way that could have harmed his career.

From another point-of-view, the whole incident is extraordinary from the moment Dieter refused to fire on the silhouettes. I remember an almost exactly analogous moment from my own basic training days. A young soldier—a volunteer to be sure—had a sudden change of heart on the firing range and refused to shoot at the silhouettes. The young man in question, I'll call him Private Bodin, was a tall, lanky African-American from a Christian background. He had a thick Brooklyn accent and a slight stutter on top of it. Bodin had enlisted to be a communications specialist and no one had bothered to inform him that during basic training he would be forced to shoot an assault rifle, throw live grenades, fire anti-tank weapons, etc.

Private Bodin was in my basic training platoon at Ft. Still, Oklahoma in 1982. The first day at the firing range, after going through all of the safety and weapon handling lessons, we were given live ammunition and placed in position. Bodin was in the next foxhole over from mine. The range sergeant gave the command for us to load and begin to fire. Bodin held his position in the foxhole, weapon in hand, but didn't load or fire. After a specified amount of time, the sergeant called for a ceasefire and then walked down the line to check each weapon to see that it had been fired. Each soldier in turn would hand the weapon up to the instructor, breech open, so that he could look inside and see that all of the rounds had been fired. When he came to Bodin, the sergeant immediately noted that the trainee hadn't fired a shot.

"Private Bodin," he said with a military drawl, something like a Southern drawl on speed, "why didn't you fire your weapon?"

Bodin said a very strange thing then, in his mumbling, barely intelligible way. He said, "Conscientious objector."

“What? What are you saying?” demanded the range instructor.

“Conscientious objector,” he repeated, slightly louder but no more intelligibly.

“What kind of rectal-cranial inversion is this?” asked the sergeant.

“Bodin, you’re a goddamned volunteer. Now you fire that weapon.”

Bodin, however, just kept repeating that he was a conscientious objector who would not fire a weapon. The range sergeant, of course, called over more senior NCO’s who proceeded to brow-beat and otherwise berate Private Bodin as “pussy,” asking him what kind of “limp dick shit” he was trying to pull.

Bodin never changed his story, in spite of the abuse heaped on him. The reaction from the other soldiers was, at first, amusement. Many of us had never even heard of conscientious objection, as strange as that may sound. Then Bodin was told that he would remain in the foxhole, on the firing range, until he fired his ammo. Furthermore, the rest of the platoon was told that we would also remain on the firing range until Bodin fired his ammo. After a long day in the hot Oklahoma sun, this is not a nice thing to say to a bunch of tired, hungry soldiers. It wasn’t long before Bodin’s peers started to shout out “encouragement.”

At least in the American Army of the early 1980s, the drill sergeants were masters of setting the group against the dissident individual, thereby appealing both to the individual’s sense of solidarity and setting him up for what is euphemistically referred to as “extra training.” The reality is that soldiers living in a squad bay, in constant contact with each other, are in some ways in a stronger position vis-à-vis the dissident individual than the NCOs and others invested with authority. True, fellow soldiers can’t call on all of the institutional power of military “justice,” but to put it in plain terms they can administer collective physical punishment of a type that would put a drill

instructor at a real risk of being prosecuted. A very typical instance is the so-called blanket party. Stanley Kubric's film *Full Metal Jacket*—the best cinematic portrayal of basic training ever filmed—depicts the type of incident to which I am referring. A couple of soldiers pin the man to be “trained” to his bunk with a blanket. The rest of the platoon then files by and hits him repeatedly, usually in the stomach where the signs are less obvious. Though it is little talked about, soldiers have been hospitalized or even died as a result of such assaults.

In both of these acts of disobedience—Dieter's and Bodin's—there was a certain amount of “push-back” or counter-resistance on the part of those with authority. They applied pressure to get the recalcitrant soldier to do as required by the procedure. In the case of the Bundeswehr, however, push-back was not extended to Dieter's fellow soldiers. He was allowed access to a higher ranking officer straightaway and came to a modus vivendi with him that was honored by the others, soldiers and NCOs, who must have known of the fiction of Dieter's repeated sick calls. In the case of Private Bodin, the authorities ganged up on him, intentionally provoked the ire of his platoon-mates, and eventually subjected him to what is known as “recycling.” A trainee who is recycled is sent back to start basic training all over again with a new unit, beginning with the most restrictive rules and physically brutal training. After that, I don't know, but if he continued to claim objector status, Bodin was likely given an administrative discharge from the military for being “untrainable.”

It is probably ethnocentric to pose the situation in the American military as *the* standard of comparison. When I presented a portion of my research on the Bundeswehr to an audience of German academics, one of the criticisms was that I was taking the “imperialistic” Army of the United States as the point of departure. Would I not find something different in the army, say, of Hungary

or the Czech Republic? Maybe—but given the economic power of Germany and its history as a Great Power the only appropriate comparisons, I contend, are with the United States or the other dominant powers of Western Europe in the Twentieth Century, France and Britain.

The Bundeswehr and the Nationalen Volksarmee

More than one Bundeswehr officer related stories to me about their interactions with officers from the former Nationalen Volksarmee (NVA), the East German Military, some of whom had been accepted into the unified force after re-unification. In these stories, related with various degrees of good humor, the former NVA officers (as represented by my informants) complained bitterly about the “softness” and lack of discipline in the Bundeswehr. The old Bundeswehr officers, in turn, complained that the former NVA officers had no feeling for *Innere Führung*, for democratic forms of self-expression or respect for basic human dignity.

The merger of the two armies—really the selective incorporation of a relative handful of former NVA professionals in the Bundeswehr—has led to new structures of refusal. Here it is useful to look at what John Borneman (1998b) has called genres of state legitimation. In his account, the dominant regime-genre of the old German Democratic Republic—and typically in socialist and fascist regimes—was romance.

Borneman references the 1989 testimony of Erich Mielke, the godfather of the East German Stasi, before the East German parliament. This was during the short period between the time when the Wall fell and unification with the West. The new parliament took up a hasty examination of the repressive organs of the state. Mielke was called largely to give the parliamentarians a chance to go on the record as critics of the old regime. Completely unrepentant, Mielke protested, “Ich liebe euch doch alle!” (“But I love you all!”).

Contrary to the disingenuous outrage of the politicians and media, Borneman plausibly considers Mielke's statement to be sincere. "Indeed," Borneman writes, "he really did love these people, and he couldn't understand how they had the audacity to claim, after thirty intimate—oh, so very intimate—years of living together, that they were not one, a natural unity, like a family, motivated by love" (Borneman 1998b, 189).

"Motivated by love," yes, in the sense of the future-oriented romantic utopia that is always at least partially a narcissistic projection of the lover's own desire. Those in power in the former East Germany, sold on the ideology of a utopian future, struggled to see in the people the transformed higher form of humanity that their beliefs promise to be just around the corner. At times, of course, the people fell short. Hence the joke about the regime lacking confidence in the people and being forced to dissolve it and form a new one; hence the state disciplinary measures promulgated by institutions like the Stasi—in the name of the state, in the name of love.

By contrast, the dominant genre in the Federal Republic, and in most of the "democratic" West, is satire. Legitimation in the satirical mode relies on appeals to an idealized past, a golden moment, a Garden of Eden—a constitution. The satirist *critiques* the present for deviation from the past. To the extent that satire becomes the dominant mode of legitimation it is adopted not only by the regime and its elders, but by those in opposition. The powers that be may fault the people (or some significant subset thereof) for a lack of faith, patriotism, republican virtue, etc.; those in opposition fault the regime for hypocrisy, for failing to live up to their nominal creed. Public discourse in this context tends to be grounded in particular readings of founding documents and exegesis (or Constitutional interpretation) becomes increasingly important to public life (Borneman 1998b, 194–96).

The tendency toward one genre or the other, of course, is rarely total. In most states legitimacy is expressed in a variety of genres. In the case of both the former Federal Republic and post-1989 Germany the satirical mode is clearly dominant, though it is also ambivalent. In the United States, by way of comparison, satirical critique of the present is always tempered by a romantic relationship with the past. It is a rare critic indeed, and no critic prominent in the political public sphere that I know of, who casts aspersions on the Constitution. Moreover, even if the mythology of the Founding Fathers, manifest destiny, the frontier and the rest has come in for increasing criticism, the basic relationship of (white) Americans to the American past is one of imagined virtuous triumphalism.

In Germany the situation is different. The Basic Law was composed in the shadow of a humiliating defeat and occupation. The crimes of the Nazi regime made the immediate past suitable only for negative example. The history between Bismarck and Hitler was widely regarded as a troubling, militaristic prelude to fascism punctuated only by the ineffectual and “weak” Weimar Republic. This only leaves a disunited German past of poets and thinkers to fall back on, at least for the most hard-headed of the satirists. This ambivalence, of course, has itself been a matter of considerable public comment, as in the *Historikerstreit*, wherein “conservatives” sought to reclaim a more romantic relationship with the German past. The fear, of course, is that this romanticizing of the past would be the ground for a critique of the present in the form of a nationalist, militarist and xenophobic position.

The immediate point here is that the former NVA officers who were incorporated into the Bundeswehr—after a non-trivial amount of examination and re-education—had been raised and trained in a social milieu in which utopian romance was the dominant mode of legitimation. The NVA was, in this sense, a fully socialist army—the authority structure was fully romantic.

This characterization, however, remains obscure—as I think it does in Borneman’s essay—unless I can say what I mean by “romantic.” There is the element of narcissism, of projecting an object-fantasy onto the beloved. But the key point is that in the romantic fantasy the object-other is a kind of pornographic icon, completely subject to the will of the lover, and completely dependent. To the extent that the beloved fails to conform to the fantasy of the lover, the lover either fails to see her as she is (including her wants and needs) or becomes disillusioned, resentful and punitive. In other words the key element of the romance is fundamental asymmetry in power between lover and beloved.

Borneman also sees a lack of reciprocity in romance, sees such “relationships” as characterized by an anti-social, monological non-relationship. This strikes me as overdrawn. The state-regime, or its local institutional surrogate, the military, does not legitimate itself purely in terms of utopian longing, but in present-provision or nurturance. The army, and the state, are not so much father figures, but dominant mothers (and thus appropriate objects of heterosexual desire for male leaders). The military in particular, and the socialist state as well, provide basic needs for their soldier/citizen children. Moreover, it also “trains them up” in appropriate ways of being human—appropriately gendered and useful for the war system. The relationship is still romantic, but it is at once domestic/paternalistic. In this familial context there is no appropriate way for the soldier-children to refuse or resist the authority of the paternal officer/NCOs or the female dominant military/state. Obedience *is* the reciprocal duty (*Pflicht*) of the citizen, and, especially, of the soldier in traditional militaries. The relationship is not without reciprocity. In fact from the liberal-individualist (and Protestant) perspectives, what the individual gives back to the traditional military (or the romantic, total state) is exactly that which is most valuable, his right to decide for himself,

especially when it comes to matters of conscience—in other words, his adult autonomy.

Thus the former NVA officers who became part of the Bundeswehr were confronted with a much bigger job than simply adopting different ideological content. They could learn to profess belief in “democracy” and “individual rights” but the basic grounding of authority in the unthinking obedience to a “loving” regime or a paternalistic order that exists to guide its sometimes recalcitrant children is another thing. This characterization of the NVA is, no doubt, over-broad, grounded not in a systematic examination of the institution, or first-hand contact with its former members, but in the extrapolation from comments by West German officers and soldiers. That is, it is grounded in former NVA officers seen through West German eyes.

Gegen den Strich (Against the Grain)

One of my informants was a young army Oberleutnant (First Lieutenant) named David Lindenhurst. Cheerful and soft-spoken with the carefully cultivated manners of the high middle-class, Lt. Lindenhurst was in demeanor about as far from the iconic Prussian military man as could be—for all that his towering height and imposing appearance seemed to fit that image. Raised in what he describes as a conservative family, and standing politically to the right, David was originally drafted into the Bundeswehr and only later, at his father’s suggestion, decided to apply to become an officer. This eventually led him to one of the two Bundeswehr universities—in Munich—where he earned the German equivalent of a Bachelor’s Degree (*Diplom*) in Sozialwissenschaft (social science), in all ways considered equivalent to a similar degree from a civilian university in Germany.

After university, David was assigned to various tank units, where he learned the craft of leading troops in the field—and where, as he described it,

he often felt like an outsider. “I felt like I was always going against the grain” (*gegen den Strich*). Especially in his early days as a platoon leader, facing harsh criticism from non-commissioned officers with ten to fifteen years experience who were predictably skeptical of young officers, he was depressed to the point where he often considered suicide.

For David, individualism was a carefully cultivated aspect of his self-image. Even his toying with the idea of suicide was part of his oppositional persona. Yet in his case, given his conservative background and politics, the specific content of his refusal was *shifted*. In his account—backed up by the statistics—conscientious objection was the *norm* for university bound young men. In refusing to refuse he was rejecting what he saw as the hypocrisy of the status quo. Though clearly proud of the liberal reforms of the Bundeswehr, David tended not to see them as a radical departure from the Wehrmacht. Likewise, for much of his time in the Bundeswehr his *gegen den Strich* personality met its other not in the powers that be, but in his fellow soldiers. These young men, particularly the draftees, were largely of working class origin and seemed, especially at first, alien to him. “They cared nothing for books or politics or conversation, but only about drinking beer and finding women.”

Thus as a young soldier David constructed a personal ethos of *Verweigerung vis-à-vis* the time-honored soldierly pursuits of getting drunk and (trying) to get laid. “These things can be good too,” he said, “but they aren’t everything.” This created alienation and distance from his fellow soldiers and a sense of being different. His suicidal thoughts in this context can be seen as a form of refusal—a way of willing self-empowerment in a situation where he felt otherwise powerless.

Later on, however, after completing his officer training and earning his university degree, David was promoted to Leutnant (Second Lieutenant) and

assigned to another tank unit not far from Berlin. Once again he reports not fitting in and, for the first time, he had a significant conflict with a commanding officer—an officer formerly part of the NVA.

In David's account, the man was something of a self-important martinet. More importantly, he was totally lacking in the refinement of the *Adelsstand* (nobility) that Lt. Lindenhurst so identified with. As a former NVA officer David considered the officer to be “naturally” hostile to his “upper class” mannerisms as well as the refinements of *Innere Führung*. The encounter between the two men proved stressful, even enraging, to David.

“At one point,” David told me, “I was ready to hit him—but I held myself back.”

The basic difference between the two men, the point of contention, was ultimately one of interactive style. The former-NVA commanding officer believed in, or in any case acted on, the traditional military formula of brow-beating and public humiliation. David, true to the teachings of *Innere Führung* and his own personal beliefs, treated and trained the soldiers under his command with respect and work-a-day professionalism. This apparently infuriated his commander, particularly when David's unit consistently scored well in military exercises. At one point he called Lt. Lindenhurst in front of the entire unit and humiliated him in public, berating him for being soft with his men and lacking “leadership.”

This treatment, it should be pointed out, though common enough during basic training or when directed against the lower enlisted ranks, is rarely meted out to senior NCOs and almost never to officers—even in the most traditional militaries, where the “tradition” of treating officers as “gentlemen” tends to pertain.² In the Bundeswehr it was extraordinary to the point that none

² The public humiliation of officers is also avoided on the theory that it undermines unit cohesion and the command effectiveness of the officer chastised. It can also create factious divisions in the ranks wherein disaffected soldiers band together with a sympathetic officer, creating the foundations for mutiny in the field.

of the other officers or enlisted men I interviewed reported anything even remotely similar from a company commander in a public setting. (Nor did I ever witness a scene of this type, directed by a commander against a commissioned officer, in my four years of active duty in the United States Army.)

David's response to the stress he was under in his unit was to volunteer for two tours of duty in Bosnia. Largely because of his skill with languages—he speaks both English and French with considerable fluency—he was accepted to the multinational force. For him these tours in the war-torn former Yugoslavia were a reprieve that proved far less aggravating than dealing with his commander. Upon return to his unit he became physically sick and was hospitalized with heart palpitations and arrhythmia. “The stress,” he said, “I can't be sure, but I think it was the stress. I was under such stress in that unit I volunteered twice to go to Bosnia. But, also, it was not conscious, but it was a way out—if I had health problems, I was in the hospital, away from the unit.”

I asked him if it was like thinking about suicide, a way out of the current situation.

“Yes,” he said “but it could have been something physical.”

And, indeed, it was something physical—chest pains and heart arrhythmia are serious business. Whether or not there was an underlying organic cause, there is no doubt from Lt. Lindenhurst's own testimony that he experienced the hospital, like Bosnia, as a refuge. There is also no doubt that the condition disappeared after he was transferred to a new unit, doing a new job, away from the former NVA commander.

David's persona—which he cultivates as that of an outsider, someone who perpetually goes against the grain—is in a dominant form of post-war German masculinity: the strong-willed individual, refusing to go along. As with the arrogant, cock-sure but obedient Prussian officer of the pre-Nazi period or the brutally efficient officer of the Waffen-SS during the NS regime, the self-directed individualist is not

necessarily the most common form of masculinity, but it is an ideal. The specific ideological content is to a certain extent plastic, the archetype available to both the left and right—though practitioners tend to accuse those with the opposite values of being slavering conformists. Furthermore, I would argue that David's "heart sickness," like his suicidal fantasies, were modes of embodied refusal that allowed him to continue with his life without actually having to confront existing authority—in what would, quite likely, have been a quixotic gesture—and still preserve his preferred self-image.

If this analysis seems unduly harsh, what I want to highlight are the *limits* of refusal and "non-conformity" as political tactics. One of the prime implications of the elevation of refusal to heroic status in post-war Germany is the fostering of a kind of socio-political isolation—the retreat of the individual into self-satisfaction based in the first place on a refusal to engage with the larger society. It seems clear enough to say that any effective ethics must expect individuals to refuse evil, but the elevation of this principle obscures the reality that such refusal is in fact a rather pathetic *minimum*, particularly when the context is shifted from that of an aggressive, murderous regime determined to wage perpetual war to a more-or-less liberal, slightly paternalistic regime in an increasingly atomized, consumerist society.

Moreover, in a society where refusal itself has been institutionalized—enshrined in the Basic Law and more importantly normalized through established bureaucratic procedures—the meaning of refusal itself shifts. In the realm of conscientious objection to military service at least, only so-called *Totalverweigerer* (total refusers)—those who refuse all cooperation and substitute service—face significant consequences, legal or social, for their position. Also the elevation of refusal as a societal value does not speak to what ought to be refused. Even amongst the Bundeswehr reformers the exact content of which traditions were to be rejected, and which continued, was a matter of controversy. In the larger society, in which no equivalent examination of tradition and continuity has ever been attempted, the content of refusal—once presumed to mean the permanent refusal of nationalism and

militarism at a minimum—is up for grabs in the changed national context of the post-1989 world.

McSoldiers

Lt. Lindenhurst's stressful confrontation with a former NVA officer serving in the Bundeswehr is not unique—and given the very different style or genre of authority adopted in the two militaries it would be surprising if it were. Another informant, Hauptmann (Captain) Gunter Wegemann, also reported tensions and concerns dealing with former NVA personnel, and moreover with draftees from the former East Germany.

An officer in the army reserve (Heer), Hauptmann Wegemann is a relentlessly logical man, good-humored, with left-leaning politics. He is a life-long member of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) from an SDP family. Like Lt. Lindenhurst, he was, as he put it, an “oddity”—a gymnasium student who elected not to refuse to serve in the military. In fact he actually volunteered for service in the Bundeswehr instead of waiting to be drafted and then went on to become a reserve officer.

Like David, Gunter was clearly proud of the Bundeswehr as a force, and particularly of its tradition as a liberal military in a democratic society. He enthusiastically related to me that some of the Bundeswehr barracks were named for officers of the Widerstand, for example Ludwig Beck Barracks in Sonthofen and Stauffenberg Barracks in Sigmaringen. He was at some pains to convey to me just how extraordinary this was, that any nation-state would name military facilities after people who were part of an unsuccessful resistance movement. At the same time he also pointed out that other barracks had been named after officers who had been Wehrmacht loyalists, including some who may have been guilty of war crimes. In fact, he said, the Ministry of Defense had recently changed the name of one barracks because

they found out that it was named after a Nazi. He cited the name change as evidence of a willingness to reassess and correct past mistakes.

One of the facilities in question, Dietl Barracks in Füssen, was named for Wehrmacht General Eduard Dietl, a notorious anti-Semite allegedly responsible for crimes against humanity in Finland during the war. The name change occurred in 1995 and it is probably too generous to say that it was because it was “found out” that Dietl was a Nazi. Rather, the shifting politics of time made it possible to repudiate the original naming at a moment when the future of the Bundeswehr—specifically its transformation from a purely defensive mass army of conscripts to a professional force of “peace keepers” able to be deployed internationally—was much in evidence (Niven 2002, 70).

Cpt. Wegemann had the opportunity to participate in military exercises in the mid-1990s in the new Eastern Bundesländer, serving with units that included both former NVA officers and soldiers from the East.

“I was appalled by the conditions there,” he told me, “and noted the tension between those of an NVA mind-set and those from a West German background. The East Germans seemed to think of us as not being a “real” army. We lacked the discipline, were too soft—and there is no doubt that they were more authoritarian.”

There is some truth in the charges of the old NVA regulars Gunter admitted. The Bundeswehr was never conceived as an all-purpose military, but rather as a purely defensive force. This, according to Wegemann, had an impact on the mentality of both the Bundeswehr and the (West) Germans more generally. The attitude during the Cold War was that conventional militaries were more-or-less obsolete and that the Bundeswehr was an army the purpose of which was never to be used—and certainly never to be deployed beyond the borders of Germany. Hence, following this logic, the physical discipline of extended practice at being miserable—the almost

compulsive “toughening up” of soldiers for combat, was not as necessary in the Bundeswehr.

Cpt. Wegemann also saw the push for “professionalization” and “modernization,” the confrontation with the more authoritarian traditions of the East and the out-of-country missions as potential dangers to the culture of the Bundeswehr. He was not certain that the carefully nurtured traditions of “transparency,” treating soldiers as citizens with rights and the moral message of *Innere Führung* could survive in the new climate. His concern was not a return to old-time German nationalism, but an acceleration of a move toward soldiers as employees evident in the Bundeswehr since its founding. This is what Michael Geyer has called the tendency for German soldiers to “become quite literally a service class, the producer of security” (Geyer 1990, 203). One thing that such a move portends, particularly with the decreasing importance and eventual abolition of conscription, is the diminution of any ethic of service in the sense of service to society.

Gunther’s reaction to this was to see it as a loss, not so much to the military—which may be smaller, cheaper and more efficient without conscription—but to the larger society. He felt that the loss of *Wehrpflicht*, and the simultaneous loss of conscientious objection and *Zivildienst*, would undermine what was already one of the *few* important commonplaces, or grounds, of social integration in German society. He rejected this tendency—what he referred to as “Americanization” as the “wrong way to go.”

Das ist nicht meine Bundeswehr

Resistance to the Americanization of the Bundeswehr was a common theme amongst the professional soldiers to whom I spoke. They ironically echoed, from the point of view of defending the German democratic tradition,

the arguments of the right-wingers in the 1950s, who objected to modeling the new German military on the degenerate Americans. Ludwig Gumbal, a former Colonel in the Waffen-SS and leader in the Bavarian branch of the Verband deutscher Soldaten (VdS), an umbrella group of veteran's organizations, said of the Americans, they have "deliberately corrupted our young men with their cowboy films and hot jazz, rendering them unfit for genuine soldierly discipline" (Large 1996, 190).

The complaints of the Bundeswehr officers about the American military were eerily similar, often grounded not in critique of the American military as such—though some officers with first-hand knowledge did provide such a critique—but in what they saw as American militarism as represented not in the Gulf War, but in Hollywood movies, particularly the Rambo films.

It was, in fact, quite astonishing to me the number of times that the Rambo character came up in conversations with German officers. One man, Oberstleutnant (Lieutenant Colonel) Walther Schuler, was eloquent on the point. A professional soldier who was drafted in the early 1970s—when the "spirit of '68 was still alive and well"—was born in a small town in the East, but his family fled to the West when he was a child. Lt. Col. Schuler spent much of the last several years developing curricula and training non-commissioned officers in the values of the Bundeswehr. He placed a high value on conscription not just as a means of social integration, but because conscripts force career-path soldiers to be mindful of the values they are there to defend—because they have constantly to teach them. Referring to armies that have become professionalized along the American lines, he said, "I see the kinds of people those armies attract and they are not always the best."

He emphasized that the current Bundeswehr was a professional military in spite of the number of Wehrdienstleister, because of the professionalism of the career officers and long serving officers and NCOs. Then he said

something quite astonishing, “Wir sind kein Rambos; wir möchten kein Rambos.” (“We are not Rambos; we don’t want any Rambos.”)

With his slate-gray hair and professorial glasses, Lt. Col. Schuler had the look of an avuncular intellectual. Though physically fit, he was about as far from the hyper-masculine character of John Rambo as could be found, not just in appearance, but in demeanor. Yet it is interesting that Rambo, though identified with American militarism, is actually a kind of “anti-military” figure, in a very specific sense: Rambo embodies, literally, the refusal of the a moribund and wimpy military bureaucracy without the guts to take the fight to the enemy. Such a military, beholden to public opinion polls and double-talking politicians, betrayed soldiers like Rambo in Vietnam (in the logic of the narrative), forcing them to fail because of their lack of will. As the Rambo character proclaims in the second First Blood movie (where he returns to Vietnam in search of American MIAs supposedly still held as POWs), “to survive war, you have to become war.”

Rambo, however, is an interstitial champion of renewed military aggressiveness, a hard-bodied, rage-fueled rejection of accommodation and compromise. His inflated physical presence is a metaphor for American military prowess and masculine daring reclaimed after the debacle of Vietnam. In a real sense the Rambo movies could not be made today, in the aftermath of the two Gulf Wars, when it is not American military prowess (or masculinity) that is at issue, but America’s ability to cooperate and work with others to find peaceful solutions.

The figure of Rambo, however, is a pivotal image in the societal reorganization of the image of American soldierly masculinity. For the relatively short period between the end of the Vietnam War in the early 1970s and the First Gulf War in the early 1990s, there was a certain amount of room for the development of alternative masculinities in the United States and the

militarist style of masculinity was de-emphasized. Rambo waged war against these alternative—feminized—forms and laid the groundwork for the re-valuation of militarist masculinity. However, through the peculiar magic of capitalism, operating in the military since the abolition of the draft in the United States, masculinity within the military, I would argue, has become relatively decoupled from masculinity in general. The expectation that every young man of able body, or virtually everyone, will quite likely have to fight in a war is beginning to fade from the public consciousness, even amongst active duty soldiers. I remember a crusty old taxi driver in Lawton, Oklahoma who was a former Sergeant Major. He complained, “These kids, they join the army and they say it’s because of the education. What kind of horseshit is that? Education? What about fighting in wars? What are they gonna do when it comes? We’re gonna be in a lot of trouble.”

The trouble anticipated by the ex-Sergeant Major, of course, has not materialized. The professional, career-oriented, military of the United States does not see itself as embodying a “Rambo” mentality. Discipline in the American military, at least so far, has been quite adequate to the task of conquering forces with vastly inferior resources. Whether it would do as well against a force of roughly equal strength is an open question—but then that is in the nature of military operations.

What has happened in the case of the American military is that as memory of the draft fades, and post-Vietnam administrations become more adroit at marketing their wars, war protest has been effectively marginalized to a hard-core of peace activists. Opposition from active duty soldiers, and particularly from a generation of young, middle-class men facing conscription, has not re-materialized. In a sense the United States government dodged the draft and with it intensive public scrutiny of its war-making policies. This gives the administration far more of a free hand in terms of what it can do with

American troops, where they can be deployed, and for how long, before they can start to expect societal resistance. This shift in American military policy is what the Bundeswehr officers identified as the danger of the Rambo image, not because John Rambo is the ideal American soldier, but because he symbolizes an opening to more aggressive militarism. Rambo is the embodiment of a masculine critique of a feminized war-making bureaucracy.

Though Lt. Col. Schuler acknowledged that conscript armies, as history shows, can certainly be used for aggressive, imperialist purposes, in a democratic society, where politicians have to face the voters, at least unpopular wars can be avoided. His fear was that a fully professionalized, Americanized Bundeswehr would eventually be drawn into conflicts in far-flung parts of the world where the Germans have no business intervening. Under such circumstances he imagined that the values of Innere Führung would be at risk. His hope was that at this point democratic values were deeply enough ingrained that they would endure. Imagining a German military that gradually loses its defensive, democratic character, he said, “das ist nicht meine Bundeswehr” (“that is not my Bundeswehr”). In his Bundeswehr, the one he believed in, soldiers trained and prepared because they understood what they might have to fight for and believed it worth defending.

As Cpt. Klassmann (see above) put it when asked why he decided to volunteer for service: “I already said that I thought the Western system and the system of the Federal Republic of Germany are worth defending... and that since it is worth defending, I also thought that it is everybody’s duty to.”

There is a flip-side to this, however, and that is an equally compelling belief in the right not to fight, to refuse, as Cpt. Klassmann added to his reasons for *not* refusing, which he gave me unasked for:

I didn’t have any disrespect for conscientious objectors, no, because they are doing socially valuable work. If they weren’t doing that, then I would have been critical of their

position. I don't really mind, even in a war situation, whether somebody works as a nurse or as a soldier. It doesn't make much of a difference. Every job counts.

Which is to say that he found alternative service just as valid as military service, *and* that he saw the right to refuse to be an important one, even if he personally believed pacifism was illusionary and self-defeating.

Lt. Col. Schuler, echoing the worries of the ex-Sgt. Major quoted above, thought that young soldiers today did not really understand the deadly seriousness of joining the military. He said that polls indicated that the number one reason young men volunteered for the Bundeswehr was for "social security." He found this ironic, in that ultimately the one thing that no soldier should expect is to be secure. A soldier puts his life on the line. Most young people, he said, have no idea what it might mean to be put in a place where they might have to kill, to see their friends die, to die themselves. Yet instead of calling for a German Rambo to repudiate the weak-willed bureaucrats and inaugurate a new golden age of militarism, he wanted a balance of realistic training and education that emphasizes the values and lives that the Bundeswehr is there to defend. Though he said no such words, implicit in his hopes was the hope for a societal refusal to deploy a military that would be the handmaid of an aggressive foreign policy, whether that policy be German-led, or dictated by the United States.

As an afterward, the shift toward an Americanized Bundeswehr is probably inevitable. German special forces troops were deployed in Afghanistan and the international pressures for Germany to participate not just in United Nations sponsored peace keeping missions, but aggressive campaigns like the one in Iraq are likely to continue to increase. Nonetheless, the continuing importance of refusal in German society is evidenced not just by the oppositional German stance vis-à-vis the Iraq war, but its importance to Schöder's position as Chancellor. Without the opportunity to refuse to go along

with American militarism, Schöder would probably have lost the last election. His ability to chart an “independent” German course, albeit seen in some quarters as too much dependent upon the French, has been crucial to his continued popularity. At the same time, the ruling by the European court requiring the general admittance of women into the Bundeswehr and the various Verweigerer movements continue to undermine the conscription system, hastening the day when the German military is composed entirely of volunteers—i.e. those least likely to refuse.

CONCLUSION

Standard communicative practice calls for a tripartite structure of repetition: tell them what you are going to tell them—tell them—then tell them what you told them. I prefer a slightly different model: lure them in with evocative chit-chat and gossip—club them over the head with five hundred slightly different iterations of the same argument—then change the subject. The watchword for the last phase is straight out of Monte Python: *and now for something completely different...*

A recent half-page article in the *New York Times* (Nov. 6, 2003) tells the story of Sergeant Georg Andreas Pogany, the first American serviceman facing a potential court-martial for cowardice since Vietnam. The outcome of the case are still pending as I write this, but circumstances of the case are as follows:

Sgt. Pogany is an interrogator sent to Iraq to help with the questioning of Iraqi prisoners. He was assigned to an elite Green Beret squad and on his second night in Iraq he witnessed an Iraqi die, cut in half by machine gun fire. Not surprisingly, the sight had a profound impact on him. He vomited. He couldn't stop shaking. His head and heart pounded. In short, he panicked.

"I couldn't function," Sgt. Pogany told the *Times*. "I had this overwhelming sense of my own mortality. I kept looking at that body thinking that could be me two second from now" (Gettleman 2003, A14).

His reactions are textbook in their normalcy. Fear is a severe challenge to battlefield functionality, especially before a soldier's first battle. Studies indicate that in the American Civil War, for example, just before a battle the "fear was so intense that men would fall to the ground paralyzed with terror,

bury their face in the grass, grasp at the earth, and refuse to move” (Dean 1997, 54). This accords with other studies of battlefield reactions in both World Wars and Vietnam (Dyer 1985; Grossman 1995; Kellett 1990; Turner 1996).

It was the evening of September 29th, to continue with Sgt. Pogany’s story, when he witnessed a group of U.S. soldiers dragging the remains of an Iraqi man past him. “From his waistline to his head,” said Pogany, “everything was missing” (Gettleman 2003, A10). According to the report, while Sgt. Pogany stood in shock, several of the other soldiers laughed at the corpse.

This, too, is understandable. Laughter is a distancing mechanism that separates the seasoned combat soldier from the new guy. Laughing at the dead and dying is an age-old soldierly ploy to de-realize the battlefield, to deny the impact on the psyche. Reports of the Japanese occupation of Nanking (1937–38) tell the story of the murder of as many as 300,000 civilians, many of them tortured to death (Chang 1997, 99–103). Soldiers transferred into the region reported being shocked, almost to the point of paralysis, when they first arrived. Gradually they acclimated to the brutality and violence. One Japanese soldier said that when he first arrived he found the murders “so appalling that I felt I couldn’t breathe.” He added, however, that “[e]veryone became a demon within three months” (Chang 1997, 57–59, quoted in Goldstein 2001, 367).

The reports from the occupation of Nanking accord with those from the death camps and mobile killing units in Nazi occupied territory, though reactions seemed to vary depending on the individual. As Gustav Fix, a member of Special Unit 6, testified, speaking of the work of the mobile killing units (*Einsatzgruppen*):

I would like to state that as a result of the considerable emotional strain that accompanied such executions, numerous men proved after a while unable to carryout

further shootings and thus had to be replaced. Conversely, there were other persons who could not get enough of it and who frequently volunteered for these executions” (Gedenkstätte n.d., 45–46).

And, in fact, much of the rationale for the development of the death camps, with their gas chamber and crematoria technologies, was to spare as many German soldiers as possible the experience of cold-blooded murderer (Breitman 1992).

So, both Sgt. Pogany’s panicked reaction to a close encounter with death on the battlefield and the distancing laughter of the war-hardened special forces troops are within the bounds of the expected. What makes the case exceptional, and gets its own half-page story in the newspaper of record, is what Pogany did next: he asked for help.

“I wanted to speak to someone,” he said, “who could tell me what was going on” (Gettleman 2003, A10).

Pogany, at least by his own account, never refused to go on a mission or asked to be permanently relieved from front line duty. Rather, he recognized that he was experiencing combat-related psychic trauma and requested access to medical attention. Instead of psychological counseling, however, the army chose to ship Pogany back to Ft. Carson to face a tribunal of inquiry that may lead to a court-martial. If convicted of cowardice in the face of the enemy, he could be sentenced to a lengthy prison term or even executed.

In essence, Pogany’s case is that of a man caught between models of soldierly manhood. On the one hand is the traditional military notion of men who need to be “toughen up” so that they can do their jobs in combat. In this model any adamant refusal has to be punished harshly as an example, to

prevent others from modeling their own behavior after that of the soldier who refused or failed to function. On the other hand is the more contemporary model, in which soldiers are service sector professionals who provide security. In this model, battlefield paralysis is essentially a medical problem, to be treated with the techniques of psychiatry and psychology. Both models are available to the military—as comments from military spokesmen about the case make clear—but which model to apply is at the discretion of local commanders. Pogany chose to interpret his problem as medical, as a case of psychic trauma that needed treatment. The army disagreed.

In some ways the army's reaction is understandable. Medical intervention implies pathology. Everyone understands, however, that Pogany's reaction to the seeing a man cut in half by machine gun fire was normal. The implication, then, is that it is the situation which is pathological. Pogany's case was probably exacerbated by an inappropriate articulateness. His very ability to say what he thought was happening to him meant that his reactions were not outside of the norm. Had he frozen completely, shut down, gone catatonic or completely non-verbal, he might well have been referred for treatment. By asking for help, however, he was admitting that he still had psychic reserves available to him which could have been used to face his fear and soldier on. To ask for help under such circumstances—i.e. when it is still elective, when one still has the capacity to *ask*—is the very definition of cowardice. A man who completely breaks down might be weak-willed, but at least he has applied every bit of his internal resources to the job of soldierly functioning, even if he ultimately fails.

As I read the story in the *Times*, I asked myself, could this have happened in the Bundeswehr? Would a soldier who asked for medical

attention have ended up facing a court of inquiry? The answer—and this goes to the very heart of what I have argued herein—is that it is impossible to say. The situations are disparate enough that no comparison is possible: without facing combat, cowardice in the face of the enemy is impossible. The culture of the Bundeswehr is such that I suspect a soldier in Sgt. Pogany's position would be treated differently—yet the organizational culture I am referring to is dependent on the Bundeswehr's current, internationally insulated place in the war system.

Manhood after Auschwitz

In early October 1942, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler addressed a group of higher SS officers in Posen. The speech has become infamous as the most direct acknowledgement of the genocide of European Jewry by a high-ranking Nazi. In the midst of a long, rambling speech that was recorded, Himmler told the assembled officers of the SS, "...the Jewish people are being exterminated; every party member says, 'Of course, it's in our program, elimination of the Jews, extermination, we'll do it all right.'" For most of these party members, according to Himmler, this was just talk. To the assembled, on the contrary, such talk reflected personal knowledge.

Most of you know what it means to see 100 corpses lying together, 500, or a 1,000. To have gone through this and yet—apart from a few exceptions, examples of human weakness—to have remained decent, this has made us hard (hat uns hart gemacht).¹

Here is the apotheosis of heroic masculinity, purified of every factor but one:

¹ Nizkor Project transcription of Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler's Posen speech (October 4, 1943). The full text can be found at <http://www.nizkor.org>. My translation.

hardness. To the hard man, nothing is forbidden—any means is acceptable. Limits are unacceptable, particularly when the “defense” of the highest ideals of the group—racial purity in the case of the Nazis—are at stake.

It is probably just a little too easy to dismiss Himmler as an “extreme case.” The style of masculinity he celebrated in his Posen speech is not so very different than the style of masculinity expected of American soldiers in Iraq. As noted above, laughing at a mutilated corpse is considered normal—asking for help to deal with shock and panic is criminal, or, at best, pathological. Moreover, genocide, organized torture, rape, and murder are still with us. We know about Bosnia and Cambodia, Rwanda and Burundi, and there are many other cases that are less known. Though in some sense each case of genocide is unique, and no post-World War II case has replicated the industrialization of murder that characterized the Holocaust, there can be no doubt that the mantra of “never again!” ought to include all cases of genocide and attempted genocide. Hence, from a certain perspective, the hope of “never again” has failed. Only in the limited senses of never again in Germany, and never again to the Jews, has the mantra been a success.

A cynical and altogether self-satisfied take on the relative harmlessness of post-1945 Germany would be: of course they haven’t murdered another people; we, the virtuous, civilized nations, haven’t let them. The absurdity of this should be patent, but it is, nonetheless, the attitude lurking behind the smugness of American foreign policy.

Perhaps the most devastating critique of self-satisfied “we are the voice of civilization” illusion is the work of Theodor W. Adorno. Adorno’s scholarly work, however, is notoriously difficult and convoluted. His overall pessimism with the project of Western civilization is clear enough. “The universality of

ideas as developed by discursive logic,” writes Adorno (along with like-minded colleague Max Horkheimer), “domination in the conceptual sphere, is raised up on the basis of actual domination” (Horkheimer and Adorno 1994 [1944], 14). That is, the project of understanding universals is inevitably bound up with the domination of people and societies. They continue thus:

The individuality that learned order and subordination in the subjection of the world, soon wholly equated truth with the regulative thought without whose fixed distinctions universal truth cannot exist. Together with mimetic magic, it tabooed the knowledge which really concerned the object. Its hatred was extended to the image of the vanquished former age and its imaginary happiness. The chthonic gods of the original inhabitants are banished to the hell to which, according to the sun and light religion of Indra and Zeus, the earth is transformed” (Horkheimer and Adorno 1994 [1944], 14).

Any number of scholars could probably make a decent career out of explaining and exploring just exactly what they were saying in this one paragraph. Nor would such a focus be a waste of time. The ideas here are pregnant and provocative—but hardly accessible.

In my mind Adorno’s “popular” essays, written for a wide audience and often delivered as radio addresses, are equally brilliant but have the added virtue of comprehensibility. Of these, one of the most interesting is “Education after Auschwitz.” In many ways this entire project is my attempt to respond to his essay. The spirit of Adorno is infused in the previous chapters, even if I have distorted him in ways that have made me shy away from quoting or attributing the argument, even in inspiration, to him. Here, however, in the relative safety of reflection, I feel safe enough to point to my inspiration.

“Every debate about the ideals of education is trivial and

inconsequential,” writes Adorno, “compared to this single ideal: never again Auschwitz” (Adorno 1998, 191).

Here it is out in the open, the sort of statement that Adorno was allowed to make as a Jewish émigré who returned to Germany after 1945. He had license, both as one of Germany’s most prominent intellectuals, but also as a Jew who had escaped the Holocaust. This double prestige allowed him to say publicly the kinds of hard truths that Germans did not appreciate.

What happened at Auschwitz

was the barbarism that all education strives against. One speaks of the threat of a relapse into barbarism. But it is not a threat—Auschwitz was this relapse, and barbarism continues as long as the fundamental conditions that favored that relapse continue unchanged. That is the whole horror. The societal pressure still bears down, although the danger remains invisible nowadays. It drives people toward the unspeakable, which culminated on a world-historical scale in Auschwitz (Adorno 1998, 191).

So, for Adorno, in a real sense, the Auschwitz was not in the past, but continued to be pregnant as long as “the fundamental conditions” that drove it in the first place persist.

What then are these conditions? For Adorno these conditions are imminent in modernity itself, a consequence of the power humans have over the world and the capacity to control and organize. In many ways he sees modern society as a giant trap. “One can speak of the claustrophobia of humanity in the administered world, of a feeling of being incarcerated in a thoroughly societalized, closely woven, netlike environment” (Adorno 1998, 193). This echoes his thinking in the famous “culture industry” chapter of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, and the overall idea is one in which individuated human beings are increasingly defined by niche marketing, their choices pre-

made for them by manufacturers and retailers. Welcome to life, the voice mail system: press 1 for relationships; press 2 for education; press 3 for art, etcetera.

As he sees little hope of changing the “objective” circumstances of the world—the ways in which society organizes commodities, bureaucracies, media, etc.—he suggests that any ability to resist another Auschwitz must be produced at the subjective level. This is, of course, a veritable impossibility in the social theory imminent in Adorno’s writings, but at least in this essay for broader public consumption, he believes the effort, however quixotic, ought to be made.

What subjective characteristics, then, might help prevent another Auschwitz?

One possibility Adorno dismisses out of hand is the idea that closer connections between people, what he refers to as “bonds” in the essay, can prevent genocide. The commonsense notion that with closer ties an emphatic “You must not!” in response to atrocity and murder would naturally prevent such is an illusion. One need only reflect on the special viciousness of civil wars, or on the fact that in repeated experiments psychologists have found “no minimum criteria” for the emergence of in-group and out-group biases and behaviors (Sherif and Sherif 1953), to see the false hope of social bonds alone.

Moreover, for Adorno, the idea of producing bonds artificially is abhorrent and liable to lead in exactly the wrong direction. Such bonds “amount to heteronomy, a dependence on rules, on norms that cannot be justified by the individual’s own reason” (Adorno 1998, 195). Any attempt to produce bonds replaces conscience with adherence to the dictates of authority

and its rules. “Yet the very willingness to connive with power and to submit outwardly to what is stronger, under the guise of a norm, is the attitude of the tormentors that should not arise again” (Adorno 1998, 195).

The only viable refuge is in the possibility of autonomy. “The single genuine power standing against the principle of Auschwitz is autonomy, if I might use the Kantian expression: the power of reflection, of self-determination, of not cooperating” (Adorno, 195).

Autonomy. Refusal. Here is the idea that was at the center of the thinking of the Bundeswehr reformers. It is also the notion that connects so many of the stories told to me by my informants and repeated in the chapters above. Refusal constitutes a limit that may in fact stand between a people and the commission of genocide, but it is a stunted standard of humanity. Never again Auschwitz is a watchword with which almost no one can disagree, yet in it there is also a potential crutch to the continuance of injustices that ought to be remedied. How? Because if refusal is the *key* virtue, it can overwhelm all others and make intragroup cooperation to remake the world impossible. The standard of “never again the worst thing that ever happened” is too low a goal, and the reflection, “at least we didn’t murder the Jews” ought to produce self-righteousness in no one.

Adorno’s one concrete suggestion is to work against the enactment of brutalizing rites of initiation into collectives, and the in-group consciousness that results therefrom.

One must fight against the type of folkways (*Volkssitten*), initiation rites of all shapes, that inflict physical pain—often unbearable pain—upon a person as the price that must be paid in order to consider oneself a member, one of the collective (Adorno 1998, 197).

And with this he almost comes to the point of addressing the production of gendered human beings. This becomes even clearer when he writes that such initiation rites are bound up with an educational philosophy designed, above all, to produce hardness.

“I remember how the dreadful Boger,”² writes Adorno, “had an outburst that culminated in a panegyric to education instilling discipline through hardness” (Adorno 1998, 197). The relationship to my long line of argument about the relationship of the war system and favored qualities of masculinity is fairly clear. Adorno continues:

He [Boger] thought hardness necessary to produce what he considered to be the correct type of person. This educational ideal of hardness, in which many may believe without reflecting about it, is utterly wrong. The idea that virility consists in the maximum degree of endurance long ago became a screen-image for masochism that, as psychology has demonstrated, aligns itself all too easily with sadism. Being hard, the vaunted quality education should inculcate, means absolute indifference toward pain as such. In this the distinction between one’s own pain and that of another is not so stringently maintained. Whoever is hard with himself earns the right to be hard with other as well as avenges himself for the pain whose manifestations he was not allowed to show and had to repress (Adorno 1998, 197–98).

Here, I think, is the kernel of the answer to the Auschwitz riddle. The question is not really education after Auschwitz, but masculinity. Masculinity, in turn, is ineluctably tied to intergroup conflict, to war and the war system. A significant change in the former requires change in the latter. In some ways this is not quite as hopeless a proposition as it might seem and the case of

² William Boger, one of the defendants at the Auschwitz trial (1963–65), known for his invention of a torture device that bore his name, the “Boger Swing.” He was sentenced to life plus 5 years of hard labor.

Sgt. Pogany, discussed above, is not all bad. Yes, Pogany is being brought up on charges of cowardice by the American army—which has been far more relentlessly traditional in its ideal of manhood than the German or many other European militaries. Yet it occurred to Pogany, himself a professional soldier, to interpret his reaction to death along different lines than the military. What is more, the most important newspaper in the country presented his case sympathetically. Hardness as an absolute value, even in the context of the military, is diminishing.

It is not only in Germany that refusal has become increasingly common, increasingly valorized. Rules for conscientious objection have been relaxed in many western European armies and the number of objectors has tended to rise steadily, if not quite to the levels found in Germany. In some lights these are small changes. The horrors of war and even genocide can even, in theory, be inflicted even by a small professional military of volunteers. Yet to the extent that interstate violence can be minimized, social space opens for the assertion of alternative modes of masculinity. This is evident in post-Vietnam America. True, the United States continues to pursue a violence-saturated foreign policy, but since the abolition of the draft, the pressure to socialize boys to military hardness has diminished. The women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s and the movement for gay and lesbian liberation in the 1980s were at least partially a result of this opening—and at the same time an articulation of alternatives. The logical counterpoint to the proposition that women don't have to be soft and dependent, is that men don't have to be hard and cold. Homoerotic possibilities undermine the inherent association between gendered stereotypes and sexual preference.

Even inside the military, even as long ago as my own basic training in

1982, consciousness of alternative modes of masculinity were in evidence—however derided. I remember the lecture of the senior drill instructor on my first day at my training company at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma.

“Tomorrow,” he said, as we stood sweating in the ninety-degree heat, “we’re going to have PT [physical training]. We’re going to see which one’s of you played football and which ones of you hung around your mama’s feet. We’re going to see which of you is hard.”

I was hard. My first PT score was 299 out of a possible 300. I had played football, lifted weights, and dreamed heroic dreams even while doubting their viability. I thought of myself as a liberal, in later years as a radical, a feminist, a progressive, yet the ideal of hardness has never left me, to my own diminishment.

The dispositions and habits of soldierly manhood, once instilled, are stubbornly persistent. And this is my final word in response to Adorno and to manhood after Auschwitz: the moment of refusal is not the moment when the institution sets you up with the role of executioner; the moment is much earlier, in the rejection of hardness itself. To the extent that our lives are controlled by the potential of war, the fear of war, war is our reality. And in war the rule of survival is the deferral of internal consequences.

Hardness means the rejection of feeling. Atrocities can also be committed in rage, but the ability to refuse to hurt some other is ultimately grounded in the immediate perception that to do so is *hurtful* to the self. With hardness, with soldierly masculinity fully in place, this is not possible. The war system seems unlikely to go away anytime soon and there are real threats in the world, but in our collective responses to these threats it would seem a step in the right direction to understand just how intertwined masculinity and war

really are—and to find ways to mitigate the extremes of manhood indoctrination as Adorno suggests. A little softening will not result in a collapse into passivity and victimhood. The challenge may be to find a viable middle ground for gendered existence.

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