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INTRODUCTION: Assessing Anthropological Perspectives on Sexual Violence and Bodily Health

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Guest Co-Editors

In the wake of the Association for Feminist Anthropology's business meeting at the 2005 AAA meetings in Washington, D.C., we proposed a double panel for the next conference entitled "Anthropological Perspectives on Sexual Violence and Bodily Health." Our idea fit well with the newly announced theme of the 2006 meetings, "Critical Intersections/Dangerous Issues." Although neither of us knew each other prior to the AFA business meeting, we independently offered topics based on respective research interests we thought appropriate for the theme: Judi on rape in South Africa and Lea on child sexual abuse in the US. Hearing our suggestions, Louise Lamphere (next to whom Lea was sitting) said, "You two ought to talk to each other." We introduced ourselves at the subsequent reception, exchanged information and ideas, and continued to be in contact. Our resultant call for papers and AFA-sponsored panel were born of ongoing conversations, and our efforts to see some of those papers in print have persisted through relocation, degree completion, new but temporary teaching situations, and trying times in the job market.¹

The original panel, comprised of ten papers with three discussants, had three sections and ranged over Africa, Asia, Europe, South America, and the U.S. Due to illness, job promotion and tenure considerations, prior commitments, issue length and other publication considerations, however, not all papers are included here. Still, we want to acknowledge all who answered our call and contributed to the panel, and remain grateful for their willingness to tackle a difficult subject. We also wish to thank discussants and feminist trailblazers Madelaine Adelman, Louise Lamphere, and Peggy Sanday, whose comments, albeit somewhat altered from their

original context, are included here with respect both to individual papers (now articles) and our larger concerns (Sanday has now graciously provided an Afterword). The continued support from AFA presidents Florence Babb, Cheryl Rodriguez, and Dorothy Hodgson, as well as VOICES editors Sue Hyatt and Amy Harper, has been invaluable. In addition, we wish to thank Mary Weismantel, Gayatri Reddy, Karen Tranberg Hansen, Barbara K. Chesney, Linda Layne, and Karen Charley for their encouragement throughout our writing. We were each fortunate to receive a Zora Neale Hurston Travel Award to attend the 2006 meetings in San Jose, and want to express publicly our deep thanks to the AFA board, officers, and members for their support.

When we proposed the panel, our primary intent was to highlight and acknowledge the persistence but invisibility of sexual violence rather than to make specific claims: we wanted to raise awareness not merely of the presence of sexual violence cross-culturally, but of its prevalence worldwide. We hoped that greater visibility might bring further research as well as policy implications, believing that ethnographic research exposing the problem of sexual violence would help to ameliorate its prevalence in contemporary everyday life. This modest goal retains its original urgency even as this critical issue gains some visibility. Writing in the summer of 2009, news reports from the Congo exposed the continuing high incidence of the rape of men, women, and children in global conflicts. Still, sexual violence remains invisible relative to multiple other forms of violence in our contemporary world, while the World Health Organization (WHO) labels it "the most pervasive yet under recognized human rights violation in the world" (2002:1).

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FROM THE EDITOR...

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I would like to recognize the efforts of the Guest Co-Editors of this issue. Lea McChesney and Judi Singleton began working on this issue under the guidance of Sue Hyatt, the previous editor of *VOICES*. They continued working with contributors and finalizing their own contributions while also dealing with life changes from finishing doctoral work to institutional transitions. They have gathered a collection of papers and commentary on a topic that, as Peggy Sanday notes in her "Afterword", has not received much critical attention in anthropological literature. Hopefully this issue may spur further discussion and analysis of sexual violence as it impacts our own lives and the lives of our interlocutors.

AFA and this journal are committed to providing feminist anthropologists with the space for established and emerging scholars and activists to bring forward new ideas in feminist analysis, to explore articulations within and between the various anthropological fields, sub-fields, and interest groups. Both the Guest Co-Editors of this issue were supported in their work by AFA projects (specifically the Zora Neale Huston Travel Award). I would like to invite others to contribute to the ongoing work of feminist anthropology by joining the AFA and the AFA listserv, and by disseminating the various opportunities AFA provides to support emerging feminist research. You will find a summary of AFA projects throughout this issue of *VOICES*. I would also like to invite you all to attend the AFA business meeting in New Orleans to contribute ideas and concerns and to continue conversations. The business meeting will be held on Thursday, November 18 from 7:30-9PM in the Grand Ballroom B, Fifth Floor, Sheraton.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT...

The Power of Feminist Anthropology

*Dorothy L. Hodgson, Rutgers University
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Almost every day I am reminded of the power of feminist anthropology to complicate and challenge the easy answers and policy pronouncements of politicians, policy-makers and pundits. Seeing public policy and politics through a feminist lens makes us attentive to how assumptions about gender, race, sexuality, class, power and more shape the formulation and implementation of policy – often to the detriment of poor women of color and other groups who are marginal to the recognized pillars of power. Combine these insights with the teachings of anthropology – about the role of cultural practices and beliefs in shaping human interactions; alternative ideas of marriage, family, personhood, progress, morality and justice; the historical production and discursive power of race and racism; and so forth – and the flimsy foundations underlying some of the loudest voices and polemical outbursts become all too self-evident. This is the case whether the issue is the treatment of undocumented migrants in Arizona, disparities in the assistance provided to women of color in post-Katrina New Orleans, fierce fights in California and other states over the meaning of marriage, or – the theme of this issue of VOICES – the role of the state in promoting (or undermining) bodily health and sexual assault.

Members of the Association for Feminist Anthropology have a long history of critical engagement with these and other issues as scholars, activists, advocates and policy-makers. Many of the AFA-sponsored panels at the AAA meetings this year include both activists and scholars and address topics of contemporary concern, including struggles for reproductive justice, indigenous rights, and public housing. The recent publications by AFA members listed on our website, discussions on the AFA listserv, columns in the AA newsletter, op-ed pieces and commentaries by AFA members all speak to the power of our vibrant community of feminist scholars to engage and inform contemporary social struggles and policy debates. I invite you to join us in these different sites, or at the AFA business meeting, reception, or panels in New Orleans to share your ideas and perspectives on the present and future of feminist anthropology.

Dorothy L. Hodgson is Professor and Chair of Anthropology at Rutgers University – New Brunswick. Her forthcoming books include Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous: Postcolonial Politics in a Neoliberal World (Indiana) and Gender and Culture at the Limit of Rights (Pennsylvania).

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FROM OUR PRESIDENT ELECT...

*Jane Henrici, Institute for Women's Policy Research
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Each year, the Sylvia Forman Essay Competition is held by the Association for Feminist Anthropology (AFA) to stimulate those studying anthropology to take a feminist anthropological approach whether in coursework or a career. The papers submitted should be feminist anthropological in topic, methodology, and analysis and be from any subfield or mixture of them. Given the feminist emphasis, the approach that AFA encourages should incorporate a critically politicized aspect, which might or might not include policy and applied elements. Finally, the competition also seeks to reward those students who have undertaken this approach and written particularly well about it.

As seems typically to be the case, the papers in 2010 reviewed by this year's AFA Committee (consisting of Srimati Basu, Nia Parson, and I) were primarily sociocultural in focus. However, fortunately the papers also had representations from a range of subfields, as well as themes, methodologies, and feminisms. Nevertheless, among this variety, across the undergraduate and graduate papers, certain trends seemed to emerge.

A third of the papers dealt either with issues of sexuality and sexual orientation or with sex workers; one of these papers analyzed sexuality among sex workers. A slightly smaller set of papers examined aspects of religion and gender, one of these with a focus on sexuality and religion. Different communities and sexual reproduction, parenting, and gender roles were the topics of other papers; again, an overlap showed up among categories, in that one paper studied gender roles and religion. Half of the papers that reviewed gender roles explored family relations among extended kin within the US. Several authors used discursive analysis: within religious contexts, with respect to individual identity change, with concern for human rights, and one as part of a feminist reexamination of the television show, "Mad Men" that has been reviewed by multiple journalists as feminist. Roughly half of the submissions took into account public policies, legislation, or applied research.

Going forward, AFA members are eager to continue to enjoy the pleasure of reading and rewarding well-written essays. In particular, we want to encourage those like so many this year that challenge, and possibly bridge, categories and subfields.

Jane Henrici is Study Director for the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

Sylvia Forman Prize

AFA is pleased to invite graduate and undergraduate students to submit essays in feminist anthropology in competition for the Sylvia Forman Prize, named for the late Sylvia Helen Forman, one of the founders of AFA, whose dedication to both her students and feminist principles contributed to the growth of feminist anthropology. The winners, one graduate student and one undergraduate student, will receive a certificate; a cash award (\$1,000 graduate and \$500 undergraduate); and have their essay summaries published in the Anthropology Newsletter.

We encourage essays in all four subfields of anthropology. Essays may be based on research on a wide variety of topics including (but not limited to) feminist analysis of women's work, reproduction, sexuality, religion, language and expressive culture, family and kin relations, economic development, gender and material culture, gender and biology, women and development, globalization, and the intersectionality of gender, race, and class. Please Check the AFA web page for details of the 2011 competition:

<http://www.aaanet.org/sections/afa/forman.html>

The 2010 undergraduate and graduate award winners will be announced at the AFA business meeting in New Orleans.

INTRODUCTION *(continued from page 1)*

As our title suggests, in our continued discussions about the panel's purpose we needed to address what the discipline of anthropology contributes to studying and understanding sexual violence from a global perspective. That question, reinforced to us in discussants' comments and the Afterword, is one we are still addressing. We offer some tentative answers here, while acknowledging that much work remains to be done. At the outset, however, we note the contribution of our discipline's comparative perspective. A topic difficult to define as some of our contributors note, sexual violence is a subject that has not historically received sustained scrutiny in anthropological scholarship, especially in societies or contexts other than those known to be conflict-ridden.² Undoubtedly, it is an issue that is difficult and even dangerous to examine ethnographically. But if we are to learn more about its forms, causes, and manifestations, as researchers we believe we must gain closer proximity to this problem in order to reveal the complex experiences of those who are its victims (and, in McChesney's terms, prisoners) as well as its perpetrators. Bringing the topic to the fore is a first step in this direction.

In addition to our interest in highlighting the issue, our purpose in initiating the panel and this collection of conference papers was to encourage other scholars to expand on this work. As it turns out, we were unaware that a special session of the 2006 AAA meetings had been organized to herald the publication of Veena Das's (2007) *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*, in which she advocates the ethnographic inquiry of violence in the ordinary and everyday. Although Das does not address sexual violence per se, her emphasis on the ethnographic, experiential, and mundane aspects of violence as it relates to politics and the state resonates with the contributions to our panel and the papers included here. Quite independent of our efforts, at the 2007 AAA annual meetings Srimati Basu organized and chaired an invited session, sponsored by the Association for Political and Legal Anthropology as well as the AFA, entitled "Beyond the Dominance of Rape: Epistemologies of Sexual Violence." Clearly, there is a developing confluence of interests, with a number of us approaching a previously neglected topic independently and from different perspectives.³

Unlike Basu's, our panel did not directly address theorizing the topic; we were instead seeking ethnographic examples of the ways sexual violence is expressed and experienced. Noting scarce qualitative research on sexual violence other than therapeutic (i.e., medical, psychological) or service (i.e., legal, criminological, and social work) responses, in our CFP we sought to interject an anthropological perspective into the public discourse. Examining the attention to violence within our discipline, we noted that at the 2005 AAA meetings sixteen papers addressed the topic of violence, with only two

of these addressing intimate violence. The papers we received in response explored the dimensions of sexual violence on women and children (boys and girls) in Africa, Bosnia, India, Iran, Peru and the U.S., examining the effects of war and ethnic conflict; economic and other forms of exploitation; how such violence is experienced, sanctioned, and contested; and the impact of sexual violence and trauma on children for adult lives. By coincidence and not editorial concern on our part, the articles we offer here self-selected to two that address the rape of women in post-conflict Africa (Rwanda and South Africa) and two others on girls' experience of child sexual abuse (CSA) in the U.S. In the end, these cases highlight the political dimensions of sexual violence, especially its relationship to the state. Thus, sexual violence bears closer scrutiny in light of Das's and others' recent work, which we outline here.

Speech and Silence: Sexual Violence, Power, and the (Contested) Discourse of State

Judi Singleton's and Maggie Zraly's articles examine the continued incidence of sexual violence fifteen years in the aftermath of two post-conflict African societies, a point argued elsewhere as a common feature of post-conflict societies. Their papers focus on everyday life and the influence of discourse and language on legal structures in South Africa and in Rwanda. Both authors explore themes of race, class, gender and ethnicity while also examining women's speech and silence surrounding sexual coercion. While women's testimony about the experience of sexual violence is encouraged in the public, state, and global arenas of human rights, their need to maintain silence in their communities to defend and preserve their local identities is testament to a vulnerable and subordinate status there. This paradox is at the heart of the thorny nexus of sexual violence, women's status, and competing, often conflicting, structures of power.

Singleton and Zraly examine discourses promoted by many post-conflict states, focusing on institutions constructed by South Africa and Rwanda. Structures such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda utilize the human rights framework of "truth" telling and forgiveness about crimes against humanity committed during conflict. These human rights discourses encourage women to come forward and speak about their experiences publicly. At the same time and as a result of their public rape experience narratives, these women are stigmatized, shunned and become fearful for their lives in their local communities.

In the South African context, Singleton examines narratives of how poor Zulu township women and men define rape in light of local sanctions on sexual access through

lineage relations and payments as these are juxtaposed with legal definitions of coercion and consent by the post-apartheid South African state. Her paper focuses on the notion of “acquaintance rape,” a concept formally acknowledged in South Africa’s recent democracy but difficult to implement as national policy given local beliefs about men’s sexual access to women as embedded in historically configured, gendered power relations. With respect to the context of rape during war, Zraly also examines the notion of “acknowledgement” through narrative discourses articulated in Rwanda’s *gacaca* courts, legal spaces specifically structured for survivors of genocidal crimes, including rape, to give public testimonies about their experiences during the 1994 genocide. After making their personal accounts of rape public, Zraly discusses how women necessarily strategize to preserve their local social identities through their silence, again in light of historically constituted and gendered structures of power. Thus, while women’s narratives are encouraged at the global and national levels, Singleton and Zraly each illustrate how support for silence surrounding women’s rape experiences is, paradoxically, preferred in the local context.

Singleton and Zraly argue that there are multiple and complex discourses around sexual violence influenced by both the global and the local spheres. They demonstrate that many people who are daily implicated in the local discourses may have little contact with official discourse. In contexts of competing discourses, as Foucault (1980) observed, there is tension between knowledge that comes from the state and the law and local knowledge, an observation explored insightfully by Turshen (2001) and Reddy (2005) that is used to great benefit here. Through an analysis of courtship and language, Singleton demonstrates the fine line between sexual coercion and consent, while Zraly focuses on the narratives of women who experienced sexual coercion during the Rwandan genocide, arguing that the post-genocide self-silencing of rape survivors following their public testimony is a survival strategy within the current crisis of everyday violence. In examining contextually-derived distinctions between specific identities and specific acts, both authors consider what distinguishes an act as sexual or violent. These differences become significant when defining notions of sexual coercion and consent.

In recent work, Sally Engle Merry (2009) reminds us that while gender violence is global it takes different forms in different social contexts. She emphasizes that in formulating laws it is important that universalized meanings not dominate: such violence should be historicized and contextualized for each situation. Writing specifically about gender violence and human rights law and its link to The Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Merry (2006) notes some of the problems that result from applying universal principles to all local situations. Gaps between global and local visions of justice due to differing historical,

political, economic and social circumstances create a fundamental dilemma for human rights practice. Negotiating to close this dichotomy between local and global perspectives is a key challenge in promoting human rights, yet it is critical to addressing the prevalence and persistence of sexual violence against women in post-conflict states.

Child Sexual Abuse: Discourse, Dominance, Vulnerable and Viable Social Selves

What constitutes child sexual abuse? Can there be a universally applicable cross-cultural definition? The conflict between local and global, contextually specific and universalizing discourses identified by Singleton and Zraly for the African cases arises again in considering domestic U.S. cases of child sexual abuse (CSA) examined by Haney and McChesney. Each notes the difficulty of defining child sexual abuse comparatively given the variety of experiences encompassed by legal (state) definitions, as well as the vulnerability and immaturity of the social person on whom this violence is inflicted. Yet it is because of an inability to consent and minor or subordinate status that sexual activity imposed by anyone of advanced years is coerced and thus violent. Now adults, the women in both articles were unable to articulate their experiences as children; some to this day question the validity of their memories. Silence in these cases has been held for decades, perhaps as a strategy not unlike that discussed by Singleton and Zraly for adult women survivors of rape. Still, for these American women the experience of earlier abuse is revealed through behaviors that are manifested later in life, a bodily mode of articulation apart from speech. Each author attempts to resolve the thorny question of definition by different means: Haney through analysis of interviews of twelve women survivors of CSA and McChesney through auto-ethnography, using the comparative lens of her fieldwork that provided access to an alternative awareness, enabling her to comprehend the physical and emotional aftermath of CSA she experienced as an adult.

Examining the personal narratives of Texas lower and middle class women survivors of CSA, Haney finds not an all-encompassing categorical distinction but rather a “discursive similarity” of narratives around disparate, “locally-constituted,” sexualized and violent acts among her female subjects. These similarities reverberate around a national discourse about the female body as dangerous and deviant. That larger discourse, she notes, becomes literally inscribed on women’s bodies as they mature, with their efforts to control an otherwise uncontrollable experience of childhood realized through a strict disciplining of their bodies expressed in habits of eating, dress, and sexual conduct as adults. This means of self-preservation, one that eluded them in childhood, is simultaneously an embodiment of the discourse of danger and deviance. While she does not specifically address the political dimensions of CSA, Haney nevertheless notes that a child’s

body used sexually by adults becomes a more docile social body to others, with victims uniformly sensing that they originated their abuse. CSA victims thus internalize larger political realities and symbolic violence while reproducing structures of inequality like masculine domination. Haney's larger concern is with the "production and performance of femininity" in the U.S., but her use of Foucault and Bourgois raises the larger question of structures of power, revealing the insidious ways in which dominance and inequality become internal and thus a naturalized response to an everyday experience of violence in the maturation of gendered social persons.

Using reflexive ethnography, McChesney explores the traumatic experience of CSA and its resultant physical breakdown and emotional breakthrough as a mature adult through a comparative analogy with Hopi pottery as a cultural metaphor of bodily health. This analogy illuminates what she terms "formative trauma" in the cultural construction and maturation of social persons. She attends to the political dimensions of CSA as inequities of power, expressed sexually, that erode the ability to form healthy interpersonal relationships by violating the developing social body. Based on her intimate knowledge, McChesney finds that the experience impacts how one learns to be social and sociable, fundamentally affecting what one's expectations for social relationships can be.

In her ethnographic attention to Hopi women's efforts to create ungendered social beings (pots) and their concern with interior dimensions, McChesney becomes oriented to the emotional moorings necessary to withstand traumatic experience. Her "object lesson" in the cultural construction of a healthy social body offered a means to objectify her long neglected trauma, as well as an embodied language to articulate its aftermath. She contrasts Hopi "cracked pots" that nevertheless have useful social lives to the loss of social productivity as a stigmatized "crack-pot" in American society. McChesney found that her ethnographic fieldwork provided an alternative cultural awareness that gave her the means of confronting and comprehending her experience of CSA. Providing a tangible means of articulation after long years of silence, this alternative cultural awareness also provided a means to re-embodiment a restored and integral social existence. Recognizing the inherent asymmetry of power in these coercive relationships and given the restorative nature of her work, she advocates the terminology of "prisoner" over "victim," noting that those who experience CSA can, in time, be released from their imprisoned state.

While Vas and others (e.g., Brison 1997) note the need to reestablish sociality after violence and the critical role of voice in that process, these cases of CSA show how certain forms of sociality as bodily health are precluded as the child matures into an adult. While some of Haney's narrators questioned their childhood experiences, they did not re-imagine

their past (Robinson 2009:116), since for some it remained all too vivid while for others it remained all but inaccessible. These examples confirm Das's observation of the need to "reinhabit" daily life for those who experience everyday violence, although the interiorized beliefs and naturalized behaviors of self-preservation established in childhood, embodying defensive states of being, reveal how difficult altering such an orientation to life can be in adulthood. Comparative perspectives, however, show the promise of ethnographic experience in expanding our knowledge while offering a tangible conception for reforming shattered selves.

Silence and Invisibility: Comparative Themes in the Study of Sexual Violence

The problematic definition of sexual violence, whether concerning adults or children, is reinforced by discussant Madelaine Adelman's comments on the African cases that highlight the ambiguity between sex and violence and the ways in which the state can fail to protect vulnerable populations.⁴ Furthermore, she notes the possibility of public testimony in exposing atrocities nevertheless to endanger those already made vulnerable by their experience, and recommends that the particular kinds of narratives represented in the contributions need to be further analyzed. She brings to our attention the problematic relationship between political economy and sexual violence, as well as the role of NGOs as a third party in addressing this issue. Finally, she worries about the way women as victims can become perpetrators or agents with roles in established structures of power rather than becoming empowered to change these. What, then, is the future of sexual violence and the everyday when its "victims" or "prisoners" themselves become agents in the socialization of others within its terms?

Discussant Louise Lamphere notes the critical role of discourse in both contributions on CSA, identifying it as a common theme in analyzing sexual violence whether or not it is specifically addressed. She also brings to the fore the question of women's agency and the cultural construction of women's bodies, as well as the problematic of arriving at a definition of CSA. Her comments highlight the omnipresence of danger in these women's lives and the emotion-laden content of their narratives, themes that also arose in the African context. Invisibility itself becomes problematic, not in this instance to the larger world (which was the editors' original concern and has been a point uniformly addressed by our commentators), but on the micro-level in the relationship between the perpetrator/predator and victim/prisoner. Can the menace of violence be seen, or does it loom so large (i.e., become so taken for granted), that it becomes invisible? Here, too, there are parallels with South Africa: is forced sex not violent if sanctioned by lineage relations and payments, an entitlement of men's access to women's bodies? Significantly, Lamphere notes the positive dimension of women's agency in control-

ling their bodies, despite the extremes to which they go, as a means of subverting the male dominance they previously endured. Still, both Haney and McChesney ask us to consider the degree to which adult CSA survivors' participation in the larger social world is compromised as a result of their childhood experiences.

Subversion is echoed in McChesney's account of rejecting a dominant discourse about women's bodies as deviant – or their minds after the experience of sexual violence as “cracked.” She maintains that “prisoners” of CSA can be released and that reclaimed lives refute either social dispossession or the disposability many sufferers encounter through lives lost to social, physical, and mental (or emotional) dis-ease. Lamphere brings McChesney's concerns with vulnerability and viability to the fore, reinforcing a theme not only of the fragility of social life but also of the need for renewed social relations to restore to health any individual life shattered by sexual violence. On some level, these micro narratives relate to the macro discourses of state and the as yet imperfect effort to restore national health and wellbeing through reclamation projects such as those illustrated by Rwanda and South Africa. In future work, we need to clarify and strengthen just what is entailed in this relationship. In her Afterword, Peggy Sanday provides some important signposts for direction, focusing on her own concerns as well as consistent themes and topics that emerge from all the contributions.

Wither an Anthropology of Sexual Violence and Bodily Health?

The contributions in this volume are notable, perhaps, as much for what they lack as for the rich ethnographic details they provide. First of all, we have no data or perspectives on males as either victims or perpetrators, or on women as other than victims. Yet we know that “perpetrator” and “victim” are neither essential nor gendered categories, and that if we leave with these alone we risk reproducing existing structures of power: men as dominant abusers of sex and power and women and children as their “docile,” broken, or otherwise deviant, subordinate victims. In order to arrive at any kind of nuanced understanding of the parameters and experience of sexual violence, we need to consider all its dimensions, making both the implicit explicit, as well as the invisible and intransigent subject to scrutiny. Despite the logistical difficulties of ethnographic proximity – itself a critical intersection – and the ambiguities of what is sexual and what is violent about this dangerous issue, we need to continue our inquiry. Fortunately, we now have this opening of an ethnographic pathway, positioned by Peggy Sanday's thoughtful Afterword, to move us forward alongside the further analytical work of our colleagues.

While this special issue contributes more towards providing ethnographic detail, our contributors point us to new

ways to think and rethink, and thus how to theorize, sexual violence and the bodily health of complex collectivities and individuals. We hope this work can be situated alongside what comes of our colleague Srimati Basu's subsequent work. Some of these articles provide important insight, to be further developed, in thinking about who gets to define the terms of the discourse, as well as a consideration of what the experience of sexual violence, articulated by those who endure – as well as perpetuate – it, can contribute to how we understand its nature, and how we might mitigate its incidence worldwide. Sanday frames these considerations in light of larger issues, highlighting new and different perspectives that arise from these cases in light of her sustained research on sexual violence in the U.S. These cases cause us to consider to what degree and how sexual violence is different from, similar, or related to other forms of everyday or routinized violence (ie. domestic violence, intimate violence, gender violence). As Sanday advocates, we need to continue our efforts to write and work “against sexual asymmetry and its frequent cultural correlate, sexual violence,” advancing the ideas of sexual warrants and sexual culture as theoretical tools to shape a larger anthropological project. A focus on the experiential and everyday represents a feminist perspective, while anthropology provides the comparative, comprehensive view of historical, political, economic, and cultural dimensions of behaviors and social life. With our foremothers and colleagues as guides and in acknowledging Sanday's recommendations, we hope that as feminist anthropologists we are fielding new territory for exploration that, in moving toward sexual symmetry, will include the experiences of all — women, children, and men alike — who are dominated by these forms of domination.

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¹ Judi's paper became a significant chapter of her recently defended dissertation at Northwestern University (Singleton 2008), while Lea's paper resulted in a closer exploration of Hopi pottery aesthetics and women's agency in the construction of a healthy sociality (McChesney 2007). Maggie Zraly advanced her work as a 2009 SAR Summer Fellow (*Anthropology News* 50(6):38), while Charlotte Haney's research continues to address the role of violence in the construction of social actors with fieldwork on the femicides in Juarez and Chihuahua. The papers published here were originally intended as "works in progress," although Singleton's and Zraly's in particular represent considerable reworking following their conference presentations.

² Notable exceptions include Adelman (2004), Sanday (1990), Winkler (2002) and the insightful discussion by Martin (2003) on the significance of cultural context in describing and comprehending rape. Sanday (2003) also highlights the importance of culture in making the useful distinction between rape-free and rape-prone societies.

³ See also the recent contribution of colleagues in the related fields of political science and sociology, Renée Heberle and Victoria Grace (2009), to theorizing the subject. Five years prior to Das's work in anthropology on everyday violence, colleagues in sociology addressed the subject of "ordinary violence" and "everyday assaults against women" (Stewart 2002).

⁴ Although she does not narrate her experience of CSA in her paper, McChesney observes in a footnote that her first violation was by her pediatrician, the very authority charged today with reporting official CSA cases. She also notes, not surprisingly, that the preponderance of CSA cases in the US go unreported.

Multiple Meanings of Rape and the Law in Post-Apartheid South Africa

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Prologue: Mise-en-scène

On the morning of February 13, 2006, Jacob Zuma, the former deputy president of South Africa who is now the current president, pleaded “not guilty” to the charge of rape in the Johannesburg High Court. In a written statement to the High Court, Zuma outlined his version of the events that occurred that evening. He asserted that the female complainant, “Khwezi,”ⁱ visited his home that evening of November 2, 2005 of her own volition, and the two of them engaged in consensual sexual intercourse for a prolonged period of time. Since Khwezi owned a cell phone, Mr. Zuma stated that he believed she was capable of leaving the premises at any time (*Mail and Guardian*: February 13, 2006, *BBC News Online*: March 6, 2006).

Outside the courtroom, thousands of women and men demonstrated their support for Jacob Zuma and Khwezi. Approximately two thousand female supporters from the organization Friends of Jacob Zuma sang songs from the days of the anti-apartheid struggle, including Zuma’s favorite, “Lethu Mshini Wami,” which in English translates as “Give Me My Machine Gun” (IRIN: February 13, 2006). At the time, some supporters claimed that the charges against Mr. Zuma represented a conspiracy campaign launched by the African National Congress (ANC) to ruin the former deputy president’s 2009 bid to become South Africa’s next elected presidentⁱⁱ (Timberg: February 14, 2006; *BBC News Global*: February 14, 2006). Others carried signs demonizing and vilifying the female accuser. On the initial day of the trial, one woman held a sign that read: “How much did they pay you, *nondindwa* (a term for “bitch”)?” (*Mail and Guardian*: March 6, 2006, March 21, 2006). On the day of Khwezi’s testimony, a group of female supporters for Zuma burned pictures of the accuser outside the courthouse while shouting, “Burn the bitch” (*Mail and Guardian*: March 7, 2006, March 21, 2006). Representatives from women’s organizations supported Khwezi outside the courthouse. They, too, sang songs urging the former deputy president to abide by the law. Some women held posters proclaiming, “Silence does not equal consent” and “Rape is always a crime” (IRIN: February 13, 2006).

Meanwhile, inside the courtroom the young woman told her story, recalling the events of that November evening. On the witness stand, Khwezi, a thirty-one year old HIV-positive woman and AIDS activist, testified that Zuma raped her while she attempted to sleep in the guest room in his home

in a Johannesburg suburb. Speaking in English, Khwezi explained to the court that she never verbally or physically resisted his sexual advances because of shock and disbelief at the occurrence of the incident. The young woman stated: “I couldn’t walk, I couldn’t move, I couldn’t do anything, I was shit scared” (*The New York Times*: March 8, 2006). She also claimed that Zuma did not wear a condom while they engaged in sexual intercourse (*Mail and Guardian*: March 6, 2006, March 8, 2006).

Jacob Zuma, who was sixty-four years old at the time of the trial, spoke in Zulu during his entire testimony. His statements included assertions of Khwezi’s desire for sex, his willingness to satisfy her sexual yearning and payment of *lobolo*ⁱⁱⁱ, the Zulu term for bridewealth. Zuma claimed that on November 2, 2005, Khwezi wore a knee-length skirt to his home. He believed that since she never visited him at home, dressed in a skirt to her knee, signaled her desire to have sex with him. He also explained that Khwezi sat with her legs crossed, revealing her thighs (*City Press*: April 9, 2006; *The New York Times*: April 10, 2006). Because of the length of her skirt and the manner in which she sat, he believed his accuser was aroused and that he had an obligation to engage in sexual intercourse with her. In Zulu culture, the most sexualized parts of a woman’s body are the thighs. On the witness stand Zuma asserted: “In Zulu culture, you cannot just leave a woman if she is ready” (*City Press*: April 9, 2006; *The New York Times*: April 10, 2006).

According to Zuma, Khwezi willingly entered his bedroom where sexual intercourse occurred. He also stated that he believed he had little risk of contracting HIV/AIDS from his accuser because he showered after engaging in sexual intercourse with her (*The New York Times*: April 9, 2006; *Mail and Guardian*: April 7-12, 2006). Zuma’s statement sent shock waves throughout the courtroom and the media. It also drew criticism from various organizations that focus on HIV/AIDS prevention. Many organizational leaders claimed that his reasoning represented the “height of irresponsibility,” while other spokesmen worried about the negative effects of Zuma’s comments on public campaigns and education for HIV/AIDS prevention (Strumpf: April 7-12, 2006, *Independent Online News*: May 9, 2006, *Safara*: April 9, 2006). Later, he publicly apologized for having unprotected sex with the HIV-positive woman (*Independent Online News*: May 9, 2006). Finally, in reference to bridewealth, Zuma testified that he would have been most happy “to pay *lobolo*” in the traditional form of cattle “if his accuser had suggested it” (*City Press*: April 9, 2006).

After listening to two months of testimony from various

witnesses, Judge Willem Van der Merwe acquitted Jacob Zuma of all rape charges in May 2006. While explaining his reasoning for the acquittal, the judge condemned him for his “totally unacceptable” behavior in engaging in unprotected sex with the thirty-one year old woman outside of marriage (*The New York Times*: May 9, 2006; *Chicago Tribune*: May 9, 2006). Judge Van der Merwe’s willingness to acquit Zuma reflects issues and questions addressed in this paper.

Introduction

This article focuses on one theme that represented an integral part of Jacob Zuma’s rape trial directly related to contemporary discourses and practices surrounding sexual violence in South Africa. I focus on language discourses about sexual coercion and consent in the law and in everyday life, examining the influence of language and sexual practices as they are discussed in the public sphere. Overall, I argue that the recently passed Sexual Offenses Act of 2007, which includes new definitions of rape and consent does not coincide with many women’s sexual experiences. The underlying questions of the trial that I address here concern the contested meanings of rape and how poor black South African township women and men define it. I use the term rape as a legal definition and as an illegal violation, showing that rape has many different meanings among South Africans. Distinctions in the meaning of the term are partially due to complicated issues surrounding race, class, gender, ethnicity and nation in South Africa. The structure of South African society that began with the arrival of European settlers to the end of colonialism, and the apartheid system, reinforced the divisions surrounding these issues. Since the transition to democracy in South Africa in 1994, these societal divisions continue to linger and plague the nation. The unresolved issues have contributed to South Africa’s problem of sexual violence.

This article also addresses how black South African women and men define consent. Jacob Zuma’s testimony demonstrated that there are cultural differences in definitions of rape and consent that differ from the new law of rape in South Africa. Zuma’s statements also exhibited contradictions and tensions between local practices and the law. While presenting a cultural argument on the stand as part of his testimony, I believe Jacob Zuma, was fully cognizant of its controversial nature. Judge Van der Merwe responded by acknowledging Zuma’s testimony, yet failed to question the former deputy president’s motives. The judge’s unwillingness to question Zuma’s testimony perhaps reflects his reluctance to address larger concerns involving complicated racial issues. Discussions on race in South Africa must include attentiveness to culture, class, and gender differences.

Sexual violence is common practice in the township of Mpophomeni in KwaZulu Natal where I conducted my field

research. My observations suggest that the new law on rape cannot adequately address the experiences of poor women unless long-held Zulu beliefs about the status of women in society and the issues concerning unemployment, poverty, and the economic disparity between women and men are addressed. Changing social, legal and economic dynamics are altering meanings of sexual coercion and consent that promote notions of universalism and globalism while at the same time subordinating local understandings of these concepts.

The Problem and Its Context

Since its democratic transition in 1994, South Africa has earned the tragic distinction of having the highest incidence of rape in the world according to national and international media reports and statistical data (Reproductive Freedom News 2001: 3). Recent statistical studies reveal increasing numbers of reported sexual violence by acts of rape (Orkin 2000; George 2001). Other organizations contend that police statistics fail to reveal the whole picture because of underreporting. Between 2004 and March 2005, more than fifty thousand cases of rape were reported to the police in this country about the size of the state of Texas with a population of approximately forty-five million. POWA (People Opposing Women Abuse), a nongovernmental organization based in Johannesburg, disclosed that a woman is raped every twenty-six seconds in South Africa, and only one out of nine women report the rape to legal authorities. More than 40 percent of those victims who reported it knew the perpetrators (New York Times: March 7, 2006).

Nonconsensual sex in marriage and dating relationships is believed to be common, but usually not well reported in surveys. Almost one-third of adolescent girls in South Africa, including those in schools and workplaces, reported coerced sexual initiation (Jewkes and Abrahams 2002). A 2005 South Africa survey of nearly two thousand respondents conducted by the Commission of Gender Equality sheds light on why women are so silent. Close to 50 percent of male participants believed that no man should beat a woman without “just cause.” Forty percent of female respondents believed that if a woman is raped after a few drinks, she has only herself to blame (Gouws 2005). In spite of these attitudes, only one significant government effort was launched to directly address the problem of rape in South Africa.

This article thus responds to a very special moment in South Africa’s legislative history. In 1996, the South African Law Commission decided that it was necessary to change the legal definition of rape and consent in South Africa to coincide with the democratic transition and the new constitution. Right after the adoption of South Africa’s new constitution in 1996, the South African Legal Commission appointed a committee to initiate a long process of

consultation around the country with experts in the criminal justice field and nongovernmental organizations working in the area of sexual offenses against women and children. The Draft Sexual Offenses Bill of 1999 was the result of the Sexual Offenses Project Committee. In August 2003, the South African Parliament began the process of lobbying and debating the revised Sexual Offenses Bill, which proposed new legal definitions of rape and consent. The proposed bill was particularly salient at this moment because South Africa is considered to have not only the highest incidence of rape in the world, but also an extraordinarily high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. In December 2007, Parliament passed the bill, now referred to as the Sexual Offenses Act.

I use the terms “sexual violence” or “sexual coercion” when speaking about some women’s violent sexual experiences. During the course of my field research I found that many poor black South African township women expressed different conceptions of sexual coercion than the ways in which it is defined in South African law. The Sexual Offenses Act defines rape but fails to provide an explicit definition of consent. South Africa’s new law defines rape as an act by any person (“A”) who unlawfully and intentionally commits an act of sexual penetration with a complainant (“B”) without consent of “B” (Criminal Law (Sexual Offenses and Related Matters) Amendment Act 2007: Chapter 2, No. 32).

Until the passing of the new Sexual Offenses Act, the legal definition of rape in South Africa had not undergone any substantial revisions since 1957. It defined rape as an act “committed by a man having intentional unlawful sexual intercourse with a woman without her consent” (South African Law Commission 1999: 69). The South African Law Commission, in its proposal released in 1999, viewed this definition as problematic for three reasons. First, the law was gender-specific. Second, for a woman to charge a man with the crime of rape, sexual intercourse had to occur with penetration of the vagina by the male penis. Finally, the Commission noted that there was a problem with the definition related to consent. While “consent” was not explicitly defined, “absence of consent” was described as physical resistance on the part of the female. I use three sources of evidence to explore language and multiple meanings of rape: women’s definitions of rape from conversations during ethnographic fieldwork in the township of Mpophomeni; narratives from a workshop on gender violence I attended at the township’s community center; and the intersection of these with the testimony from the rape trial of President Jacob Zuma.

The Township

Mpophomeni is an urban township situated thirty-seven kilometers west of Pietermaritzburg and approximately eighty kilometers or sixty-five miles west from the city of Durban in

the KwaZulu Natal province. According to the 2002 South African census, Mpophomeni has approximately thirty-five thousand residents (South African Census 2002). Built in 1969 next to the “white town” of Howick, Mpophomeni provided housing to the workers of British Tyre and Rubber/ Sarmcol (B.T.R. Sarmcol), and was the site of the longest running strike (1985-1994) in the history of South African capitalism (Bonnin 1987). By 1985, the township became a site of political violence between the African National Congress (ANC) and Inkatha. Today, Mpophomeni has all the visible signs of South Africa’s post-apartheid infrastructural transformations, including new housing, a computer center, and a well-established community center.

Young Women and Men’s Definitions of Rape and Consent

Young women and men in Mpophomeni expressed different definitions and conceptions of rape. Because of educational programs sponsored and disseminated by the government and nongovernment organizations, young women acknowledged the existence and reality of acquaintance rape. They communicated distinctions between “forced sex” and rape. The economic factor of *lobola* or customary bridewealth payments influences the differences between the two concepts. Dudu explained differences between “rape” and “forced sex” by saying: “Rape is demand. Forced sex is demand of sex from my husband. I would never say ‘My husband raped me,’ because my husband paid *lobola* for me. My boyfriend paid nothing for me, so that is rape.” Some women believed that once *lobola* is paid to the family of the woman, the man was entitled to unlimited sexual access to his wife. Jacob Zuma expressed this idea in his testimony. But other women interpreted distinctions between “rape” and “forced sex” in other ways. NoSipho defined rape as “having sex with my boyfriend when I do not love him anymore.”

Most young men I spoke to in Mpophomeni rejected the idea of acquaintance rape and did not acknowledge the idea that boyfriends and husbands rape their girlfriends and wives. Like women, young men believed that once *lobola* was paid, they were entitled to sex. Many young men defined rape as a premeditated act committed only by strangers in the streets. They also recognized that family members often raped children. Regarding sexual consent, many young men I spoke to believed that women did not have the right to say “no” to sex. They believed that men were entitled to sex with women, particularly if *lobola* payments were initiated. Once a woman and man are married, Zakhele, a twenty-five year old security guard argued, men should maintain power in the home. He believed a woman’s responsibility was to stay at home and produce a large family. This meant that neither consent nor non-consent applied to women. Sipho and Zakhele expressed frustration with the idea of women

consenting or not to sex. They believed husbands had the right to have sex with their wives without their permission.

Women in Mpophomeni explained some of the language and connotations used to signify consent in heterosexual relations such as the phrase “I love you.” The locutionary and illocutionary utterance “I love you” is one that marks the woman’s position as the responder while the utterance marks men as initiators (Austin 1975: 98-9). Enunciated as a declarative statement by men to women, “I love you,” also proposes a question: “Do you want to have sex with me?” I contend that the phrase is perlocutionary (speech that produces an effect, intended or not, in the person addressed by the speaker, in that it is trying to persuade women to have sex). Some men enunciate this performative declaration and receive responses from women that have racial and gender implications.

For example, Nomusa, a nineteen-year-old unemployed black woman who lived in Mpophomeni, described how she met the man who later became the father of her child. “The first time he saw me,” she recalled, “he said to me, ‘I love you, I love you.’” She responded by saying: “I do not love you.” “Why?” the young man asked. “Because you black man,” she told me as she laughed. “Please love me?” he asked. Nomusa’s telling the father of her child that she could not love him because he was a black man reflected the hidden scripts of race left over from the legacy of apartheid. Nomusa’s statement implied that she could not love a black man because of the negative implications and hatred of blackness. NoSipho also described how she met her last boyfriend, who died of AIDS. She believed she contracted the disease from him. “He asked me to show him the Falls in Howick. When we were going out, he told me he loved me and I said, “No, I will just see.”

But Zakhele told me that when a man is interested in courting a woman and says “I love you,” the longer she puts off his advances, the more it signals a woman’s self-respect, including respect for her body. He explained:

If a woman responds by saying “Yes” or “Yes, come tomorrow,” it signifies that she thinks she loves you and you (the man) are supposed to come tomorrow and get love. If she is saying this, she is probably saying it to other boys and she is acting like a prostitute.

Zakhele’s explanation provides a probable understanding of why Nomusa and Sipho said no the first time they were asked to have sex by men who later became their sexual partners. If a woman immediately says yes after a man says “I love you,” it signifies to many men that she is a “bitch.”^{iv} This illustrates the double standard that has continued in the local sex/gender system. Young men are expected to have many girlfriends, while it carries a stigma for women to “consume” many boyfriends. These kinds of values, expressed through language, have limited women’s sexual autonomy and their freedom in making decisions about their lives.

Women’s enunciation of “no”, such as NoSipho’s response, had the potential of prolonging a sexual encounter. For the man, it had the potential to produce his own subjectivity, to continue to try to “conquer” and transform the response of “no” to “yes.” NoSipho eventually said “yes” to her last boyfriend. She blames their intimate relationship in her contracting AIDS.

But other young men told me that women forced men to have sex with them. According to Thandanani, a twenty-five year old man, women forced men to have sex so they became pregnant and had children to gain access to social welfare grants that have been instituted by the democratic government. But instead of using the money for children once they received the grant, women would “buy cell phones and get credit.” Other men believed some women used rape as a threat or as blackmail to attain money from them. Thandanani told how after an argument, he and his now-former girlfriend “made up” by having sex. The next day, Thandanani said, the young woman told the police that he had raped her. “If the policeman is interested in the woman for himself,” Thandanani exclaimed, “he will defend her!”

More importantly, some young men strongly disagreed with South Africa’s new law on rape. They believed this law, constitutional advocacy for gender equality, and the protection of women had diminished the legal system’s ability to protect men. Simply, these young men believed the law protected women more than men. Because of women’s ability to coerce men into sex, Sipho said, men also needed the support of the law. Musa said the new government had allowed women to acquire power while it disempowered men. While Sipho personally believed “the government is on the side of women when it comes to the issue of rape,” publicly he expressed acceptance of the new ideology of government. Sipho was someone who volunteered to work for several nongovernmental organizations located in Mpophomeni. Because of his involvement, he enjoyed a certain amount of status with young people in the community and realized that publicly he must express some political correctness. He explained by saying, “You have to keep up with the changes of the new government. So, no, women and men are equal.”

Rape Discourses by State and Nonstate Actors

Violence against women, including rape and HIV/AIDS, are perceived as epidemics that threaten the lives of millions of South Africans (Peacock and Levack 2004: 174). Nongovernmental organizations conduct public workshops in Mpophomeni to educate young women and men about the meanings of rape and consent. These meetings also encourage open discussion about sexual behavior and relations between women and men. Line of Life, an NGO based in Pietermaritzburg that focuses on issues concerning rape and HIV/AIDS, recently established free rape

counseling services for women who live in Mpophomeni. Another NGO, Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA), focuses its workshops on educating men. The goal is to create safe places for women and men to come together to discuss their lives and fears as well as their hopes and dreams. NGOs encourage communication through speech rather than silence. One particular kind of speech ideology dominates – the language of Western-based human rights.

Through their use of language, facilitators in workshops sponsored by NGOs influence the meanings of rape and consent. Educating the masses through the spoken word is preferred because of South Africa's high illiteracy rate. Facilitators often use English, the language of power and the elite, in workshops on rape and gender violence in local communities. I believe that the use of English in this context signifies power and domination. Language continues to be a source of tension between traditional and modern practices in the new democratic South Africa. Tensions between those who espouse modern/Western definitions of rape and consent and those who subscribe to local, traditional perspectives became evident in workshops I attended and observed in Mpophomeni.

Motivated by these observations, I suggest that human rights discourse is a means of the postapartheid state to engage in democracy promotion. Educational workshops facilitated by NGOs about rape and HIV/AIDS in poor communities such as Mpophomeni are used to promote democracy while ignoring dismal economic and social conditions locally. Human rights discourse, particularly in discussions about rape, is one method by which the government promotes cultural universalism. Rape as a form of sexual violence is now discussed in educational workshops facilitated by NGOs within a human rights framework that ignores economic factors and local meanings of sexual coercion and consent.

Workshops in Mpophomeni

While attending a workshop on gender violence at Zenzeleni Community Center, I was struck by the leader's forceful presentation and the mixed reactions of the small group in attendance. Thembelishe, the workshop leader, was a university-educated black South African woman in her late twenties who worked for Line of Life. Dressed in a dark business suit, she spoke eloquently in Zulu and English to the group of four young women and nine young men about gender-based violence and South Africa's previous definition of rape. Thembelishe began her presentation by explaining the meaning of gender-based violence and emphasized that it encompasses child abuse, domestic violence, and rape. She spent a great amount of time on the meaning of consent. "According to South African law," Thembelishe said, "the most important element of rape is consent." She emphasized

that a woman has the right to say no to sexual intercourse. Thembelishe also noted that South Africa is trying to restore order in society through its laws.

Bongani, a twenty-five year old man, disagreed with Thembelishe and expressed conservative views about sexual relations based on the practice of lobola. During the workshop he stood up and in Zulu shouted angrily that women do not have the right to say no to sex, because they were paid for either through *lobola* or because they are prostitutes. Bongani also expressed his entitlement to have sex with women at any time and that women were created to bear children for men. Other young men challenged Thembelishe's presentation, saying it was unfair and that Line of Life's services were useless for men. Some of them complained that the organization was "on the side of women."

While some women openly challenged opinions expressed by men, Thembelishe waited patiently until the group became quiet. Then in English she replied to Bongani's comments and said emphatically, "You know, we have a name for men like you. You are worse than a sexist; you are a cave man. The reason why men like you exist is because we allow them to." Thembelishe then continued to explain the proposed legal definitions of rape in the Sexual Offenses Bill. She never mentioned any social or cultural aspect of rape, such as *lobola*.

Observing civic educational projects initiated by a nongovernmental organization in Malawi, Harri Englund argues that they often marginalize people's own insights into their life situations (2006: 71). Such human rights projects offer little to assist the poor and the disadvantaged in improving their lives (*ibid.*). In the case of South Africa, I suggest that civic education, despite its promise of dialogue and empowerment, makes distinctions between those at the grassroots level and the privileged, who spread the messages. Englund comments that distinctions between privileged and disadvantaged would be irrelevant if civic education brought people together from diverse backgrounds to discuss human rights on equal terms. Discussions in social spaces tend not to proceed as if everyone were equal (Englund 2006: 70).

As Thembelishe's response to Bongani illustrates, condescension plays a significant role in how the privileged treat the disadvantaged. Human rights activists working for NGOs have often forged a style that asserted their status in subtle ways. This example illustrates that the English language captures and resonates expressions of power in this part of postcolonial Africa (Englund 2006: 71, Mbembe 2001). Workshops such as this one serve to further distinguish between those who are dominant and those who are dominated (Englund 2006: 91). Thembelishe's linguistic reaction to Bongani also represents deep divisions between the "educated" and "uneducated" classes of black South Africans.

Perhaps as a result of this workshop experience, Bongani may create an alternative identity, particularly when he attends workshops on gender relations. Thembelishe's scolding remarks may encourage Bongani to use the language of human rights ideology in workshops while maintaining his patriarchal persona elsewhere. Young men like Bongani find it difficult to accept the human rights ideology that encourages women's equality. Yet, while dismissing some of the ideas proposed in NGO workshops, young people continue to attend and participate in these activities for other reasons. For example, hot meals are often served, guaranteeing food for the day. Workshops also help fill the day with activity, reducing the mindless boredom of unemployment.

Discussion

Narratives by Jacob Zuma, Khwezi and the young women and men in Mpophomeni inform us of divergent local definitions of rape and consent as opposed to those of the state. Their statements articulate tensions between notions of local versus universal as well as highlight race, class, and gender politics that are embedded in South Africa's postapartheid society. Jacob Zuma, Khwezi, and Bongani manipulate language in their narratives. Their accounts demonstrate complex race, class, and gender based politics that pervade South Africa. Zuma, like Bongani, spoke Zulu throughout his testimony to the Court, delivering a performance displaying deference for maintaining Zulu practices and beliefs and portraying himself as a "common man" of the people. On the other hand, Khwezi chose to deliver her testimony in English, perhaps signifying her recognition of the rules of the civil court while at the same time implying opposition to local rules and practices, which discourages women from coming forward and publically disclosing their experiences with sexual coercion.

Like President Zuma, Bongani articulates his rights to sexual access to the female body because of payment of *lobola*. He conflates the practice with prostitution, signifying that sex for him is merely an economic exchange. Once the exchange has taken place there is little space for women to not consent. Emphasizing the meaning of *lobola*, Dudu expresses denial of the concept of acquaintance rape. She clearly does not acknowledge marital rape as a form of sexual violence. For her, rape consists of sex with a male who has not entered into *lobola* proceedings. Dudu's narrative also concedes reservations about acquaintance rape. A boyfriend she loves cannot rape her. Thembelishe, the workshop leader, acts as a messenger whose purpose is to deliver the declarations and policies of the new democratic government. Thembelishe's reaction to Bongani's outburst not only represents the government's promotion of gender equality but also represents deep divisions of gender and class that are widespread. Her remark to Bongani in English expresses the

views of many young, educated black South African women. Bongani articulated beliefs about women and entitlement as well as the desire to uphold local practices to maintain power.

Conclusion

My primary concern here is to illustrate the wide disparity between discourses produced by the state through laws about rape and consent versus local beliefs about the meanings of these terms. My observations demonstrate that local definitions of rape and consent among young women and men in the township of Mpophomeni differed from legal definitions of the state. Many young women and men linked rape to the local practice of *lobola*. Some young women suggested that rape only occurs when a boyfriend who has not paid *lobola* engages in sex without consent; so a boyfriend who has initiated *lobola* payments cannot "rape" his girlfriend. With this in mind, many young women expressed beliefs that husbands cannot be said to rape their wives, because it is assumed that *lobola* has been exchanged. *Lobola* seems to be the critical element in determining the difference between rape and "forced sex." It illuminates the importance of language, economics, and exchange in local definitions of rape. Women I interviewed believed that once a man has paid *lobola* to a woman's family and married her, he then has full entitlement to sexual access to her body. Many young adult women in Mpophomeni believed that rape occurs only with boyfriends (who have not paid *lobola*) and strangers. They did not recognize acquaintance rape as a form of sexual violence.

Young women and men in my study also contested definitions of consent not only with the state but also among each other. Some young men perceived consent as expressed through bodily action, while women held that it was expressed verbally. These beliefs were also expressed during the Jacob Zuma trial. On the witness stand, Mr. Zuma claimed that Khwezi signaled a desire for sex because she wore a short skirt exposing her thighs, the most sexualized part of a woman's body. Khwezi testified that her silence due to shock and fear of Mr. Zuma's behavior signaled non-consent, and in her use of English she appealed to non-local authorities for support of her position. Still, definitions of consent are more complicated than the ways in which they are articulated in the law of the state and on the ground.

Contested definitions of rape and consent in South Africa exemplify tensions between universalism and cultural relativism concerning sexuality, sexual violence, and the law. Local definitions of rape and sexual violence have been shaped by historical changes in the social, political, legal, and economic structures and dynamics of South Africa. The new Sexual Offenses Act will be difficult to enforce because of the wide disparity between the law and local practices and the experiences of poor township women. The law alone cannot change behavior without changing the social context

that influences sexual coercion. The rape trial of Jacob Zuma was important for initiating public discussions among black South African women and men about gender relations and sexual violence. Resentment between many women and men exist not only in Mpophomeni but also in the wider social world of South African society. Policies and social programs must acknowledge and address these disparities.^v

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in media accounts to protect her identity.

ⁱⁱSouth Africa held presidential elections in April 2009 and
Jacob Zuma was elected and is now the current President of
South Africa.

ⁱⁱⁱAccording to the *Scholar's Zulu Dictionary*, *lobolo* (*ilobolo*)
is a noun referring to cattle and other things given for a bride.
Lobola is a verb meaning to give cattle for a bride.

^{iv}“Bitch” is a term used among black South Africans to
refer to women who engage in sexual relations with many male
partners.

^vFunding from the Fulbright Hays Doctoral Dissertation
Research (DDR) Fellowship allowed me to conduct research in
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Danger Denied: Everyday Life and Everyday Violence among Rwandan Genocide-Rape Survivors

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Introduction

In post genocide Rwanda, genocide survivors, particularly those who participated in *gacaca*, continued to be vulnerable to mortal danger (Hirondelle News Agency 2009, Mwesigye 2007). *Gacaca* courts were designed to try genocide crimes at the community level, in part, to contribute to the post-genocide peace and reconciliation process (Tiemessen 2004). The *gacaca* system was set up to compliment the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in order to deal with a backlog of over 100,000 suspects of genocide-related crimes that would have taken over 200 years to try within a conventional national court system (de Jonge 2001, Government of Rwanda 2002, Kabuye 2001). According to the Republic of Rwanda Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) for 2008 – 2012 (Republic of Rwanda 2007:28), the majority of the Rwandan population views the performance of the *gacaca* courts favorably, which is seen as a key component to “building trust and tolerance among and between individual citizens.” In contrast, some scholars have argued that “the *gacaca* courts may ultimately undermine the security of all Rwandans” (Corey & Joireman 2004:89) because the process exclusively handled cases of genocide crimes, leaving aside accusations that members of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the ruling political party, were involved in war crimes

In the extraordinary case of *gacaca*, powerful international partnerships were marshaled to encourage active participation of Rwandan community members in the judicial process (Babalola, Karambizi, Sow, & Ruzibuka 2003). It has been suggested that most Rwandans hope for community acknowledgement of their pain and suffering through peace and reconciliation efforts like *gacaca* (Clark 2005). However, recent research shows that Rwandan women who testified in *gacaca* were harassed before, during and after giving testimony, and faced the threats of trauma, ill-health, isolation and insecurity (Brouneus 2008). These data do not support World Bank assessments of Rwanda’s internal security that repeatedly assert the situation “remains stable” (World Bank 2006, 2009). At the very least, the question arises: security and stability for whom?

The distinction and dynamics between knowledge, acknowledgement, and denial is useful for understanding how danger can be known, perhaps even selectively acknowledged, yet simultaneously denied in post-genocide Rwandan social life. Referencing philosopher Thomas Nagel, Cohen (2001: 225) defines acknowledgement as

“what happens to knowledge when it becomes officially sanctioned and enters the public discourse.” Building from Cohen, Ramet (2007: 42) calls “a combination of selective perception, selective recollection, and selective interpretation” that combine to prevent the acknowledgment of unbearable information the “denial syndrome.” In counterpoint, the concept of social acknowledgement has recently been operationalized in the health sciences literature as “a victim’s experience of positive reactions from society that show appreciation for the victim’s unique state and acknowledge the victim’s current difficult situation” (Maercker & Müller, 2005:345).

Structural violence has been defined as a “permissible, even encouraged” violence “deemed necessary to the maintenance of crucial cultural, social, and political institutions,” (Scheper-Hughes 2004:14). The development enterprise has been implicated in the lethal dynamics that escalated structural violence and fueled the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi people in Rwanda (Uvin 1998, 2001). Therefore, this analysis takes an ethnographic approach to understanding denial and acknowledgement of danger among genocide survivors in Rwanda to attempt to “clarify the chains of causality that link structural, political, and symbolic violence in the production of an everyday violence” (Bourgois 2001:30). Drawing on ethnographic data gathered from women and girl Rwandan genocide-rape survivors who were members of genocide survivor associations, this paper examines how danger was known, denied, and acknowledged in the local context everyday post-genocide life.

Methods

Over a period of 14 months from September 2005 to November 2006, I conducted an ethnographic study of resilience, a process implicated in cultural responses to collective trauma, among Rwandan genocide-rape survivors in the Southern Province of Rwanda. The purpose of this study was to expand an understanding resilience as a process implicated in cultural responses to collective trauma, such as rebuilding life and continuing to live in post-genocide Rwandan society (Zraly & Nyirazinyoye, 2010). This study was conducted among Rwandan genocide-rape survivors who associated on the basis of being *Abasa* (those who resemble each other, which is the name of the association) and those who associated on the basis of being *abapfakazi ba jenocide* (genocide widows). The particular association of genocide widows involved in this study was AVEGA-*Agahozo*. Methods included participant-observation in household and community settings, ethnographic mapping

of the associations, repeated observations and unstructured interviews with seven key informants, and semi-structured interviews with 57 study participants who had experienced rape during the 1994 genocide.¹ Fieldnotes were transcribed on the same day that they were recorded. Rwandan research assistants transcribed the digital interview recordings and translated the Kinyarwanda texts into English.

Results

Findings revealed that genocide-rape survivors used multiple tactics in their attempts to navigate insecurity. The disjunctures between study participants' considerable experiences of danger and fear and the inadequate response at local, national, and international levels was arresting. Below, narrative and ethnographic data are presented to show how danger was known, denied, acknowledged, and socially navigated in the everyday life of Rwandan genocide-rape survivors.

Knowing Danger

Survivors of genocide-rape recognized social danger through their emotional experiences of fear. For example, Kathy feared being killed by the family of an imprisoned man whom she had testified against.

We are told to give testimony in *gacaca* courts, and then when evening comes and it rains, one thinks they will not live until the morning. Me, for example, there are those I accused, those who killed my family. I was given a house from their land, they are my neighbors. They are in prison because I accused them and some of the elder brothers are home. They pass near my place and go. So when I'm asked about it there [in *gacaca*] ... I feel I have a problem, and I imagine that they may kill me at night.

Like Kathy, Gretchen is also living in fear of the family members of a man she testified against. In Gretchen's case, this is the man who raped her during the genocide.

This *gacaca* situation is also a complement to problems. When you look at it, apart from my constant fear, I'm afraid they would kill me ... I accused one person, the one who raped me. He was with soldiers. As for the soldiers, I can't know them, but that one is in prison – I got him arrested. Because I got him arrested, I'm always afraid, wondering: "what if they killed me and said that it was done by thugs?" This is what I'm always afraid of ... So truly speaking, I'm always worried, saying that they will come and find us in the house, kill us and will say that it was done by thugs.

The man who Gretchen testified against is currently in jail; however, she will be called to give testimony against him

again when his case re-appears in the *gacaca* courts. Jeanie is also living in fear of the neighbors and family members of people that she has and will testify against in *gacaca*.

Like now, the problems that I have, in my neighborhood, I'm the only survivor among about 50 houses. I go to bed before six o'clock. Because even if someone pretended to be drunk and hit you with an empty bottle, no one would admit to have watched it happen. Never. You would die and be buried.

Women survivors of genocide rape experienced chronic fear of violent retaliation by their neighbors for giving testimony in *gacaca*.

Denying Danger

Though danger in the lives of genocide-rape survivors was known by government authorities and leaders of women's genocide survivor associations, in the same moment it was denied. For example, in the days before the genocide mourning period, a women's association leader reminded the membership of the focusing theme that the government disseminated to the Rwanda populace.

We should remember the genocide by responding to the *gacaca* courts and to have the courage of telling the truth and facing its consequences.

In other words, she delivered a strategic "sensitization" message. She informed the group that this message was targeted especially to genocide survivors like them, and advised the group not to be scared. In response to this reminder to tell the truth in *gacaca*, one member asked, "what if they come kill us?" The leader responded by ridiculing her in front of the group, asking "but why didn't they kill you *then*, during the war?" The leader continued by telling the group that "those people" are their neighbors now, and no one should be scared.

Similarly, a government official made a guest appearance at the meeting of a women's association in the days leading up to the genocide mourning period, and informed them that they shouldn't expect to have any security problems. However, the official also told them that if they did have a problem, they could come and tell him. His visit and his statements suggest that he knew about the danger for this group of genocide-rape survivors. However, by stating that "security problems" could be taken care of by "coming to him," he denied that "security problems" included the danger of being attacked at night and/or killed, which would preclude their ability to "come to him."

Acknowledging Danger

Sometimes danger was acknowledged. For example, another leader of a women's genocide survivor association, Violet, a genocide-rape survivor, explained to me that she

could not live in the villages where most of the members of her association lived, because she had received many written death threats due to the fact that she “tells everything” as a *gacaca* witness. Because of these written threats, the Rwandan government acknowledged that someone could manage to kill her. Therefore, the government provided her with housing in a guarded area, and issued her a cell phone for security purposes. Furthermore, Violet prided herself on not being afraid of anything, and she counseled other women genocide witnesses to do the same. For example, while sitting and waiting for the judges to arrive for the trial of ten men accused of genocide crimes, four of whom were accused of raping fellow members of her association, she advised the potential witnesses to stand and speak up. She told her members that even if these men were to return to the community, they would do no harm. Later, Violet privately divulged to me that she knew the situation was dangerous for these women witnesses and that the security of the members of her organization was not insured.

Socially Navigating Danger

Members of women’s genocide survivor organizations navigate the terrain of knowledge, denial, and acknowledgement of danger using multiple strategies. For example, during one women’s genocide survivors’ association meeting, while no leaders were present talk turned to the issue of insecurity. One member brought up the notion that the *imidugudu* (public housing communities) that many survivors live in together are “not good,” because it will only make the job easier for the people who want to kill them. She suggested that “they” will just come and burn their houses; and, if they don’t burn, they can just come and chop. Another member responded that her neighbor was chopped on the neck not so long ago, and she ended up in the hospital. She then revealed that she had problems sleeping at night because of insecurity. Another member then chimed in, saying that there were always problems with insecurity right before *icyunamo* (the annual genocide mourning period). Yet another member expressed that either way “we are dying,” referring to the fact that all of the members of this particular group of women genocide-rape survivors were HIV positive.

Suddenly and unexpectedly, a leader entered the room. The conversation halted, and the leader asked after the well-being of the daughter of the woman who had just suggested that they all might be chopped to death. The woman answered that her daughter was doing okay ... however, these days she herself had a problem: she didn’t have a place to keep her goats. The issue of insecurity was not brought to the leader’s attention or spoken of in front of the leader. The members ‘kept quiet’ about the danger of insecurity in the presence of an authority while ‘sharing information’ amongst themselves.

While “keeping quiet in the presence of authorities” was one strategy used to socially navigate danger, another was ‘pretending to be naïve.’ For example, Jeanie (who was always in her house by 6:00 PM) lived among the people who destroyed her house and stole the things from her home during the genocide. She felt that they were always watching her, she heard them talking about her, and she thought that they wished she would die or leave the area. Sometimes, this situation made her feel like she could commit suicide, but she devised social techniques to handle the situation, barely.

To comfort myself, I meet them busy plotting, and when they see me they shut up. This is how I get rid of them, I ask: “How are you?” and I bring in endless stories, we laugh, but knowing that they were plotting against me or against us. So when I meet them like this ... I make myself crazy with it, laugh and do whatever, everything in my heart becomes fine. But when I fail to do this, I go and sleep. I go and sleep in my house, cover myself and keep silent. And when I wake up, who can I tell?

In a separate incident, a night patrol was assigned to the home of Meredith, who had been attacked even after the attackers were arrested. However, this woman, mother, widow, genocide and rape survivor was still not assured of her safety.

They attacked me, and my neighbors kept on harassing me due to the fact that the leaders discovered that [the attack] was done by my neighbors, and they were arrested. I kept on being harassed, but I can’t pay much attention to being attacked during the night because now there is a night patrol at my home. [The neighbors] just steal things from my home when I am not around and when the children are at school. You think about all this, maybe they would come during the day when I am at home and children not around; so I’m always scared that they may come and kill me.

Meredith was able to ‘get local security personnel involved’ in her case after she had already been harassed and attacked, but she did not have faith that these night patrols would actually be able to protect her from being killed.

Discussion

Danger is selectively denied and acknowledged in post-genocide Rwanda social life. Communication messages that organize courageous sentiment in order to face the consequences of participating in *gacaca* courts were deployed while Rwandan genocide-rape survivors feared being attacked by their neighbors and/or the family members of people whom they have testified against in *gacaca*. In other words, all levels of government and society knew that there was danger associated with participating in *gacaca*; however,

when one woman publicly voiced her fears about this danger, namely being killed, the morality and meaning of her genocide survivorship was called into question, humiliating her. While the danger of being attacked was known by the Rwandan state and society, and continued to be reported in the media where it reached international audiences via the internet, it was not fully acknowledged.

From the case of Violet, it is apparent that danger of insecurity for those who “tell everything” in the *gacaca* is not summarily denied in Rwanda. Once danger is acknowledged, it can even warrant the response of military protection. However, genocide-rape survivors’ fear of their neighbors or of the consequences of testifying in genocide trials is not an officially sanctioned way to signal danger in Rwanda. Unlike written threats or attacks that have already taken place, danger known through fear is denied. Genocide-rape survivors are given the directive to “not be scared.” Government authorities and women’s survivor leaders alike issue this instruction, even though they know that danger is inherent to participating in *gacaca*.

However, the data presented show that genocide-rape survivors do not deny the danger known through fear in their own lives. Instead, they socially navigate it by employing the strategies of ‘keeping quiet’ in the presence of authorities, ‘sharing information’ with peers, ‘pretending to be naïve’ around potential attackers, and ‘involving local security services.’ I suggest that since these social navigation tactics are being enacted in an adverse context, where danger is known but not fully or adequately acknowledged, such strategies should be interpreted as elements of genocide-rape survivors’ resilience practices. For women and girls they are not only overcoming the danger they sense through fear, but they are also withstanding the tension that arises from knowing that danger exists while it is simultaneously denied by more powerful social actors across multiple scales. From this perspective, genocide-rape survivors’ self-silencing, feigning naiveté, gossip, and protection seeking does not signal an inability to cope with a traumatic past, but rather reveals a range of capacities for survival in a context marked by a crisis of everyday violence.

For the last two decades, Rwanda has been involved in a system of global bondage that has severely weakened its public sector infrastructure (Storey 2001). Promoted by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, macroeconomic reforms known as structural adjustment programs (SAPs), “recently repackaged euphemistically as ‘Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers’ or PRSPs” (Pfeiffer & Nichter 2008:411), and repackaged again in Rwanda as the EDPRS, encourage economic privatization to stimulate economic growth. Yet human security is dependent on a protective infrastructure

that includes linkages between strong, functioning public sectors including health care systems, education systems, and employment systems (Vaux & Lund 2003).

Without a protective human security infrastructure in Rwanda, the price of participation in *gacaca* for genocide-rape survivors was mortal danger. Even so, such participation was encouraged through the deployment of the powerful social machinery of the international development enterprise and deemed an unequivocally necessary institutional exercise for building post-genocide trust and tolerance. This structural violence followed on the heels of the systematic political and ethnic violence of the 1994 genocide. Furthermore, women genocide association leaders, aware of the dangers to their fellow associates, also encouraged participation in courts and *gacaca* and humiliated those who publicly expressed fear. This symbolic violence (see Scheper-Hughes 2004) appears to operate in part like the “unbearable information” of the denial syndrome (Ramet 2007). However, the denial of mortal danger in the lives of genocide-rape survivors in post-genocide Rwanda not only contributes to the multiple violences they experience, but also compounds the denial of their full humanity and dignity, as well as the denials to violations of their human rights.

Lastly, women and girl genocide-rape survivors’ expression of the emotional experience of fear must be acknowledged. Such fear can be understood as a source of information, or symptom, signalling that the current economic development trajectory of Rwanda is fostering social insecurity. However, under current macroeconomic conditions, women’s fear was naturalized as a dismissible factor, overridden by calls to strength and rubbed out with everyday violence. In this way, a climate of fear and danger was effectively hidden, protecting the new Rwanda from spoiling its carefully manicured image of a progressive and secure African nation (Hintjens 2008). Both the Rwandan government and the international donors jointly depended on the maintenance of that image for harmonious continuation of private sector development projects. A corrective shift in course would divert attention and resources to meet the dire need for strong, cross-cutting, protective public sector infrastructure, which would go far to realize the human rights of genocide-rape survivors and the Rwandan population as a whole.

Conclusion

Genocide-rape survivors’ fear of mortal danger was not officially sanctioned and did not enter the public discourse in the mid-2000s in Rwanda. Their uniquely difficult situation as both survivors of past extreme collective and sexual violence *as well as* ongoing structural and symbolic violence

was socially acknowledged by individuals themselves and select fellow members, but not by powerful social actors such as local genocide association leaders, government leaders in Rwanda, or the international development community. While punctuated media attention was drawn to the issue of the continued killing of genocide survivors in post-genocide Rwanda, this analysis suggests that the “denial syndrome” is likely to doom the international development community to repeat its collusions in structural violence to the detriment of the poor and the vulnerable (Uvin 1998).²

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2010 Don't let the suffering make you fade away: An ethnographic study of resilience among survivors of genocide-rape in Rwanda. *Social Science & Medicine* 70(10):1656-1664.

¹ Throughout the fieldwork, the everyday danger experienced by many Rwandan genocide-rape survivors was a constant concern. It influenced the logistics of the study, including choice of taxi drivers, decisions about where to park cars, the necessity to sometimes accompany participants home, and being aware of windows to check who could be within earshot of conversations.

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Report on the Zora Neale Hurston Travel Award

We are pleased to congratulate the following students, who each received grants for travel to the 2009 American Anthropological Meetings in Philadelphia:

Rania Kassab Swieis. Stanford University, "On Zones of Childhood Abandonment: The Entangled Politics of Street Youth, Urban Space and Social Suffering in a Global Cairo" (Advisor: Sylvia Yanagisako)

Camee Maddox. University of Florida, "Yes We Can! Down with Colonization! Racial Tension and Political Unrest in Martinique" (Advisor: Dr. Faye Harrison)

Jenny L. Davis. University of Colorado, Boulder, "If you want to be Correct You'd Call us by Our Tribe': Two-Spirit Articulations of Indigenesness and Alterity" (Advisor: Kira Hall).

The Zora Neale Hurston Travel Award has been an AFA tradition since 2002. The award honors the contributions of pioneering African American anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston (visit the AFA website for further information on her contributions and accomplishments). Eligibility is restricted to students and recent PhDs focusing on issues of concern to feminist anthropology. Preference is given to individuals from under-represented US groups. The winning awardees will be notified prior to the AAA meetings, but the awards will be formally announced and checks given out at the AFA business meeting held in conjunction with the AAA meetings. The winners of the 2010 awards will be announced in the next issue of *Voices*. Details for the 2011 competition for the meetings in Montreal will be posted to the AFA website soon (<http://www.aaanet.org/sections/afa/travel.html>).

Ambivalent Justice: Sexual Violence and the State in South Africa and Rwanda

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The papers by Singleton and Zraly included in this issue help advance the discipline to better understand the paradoxical relationship between the state and gender violence: namely, how the state engenders gender violence and then seeks to pursue justice for its victims.¹ Singleton and Zraly focus their attention on South Africa and Rwanda, two states-in-transition to democracy. To enable this transformation to democracy, both South Africa and Rwanda have turned to ritualized forms of public testimony of harms endured during the apartheid regime or genocidal war. In post-apartheid South Africa, the country known infamously as the rape capital of the world, the state has used truth and reconciliation hearings, and taken the lead in revising the legal definition of rape, without necessarily consulting its citizens who hold conflicting understandings of the line between sex and violence. In post-genocide Rwanda, the state has supported the use of *gacaca* courts to help process the backlog of genocide-related crimes, including gender violence, without creating a corresponding infrastructure to protect its participants.

In both South Africa and Rwanda, women have been encouraged to publicly narrate their experiences of sexual violence. Yet, these same women have been subsequently sanctioned by their local communities for doing so. In their analyses of this ambivalent justice, Singleton and Zraly raise important questions about the uneasy relationship between the state and sexual violence, and demand a more robust conversation about what it means to pursue justice in post-conflict transitional states such as South Africa and Rwanda.

Sexual Violence and Transitions to Democracy

Singleton and Zraly study the cultural politics (Merry 2009) and political economy (Adelman 2004) of the relationship between the state and sexual violence.² Singleton situates the reformation of South Africa's sexual offences act within the post-apartheid transition to democracy and its leaders' search for legitimacy as a new liberal state. In an effort to signal its alignment with other democracies, the South African parliament passed a universally applicable and gender-neutral law against sexual violence. The parliament defined rape as "an act of sexual penetration with a complainant without their consent" (Singleton, this issue). Perhaps intentionally, although it remains unclear, this new legal definition of rape bypassed local understandings of sex and violence.

According to Singleton's research, black women in the township of Mpophomeni reject the parliament's revised definition of sexual violence, and instead talk about rape as a stranger's sexual coercion of a woman he does not know, or sex performed in the absence of love. Still others consider a man's payment of *lobola* or bridewealth, and its associated unbounded sexual access as a defense against a charge of rape. That is, *lobola* makes rape unthinkable: a husband may force his wife to have sex, but he cannot rape her. On the other hand, a boyfriend who has not paid *lobola* can be accused of raping his girlfriend if she did not want to have sex. Men in Mpophomeni shared even a deeper sense of ambivalence about South Africa's newly defined notion of rape.

Jacob Zuma, the former deputy president of South Africa, and his supporters similarly engaged in the cultural politics of sexual violence during his publicized rape trial. During the trial, Zuma testified in Zulu, emphasizing his association and solidarity with the Zulu people, while noting his adherence to dominant Zulu ideas about women's sexuality, and the locally resonant distinction between sex and violence. Zuma's supporters sang songs from the anti-apartheid era, insinuating that his accuser was part of a political conspiracy. Zuma's trial was not the only evidence of the link between sexual violence and the state. In this way and others, Singleton reveals how rape in South Africa is inextricably linked to the cultural politics of the state.

Speech and Silence

Similar to the South Africa case, rape in Rwanda cannot be understood without analyzing its link to state politics. In Rwanda, forms of transitional justice such as truth and reconciliation hearings and *gacaca* courts, were put in place in part to satisfy the international development requirement for evidence of domestic stability. Without such evidence, the development world would have withheld desperately needed economic support. Zraly documents how Rwandan genocide-rape survivors were admonished to cooperate with these peace and reconciliation processes. That is, they were urged to tell truthful stories of victimization perpetrated by their neighbors – and to simultaneously deny how the very telling of these stories endangered them. According to Zraly, the Rwandan women she worked with are resilient and have crafted strategies around speech and silence to maintain their sanity if not their long-term safety.

Women were asked in Rwanda to share in public places intimate personal stories of vulnerability and violation. These stories are told in local *gacaca* courts, state-level civil and

criminal courts, and international criminal courts. Their public testimony is intentionally recorded and archived and analyzed by government agency staff, non-governmental organization volunteers, and anthropologists, among others. Such structured public telling suggests that sexual violence is considered equal to that of other crimes against the state, and that survivors of sexual violence deserve protection and justice. However, after women's testimonies have been documented and filed, they and their families typically have been left with little or no infrastructure that offers protection, long-term security or justice. In Rwanda the post-genocide regime, perhaps overwhelmed by the sheer number of genocide-related crimes, seems only to record atrocities and pronounce an outcome of reconciliation, rather than deal with the survivors of sexual violence in any locally meaningful or coherent way. As a result, women are set up by the state to publicly purge themselves of their rape stories with the presumption that such speech will be followed by silence: survivors are expected to move on with a newly established post-genocide "zero hour," while community members are similarly presumed to be able to put aside the genocidal past. Both assumptions fail survivors of genocide-related sexual violence with the imposition of a symbolic-only catharsis. On the ground, women who have participated in *gacaca* courts have been harmed "before, during and after giving testimony" (Zraly, this issue). Zraly renders visible the gendered nature of post-genocide security, or lack thereof.

Her invocation of resilience, a concept borrowed mainly from social work and psychology, is applied here in the Rwandan case to understand how genocide widows, who are also rape survivors, creatively manage their ongoing vulnerability on a daily basis. Zraly's focus on resilience also reveals the dynamic tension obtained between speech and silence from the perspective of the widows, who share their concerns laterally with each other, but know to withhold their talk about fear and danger when in front of the authorities, whether political emissaries or non-governmental organization staff. This is a particularly fraught balancing act for women during the official genocide mourning period, *icyunamo*, enforced annually by the state. Here, Zraly makes an important contribution to the universalist post-traumatic stress disorder literature, and the sometimes overly celebratory embrace of transitional justice rituals, such as truth and reconciliation hearings, by demonstrating "how danger can be known, perhaps even selectively acknowledged, yet simultaneously denied in post-genocide Rwandan social life" (Zraly, this issue). Another way into the same ethnographic data would be to identify who gets to tell what kinds of stories to whom and in which contexts, whether on the street with neighbors, in support groups

without the leader present, or during a *gacaca* hearing or inside the international criminal court.

Non-governmental Organizations and Sexual Violence

Anthropologists have turned to direct analyses of public policy, non-governmental organizations, and social movements. NGOs are central to the global movement against gender violence both in terms of creating gender violence as a social problem and then mobilizing resources to solve it. Both Singleton and Zraly contribute to this burgeoning literature by pointing to the critical role of civil society in addressing gender violence. Civil society, or "the third space," in new democracies includes the proliferation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which fulfill functions the state is either unable or unwilling to perform. In South Africa NGOs such as Line of Life and the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness conduct workshops "to create safe places for women and men to come together" to talk about sexual violence, HIV/AIDS and healthy relationships (Singleton, this issue). In Rwanda, NGOs create safe places for genocide widows to gather while at the same time delivering and enforcing the state mandate that "no one should be scared." Organization staff mediate between the state and its citizens, attempting to transform how locals understand rape in South Africa or enforcing state norms about mourning and safety among genocide widows in Rwanda. In both sites, ambivalent ties are found between NGOs and the local communities they serve. Future research will be able to document how the global circulation of ideas and funding (e.g. those related to the transmission of HIV/AIDS), informs how NGO staff and their program participants negotiate these ambivalent ties.

Singleton's and Zraly's contributions identify competing constraints on the possibilities for justice inherent to ritualized forms of transitional justice which fail to also develop effective forms of support for survivors. Although scholars and activists alike welcome new efforts across the globe to recognize the multiple harms associated with sexual violence, we lament how women survivors are asked to put their safety on the line by the very state actors which helped to perpetrate their victimization. In both cases, women were caught between survival and serving the cultural politics and political economic goals of their state. Singleton and Zraly also highlight the importance of fine-grained ethnographic studies of the complex relationship between sexual violence and the state. These studies reinforce why anthropology can no longer reproduce the shame or invisibility often associated with violence against women by ignoring or marginalizing it as a legitimate topic of academic study within the discipline. This issue will help anthropologists across the discipline,

and not just those who identify as feminist anthropologists, to recognize how sexual violence can — and should — be integrated into ethnographic studies of public health, globalization, modernity, governance, and war, among other mainstream topics.

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¹ Gender violence remains an entrenched social problem with significant health consequences for women and their families across the globe. The prevalent and pernicious effects of gender violence have been documented across the disciplines. Anthropologists in particular have begun to reveal the complexity not only of the perpetration of gender violence but also of the global movement against gender violence. We have noted, for example, how culture has been implicated in explaining why gender violence exists in its various forms, and also how culture has been deployed as a form of intervention against gender violence (Adelman, Hildane & Weis, forthcoming; Merry 2006; UNSRVAV 2009). Recent work looks beyond the deviant individual or family to better understand the normative politics of gender violence (Adelman 2000).

² Most research on sexual violence has focused on rates of victimization, factors that place certain populations at higher risk for sexual violence, or the effect of sexual violence on survivors. Others, such as Peggy Sanday (1996), have analyzed how contexts such as college campuses structure the perpetration of sexual violence. Recent studies also have documented how state regulation of gender violence, such as court processing of domestic violence cases (Lazarus-Black 2007) or law enforcement processing of sexual violence (Hautzinger 2007), exacerbates the victimization of women.

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Child Sexual Abuse and the Reproduction of Femininity in the United States

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Immediately, upon taking up the task of investigating child sexual abuse, one is struck by the difficulty of defining it (CSA) in a manner that is relevant cross-culturally. David Finklehor, a leading scholar in CSA in the United States, defines child sexual abuse as being comprised of two elements: “1) Sexual activities involving a child and 2) an abusive condition such as coercion or a large age gap between the participants, indicating a lack of consensuality” (1994: 410). However, a quick scan of the anthropological literature demonstrates that this definition is not meaningful in many cultural contexts. The literature is full of sexual conduct with minors, much of which is conducted by adults or in circumstances which could be perceived as coercive (for a review see Korbin 1987: 255). Returning to the United States, we find that the definition of CSA may include such disparate acts as a single incidence of fondling at the hands of a stranger, habitual rape by a father, and the “consensual sex” of a teenager with a teacher.

I do not point out the discrepancies within this category to denigrate the experiences of any survivor, nor to impose some artificial hierarchy of suffering. The sequelae of CSA have been well documented and include such diverse and detrimental impacts as higher rates of suicide, colitis, STDs, teen pregnancy, lower birth weight babies with lower APGAR scores, a greater likelihood of experiencing stranger-rape in adulthood, lower levels of high-school graduation, spiraling socio-economic status and higher overall morbidity and mortality (Edwards and Donaldson 1989, Mullen et al. 1995, Bohn 1996, Beitchman et al. 1999). Rather, I am arguing that the acts that are included in CSA are locally constituted. Making this point should not, in any way, detract from the real and significant harms experienced by survivors, just as the deconstruction of biological race in no way discredits the tremendous material harms of racism in our society. It simply frees our ability to conduct analysis. How is the category of CSA meaningful in the United States? What similarities do such disparate acts possess? In this paper, I will argue that rather than being a haphazard catch all, the category of Childhood Sexual Abuse points to a discursive similarity communicated in these disparate acts.

There is a discourse surrounding the female body in the United States. Emily Martin, Susan Bordo, Rose Weitz and many others have examined this discourse. It is a discourse of defect and lack, deviance and danger. While most women in the United States develop their habitus within this

discourse, women with a history of childhood sexual abuse have it literally written upon their bodies. Such women may enact a discipline rooted in their abuse experience. In order to understand how this discipline is enacted, I collected the life histories of twelve women who had experienced child sexual abuse. My collaborators were lower and middleclass Anglo mothers living in Texas who self-reported, however hesitantly, a history of CSA.^{i,ii,iii} Despite the similarity of some of their material circumstances, the details of their narratives are quite dissimilar. They include a woman who experienced a single incidence of rape by her neighbor when she was four and a woman who suffered incest at the hands of her father throughout her childhood. One woman who was date-raped when she was twelve by her nineteen-year-old boyfriend used the language of child sexual abuse to recount her experience. Yet another woman, who was raped nightly from the age of 12 to the age of 18 by a cousin four years older, thought that her complete silence during the rapes, although she hid to escape them, created a complicity that made her ineligible to label these hated experiences abuse.

The stories told by others further complicate this already confusing picture. What should we do with the woman who still feels fondly towards the grandfather who would rub her clothed body on his erections in encounters she describes mainly as, “idle?” Or, the woman who so completely dissociated during the abuse that she has no memory of her father’s violations and offers as verification for her claims only her nightmares, her spectrum of physical symptoms, and a story in which she hands her newborn daughter to her father only to be overcome with violent vomiting? Anton Blok explains that “rather than defining violence *a priori* as senseless and irrational we should consider it as a changing form of interaction and communication, as a historically developed form of meaningful action” (2000: 24). Violence communicates. And, the violence of CSA communicates within the discourse of the female body in the United States. Each of the women who collaborated in my research, despite the dramatic differences in their experiences, understood their experiences within the discourse of the female body in the United States. In the more negative aspects of this discourse, the female body is the site of deviance, defect, and danger. My collaborators responded to their abuse by engaging in self-disciplining a body that had left them vulnerable to abuse.

Michel Foucault uses Jeremy Bentham’s design for the Panopticon to explain what he means by discipline. At the center of a circular structure there is a tower composed of windows. The surrounding structure consists of cells, each

with two windows, one facing the windows of the tower and the other drawing light from outside the structure, effectively backlighting the cell and making it visible to the observance of the tower. According to Foucault, this constant visibility “induce[s] in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault 1977: 201). The inmate, aware of her visibility, constrains her own activities. This “state of conscious and permanent visibility” produces both a profound individualism and a disciplined or “docile” body.

The Panopticon is a useful analogy for the experience of survivors of CSA in the United States. For many women with a history of CSA, like the inmates in the cells of the Panopticon, there is no safe place to hide. As few as 7% of CSA survivors were originally assaulted by a stranger (Finkelhor 1994). Of the twelve women in my study, not one was assaulted by a stranger; rather, it was their fathers, family members, babysitters and neighbors. With a threat so omnipresent, such women often direct their efforts of self-preservation towards their own bodies, engaging in efforts to control the only aspect of the experience that is under their control. In addition, many women with a history of CSA understand themselves as different from other women, and experience this difference as deviance. In this way, CSA individuates the women under its regime and promotes the self-discipline of their bodies. CSA is not simply a form of physical violence; it also perpetuates a form of symbolic violence on its victims. Symbolic violence internalizes the humiliations and legitimations of inequality (Bourdieu 1997: 170). Philippe Bourgois explains that symbolic violence, “persuades victims that their own actions are the cause of their own predicament and that their subordination is the logical outcome of the natural order of things” (2002: 223). Instead of interpreting negative life events in terms of the structures of inequality which promote those events, the vulnerabilities inherent in their subordinate status in a culture where female is subordinate to male, my collaborators tend to perceive these events as the “natural” consequences of their own difference. This sense of deviance promotes a feeling of disorientation.

“Difference” is a recurring theme in the narratives of my collaborators. One woman, raped by her neighbor when she was four, explains that her experience of deviance began not during the attack but later, in the doctor’s office. As a consequence of the rape, she developed the symptoms of an STD and her mother took her to the doctor. The doctor was, in her words, “disgusted to find an STD in such a tiny child.” At the time, she did not understand that the doctor was horrified by what had been done to her body rather than her body itself and reports experiencing tremendous shame. For other women, it is their difference in knowledge that makes them feel deviant. One woman recounts that “when I was eight or nine and the other kids began telling

dirty jokes, I realized that I knew a lot more than them—that I was different.” Another explains that when she was a child, “everything was sexualized to me and after a while I realized that other kids weren’t like that.” For several women, the need to keep family secrets made them feel isolated and alone. The women in my study felt different from other women, individuated from their peers like the inmates in the Panopticon. The women who survive CSA are predisposed to apprehend the discourse of deviance and defect surrounding the female body in the United States.

In addition to this experience of individuation through difference, the child’s body that is used sexually by an adult is transformed into a more docile body. What is most striking in these narrative accounts is how quickly the perpetrator recedes from them. As one woman tellingly explained, “he was so big I couldn’t see him.” In the stories given to me by my collaborators, it is almost as if the perpetrator is exempted from responsibility. In an environment where any man is dangerous, the threat is not a perpetrator but the body which is the vehicle of vulnerability. When women relate their stories of abuse, the stories center on their own bodily sensations and their body’s encounter with an object: a bottle, a penis, a belt. Once women step back from the immediacy of the experience, the narratives transform this embodied vulnerability into a discourse stressing the dangerous body. In these accounts, their bodies somehow precipitate the abuse. One woman, who explains that she wore baggy clothes and a back brace during the years of her abuse, said, “I wonder what was the turn on?” Another woman, who was raped in early childhood by a babysitter and who was one of the fortunate few to have the external validation of a supportive family, recalls that during preadolescence she still became obsessed with the thoughts: “Was it my fault? Did I like it? I must have liked it? Am I bad?” All of my collaborators expressed the belief that in some way they had originated the abuse. They regained some measure of control through this tactic but at the cost of transforming their own bodies into defective, deviant, dangerous bodies that must be disciplined in order to stave off further attack.

Among my collaborators, I witnessed several forms of bodily discipline. They restricted their use of public space and they exercised various forms of control of their bodily orifices. I would like to demonstrate the degree to which a life can become constrained by these disciplines by relating the narrative of one of my collaborators. Sara’s story stands out because she was the least able to exteriorize the threat, and her response to her experiences were correspondingly global. Sara was raped by an older cousin over the course of several years. When her cousin assaulted her, she would close her eyes and remain absolutely still and silent. She tried, unsuccessfully, to avoid these incidents, hiding in closets and behind locked doors, reporting that one night she even hid under the crib of a sleeping baby. Yet each night her cousin

would find her and rape her. Still, because she remained silent and never said “no,” to this day she remains unsure of whether or not she has experienced abuse, explaining to me that this confusion had led her to participate in the research.

To escape, she worked hard, finishing high school early, and saving enough money from jobs to pay for her own dorm room in college in cash. Before she left for college, she told her family of the abuse. The results of this experience continued her disorientation. Her cousin told the family that he had confessed the sin of fornication to God and explained that Sara had seduced him and offered to forgive her. Her family chose to believe the cousin, making her further doubt her own blamelessness. At college, she found herself unable to change her posture of silence and was the victim of several acquaintance rapes, each time feeling that her body had been complicit through its silence. Soon, she adopted a discipline common to many of my collaborators. She began initiating sex whenever she was alone with a man. In this way she was able to gain some control over a dangerous orifice.

While she never experienced these encounters as consensual, she says “I felt better being able to control when it happened.” The man she married was, not coincidentally, the first one to say, “You don’t have to do this.” Today, she homeschools her children in a remote location on the edge of cotton field in a desolate part of West Texas. She describes how she has fashioned her life so that she would never have to be alone with any man, co-sleeping with her youngest child so that she was not alone even with her husband. Evocatively, she made up her portion of the household income by selling homemade soap over the internet.

In addition to controlling the space her body inhabits, she tries to control the penetrability of her body through anorexia. At 5’6 she is 101 pounds and describes herself as “fat.” She does not express a desire to be thin; rather, she states “I so want to be non-fat.” Pointing at her breast bone, she explains that she wants her body to be “like this all over.” She wants an armored body, not a soft and vulnerable one.

In Sara’s narrative, she cannot easily locate the threat outside of herself. Unable to fix upon an external perpetrator, she exerts the most extreme disciplines upon her threatening body, controlling her orifices, restricting her freedom of movement, and experiencing herself as very different from other women. While none of my other collaborators engaged in discipline this extreme, each engaged in efforts to control the body that they perceived to be defective and dangerous: controlling the amount or the purity of their foods, avoiding sex or aggressively seeking it out, and/or restricting their own freedom of movement. Violence becomes internalized through embodied processes like discipline and is transformed into the symbolic violence which reproduces structures of inequality, like masculine domination, through the misrecognition of the locus of

threat. By locating the threat internally, my collaborators were hampered in their ability to overcome the negative aspects of the discourse surrounding the female body in the United States.

In a world of television with entire series based upon miraculous survival tales, Philippe Bourgois rightly reminds us that, “People do not simply ‘survive’ violence as if it somehow remained outside of them, and they are rarely if ever ennobled by it” (2002: 30). In this paper, I have attempted to very briefly sketch out the processes through which the internalization of threat inscribes a discourse on the body of girls who experience sexual abuse, a discourse of deviance, defect and danger. An artifact of the brevity of this paper is that this description seems too mechanistic: if sexual abuse, then an interiorization of threat. In reality, social agents and their libidinal bodies creatively engage this discourse. In my research, I witnessed feats of heroic imagination, where women broke through the discourse of the female body in the United States and I have witnessed women who were ennobled by this struggle. However, before we can tell these stories of hope and courage, we must honor their victories and their suffering by explicating the many ways in which the violence of child sexual abuse becomes interiorized, and considering what implications this interiorization has for the production and performance of femininity in the United States.

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ⁱ This paper grows out of a larger investigation done for a master's thesis into childbirth experiences of women with a history of CSA. I am deeply grateful to Susan Rasmussen, Eugenia Georges and Janis Harper for their provocative comments and encouragement throughout this sometimes challenging project.

ⁱⁱ For questions taken up in the larger study, I recruited 12 women with a history of CSA who had also attempted "natural childbirth." Due to the difficulty inherent in recruiting such women, I recruited at La Leche League meetings, childbirth classes, and "natural parenting" playgroups. The women who collaborated in the study self reported themselves as having a history of CSA. While this sampling strategy severely limits the external validity of the study, it pointed me in the fruitful direction of analyzing construction of the category of "sexual abuse" in the United States.

ⁱⁱⁱ Every effort has been made to maintain the confidentiality of my collaborators including the use of pseudonyms which they themselves chose, often to honor a personal hero. I am profoundly grateful to these women for sharing their stories and homes with me, for laughing and crying with me and correcting me "when I got it all wrong." Their courage and imagination gives me hope for a better world. All errors are my own.

The Body Breaks: Narrating Child Sexual Abuse through Transcultural Metaphors of Bodily Dis-ease

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Cultural Bodies as Persons and Pots: Formative Trauma and Dis-ease

Scholarship on embodiment typically focuses exclusively on the human body as the locus of experience (e.g., Csordas 1994). Subjective and auto-ethnographic studies of physical and emotional trauma resulting from sexual violence such as rape confront its impact on the human body, address physical and “mental” health in its aftermath, and explore how, for instance, adult women’s experience of rape re-conceptualizes the self as a relational and autonomous being (e.g., Brison 1997, Winkler 2002). Here I explore the experience of trauma and its consequences through analogy with a non-human form of embodiment, Hopi pottery. Using my encounter with Western biomedicine through a diagnosis of “major depressive disorder” that emanated from a childhood experience of CSA in light of ethnographic knowledge derived from formal fieldwork among women potters in the First Mesa community of the Hopi Reservation, I explore the concepts of “cracked pot” and “crackpot” as cultural metaphors that are, respectively, apt and counter-productive for describing the adult dis-ease that emerges from what I call formative trauma: the experience of traumatic sexual abuse in childhood.

Broken Bodies: From Cracked Pot to “Crackpot”

With a trenchant admonition, an elderly, experienced Hopi potter soberly cautioned me of the mournful outcome of careless pottery production: pottery “baked” or fired outdoors when not properly prepared would explode or “pop,” shattering “all into little pieces.” “You’ll get nothing out of it,” she warned. Unprepared for the determining test of a new social life – emergence into the world – a pot that is not first warmed in an indoor kitchen oven will be “wasted,” its only use as sherds providing a protective covering for another pot in a future firing (Figure 1).



Karen Kabe Charley preparing a firing using broken sherds to protect the vessels being fired. Photo by Kristin Nasafotie, courtesy of Karen Kabe Charley

As this senior woman and other experienced First Mesa potters instructed me, improperly formed and tended pots in their vulnerable early stages can neither “ring” in social interaction with others nor circulate autonomously in the world, bringing economic and symbolic gain to their makers. “Thoughtless handling” at this crucial stage means that these pots will have a truncated or aborted social life.ⁱ

Compare her description of the waste of a shattered object with my experience of a physical breakdown – but emotional breakthrough – that occurred within ten days of the receipt of my doctor’s hood at New York University’s 2003 Convocation:

I was panicked when I finally spoke to the receptionist at my internist’s office – hyperventilating, speaking incoherently, stifling as best I could my utter frustration and rage at the world and barely able to muster the words that I needed help. My legs had wobbled and nearly collapsed under me as I went from floor to floor frantically searching for phone numbers. Now I believed I couldn’t stand, and that each breath might be my last. Contacted through emergency channels, my husband, daughter, and the neighbor who retrieved her from school arrived simultaneously with the ambulance summoned by the receptionist. All watched me leave the house not a proud and confident “brain doctor,” to use my internist’s description of my new PhD status, but a disheveled invalid plagued by “mental illness,” a shadow of that other self.

Ten years after my field observations and clearly flourishing cognitively, the very marrow of my body ached, truly indicating a core malady. Yet I remained unaware of what had provoked this physical and mental incapacitation, requiring temporary hospitalization in a comprehensive psychiatric emergency program and resulting in acknowledging a profound and enduring sadness.ⁱⁱ

Separated by culture, class, race, generation, geography, and history, what possible similarities can there be in these two descriptions of human experience? I maintain that the Hopi concept of a cracked pot illuminates the experience of “breakdown” and “mental illness” while countering our colloquial stigmatization of a “crackpot.” Hopi women’s pottery knowledge constitutes both cultural and practical understanding of the wherewithal to construct ideal social beings that has application well beyond the extent of potters’ networks and the confines of their reservation communities. In effect, pottery knowledge encodes just what the human

body endures from unacknowledged childhood trauma that is both physical and psychological, and emotionally prepares those affected for the potential consequences of an “unwelcome eventuality” (Layne 1997).ⁱⁱⁱ

Through reflexive ethnography, I now comprehend that the study of Hopi pottery brought my experience of early, or what I call formative, emotional and physical trauma through child sexual abuse to the fore, causing me to relive and rethink my childhood; it also provided the means to articulate traumatic experiences that I previously lacked as a result of repression. My ethnographic observations, attention to potters’ language, and participation in the intimate actions of making a pot engaged my largely numbed and self-alienated “somatic modes of attention” (Csordas 1994). Research followed by writing awakened first my body and then my mind to the “permanent mark” left by an earlier “visceral response to trauma and terror” (Winkler 1994:259), revealing the unseen cracks in my being I had unwittingly carried throughout my life. I was also newly confronted with the adolescent experience of threats to my existence from sexual violence by the somatic reality of my developing daughter. Confronted with her approaching adolescence and sexual florescence, what had been a shaming secret could no longer be relegated wholly to my unconscious mind.^{iv}

Object Lessons in Forming a Healthy Cultural Body*

Hopi pots at once materially reveal and objectify concepts about the proper social relationships that create and index a healthy existence: the emphasis on close physical and emotional contact in the formation of social beings that is free of interpersonal domination or coercion; careful avoidance of injury to the body but attention to its consequences if and when it occurs; and the role of expressed emotion for a healthy social being. Potters use the same language to describe the intimate work of pottery as they do for preferred social relations, which they value as “close.” Closeness in pottery is marked by physical proximity and indexed by shared sentiment (Figure 2).



*Karen Kabe Charley painting an unfired pot.
Photo by Kristin Nasafotie,
courtesy of Karen Kabe Charley*

Potters say that they cannot force the clay to take a certain shape but instead guide it with their skilled hands, with the pot emerging on its own terms. A potter literally breathes life into her pot as she works the clay, “helping” a pot to become the potential that the clay has within it.

Hopi pots are, in fact, transformed humans, and clay is a different medium for realizing human creativity and procreative potential, apart from yet intimately associated with the female human body. Literally and figuratively in potters’ conception, clay comes from Mother Earth. Likened to children, pots are birthed of women through firing, what potters term “baking.” With an explicit analogy, one potter described a pot’s “being born through the fire” to emerge “whole and beautiful as all our children.”

Although produced through this gendered labor, pots are un-gendered social beings labeled with the parts of a human anatomy: they have lips, mouths, shoulders, stomachs, and “butts.” An integral pot also has a voice: the clear, bell-like sound that, when struck firmly with a finger, articulates through social interaction. More importantly, as with the human face a pot reveals emotion through “blush,” a feature of pottery revealed only in a technological transformation (firing) that is beyond human control. “Blush” manifests the pot’s animate character and is the defining quality of its beauty (Figure 3).



Sikyatki Revival pottery bowl exterior showing “blush.”

For the human body, blushing is a fleeting process that reveals emotion. In the cultural body of Hopi pottery, the technological process of firing brings an interior state of being to the exterior and fixes it as permanent. A pot’s blush objectifies the positive outcome of moral work. Hopi pottery knowledge encodes the cultural gestation of the social being, its proper preparation for entering the world in the viable form upon which further elaborations can be built. The desired golden coloration of a finished pot both derives from and elicits a warm emotional response, reproducing and ensuring the continuity of this valued feeling in time and space.

Potters must attend to the interior walls of the pot as carefully as they do its exterior, decorated surface and the clay used to form it. Poorly processed clay or lack of attention to all stages in the maturation of the vessel – including proper drying of the clay, as graphically expressed to me – will result in a non-integral pot with a hairline crack or worse, the total loss of the vessel in firing. Lost is not only the individual object but, more importantly, a social body in the larger

sphere of a potter's network, and of the potential through circulation to establish wider social relations, since pottery "connects you to others" (Figure 4).



Polychrome pottery small jar by Dianna Tahbo-Howato.

Yet even an imperfect pot with a smudged surface or crack has a useful role establishing social relationships. Cracked pots are given as gifts and used in local kinship contexts, not tossed aside as a result of their flaws. Recognizing the labor intensiveness and risk of loss in every pot, community members prize them and acknowledge with potters that humans should not strive for perfection. This small jar by Dianna Tahbo-Howato emerged from the fire with a portion on its base nearly popped from the surface, although it remained attached. The flawed pot became her gift to me in a gesture of friendship, extending her social world and implicating me in its aesthetics. Blemished as the personhood they objectify may be, "cracked pots" remain integral to First Mesa social life. Despite their imperfections, these pots embody the cultural values that brought them to life. Yet they also evince life's fragility.

Fragile Lives: Sexual Violence, Trauma, and the Immature Social Being

Child sexual abuse is interpersonal, micro-political violence rendered through sexual means that involves inequities of power resulting in coerced activities that are sexual in nature.^{vi} The sexual dimensions of the acts may be incomprehensible to the child but are a central motivation for the adult. In every case the child's consent is impossible not only due to chronological age or social and emotional maturation, but also and more importantly as a result of the asymmetry of power. By exploiting the vulnerability of the as yet unformed social being, child sexual abuse erodes the heart of interpersonal relationships (Mullen and Fleming 2004:18). The child feels violated and degraded, is often unable to articulate these feelings, yet senses that, as an immature, powerless subject she has become an object of gratification for the mature, powerful subject's pleasure (cf. Sontag 2004:12).^{vii}

The shattering of one's existence is a normative occurrence for adults who experience traumatic sexual abuse as a child, yet not all who experience it perceive the abuse as traumatic. What differentiates a child's experience of trauma? Any trauma is "a subjectively structured form of knowledge" that is *intersubjectively* experienced (Giller 2006, Winkler 1994:250, Kleinman and Kleinman 1995:101). For adult survivors, trauma involves a complete loss of self by means of the absolute control of another, making the violated feel "emotionally, cognitively, and physically overwhelmed" (Giller 2006). Trauma conflates the mind/body duality at the same time that it brings heightened emotional awareness to the fore. "Burying the trauma delays and magnifies [the] landmines of horror" implanted in the body and mind through traumatic experience (Winkler 2002). When buried from childhood well into adulthood (in my case, for thirty seven years), those landmines become especially volatile. Traumatic effects are often cumulative. Repeated violations in CSA manifest greater, more serious types of "mental illness" in adulthood (Giller 2006).

CSA is a violation of the developing social body, constituting physical injury regardless of the severity of contact and threatening the as yet forming integrity of the self.^{viii} The child is made to keep a secret, both by her abuser, whose actions depend on concealment, and by social constraint, since public knowledge stigmatizes her as sexually violated. There is a brute force to this silencing which imposes a hard lesson in adult realities of hierarchy and subjugation, stripping the child of her subjectivity. These are the terms by which she comes to understand and engage, however imperfectly, in the world. While adults experience the *cessation* of ordinary life in trauma and torture (Scarry 1985:9), traumatic child sexual abuse portends the *preclusion* of ordinary life: "their whole experience of identity and of the world is based upon expectations of harm and abuse" (Giller 2006). This sexual violence and trauma threaten the very basis by which she can become an autonomous and relational self (Figure 5).



A Hopi child named Lenmana holds an infant named Kuwanmana, guided by the hands of the infant's great-great-grandmother and master potter Marcella Kahe. Photo by Kristin Nasafotie, courtesy of Karen Kahe Charley

A single or even multiple incidents of sexual abuse may not be perceived as traumatic to the child. If emotionally neglected, the child may think this degrading treatment is a means of receiving recognition, while a prior emotional trauma may create the conditions for routine abuse. The events are traumatic when the abused lacks an emotionally supportive context in which to articulate her terror. The greater the social isolation and sense of shame, the more incapacitating the trauma and the possibility that she will experience a breakdown in maturation:

Eventually, often in the third or fourth decade of life, the defensive structure may begin to break down ... The façade can no longer hold, and the underlying fragmentation becomes manifest. When and if a breakdown occurs, it can take symptomatic forms that mimic virtually every category of psychiatric disorder. Survivors fear that they are going insane or that they will have to die (Herman 1992:114).

Children and then adults who have experienced traumatic CSA become isolated both through structural elements of society and through the devaluing of the emotional dimension of human existence in the American cultural construction. With the term “crackpot,” we make light of what is commonly a fractured, emotionally marginalized, and socially silenced existence, further stigmatizing these fragile beings and truncating their social potential. The social cost of child sexual abuse is steep. Literally and figuratively, it can be measured in the lost lives taken in suicide as well as those encumbered by psychiatric disorder.

Restored Bodies: Ethnography, Epistemology, and Emotional Health

It is not sufficient for mastering the trauma to construct a narrative of it: One must (physically, publicly) say or write (or paint or film) the narrative, and others must see or hear it, in order for one’s survival as an autonomous self to be complete (Brison 1997:29).

Ethnography constructs knowledge not in dialogue alone but also through somatic engagement and the utilization of physical, cognitive, and emotional capacities the multiple dimensions of which we may be unaware during fieldwork. As a way of highlighting the contrast, anthropologist Anna Grimshaw explores fieldwork as *practice*, versus as a methodology, describing “embodied ways of working” (“Anthropologies of Art” conference notes, 4/25/03). Our ethnographic authority is grounded not only in cognition but also in somatic apprehension and emotive content that may as frequently derive from dissonance and the clash of cultural values as by analogy with similar experiences (cf. Meneley 1998). Even when analogies can be made, they may

lie at a deeper level than initially thought, and the grasp of a “native’s point of view” can have profound implications for self-understanding.

Just as the anthropologist and rape victim/investigator/survivor/activist Cathy Winkler’s field work gave her knowledge, in the immediacy of her trauma and beyond, of how to confront that experience through an alternative cultural awareness, so my field work among Hopi women potters gave me the means, post-facto, to confront and comprehend my traumatic childhood experiences. My ethnographic authority stems as much from the somatic knowledge that remained within my body, unavailable to my conscious mind until after I had both become a mother (and thus newly engaged with my body) and completed my dissertation, as from the cognitive, analytical tools by which I processed my data and fieldwork experiences. As importantly, the insistence of these Hopi women that I learn to value pottery as they do awakened me to the impoverished emotional dimension of my existence.

Through its critical aesthetic feature of blush, the cultural body of a Hopi pot manifests the conception of an ideal social being whose materiality reveals positive emotion perpetually, as a constant feature of its existence. Hopi pots provide another mode of telling about human existence and are an alternative form of articulating a viable social presence, in both whole and partial states. Yet even as they emanate from an interior state, emotions are not restricted to the mind or subsumed under mental phenomena. In the Hopi conception, emotions – especially glowing, warm ones – are a critical feature of a phenomenological presence in the world that induces social interaction and enhances the ties that bind. Displays of warm feelings that foster sociality are an indication of bodily health, both for the individual and for the collectivity. Based on the Hopi analogy, “mental health” is a misnomer and “emotional health” is far more apropos. Wider application of this terminology where warranted might go far towards removing the stigma of the pejorative label of “mental illness” and its colloquial condescension of “crackpot.”

Hopi women prepare this cultural body, as well as persons in its immediate social network, for the possibility of trauma as physical *and* emotional experience, since physical incapacitation (a crack or worse) brings emotional loss: the failure of the pot to ring, the pot being “wasted” or spontaneously aborted, and the possibility that even the best potter’s efforts cannot alone ensure its capacity to achieve a flourishing social life. Yet despite any flaws, this being *will* have a social life, for Hopis insist that neither pots nor persons should be left alone. A potter’s concern is for the consequences of adverse or traumatic experiences in formative stages of life and their long-term impact on the health and integrity not just of the individual but also of the larger, collective body.

While these potters claim that a pot cannot be remade after firing, first-person narratives from survivors of life-threatening experiences reveal that they can remake – even outlive – themselves following trauma (Brison 1997). Recovery includes fashioning the narrative of our experience and presenting it to an empathetic audience in order to reestablish our wellbeing. Survivors of trauma in adulthood may resist both their trauma and stigmatization, fighting for the reclamation of their selves in the aftermath of sexual violence. Unlike trauma to a mature social being and because our formative selves are compromised, however, survivors of childhood traumatic experiences must newly establish our social selves with bodily and emotional integrity. In the case of adults who experienced traumatic CSA, the anthropological object lesson of Hopi pottery is that ethnographic knowledge, like temper that strengthens the clay from which these life forms are built, provides a means to amplify a transcultural understanding of traumatic phenomena. Moreover, this knowledge provides the ground from which to fortify a life: to rethink, re-embody, and articulate an integral way of being-in-the-world (Figure 6).



The author's attempt at Hopi pottery in the field: a small polychrome bowl whose exterior design is based on one in Hopis, Tewas, and the American Road, a volume to which she contributed as a neophyte scholar (McChesney 1983).

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This work has affinities with that of colleagues whose traumatic experiences and challenging encounters with Western biomedicine have influenced the direction of their professional research (e.g., Brison 2002, Flaherty 2003, Jamison 1995, Layne 2003). It also intersects with ethnographic attempts to narrate the self and analyze one's own experience as lived reality from a feminist standpoint through "processes of engendered construction" (e.g., Behar 1996, Moore 1994, Ochs and Capps 1996).

ⁱ Hopi and Hopi-Tewa women have historically become potters in mid-life, after their children are old enough not to require constant supervision. The pressures of the marketplace, however, and the fact that pottery production is a principal means of "making a living" and supporting households in this community, have resulted in both individuals taking up pottery at younger ages and in increasing numbers of men engaging in the activity. Beginning in the early 20th century, young children of specific families were socialized into market practices in distinction from other members of the community (McChesney 1994, 2003). For a touching, emotional account of the experience of loss from a pot that does not fire properly and its likening to a miscarriage, see the interview of Priscilla Namingha and her daughters in the film "Life of the Clay."

I take the term "thoughtless handling" from Leslie Marmon Silko (1996:26).

ⁱⁱ Besides the somatic symptoms I suffered of insomnia, loss of appetite, and lingering fibromyalgia, what I came to call "adult failure to thrive syndrome," the psychiatric disorders I manifested included clinical depression, dissociation, dysphoria, profound distrust, and suicidality. My diagnoses by mental health professionals included "major depressive disorder," "adjustment disorder," and an "existential problem." I chose not to be admitted to the psychiatric facility because of its further isolation and stigmatization, sensing at a fundamental level – no doubt because I was a newly certified social scientist – that a primary factor in my dis-ease was the frustration I found in fulfilling my desire to be a valued social being.

ⁱⁱⁱ At the time I studied Hopi pottery, I was not yet a mother.

Learning to make pottery sensitized me to the somatic subtleties of forming and processually enhancing a social being. It also brought the issue of emotional attachment and the risks involved in the realization of a life form into full focus.

^{iv} Environmental factors such as widespread media coverage of the scandal of pedophilia in the Roman Catholic Church also triggered my memory, beginning in 2002. My initial sexual abuse occurred at age eleven, with digital penetration by my pediatrician ostensibly conducting a “routine” physical exam to determine if my hymen was intact. I realized then that the priesthood was not the only profession in which revered, powerful men violated little-valued, vulnerable children. My breakdown and the subsequent cataloguing of my personal history in psychotherapy also revealed an emotional trauma of problematic attachment that occurred much earlier in my life, around the age of two. In another account I detail the serial incidents of CSA I experienced that included penetration, exhibitionism, and stalking with contact abuse (McChesney 2005a).

^v Parts of this section are adapted from my dissertation (McChesney 2003) and an article on Hopi pottery aesthetics co-authored with Hopi potter Karen Charley (Charley and McChesney 2007).

^{vi} Of course, even at this level these power relationships are structured by and reproduced within the institutionalized authority of the larger society (Asad 1995, Kleinman 1995). Although they may appear “natural,” these intergenerational, gendered relationships are in fact naturalized.

^{vii} Estimates of the incidence of CSA in the US vary but most are conservative, meaning that the incidence is likely more widespread than data suggest. One source cites more than 100,000 American children affected annually, with one in four girls and one in six boys experiencing an episode before the majority age of eighteen (Botash 2004). The age of sexual consent varies by state or municipality and is sometimes as young as sixteen, as was made widely known through the scandal involving pages in the US Congress (Wilgoren 2005).

My Rochester, NY internist who was chief among a network of skilled health professionals I was fortunate to have aid in my reconstitution, assured me that many if not most cases go unreported, as mine did. Even Botash recognizes the conservative bias in her figure: “The actual number is likely to be higher because these numbers reflect only children whose cases are investigated by Child Protective Services” (2004:2). Without providing a total figure for annual cases, another source states that “about 1/3 of sexually abused children have no [adult] symptoms, and a large proportion that do become symptomatic are able to recover. Fewer than 1/5 of adults who were abused in childhood show serious psychological disturbance.” Yet “40% of all psychiatric inpatients have histories of sexual abuse in childhood” (Giller 2006).

The World Health Organization cites the statistic of 20% of women and 5-10% of men worldwide were abused as children. Sexual abuse would be a subset of this generalized abuse statistic (http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention).

^{viii} For an eleven-year-old child who has limited knowledge of the sexual aspects of her body, and what she does know is considered shameful, the abrupt insertion of a finger into her vagina by her pediatrician, dressed in white lab coat and standing over her exposed body ostensibly to inspect her hymen (an internal body part of which she has no knowledge), is a case of severe contact abuse and penetrating injury. It pales in comparison to the brutal adult women’s rapes described by Susan Brison (2002) and Cathy Winkler (2002), yet its traumatic effects are as insidious. Similarly, the non-contact abuse of exhibitionism is terrorizing if the child feels she is compelled to witness a mature man’s masturbation and is utterly uninformed about male sexual arousal, knows instinctively that her evident distress is what gives the perpetrator his pleasure, and is helpless to escape her horror, as was the case in my second episode of sexual abuse. The conditions that give rise to children’s loss of voice, will and agency, their perceived need to submit absolutely to the authority of any adult whether abusive or not, and their sense of responsibility for this dehumanizing treatment are important topics that must be addressed elsewhere.

^{ix} Survivors of CSA and other forms of torture are often referred to as “victims,” terminology that in my estimation reproduces the structures of power and renders the subject eternally acted upon and not herself active. The term “survivor” acknowledges the agency required to remain in the world despite enormous difficulty, an overcoming of odds, yet can be absent of emotional content. Cathy Winkler (1994, 2002) coined the acronym VISA (victim/interrogator/survivor/activist) to describe the multiple dimensions of the experience of trauma from the sexual violence of rape and determined efforts to reclaim one’s life. Following Scarry (1985), I use the term “prisoner,” as it more clearly denotes a condition predicated on specific, asymmetrical interpersonal relations that constrain both body and mind. But prisoner is not an essential category. Through efforts to interrogate the conditions of our existence and activism to change them, we can be released from an imprisoned state.

Child Sexual Abuse and the Cultural Construction of the Female Body

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These papers by Lea McChesney and Charlotte Haney are thoughtful examinations of women's bodies as culturally constructed in the context of child sexual abuse (CSA). Both papers emphasize the critical role that discourse plays in shaping how women's bodies are conceptualized and how CSA is experienced, as well as the importance of women's agency in coming to terms with and healing from the early traumatic experiences that McChesney terms "formative trauma" (this issue).

These papers build on and contribute to the broader literature on women and the body pioneered by feminist anthropologists. Emily Martin in her book *The Woman in the Body* found that U.S. women experienced their bodies as fragmented, not surprising in a society where science utilizes models of menstruation, childbirth, and menopause that are saturated with images of failed production, waste, decay, and breakdown (1987:197). Two collections during the 1990s took research on women's bodies in a more global direction. Faye D. Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp and their collaborators focused primarily on reproduction in *Conceiving the New World Order* (1995), while Margaret Locke and Patricia Kaufert (1998) look at the medicalization of women's bodies in more local and everyday contexts, but also taking a global perspective. Both collections expanded on Martin's interest in medical discourse, power, and, more importantly, the body as a site of resistance and women's agency, a theme these papers take up from a different perspective.

While much of the anthropological literature has continued to emphasize reproduction and especially the impact of new technologies, very little of this literature has looked at sexual violence in childhood. Other feminist scholarship has addressed the objectification of the idealized female form in the popular American toy, the Barbie doll (Urla and Swedlund 1995), and young white women's control of their bodies through tattooing in defiance of unattainable ideal female body forms represented in mass media (Mascia-Lees and Shpare 1992). While these topics relate to their work indirectly, McChesney and Haney turned to other disciplines and have drawn on the work on Elaine Scarry, Foucault, and specific psychological studies of childhood abuse. McChesney has also utilized anthropological contributions to embodiment and the construction of the self (Csordas, 1994, Ochs and Capps 1996). Rather than exploring the larger political and social

forces that may shape Child Sexual Abuse, McChesney and Haney focus in on women's experiences. In this way these two articles contrast with Singleton's and Zraly's contributions to this issue of *Voices*. Those papers analyze the relationship between sexual violence and the state, with the role of NGOs as potential advocates for women. In contrast, McChesney and Haney examine women's experiences and the ways their own agency helps them to refashion themselves and reject dominant discourses. All four articles continue to interrogate women's agency and make it a central theme in the understanding of sexual violence.

Haney conducted 12 interviews with women who had experienced CSA. I was struck by the variety of experiences that these interviews revealed, from a single rape by a neighbor when she was a child, to a teen-age date rape, to nightly rape by a cousin, and years of incest by a father. Haney presents the emotionally-laden case of Sara who was raped by her cousin. Her description communicates the immediacy of Sara's experiences, though I would have liked more interview excerpts that used Sara's own words.

In analyzing these narratives of danger, Haney argues that the perpetrator recedes and almost disappears. In a seemingly contradictory image, one woman said, "He was so big, I couldn't see him"- conveying both the looming nature of the predator and his simultaneous invisibility. Instead of focusing on the perpetrator, the woman's own body becomes the center of her attention and evolves into a "docile body," to use Foucault's term. The woman becomes responsible for the perpetrator's actions. Some women saw themselves as guilty; others saw themselves as deviant. Women's agency comes through their discipline of their own bodies, thus putting themselves (rather than the perpetrator) in control. They directed their efforts at self-preservation, for example hiding from a perpetrator, or remaining mute during a sexual encounter, wearing baggy clothes, or initiating sex and thus retaining control of when it happens. Here Haney lets her subjects speak a little more, as they anguish over whether CSA could have been their fault. "Was it my fault? Did I like it? I must have liked it? Am I bad?" said one woman as she described her feelings. Sometimes their strategies did not work. The woman who wore baggy pants and a back brace wondered, "What was the turn on?" But still the abuse continued. Sara's cousin always found her, though she remained passive during their encounters and escaped early to college.

Haney employs a powerful visual image to help us understand this process. She draws on Foucault's discussion

of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon (an image familiar to anyone who has read *Discipline and Punish*). In Bentham's plan for a perfect prison, the inmate is always on view from a central source that can see into each of the cells that line the sides of a multi-level rotunda. This produces not only hyper-individuation, but also docile bodies that willingly obey, even when no one is watching. Haney argues that CSA produces the same effects since women adopt strategies that control their own bodies in attempts at self-preservation.

Lea McChesney's paper is more distanced and abstract, even though she is discussing her own experiences with CSA (the recounting of her childhood experiences elsewhere is referenced in a footnote). The narratives are not so immediate and gripping but focus on the metaphorical and philosophical. She tells us little of her own emotional experiences of abuse, but rather begins with her breakdown as an adult and shows us how her research with Hopi potters led her to a better understanding of her own trauma and a path towards healing. She recasts the dominant discourse of women's bodies as deviant and dangerous using Hopi women's discourse about broken pottery or "cracked pots." In doing so she rejects the negative and creates a positive approach to her own conception of self, and by extension other CSA sufferers whom she describes as "prisoners" instead of "victims." Hopi pots are seen as living beings from Mother Earth to be cared for as they emerge from the clay. A broken or "cracked pot" is never seen as disposable, but continues to have an important role in Hopi society.

McChesney's paper also revolves around a telling visual image (aided by her photographs) – that of the pot, as an integral being with lips, mouth, shoulders, and a voice. Pots also reveal emotion through "blush" that "manifests the pot's animate character and is the defining quality of its beauty" (McChesney, this issue). Potters "help" the pot into being so it emerges on its own terms from the clay that has the potential within it. Thus, a second image- the cracked pot- is not "wasted" or thrown away, but continues to have a social life, often as a gift to kin as part of exchanges that knit together social relations among relatives and community members. They, alike with unblemished pots, connect the maker to others and acknowledge that there is always a risk in making pottery, so humans should not strive only for perfection but care for and maintain the imperfect pots as well.

In her paper, McChesney connects the agency of Hopi women potters as they guide their pottery to life with her own agency as she uses her understanding of the philosophy behind Hopi pottery-making to reconfigure a "crackpot" (her damaged psyche) existence into that of a whole human being still connected to others with self worth and the potential to heal herself. In this effort she shows the way ethnographic knowledge can inform a deeper understanding of social

relations through trans-cultural awareness and alternative forms of existence.

These two papers complement each other nicely – one focusing on the trauma of CSA and the negative strategy of creating the docile body and the other emphasizing a re-constituted body and a positive trajectory. I cannot refrain from wishing that each author had incorporated some of the analysis of the other. I wanted more from Haney on how women broke with the traumatic experiences and began to build more positive strategies of caring for the self. On the other hand, I wanted more of McChesney's narrative of her own trauma, more accounts of how she felt and reacted as a child. Taken together these papers start with the usual feminist analysis that focuses on the woman's body as dangerous and defective, but go well beyond this. They point towards overturning a dominant, negative discourse and replacing it with a more positive one constructed through analyzing ethnographic experiences and, in one case, promoting intercultural endeavor. By focusing on women's narratives and strategies that are positive and healing, yet allowing women to bring to light and re-tell their stories of emotional trauma, these two papers make an important addition to the literature of sexual abuse. In addressing the experience of CSA and the role of violence in the construction of gendered social beings, this work might usefully be compared with controversial work on female genital operations (i.e., Gruenbaum 2000, Walley 1997) to widen our understanding of the impact of sexual violence on social persons as they mature from childhood into adulthood, as well as what constitutes traumatic experience in this domain.

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AFA Dissertation Fellowship Announcement

The AFA Dissertation Fellowship provides a \$2000 award to a doctoral candidate in anthropology for a dissertation project that makes a significant contribution to feminist anthropology. The award is intended for the write-up phase of a dissertation project. The 2010 grantee will be announced at the AFA business meeting in New Orleans. The deadline for the 2011 applications is June 15, 2011. Please check the AFA website for updates and more complete information on the fellowship competition.

AFTERWORD:

Steps Forward

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These papers add to the paucity of anthropological information on violence against women and children by focusing on its particularities and ramifications in four ethnographic settings. Yet even with this significant addition, much more work needs to be done as is pointed out in the Introduction. The following overview is written to suggest steps forward. A long-time public interested anthropologist, I believe strongly in the anthropological approach as one of the few social/biological sciences equipped to shed light on gender inequities through time and space. I urge using this knowledge in pursuit of much needed change in ways I outline here.

The way forward is suggested by the moral, social, ethical, and therapeutic issues for thinking about asymmetrical interpersonal relations touched on by the authors. I am particularly heartened by their compelling tone of engagement with our sisters in other societies. I agree that the word “prisoner” is preferable to “victim,” but would point out that both words are relevant for different reasons. Women are victimized by sexual asymmetry because there are few cultural supports to protect them from male claims on their bodies. All the more reason, as McChesney suggests, why women should interrogate the conditions of sexual violence and engage in activism to change these conditions so that we can all be released from an imprisoned state, men as well as women. Hopefully, men will join us in this enterprise in order to find release from the emotional solitary confinement and sexual inadequacy that goes along with male sexual and social dominance.

In the Introduction the editors state that their primary intent for the panel, which sparked this volume, “was to highlight and acknowledge the persistence but invisibility of sexual violence.” They note that sexual violence “is a subject that has not historically received sustained scrutiny in anthropological scholarship.” The exceptions to which they refer include the work of Adelman and Winkler published in 2004 and 2002 respectively, and my own work published in 1990 (reprinted, with a new introduction and epilogue, in 2007). In fact, I started working on the issue of sexual violence in the 1970s, and published the first article in 1982, an article which received worldwide attention both in the academic and news media but not a word from anthropology.

In my opinion, one step forward would be for American anthropology to engage in a cultural critique of the discipline by addressing the question of why there is a near absence of

studies of sexual violence in a field that prides itself for its “holistic” approach. This is not the place to embark on such a critique, but I would hazard a guess: an implicit assumption of “universal male dominance” and the analytic practice of moral and cultural relativism deter anthropologists from studying and writing against violence against women.

With respect to male dominance, alleging its universality is not conducive to optimism about change. Nor is it empirically correct in terms of the information that can be gleaned from the world’s known and best described tribal societies (Sanday 1981; 1982.) For a discipline devoted to studying the impact of the concept of culture on human variability, one wonders why essentialist arguments are invoked when it comes to the topic of sex roles and sexual behavior.

In their edited book on the subject of violence in war and peace, Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (2004:6) make a different point in suggesting why violence, including sexual abuse, was not considered a proper subject for the discipline. Likening anthropologists to “inverse bloodhounds on the scent of the good in the societies they studied,” these authors suggest that being compelled by the “golden rule of moral relativism,” anthropologists reported no violence from the field.

Anthropology’s long devotion to cultural relativism is increasingly critiqued. In a diminishing world in which communication technology and capitalism have penetrated most societies and in which global warming and nuclear disaster threaten our very existence, it is time to think about participating in shaping the emerging world culture. I endorse Paul Farmer’s critique of the hands-off nature of cultural relativism. “Is every culture a law unto itself and answerable to nothing other than itself?” he asks (2004:47.) Answering this question resoundingly in the negative, he says:

Concepts of cultural relativism, and even arguments to reinstate the dignity of different cultures and “races,” have been easily adopted and turned to profit by some of the very agencies that perpetuate extreme suffering. The abuse of the concept of cultural specificity is particularly insidious in discussions of suffering in general and of human rights abuses specifically: cultural difference, verging on a cultural determinism, is one of several forms of essentialism used to explain away assaults on dignity and suffering. Practices including torture are said to be “part of their culture” or “in their nature”—“their” designating either the victims, or the perpetrators, or both, as may be expedient (Farmer 2004:48).

Farmer ends this discussion with the comment: “‘Culture’ does not explain suffering; it may at worst furnish an alibi” (Ibid.:49). The key for Farmer (Ibid.:28) is “bearing witness...on behalf of others, for their sake.”

Bearing witness on behalf of others for their sake by examining the socio-cultural roots of gender inequality and sexual violence in the interest of activism for legal and social change is an important step forward. With respect to sexual violence, only through anthropology can we develop the conceptual and activist implications of the observation that human sexuality sits precariously on the divide between generalized arousal sensations and culturalized meanings, making sexual agency that turns into violence preeminently social as well as physiological.

Because sexual behavior is guided by sexual warrants that often vary along lines of gender and developmental stage, the first step in bearing witness is to describe local socially agreed upon understandings. Often these understandings are shaped in single sex groups focused on promoting gender identity development and are played out in adolescent or childhood sexual games.¹ The enculturation and acting out of these warrants underlies recurring patterns of adult gender-based sexual behavior. I suggest that the warrants and associated patterns of behavior constitute models of/for *sexual culture*.

The concept of *sexual culture* needs to be stressed in order to move vigorously away from the still-present essentialist thinking in anthropological writing about sexual behavior.² Elsewhere, I describe the feedback between gender identity development and culturally programmed sexual behavior (Sanday 1997; 2007.) For example, in the US we live in a sexual culture in which boys face the possibility of being bullied by other boys if they don't subscribe to certain attitudes towards girls. Who wants to be called “nerdy,” a “dork,” or a “fag” at school? In many adolescent peer groups, a young male is expected to display his “hard-wired” heterosexual maleness. This is odd in light of the obvious homoeroticism of “gang banging” in which boys gang up on a lone girl. Is this a ritual for silencing the feminine in the young male self in favor of a strictly masculine, sexually performing male identity? I think so.

The matter becomes even more complicated when one considers Geertz's (1973: 75-76) point (based on the work of Ford and Beach (1951)) that human evolution exhibits an “evolutionary trend away from fixed activity sequences toward generalized arousal response patterns,” which by increasing the flexibility and modifiability of sexual patterns results in “the justly famous cultural variation in the sexual practices of man.” In a footnote to this comment, Geertz says “this general trend appears already well established in the subhuman primates.” He continues by quoting an interesting passage from a study by Beach (1947: 293-315) that “some [male] chimpanzees have to learn to copulate” when placed

with receptive females because “the naïve male appears incapable of carrying out his part of the mating act, and it has been suggested that a great deal of practice and learning is essential to biologically effective coition in this species.” By comparison, Beach notes, adult male rodents “reared in isolation copulate normally the first time they are offered an estrous female” (see Geertz 1973:76, fn55.)

I find this information fascinating because of its focus by males on male sexual performance phylogenetically and cross-culturally, and because of the implication that females are necessary for male sexual learning. How do sexually mature but inexperienced male humans learn heterosexual copulation? In some male dominated US sexual contexts, males learn from one another by watching more experienced males force themselves on a woman and then participate, such as in “gang banging,” in order to acquire their badge of masculinity. In more equitable contexts, other young males might learn from older women who teach them. Or they and their girlfriends may experiment and teach one another. These three scenarios involve three very different kinds of sexual agency: male dominance exerted by means of sexual violence; female sexual authority; and sexual equity. We need much more information on how sexual learning is accomplished in this and other societies.

Geertz's (1973:44) concept of “control mechanisms,” i.e. the “plans, recipes, rules, instruction (what computer engineers call ‘programs’) for the governing of behavior,” is useful in elaborating the concept of *sexual culture* noted above. I define *sexual culture* in terms of the customs, beliefs and acts, communicated in social relations, stories, songs (and other discursive media), regarding the conditions for arousal, performance, and satisfactory consummation by which males and females first experience and then establish their sexual selves (see Sanday 1997; 2007: Introduction.) Cross-culturally there is a correlation between indicators of social male-dominance and forced sex, which first suggested to me that sexual culture is part of the sex/gender socio-cultural system (Sanday 1981; 1982). More work needs to be done to investigate the particularities related to this generalization in specific societies today, such as is found in Singleton's paper in this volume.

Judi Singleton's account of the Zuma trial raises in my mind the unstudied issue of female investment in male dominance. Unless educated or otherwise aware of cultural alternatives, women whose sexual consciousness is woven from the fabric of male social dominance will inevitably conspire to uphold its infrastructure, partially as a means to promote the interests of their sons and partially to maintain their position in the broader cultural system of gender status and identity. In the court case described by Singleton, the two-thousand women who demonstrated on behalf of Zuma, the male defendant in the case, may or may not have understood that by so doing they were agreeing with

the sexual warrants or implicit authorizations to which he alluded in defending his right to penetrate Khwezi's body.

Using the testimony of Jacob Zuma as her focus, Singleton describes various aspects of the Zulu sexual culture which takes paying *lobolo* and the way a woman dresses as giving men the right to penetrate a woman, sexual warrants also mentioned by one of the males she cites. It appears also that men think they have the obligation to penetrate a woman who allegedly displays sexual interest by means of her attire in order to satisfy her, an interesting twist on the American adolescent male notion that "she wants it."

In the above discussion, I use the word "penetrate" as opposed to the usual "have sex with" for a reason. Studying rape trials in the US (Sanday 1997) I found that although female complainants who have experienced nonconsensual sex do not say in their testimony that they engaged in sex, news commentators often use this phrase. In the Zuma case, Singleton first quotes Khwezi's testimony regarding her response to Zuma's move on her—"I couldn't walk, I couldn't move, I couldn't do anything"—and then writes in the next sentence that she "also claimed that *Mr. Zuma did not wear a condom while they engaged in sexual intercourse*" (emphasis mine.) It is not clear whether this slip is Singleton's, the young woman's, or the news source from which this statement was taken.

It is quite common for news articles in the US to describe alleged rape in terms of joint male and female agency by using the phrase "engaged in" when discussing court cases brought by women against men. It turns out also that US news commentators are limited by their editors in what words they can use in describing sexual acts, which raises the issue of the discursive public sphere of sexual behavior. The discourse of the US sexual culture does not recognize one-way sexual agency, other than through the term rape. I use the term *penetrate* to reflect one-way male sexual agency such as illustrated by the testimony of the plaintiff in the Zuma case. This point raises the question of when one-way sexual agency turns into rape because of lack of consent by the other party. Did the defendant assume that the plaintiff consented through her silence? What was the nature of the silence? Did she moan in fear because of the hurt she felt or because of passion; or, did she evince no reaction at all? How is consent defined legally in South Africa? Does paying *lobolo* give men the legal right to a woman's body in the national legal context if the accused hails from a local context in which men view this as giving them nonconsensual access to a woman's body? Do women who hail from the same local context have the same understanding? Is dress that might show hips when seated treated as legal consent in the courtroom?

According to Singleton, it is not at all clear what the South African law means by consent, beyond the obligation to visibly demonstrate nonconsent through struggle.

This was also true of US law until recently. Evidence of struggle was once the focus of most US rape laws. Feminist activism in the 70s brought about change in many of the US state statutes so that consent is now more specifically defined. Indeed, some statutes have gone so far as to require affirmative verbal consent (see Sanday 1997; 2007:221;224-26.) Defined in this way, the legal issue turns not on whether a woman resisted or on how she was dressed, but on whether she said "Yes" or "No." It is not helpful to women, as Singleton notes, that the Sexual Offenses Act adopted by South Africa's Parliament in 2007 "defines rape but it fails to provide an explicit definition of consent." No doubt work like Singleton's will pave the way (if not already doing so) for changing the semantic vagueness in the South African legal meaning of consent.

Maggie Zraly's paper is a heartrending example of how women victimize women in the interest of broader cultural issues. She remarks on the fear under which Rwandan genocide survivors participated in *gacaca* courts, which rather than "building trust and tolerance among and between individual citizens," as these courts were meant to do, consigned survivors to daily fear for their lives. Even worse, by asking survivors to testify, government authorities and women leaders of the genocide survivor associations both recognized and denied the danger to which they were subjecting these witnesses. Zraly points out that this is another example of "structural violence," such as described by Scheper-Hughes, Farmer, and Bourgois for other situations. The point here is that promoting reconciliation as "an unequivocally necessary exercise for building post-genocide trust and tolerance" showed extreme insensitivity to individual lives in the interest of maintaining cultural, social, and political institutions.

Zraly is right to equate this practice with structural violence—in this case, the violence rendered by an institutional social policy. The situation she describes brings to mind Carol Nagengast's (2004) compelling discussion of individual versus collective rights when considering what the UN regards as "nonderogable" human rights (i.e., rights that are protected by most international human rights treaties as part of customary international law, such as the right to life and rights protecting against torture). According to Nagengast (2004:122): "If individuals...are not free to choose whether they are in or out of the collectivity, if they are not free to support or oppose that collectivity, then the notion of group rights becomes vacuous." Nagengast suggests (2004:124) that "ensuring each person's physical and emotional survival takes priority," which means that individuals cannot be sacrificed in order to ensure the "survival of some essentialized group."

The papers by Haney and McChesney on child sexual abuse (CSA) in the US touch on the medical, somatic, and psychodynamic breaks in the body and mind of penetrated

and sexually used children. Not having studied CSA, I must ask questions in response to these papers rather than suggest steps forward (although these may be implied by my questions.) The two papers taken together raise a number of issues regarding the formation and consequences of sexual culture in the US. For example, Haney mentions the discursive framing of the female body as being a discourse of “defect and lack, deviance and danger.” She suggests that CSA literally writes this discourse upon the female child’s body. But there is something else to query here. What are the somatic and psychodynamic sources of adult sexual arousal prompted by a child’s body? What is going on with the adult male who is aroused by the docile, unknowing body of a child? Is he at the same age of the child in terms of his sexual maturity? Or is he terrified by the adult female body that may once have abused or frightened him? McChesney’s pediatrician is undoubtedly present in the lives of male children clothed in a variety of forms, playing a variety of roles. A boy infant/child may also face a variety of invasive psychological or physical assaults on his body, not just from adults but from older children as well. We need more male case histories illustrating the possible connection of early sexualized encounters and later abusive behavior.

While Haney’s discussion of Bourdieu’s symbolic violence and Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* is useful, we need more work to shed light on the causes of CSA and its impact on adult sexuality. I understand that survivors of CSA may discipline their adult bodies or slip more quickly into acquaintance rape because of their experience of being used and abused as Haney suggests. However, lack of self-confidence in asserting their own sexual agency by saying “No,” as we see in Sara’s story, is not limited to survivors of CSA.

Many young women, fewer today perhaps, have difficulty in saying “No,” and in making it stick, due to their inability to assert their own sexual agency, either with a “Yes” or a “No.” We need more work on the genesis of female sexual agency, or lack thereof. Is it a consequence of CSA? Can it be attributed to the middle-class socialization of docile girls and to the predatory adolescent male sexual culture? Or, is it some combination of all of the above? Saying “yes” too quickly could turn a young woman into a “working class slut,” in my high school or mark her as “easy” on the campus where I teach. Elsewhere (Sanday 1997:100), I ground the history of such beliefs in early nineteenth century religious writing on “true womanhood,” which defined four cardinal virtues for women—“piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.”

McChesney’s account of child sexual abuse is brave. Was the pediatrician giving himself permission to penetrate the sanctity of a girl-child’s body? Or, was this then common practice in the medical profession? We need to know more when McChesney is ready to put her experience under the

ethnographic microscope. Accounts like hers will help to develop public social warrants regarding the respectful and reassuring examination of young female bodies in the doctor’s office. My guess is that most young girls absolutely hate the internal exams of young adulthood and are terrified when undergoing their first. To this day I don’t feel comfortable being examined by a male gynecologist. Lacking such respectful approaches to female internal exams, has there been an implicit cultural assumption or sexual warrant about automatic access to women’s bodies in the US, at least for some medical professions? How are these practices related to the experience and incidence of sexual violence? Certainly these are areas for future work.

McChesney’s sharing of how her Hopi fieldwork helped her to work through the trauma is extremely helpful. By giving us the gift of her vulnerability and her journey toward putting the cracks back together she passes on the gift of the cracked pot given to her by the Hopi potter. I was struck by her account of the Hopi custom of giving their slightly cracked but beautiful pots to friends and kin. As she says:

Family members understand the labor involved in pottery, including the Zen-like dedication to the task and the inability, despite one’s best efforts, to control the outcome. All the more reason Hopi potters celebrate each successful pot on its emergence into the world. Yet they also know that most flaws are not fatal, and they value the warm social interactions engendered by pottery making and embodied in their pots (McChesney, personal communication.)

Ethnographers should think more about passing on the gifts of knowledge about life given them by their “friends and kin” in their ethnographic home. Someday, I will pass on the emotional knowledge I gained over the span of 20+ years of fieldwork in West Sumatra, Indonesia. It was deeply therapeutic and enormously healing for reasons having to do with my confinement to a semi-orphanage-like situation during the first eight years of my life. Today, Peggi Sandi, my namesake, is 23. She bore her first surviving child in May of 2009. She and her family asked me to come to the naming ceremony and name the infant boy, which I did in July of that year when the baby was old enough to chew a mix of rice and bananas (the metaphor for becoming Minangkabau.) Placing ourselves on the same plane or being placed there (with the same name) by those with whom we have lived as ethnographers and from whom we have learned so many lessons about life is for me part of the exhilaration of doing ethnography and being an anthropologist (see Sanday 2002, 2010.) It is not just that we study others to learn about ourselves; it is also that we bring their riches home and weave the jewels of the knowledge they have shared with us into the fabric of the emerging world culture. Some ethnographers not only live in two worlds; we are

also formed by these worlds, a sentiment and experience McChesney certainly shares.

My understanding of ethnography as therapy was crystallized by McChesney's comparison of the Hopi concept of a "cracked pot" to our notion of a "crackpot." Her story is a wonderfully expressed example of why the world needs ethnography and anthropologists to write up their findings. By likening the local meaning of the Hopi cracked pot to the cracked psyche re-constituted with the special sheen and color of maturity as a metaphor for her own healing, McChesney brings us face to face with the therapeutic aspect of anthropology in a way that highlights what anthropology can offer to humanity.

Taken as a whole, these papers provide anthropology with a continuing path forward for working and writing against sexual asymmetry and its frequent cultural correlate, sexual violence. Since women hold up *half the sky*—as the ancient Chinese proverb states—it is time to think of them as equitable partners in social and sexual life. It is also time to think in terms of warrants for sexual symmetry, not just for the health of women but that of men as well, because they are also imprisoned by warrants for male domination and abuse. As Bourdieu and Wacquant understand, men are dominated by domination. They see this reality in the theme of Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse*, an observation worth quoting here:

We find in this novel an extraordinary perceptive analysis of a paradoxical dimension of symbolic domination...namely the domination of the dominant by his domination: a feminine gaze upon the desperate and somewhat pathetic effort that any man must make, in his triumphant unconsciousness, to try to live up to the dominant idea of man (2004:273.)

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¹ The concept of "sexual warrants" authorizing specific kinds of nonconsensual and consensual behavior is taken from George Lipsitz's idea of a social warrant, which he defines in terms of a "socially agreed upon understanding" (Fischer 2006:449 citing Lipsitz 2001:xiv). According to Lipsitz (2006:454) "(a) social warrant is a widely shared and generally understood definition of what is permitted and forbidden in society. It is rarely written down but draws its power from the diffuse authority of collective ideas and actions. It functions as a de facto Bill of Rights, articulating foundational principles about obligations and entitlements and about exclusion and inclusion. Social warrants author and authorize new ways of knowing and new ways of being."

² I am grateful to Judi Singleton for suggesting a number of sources for more on the social construction of sexuality and gendered identity within the frameworks of language, history and political economy. See, for example, Connell (1987, 1995), Elliston (1995), Gilley (2006), Kulick (1998, 2006), Massad (2007), Morrell (1996, 2001), Reddy (2005), Ross and Rapp (1997), Rubin (1975), Weeks (1981, 1985), Weismantel (2001), and Xaba (2001).