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Happiness is a Warm Gun Militarized Mourning and Ceremonial Vengeance:

Toward a Psychological Theory of Combat and Manhood in America, Part III

Chaim F. Shatan, M.D., C.M.

"Do unshed tears shed blood?"

Introduction—Towards a Psychological Theory of Combat and Manhood in America

"Be this the whetstone to your sword, Let grief convert to anger."

A bumper sticker proclaims: "My dog, yes, my wife, maybe, my gun never!" This suggests that guns are as American as Mom, apple pie, the Mah-rines and John Wayne. John Wayne recruited many men—including psychoanalysts—into the Marines. We should be curious about the powerful attraction exerted by such elite groups.² What do they offer in exchange for their ability to enforce servitude?

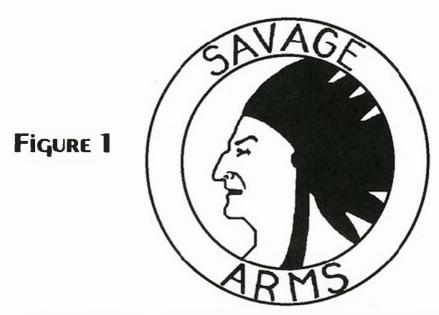
Let's begin by examining the connection between organized killing and male character development in the Marines.

The unhappy odysseys of Vietnam vets, American troops in the Philippine wars, and wounded soldiers on Civil War battlefields, have given me hunches about the common experience of the U.S. warrior. So have totems like the emblem of "Savage Arms," a Springfield, Massachusetts rifle factory³. (See Figure 1) This totem, a giant target of an Indian chief, tells us that the biggest game in America was the MANHUNT. And the victim became the hunter's totem.

The Beatles' song "Happiness is a Warm Gun" was highly popular among American troops in Vietnam. John Lennon took the song's title from a National Rifle Association slogan, itself adapted from the 1968 Broadway show *Peanuts*. But in the comic strip show, the slogan was "Happiness is a warm puppy."

I have a hunch that the popularity of the song throws light on the impact of basic combat training (BCT) and counter-guerrilla training (CGT) on millions of malleable adolescents. I will analyze the effects of BCT and CGT with the following goals in mind:

1. To rearrange some central myths about manhood, such as the John Wayne image;



- 2. To examine how young men are militarized into combat teams in the Marines;
- 3. To explore the transmutation of "impacted" combat grief into ceremonial vengeance and combat; and,
- 4. To speculate about new masculine initiation rites and new bereavement rituals.

Let's examine how the Marines turn adolescents into combat teams, how young recruits are militarized. How do the Marines tie in with myths and rituals of male identity, with unfinished mourning, with manhood and vengeance?

I. THE MARINES

In "looking for a few good men," the Marines exemplify how the military affects our national life. Marine Corps training is based on mass surrender, not on elite status. Its ceremonies are deceptions which cloak this imposture.

Let's look at six aspects of basic Marine training:

- A) Combat Training and Combat;
- B) Erotization of Violence;
- C) Bogus Manhood;
- D) Ambush and the Embrace of Death;
- E) Homecoming; and,
- F) Impacted Grief and the John Wayne Myth.

First, I'll summarize:

A) Basic Combat Training and Combat

I have described this process in detail in my paper "Bogus Manhood, Bogus Honor: Surrender and Transfiguration in the U.S. Marine Corps." The paper tries to convey the impact of a third of a century of modern, industrialized combat training, capped by counter-guerrilla warfare. It underpins my impression that enduring personality changes were wrought in millions of malleable adolescents during the Vietnam decade.

Basic combat training constitutes a massive intervention in the social process by which values are formed and transmitted. It is replete with serious, sometimes fatal, training "accidents." Although called accidents, they are never described in the training manuals, and are usually hushed up. I suggest that they are unwritten, vitally important aspects of "training." They are allowed to continue so that BCT will be more "realistic." As one paratroop sergeant said, after a training accident, "that's what we joined for, that kind of risk." Or, as one general said, in supporting combat training for women, "after all, combat is a fact of life."

Basic Training includes:

- 1. De-individuation:
- 2. Identification with the Drill Instructor (DI);
- 3. The rewards of surrender; and,
- 4. The Military Reality Principle.

1. Loss of Individuality

The Marine Corps pursues three *totalitarian ideals*—uniformity, pursuit of maximum bodily fortitude—"guts"—and the rewards of surrender. Men on horseback tingle at the swarms of naked, bald bodies being examined and inoculated "on the double," like newborns or death camp inmates—the first step in de-individuation.9

Recruits are rebuilt into fighting men by the Drill Instructor, who relentlessly "degrades, sanitizes, immunizes, clothes, equips, pains, trains, scolds, molds, and polishes" them.¹⁰

Once their identity has been smashed and recast, the masses of men move as one man; they *uniformly* perform extravagant acts of endurance on command. The swarm, the mass, has become a Combat *Unit*.

2. Identification with the Aggressor, the Drill Instructor¹¹ (see Chart I)

Like orchestra conductors, DIs change their fatigues many times a day to look crisp and dominating in front of the wilting, raw recruits. Manhandling by a feared, admired Super-Sergeant appeals to seventeen-year-olds who are having trouble with adult male identity. The tyranny and cruelty of basic training transfigure personality. Young men identify with the aggressors who train them, and surrender their former civilian identity. They emerge as champions of a new military identity, reborn in uniform. The world of military reality has replaced civilian reality. The military code of conduct, with its rigid standards, takes the place of everyday personal ties and civilian rights.

3. The Rewards of Surrender

The DI provides the classic sadistic dividend—the rewards of surrender. In return for total submission, the warriors earn the right—the duty— to manhandle the "enemy" just as they themselves are manhandled in training.¹⁴ Destruction and killing are legitimated as "combat."

Chart I. Identification with the Aggressor in Vietnam Combat Training

OFFICER : TRAINEE : GI : "GOOK"

Basic Combat Training transfiguration of personality

combat zone Counterguerrilla Warfare

In Basic Comat Training, the Officer (aggressor) treats (:) the Trainee in the same way in which he wants (::) the GI, in the combat zone, to treat (:) the "Gook." The resultant "transfiguration of personality" prepares the future soldier for Counterguerrilla Warfare.

Authoritarian reflexes, peer pressure, and obedience to authority replace doubt. Responsibility is spread up and down the Chain of Command. This is a handy institutional arrangement for *relieving superego scruples*. Officers act like priests, assigning guilt or absolution. The goal is to create soldiers with little empathy, quick to violence, and under constant pressure to act. 15

4. The Military Reality Principle

As personality is reintegrated, recruits evolve a new "combat personality." A combat personality judges events through the military reality principle with its new styles of affect, cognition and action. The military reality principle embodies the siege mentality and the paranoid position of combat: permanent hypervigilance, reflex obedience, and instant tactical response—to any threat, real or imagined. Combat vets walk on the inside of a park path "not to be seen.... Any man who's been on patrol knows that." This is how soldiers learn to survive when reality is linked with death.

As for affect, Basic Training discourages tenderness and grief, ¹⁸ for these feelings promote neither a unit's survival, nor its fighting strength. ¹⁹ The impact of this aspect of combat training on relations between men and women brings us to sexuality and combat training, to the *erotization of violence*.

B) Erotization of Violence

The harassed troops become a *combat unit*—a group with an unstable group superego which succumbs to its dreaded, admired Super-Sergeant, and is ready for instant violence. Like a cult, a combat unit has primitive beliefs and rewards. The leader's promise is viewed as magical, especially if he has been properly "blooded" in Vietnam. He is believed to be immune to destruction, giving his men a charmed life, as well as protection against retaliation and against superego pressures.

The attractiveness and softness of women are risky to the military. Tender feelings are the most anti-martial of sentiments: they may

disrupt combat training and combat. To harness youthful male sexuality for killing, the "John Wayne" mystique mandates total separation from women for six to ten weeks. On this glory road, the man waves goodbye to his girlfriend, while kissing his horse. He needs his horse for combat, but not his girl.

When killing is legitimated, sexual imagery becomes sadistic and pornographic. One vet said: "Combat feels like subjugating women. Combat feels like you're fucking like gangbusters, macho-mean, like you're punishing the woman—or the enemy." A Navy vet said: "A ship is at a big disadvantage against a shore battery. When seen from shore, a ship sticks out like a virgin in a whorehouse." And another vet said: "I'd like to love the way I learned to hate in the 'Nam. But love's a pretty heavy word." Page 18.

Automatic weapons symbolize both merciless conquest and the squandering of virility in masturbatory fashion. Eroticism and destruction are blended in an orgasmic thrill of violence. "Power is the ultimate aphrodisiac." (Apocryphal saying attributed to Henry Kissinger).

The dynamic energy of sex is linked to the Pentagon ideal—addiction to violence, killing and combat. Sexual pleasure at owning a weapon is joined with its preternatural destructiveness. During weapons training, the DI points to his M-16 and then to his genitals, and chants: "This is your rifle, this is your gun. One is for killing, one is for fun." This becomes a refrain, like the taunting of bayonet practice. A bedtime ritual is praying "God bless the Marines. God bless my sergeant. Pray for war," then sleeping with your rifle. All this was echoed in the Beatles' song, "Happiness is a Warm Gun."²³

Philip Caputo, in his novel *Indian Country*, presents an eroticized image of a rifle: "To stifle his longing to rush out and touch her,...he fondled the carbine, its steel so cold and stern, and formed a mental blueprint of its inner parts...."²⁴

Marines are trained to be "fag-baiters." After ten weeks without women, they regard women—especially foreign women—as vessels for their lust. Affection towards women imperils obedience and "discipline." Only discipline earns the Commander's praise. Only obedience turns you into his power appendages, manipulated by him and sharing morsels of his might—sharing in that magical thrill of destructive power over life and death which relieves fear.

Some instances of eroticized violence in Vietnam were:

- a) Helicopter door gunners with erections while firing;25
- b) Rangers on ambush ejaculating at the sight of an enemy "exploding;"
- c) Paratroopers ejaculating while jumping;26
- d) Exploding detonation caps inside the genitals of captured North Vietnamese Army nurses; and,
- e) Stuffing enemy genitals in the mouths of dead Americans or dead Vietnamese.

Specific Vietnam Examples

I. "Albany George"

After years of high altitude bombing, "Albany George" was switched to close ground support. His initial mission involved machine gunning "gooks" and seeing his targets. The first "gook" got away after George's bullets kicked up some sand around his feet. The second "gook" was wounded, and the third blew up. George was horrified to find that he had developed an erection. He went to his flight surgeon to resign his commission. The flight surgeon said his reaction was very common, and he'd get used to it. But George argued that eroticized killing was foreign to his religious upbringing, and resigned his commission.²⁷

II. "Frank"

"Frank" got an exalted feeling of fearlessness and almightiness from using his M-60 machine gun. He felt like a "real man" when "parts of bodies flew all over the place." The excitement felt like ejaculation. His greatest thrill came from having intercourse while firing bursts from his machine gun.²⁸

Here are Three World War II Examples:

- I. The pilot who dropped the A-bomb on Hiroshima named the plane after his mother, "Enola Gay." Momma, like a gigantic rifle, gave birth to an immensely destructive bullet. The bomb was called "Big Boy." The bomb dropped on Nagasaki was called "Fat Man."
- II. "An A-bomb...dropped on...Bikini" was wrapped in the famous black lace photo pin-up of "The Great American Love Goddess," Rita Hayworth.²⁹ III. Tailgunners on World War II bombers often developed erections while firing.³⁰

C) Bogus Manhood

Separation from women helps channel the unfocused sexuality of young recruits into bogus group manhood, ready for split-second violence without compassion. "Shoot first and investigate afterwards." You feel big and strong at the expense of the defeated. The "potency" is bogus: it depends on subjugating the victim. The "product" is bogus: savage strings of Vietnamese ears are as dehumanized as lampshades made of Jewish skin. Vietnam films like Apocalypse Now, Platoon, Full Metal Jacket and Basic Training³¹ show that the central ingredients of bogus manhood entail readiness to act, with instant violence and without compunction. These ingredients facilitate the "natural dominance of the psychopath" in modern warfare.³²

Still widely used in schools is that classic of pap, *Through Basic Training with Walter Young*—a book designed to "get them before they are twelve." It focuses on "building men" through humiliation, public degradation and submission. Then, as one raw recruit said: "I was chewed up by the Vietnam war machine and spit out unfeeling to become the finger that pulled the trigger." Like Custer and John Wayne, these men lost touch with their tenderness and their ability to mourn.

Informal Nazi-style trappings reached a peak of death worship among crack killer squads who called themselves "Bloodhounds," "White Warriors," "Wolves," "Skulls," or "Dealers of Death." They wore SS Death's Head regalia, and left calling cards with the Ace of Spades or the Skull and Crossbones after their "visits." One Ranger group's motto was: "If you kill for money you're a mercenary, if you kill for fun you're a sadist, if you kill for both you're a Ranger!" ³⁴ And "Standing on Other Men's Graves" gave the illusion of omnipotent power over death, of symbolic immortality. ³⁵ No wonder one vet wrote:

Yea as I walk through the valley of death I shall fear no evil For the valleys are gone And only death awaits

And I am the evil36

D) Ambush and the Embrace of Death

The average Vietnam ambush, lasting 15-30 seconds, conveys the true psychotic reality. The darkness and silence are annihilated by foreboding, by flashes of light, explosions, floods of startled and startling sensations, spasms of fear, and feverish sweating while shivering and cold to the bone. Something is beating a deafening rhythm in the jungle: you realize that it is your own heart pulsating against your rib cage. "Time is compacted" and refuses to move on. There is no past, and no future. Each second feels like a separate parcel of time. In that moment, the membrane of old reality is torn asunder, leaving no boundaries and no guideposts. Now it is you who feel unreal. Death is the reality now. Death comes from everywhere and nowhere. To live, you must learn to embrace the everpresent nature of death by wrapping it in yourself like a new "introject," a reservoir of evil and destructiveness. Only then can inner and outer reality feel at one again. Otherwise, you are maladapted to the vast web of suffering in which you are enmeshed. Otherwise, you will succumb to sensory dislocation, death or mutilation.

All that in 15 seconds....³⁷

E) Homecoming: "Back Through the Membrane of Reality"

With brutal suddenness, Vietnam warriors were rotated home over a one to three day period, rarely with buddies, creating not only jet lag, but "time lag." After this bludgeoning shock, it is hard for the veteran to recapture his repressed and regressed civilian identity, and to return to his eclipsed civilian reality principle. Through an inner struggle, he feels the acute personal loss of his *symbiotic combat unit*, while remaining attached to bogus manhood, the "tough guy" mythos of the warrior cult. Meanwhile, there is no one to talk to, no kindness or gentleness, no respect. There is also guilt feeling about the distress of family members who don't know what happened to him, but only that he seems somehow

permanently changed. He feels ashamed over upsetting them and they feel afraid of him.³⁸

In the present, both military and civilian time frames exists at once [see Chart II], like a double exposure.³⁹ I call this simultaneous existence in both time frames "perceptual dissonance." A Vietnam veteran called it "living in a split time zone." After the initial triumph of survival is over, a wide spectrum of post-combat phenomena may emerge. Called "symptoms," this array includes: restlessness, guilt feelings, indiscriminate rage, startle reactions, "flashbacks," sensory disorientation, combat nightmares, and anguished doubts about regaining feelings of love and trust for others.

How long will it last? Do you have to grow "scar tissue" to get over it? Some take years, some bleed indefinitely. There's no answer, certainly not right after homecoming.

"Flashback," or partial dissociation, is the most dramatic of post-military phenomena. Niederland has called it "hypermnesis," the polar opposite of amnesia⁴⁰.

I speculate that flashback is related to an alarm reaction on the part of the neuro-endocrine system, followed by long-term autonomic and neuro-endocrine adaptation to combat stress. It would fall within the category of Mardi Horowitz's "disorders of the stress response." Standing with one's back to the wall is a portable aspect of siege mentality.

"Highway One:" An Extreme Case of Flashback.

A truck driver drove Vietnam's Highway One "like a bat out of hell" for a year. Seven years later, he became a copper mine truck driver. The one-lane, snaking dirt road felt like Highway One. Soon, he began to see a split image in his rearview mirror: on one side, Highway One, on the other, the copper mine road. He knew that Highway One was in the past, yet he was panic-stricken and shaking at the end of each day from his struggle to avoid a crash. His new job recapitulated his military job, and carried him back to Vietnam just as surely as seeing NVA troops might have. We do not know whether living in a split time zone led him to accept this job.

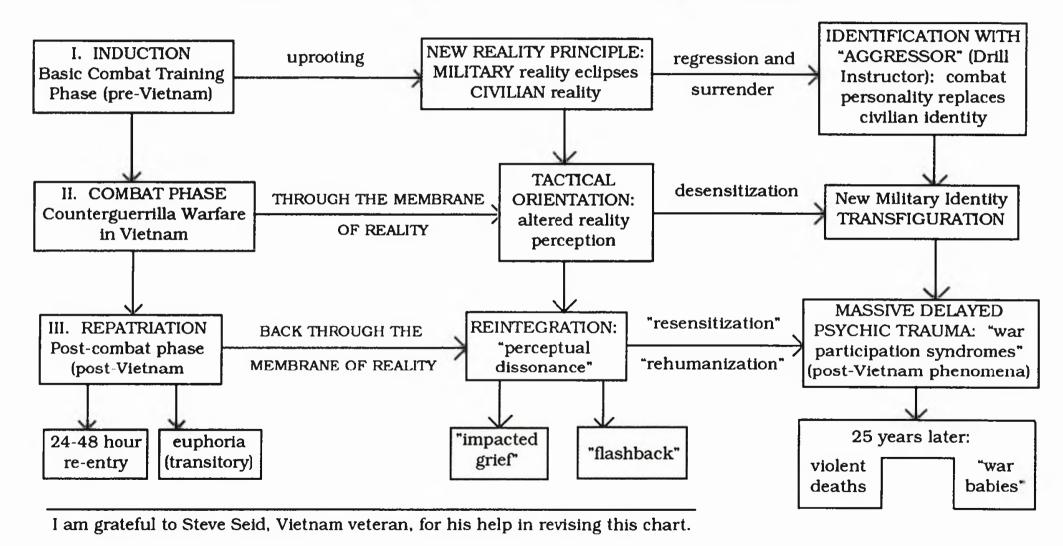
"Coming home, there was no homecoming."

F) Impacted Grief and Bogus Manhood: The John Wayne Myth

In war, destruction and killing relieve the tensions of the loss of buddies and of the paranoid combat stance. Civilian life demands that these seething impulses be restrained and sealed over. Yet the need to grieve collides with the terror of "appearing weak." This conflict threatens the enduring military identity, yet presses constantly for utterance. Such a clash leads to unfinished or "impacted grief" in which an encapsulated, neverending past robs the present of meaning. Unconsummated or impacted grief may prevent intimacy, and can produce other "symptoms" and "syndromes."

Chart II.
Through the Membrane of Reality

Phases of transfiguration and reintegration before (I), during (II), and after (III) combat.



When grief becomes impacted, the soldier's sorrow is unspent, the grief of his wounds is untold, his guilt is unexpiated. If this process does not lead to depression or flashback, its affective energy can still be militarized and turned into addiction to combat.⁴³ In other words, the erotization of the combat unit can be converted back into combat or combat surrogates. These surrogates include mercenary enlistments, re-enlistment ("re-upping"), police work, security work, or compulsive or fugue-like re-enactments of combat situations.⁴⁴

After discharge, the vet still clings to his conviction that the "heroic" John Wayne image will see him through, that its bogus military "glory" will maintain his personality, and that *ancestor worship* will be life sustaining. A secret hope remains that the counterfeit ideal of warrior manhood can be embraced once more. The symbolic immortality of the undying combat unit asserts the triumph over death of "all who have gone before and all who will come after."

Despite the Marine mythos, loss and change—the two faces of bereavement—remain core experiences which demand consummation and resolution. Combat training and combat may suppress—but not eradicate—human mourning. This brings us to the relationship between grief, myths of manhood, and vengeance.

II. Manhood and Vengeance—A Hypothesis

"Dispute it as a man" or "Feel it as a man"?46

Since antiquity, Western male childrearing has embodied ideals of hypermasculinity. While women are viewed as carriers of emotion, men have been programmed to detach themselves from emotional expression: dependency, nurturing and caregiving are defined as the province of women and children. The warrior ideal is the extreme. To promote this ideal, men are reared to progressively separate themselves from sentiments of attachment and loss, leaving the language of affect, ritual and expressive movement to women. Male grief is "hardened" into ceremonial vengeance: scapegoating supplants mourning and unshed tears shed blood.

Grief and intimacy, dependency and mourning—bonds and broken bonds—are viewed as unmanly. They interfere with combat effectiveness. To limit the growth of tender bonds, male character development is crystallized around active aggression, around aggressive impulses and aggressive behavior.

The breaking of pair-bonds is the central issue in bereavement.⁴⁷ As we have seen, modern combat training assiduously discourages intimate attachments. Since love may end in broken bonds, in loss and grief, "trainers" fear that the death of a beloved buddy will render a soldier useless for combat.⁴⁸ Instead, training fosters "antigrief"—soldiers are absorbed into the corporate entity of the immortal legion⁴⁹. This metaorganism concentrates on maintaining the symbiotic "virility" and

collective survival of the combat unit, transcending the existence of its individual members.

Let's examine three aspects of this masculine evolution:

- A) The subversion of the adolescent superego;
- B) Rebirth in uniform; and,
- C) Militarized Grief.

A) Subversion of the Superego

The armed forces know why combat training must begin with early uprooting from home and separation from women. The age of seventeen, eighteen, or nineteen provides the last best chance to effectively reorganize aggressive impulses in young men. The fluidity of adolescent superego development permits personal boundaries to dissolve, subverting one of civilization's foremost achievements, the <u>superego</u>. It is replaced by automatic obedience to authority instead, by identification with the aggressor—the DI—and with the Corps. The code of conduct of the Corps, with its own standards and its own ideals, replaces civilian inner direction.

B) Rebirth in Uniform, the Core of the Warrior Ideal

In the militarized personality, aggression diverts loss and mourning into ceremonial vengeance. Scapegoating replaces grief, unshed tears shed blood. Men focus on rebirth in uniform—on the trading floor, the assembly line, or the Army. A uniform is the emblem of a single function, obedience or destructiveness. Reincarnation as legendary warriors promises collective rebirth to all who have died for the Corps. Command over the death of others asserts that sowing death can triumph over change and death, and provide symbolic immortality. It erases "feminine" feelings of vulnerability aroused by the death of comrades, and replaces those feelings with worship of the changeless and uniform legion.

The DI's insults are a message that *loving*, caring feelings *endanger* "virility"—a message that affection transforms men into women or gays, objects of contempt: "ladies," "pansies," "fags," "fairies," "slits," "girls," "limp dicks."

Or: "If you don't stop giggling, bending your wrists, and blowing each other, I'll make you wear panties, bras, and Kotex under your uniforms." 52

Such insults redirect emotional and erotic attachments away from women, especially mothers—away from Mah-Mah, to the Mah-rine Corps, a substitute corporate entity (see Ma Bell, etc.). Men are expected to cradle their weapons in their arms, rather than embracing their babies or their loved ones.

C) Militarized Grief and Ceremonial Vengeance

Militarized grief and ceremonial vengeance are widespread in war and peace. There are many literary, historical and clinical records of militarized mourning, both civilian and military. To be the bearer of bad news has been a thankless task since history began. I shall give

examples of militarized mourning and ceremonial vengeance from combat, literature and civilian life.

- 1. The My Lai massacre is a byword, a paradigm of war atrocity. It illustrates militarized mourning in wartime. ⁵³ It began when Lt. Calley's commander, Capt. Medina, was eulogizing a beloved sergeant killed in ambush. Suddenly, Medina turned the memorial into a vengeance-ridden pep talk and a call to arms. ⁵⁴ Charlie Company, smarting from collective wounds, became galvanized for the slaughter of the innocents—the My Lai massacre. In an act of militarized grief and symbolic repair, its unshed tears shed blood. Women, children, old men and livestock were blamed for the death of comrades. ⁵⁵ All of them became dehumanized as "gooks" and were massacred by the surviving soldiers. These combat survivors denied their own mortality by dealing death. Such denial of death is celebrated in Western literary epics since the *Iliad*.
- 2. In literature, ceremonial vengeance is a perversion of mourning. The messenger of grief may be scapegoated, even killed for bringing evil tidings. Shakespeare and the 19th century Russian cavalryman and writer, Lermontov, offer vivid images of mourning transmuted into ceremonial vengeance
 - a) Shakespeare's scapegoats—Macbeth

"Dispute it like a man" or "Feel it as a man"?

Many of Shakespeare's heralds of doom fear for their safety, if not their lives. *Macbeth* provides a notable exception in the character of Macduff. Macduff leads the plan to unseat the assassin, Macbeth. When Macduff leaves Scotland to join the opposition in exile, Macbeth exterminates his entire family. When Macduff learns this, he suffers a paroxysms of grief. He cries out in agony, "All my pretty ones? did you say all?"

The lords and cohorts urge him to "dispute it as a man." 57 But Macduff responds:

I shall do so:
But I must also <u>feel</u> it as a man:
I cannot but remember such things were
[That] were most precious to me.⁵⁸

Crown Prince Malcolm is eager to put the bereaved and weeping Macduff into a fighting mood. He spurs him on to:

Make us med'cines of our great revenge, To cure this deadly grief...⁵⁹ Macduff agrees that he will no longer "play the <u>woman</u> with mine eyes,"⁶⁰ but will turn his gricf into "valor against the tyrant." "This time goes manly,"⁶¹ exults Malcolm.

"Revenge to cure this deadly grief" wins out so that Macduff now "disputes it as a man." This transition from "feeling it as a man" turns grief outward as combat. As Malcolm says: "Be this the whetstone to your sword; let grief convert to anger...blunt not the heart, enrage it." By slaying the enemy, he inflicts grief on others, and denies the inevitability of mortality and bereavement.

However, Macduff also consummates his grief personally, as part of his own being and purpose. And so, the messenger goes unharmed, despite his terrible burden. In fact, surgeons tend his wounds. Is it possible that Macduff requires no scapegoat because he allows his bereavement full expression?

Yet in this Renaissance play, there is still a conflict. Only minutes before he calls tears feminine, Prince Malcolm urges Macduff to "Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break."

Elsewhere, Macbeth asks his aide, Seton, "What was that sound?" The reply, "It was the cry of women" is taken as sufficient. For the militarized Macbeth, the cry of women is synonymous with the wail of mourning. What has become of "feeling it as a man" for Macbeth? Without feeling, he is dehumanized and descends into animality.

King Lear, wandering alone on the heath, meets the blinded Duke of Gloucester. Lear cries out to him, "You see how this world goes?" And Gloucester—blind—rejoins, "I see it—feelingly." 63

b) Lermontov's A Hero of Our Time (1840)⁶⁴—Anti-Grief

In A Hero of Our Time, Lermontov—a Tsarist officer describes a deep and loving friendship between two soldiers—a young cavalryman and an old captain. Their perfunctory reunion, years after their separation, pains the captain. As the young soldier gallops off, he throws his literary notebooks to the old soldier, who busies himself with his horse to avoid tearful farewells. But the narrator sees that the old officer's eyes are moist and asks him, "What will you do with the notebooks?" The captain's voice breaks as he chokes back his tears and replies gruffly, "Oh, perhaps I'll use the paper from the notebooks to stuff cartridges." He aborts his grief by converting his friend's intimate farewell gift into a weapon of war. Despite his pervasive sorrow, he copes with his "unmanly weakness" by falling back on vengeful antigrief, on the military mode of fighting off loss and injury. Like John Wayne, he, too, tends to his horse, and represses his tender—his so called "womanly"—feelings.

c) Here's a case of militarized mourning in civilian life: shrines and cartridge cases:

A 23-year-old man, who lost his father as a boy, creates a new home for his family. In three years, his mother lies dead from cancer. He joins a rifle club. After target practice, he feels rejuvenated, and lovingly stores his weapons in his mother's room. He is unaware that, except for target practice, all his warlike actions—tenderly dismantling, cleaning and oiling his guns—take place in the repository once used by the dead—her room. The room is arranged like a shrine, spare and dark, devoid of the furnishings of everyday life.

He denies all grief for his mother, but "suddenly" becomes a racist—ready to drive the rising flood of blacks and Hispanics out of his city. In analysis, he finds that he unconsciously equates these "foreign elements" with the surging alien feelings of grief which he is struggling to control. He yearns to inflict the wounds of grief on symbolic others rather than experience them himself.

His shrine holds empty ammunition canisters and leather cartridge cases—"just the right size" to store his dead parents' papers: birth, marriage and burial records, love letters, rent receipts, doctors' bills yellow with age, and old photos. These are his holy writ, scrolls and icons—all contained in cartridge cases and canisters.

Only when he works through this material in therapy does he recognize that his military ceremonials serve to fight off his mourning for and hatred of the parents who abandoned him through death. Only then is he able to excavate his frozen, "impacted" grief and to permit his life to go forward. Aware of the tie between shooting and bereavement, he loses all interest in guns, and stops scapegoating minorities. He becomes pacific, even compassionate.

III. Discussion: Grief, "Militarized Mourning," and Manhood

Human grief wears many mantles: among these are

- A) "Normal" grief;
- B) "Militarized Mourning;" and,
- C) Symbolic Wounds.

A) "Normal" Grief

At one time, mourners used to sob, beat their chests, wring their hands, tear their hair, rip their clothes, and even rend their flesh—ageold bereavement behavior. However, the affective aspects of the grief reaction have become largely internalized, especially in men. Conflicts

about grief, about separation or parting from the lost person or lost ideal, take place deep within the psyche. "Normally," the bereaved do not hit out.

After the Exodus, Moses commanded the Israelites to adopt new bereavement rituals. One striking rule forbade self-inflicted wounds when mourning the dead. Instead of self-mutilation, the bereaved were told to rend their garments⁶⁵—a symbolic substitute for the psychic damage of bereavement.

Such a radical change in emotional expression, in affecto-motor behavior—from concrete to abstract substitute activity—must entail new and greater internalization of the conflicts aroused in all of us by the death of near ones. We are entitled to assume that Moses had to enunciate this new commandment because self-mutilation was standard in historically earlier bereavement practices.

A century ago, Sioux women would often chop off a finger joint after a close male relative was killed in battle. (Contemporary anthropological evidence informs us of cultures which still observe such self-mutilation rites, as in New Guinea.)

"The work of grief" consummates this newly internalized process. But in *pathological* grief, tearing of the flesh may erupt from the unconscious. Ayoung sculptor "accidentally" severed part of his thumb while welding his first sculpture after his father's death from cancer. 67

In *melancholia* (or pathological grief), there is an *excessive* internalization of the real or symbolic loss. This prevents recovery from, or adaptation to, the wounds of grief.⁶⁸

B) "Militarized Mourning"

Militarized mourning (MM) is one form of pathological grief. It may develop after the fading of the initial triumph at living when so many have died. It externalizes the vast emotions of survival guilt, shame and aggression felt towards the dead for "abandoning" the living, and towards the living for surviving. ⁶⁹ After massive manmade disaster, such guilt and rage may be deflected and redirected, allegedly to "honor" the "sacred" dead. The targets of this ceremonial vengeance are substitutes for the departed, scapegoats for the damage done to the group. What is the damage in need of repair? It is the breaking of an attachment or of a social bond, a wound to the body politic, losing a war, the wiping out of a family or military group.

The survivor may feel tortured by his failure to prevent all those deaths—whether of 60,000 or 6 million. He may identify himself with the destroyers of the deceased, as Sgt. Dwight Johnson did.⁷⁰ He may, at worst, believe that he himself was one of the destroyers, whether of his own comrades in battle, of the "enemy," or of other inmates in the KZ camps. Of course, much of this is repressed.

In militarized manhood, Macduff's ideal of "feeling it as a man" is replaced by a caricature of male character development, built upon legitimized violence. This caricature separates intimacy from male

identity. It plays down the "soft" emotions of love, lament and support. It emphasizes "hard" attitudes: duty, obedience, fighting and winning. In short, character and adaptive lifestyle are permanently changed in both war and peace. A significant feature of this change is the inability to grieve completely.

Reunions of elite combat groups have been flourishing. They go beyond swapping war stories. Often, they stage realistic combat engagements, old and new. They draw upon the largest number of unemployed combat veterans since the U.S. Civil War. Recruiting of mercenaries is routine at these get-togethers—for Angola and Northern Ireland and Nicaragua, for El Salvador and, formerly, for Zimbabwe (Rhodesia). One reunion sponsor is *Soldier of Fortune*, the disturbingly successful magazine for mercenaries.⁷¹ Publisher Major Brown, U.S. Army (Ret.) was Commandant of the Army Disciplinary Barracks in Milwaukee, Wisconsin early in the Vietnam war.

Of course, I wonder about the "Delta Group" which finances Soldier of Fortune: The Journal for Professional Adventurers. But more significant is its blossoming circulation. As a thin quarterly it began with about 15,000 copies. By the second year it doubled in size, came out eight times a year and sold 125,000 copies per issue. As a monthly, it sponsors an annual convention, revels in destruction, links pornography with Nazi symbolism and violence, and used to openly recruit for the old Rhodesian Army on its back cover.

Should we be on the lookout for the development and growth of such social groups which practice militarized mourning? Should these phenomena be viewed as early warning signals, or beacons, forecasting the initiation or resumption of calls for violence, or for combat, perhaps even of calls for authoritarianism and war?

C) Symbolic Wounds, Symbolic Losses

Should we be on the lookout for *people who cannot mourn fully*? They remain dependent upon, and *attached to*, the lost object or lost cause. Inability to confront the torment and suffering of bereavement is not limited to any clinical category. Rosenbaum reported a patient who showed "no…grief or mourning when faced with an important loss, but rather developed a paranoid state" —the type of paranoid transformation at the core of militarized mourning.

Since we are symbol-making animals, perhaps the most fundamental losses are "symbolic" wounds. Many veterans felt that their belief in the value system of the United States had been wounded. Others experienced defeat as serious blows to their manhood, their honor, and their competitive strivings.

Given the right conditions, can processes akin to militarized mourning occur on a group or national scale? Can the loss of territory (the Rhineland, Danzig), the loss of empire or the loss of six million be perceived as symbolic traumata which stimulate large scale vendettas?⁷⁴ This would parallel the experience well known to combat soldiers—that

often only combat relieves their tension, their depression, their loss, their need to "pay their dues" by getting hurt, their need to strike out at others—or at themselves.⁷⁵ The combat response persists *after* the combat setting no longer exists externally: it persists because alternative ways of purging these emotional tensions are not available, so that the psychotic experience of combat remains internalized.⁷⁶

I have described how BCT and CGT discourage compassion and grief. Instead they promote a paranoid posture like that of Rosenbaum's patient, with its vengeful hunt for targets, external or internal.⁷⁷

Meanwhile, public and private ceremonials are still needed to facilitate the closing of communal ranks, the healing of the wounds of grief. The atrophy of such psychosocial customs prevents groups and nations from dealing with these essentials.

Three hundred and fifty years ago, Sir Francis Bacon, Chancellor to Queen Elizabeth I, proposed specific discharge rituals for disbanded armies, rituals to prevent demobilized soldiers from creating civil strife. A few remembrances and some hospitals for maimed soldiers were, he asserted, insufficient. He recommended that European rulers resurrect the ancient Roman pageants, the triumphs, the great laudatives and donatives. After Vietnam, only the returned prisoners-of-war, and some missing-in-action whose remains were recovered, received comparable public acknowledgment.

Vietnam veterans were forced to create their own anti-heroic war memorial in Washington, D.C. They bore the entire cost. The U.S. government gave no funds. For thousands of veterans and their families, the unveiling of this monument became their long-delayed homecoming—a profoundly therapeutic event. The President of the United States was conspicuously absent from Washington throughout the entire dedication.

IV. Conclusions-America Imagines Manhood: Militarized Mourning, Ceremonial Vengeance, and Coming of Age as a Man

"And then there's that whole mourning strain.... In America we rarely talk about World War II. They [the Russians] talk about that war as if it happened yesterday."

Larry Rivers,80 1977

A) Bogus Manhood and Militarized Mourning—The John Wayne Myth

Militarized mourning is a substitute emotional satisfaction or compromise formation, rooted in the denial of grief. It is not a sublimation. At its peak, the individual or the collective can feel relief, transports of joy, intoxication, even almightiness. However, as psychoanalysts know, substitutions can bring only temporary comfort from lament denied. Such "pay as you go" security must be repeated and expanded to sustain the illusions which fill the gap and provide relief. It

does not heal the narcissistic wounds of grief, old or new, any more than pathological depression heals wounds. "Only the mourning for what was missed, missed at the crucial time, can lead to real healing."81

What was missed at the crucial time? Nurturing and thoughtfulness, vulnerability and compassion, are shunted aside and atrophy. They are replaced by the development of a parody of toughness, molded into the "power-junkie" of bogus manhood. Violence and power are maximized while affection and grief are soft-pedalled. Unfinished or impacted grief turns into revenge.⁸² In a nutshell, soldiers coming out of "Today's Action Army" have trouble with grief and intimacy due to:

- 1. De-individuation and identification with the DI (the aggressor);
- 2. The rewards of surrender;
- 3. The legitimation and erotization of violence;
- 4. Separation from women;
- 5. The paranoid posture of combat; and,
- 6. The mystique of ancestor worship.

These processes percolate into society at large and promote the militarization of character. One example of militarization of feeling is found in civilian life when a man compliments a woman with what he feels is the highest accolade: "You think like a man." By this he means the ability to absorb statistics, numbers, data and body counts without emotion, to deal only with "the facts." Such men have been socialized to avoid the fact of emotion. 83

B) Alternative Models of Male Emotionality—From "Any Boy Can Win" to "Any Kid Can Play"

Let me return to the psychohistorical problem I posed earlier. The increasing legitimation of violence as an ingredient of bogus manhood has grave implications for the "engineering" of social control and consent. If we are disturbed by this engineering, we need to study what promotes successful resistance against psychosocial indoctrination during male development. Early formative tasks include the integration of adolescent initiation rituals and illusions, the integration of inchoate infantile and sexual fantasies, of wishes and needs.

Do we have any choice about the diversion of male character away from "soft," tender and nurturing impulses towards "hard" orientations which center on aggression? How did expressiveness and tenderness become the province of women? Can we foster models of male development which facilitate tenderness and feeling? Can we learn from the sharing of feeling states between men who have followed different paths toward manhood in different societies? Perhaps this can throw light on the fate of feelings in men.

Model 1. United States: "Any Boy Can Win"

In the United States, winning is a central theme in the making of a boy's self image. Boys learn early that "Any boy can win." Corporations

love coach Lombardi's motto: "Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing." This shows up in drag races, on the commodity exchange, in street fights, in airlines advertising.

Model 2. Scandinavia: "Any Kid Can Play"85

In 1976, a Norwegian-American camp director told me he had replaced the theme "Any boy can win" with "Any kid can play." He abolished competitive games and scorekeeping. Girls and boys played baseball together.

Swedish psychologists and political scientists were amazed when I asked them how Sweden had become peaceful and noncompetitive. They said, "It's our history." Yet only two hundred years ago, Swedish armies swept across Europe. This shows that social change can foster changes in emotional development. Not all male-female emotional differences are inevitable.

In 1983, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, a German poet who had lived in Sweden, wrote: "The [Swedish] state has...governed in a...tidy fashion. The bureaucracy may be overly enthusiastic, but it is not corrupt. And, for as long as Swedes can recall, the state has abandoned a sport...still common [elsewhere]:... the armed manhunt."86

In 1989, the *New York Times* quoted Moses J. Stewart "whose 16-year-old son, Yusuf K. Hawkins, was surrounded by a gang of young whites a month ago and shot to death." The *Times* stated that Mr. Stewart's "immediate aim is the harshest possible penalty for the seven defendants accused in his son's killing.... But the larger goal of Mr. Stewart's cause, he said is 'making black people aware that we are open game and must be prepared to protect ourselves." ⁸⁷

This hints at the interweaving of psychic and social fabrics.

Now, back to manhood in America.

Model 3. United States: Manhunt and Conquest

The "Father of our Country" gave birth to it through war. Since *de Toqueville*, the armed manhunt and the lust to conquer the virgin frontier have impressed foreign observers as U.S. male traits.⁸⁸ The manhunt went beyond vigilantism. In 1908, newspapers described the killing of "miserable Digger Indians" by San Franciscans out shooting as part of regular Sunday recreation.⁸⁹ In 1988, four New York cops shot a woman to death for running a red light, and not stopping.⁹⁰

The first A-bomb explosion began the conquest of space.⁹¹ Its father, an all-male collective, cabled President Truman: "Baby is born." Since baby has no mother, he's a *tough boy* and now lives underground in a "crib." With this kind of mystique, it's not surprising to hear a man say, "I was falling in love as fast as a bomb comes from an F-15."⁹²

Model 4. Fighting for Power—"A Son of a Gun" or "Why Can't My Boy Learn to Fight?"

To Imperial America, Vietnam was "she." "She" had to show that our leaders had "guts" and "balls." Lyndon Johnson said, "I've got his pecker

in my pocket" to show that someone was in his power.⁹³ Our actorpresident said, "America is standing tall again"—a John Wayne posture. The Philippines were "screwed," in both senses, by Teddy Roosevelt's successors for fifty years.⁹⁴

Why should this concern us? It should concern us because not all Western cultures share identical images of manhood and power. The French find it natural that intellectuals can exercise power, and that power can be intellectual. Russians assume that prolonged, intense mourning is a male trait.

Our playing fields provide gore and glory. Our boxing champions are *World* Champions. The baseball season ends with the *World* Series. Super Bowl players want to "tear opponents' heads off" for putting their "cleats in our chests." These attitudes can turn into *failed adolescent initiation rites*, involving brutality and self-destruction. 95

From 1949 to 1953, I and other psychiatrists worked with adolescent males at Hillside Hospital, a psychiatric hospital in New York City. Every visiting day mothers—as often as fathers—besieged us with the demand, "Why can't my boy learn to fight?" Since boys in the U.S. are expected to prove their masculinity through violent aggression at an early age, these parents felt that their sons had failed their adolescent masculine initiation rites.

SUMMARY: "Sons of Guns" and "The Great Shoot-Out"

Within the limits of heredity and history, I feel that psychosocial choices can be made about individual emotional development and against indoctrination. Choices can be made about social forms of coping with attachment, intimacy and loss. We can design and introduce new adolescent male rituals, new masculine initiation rites, and new bereavement customs. Choices are even now being made which bridge the gap between realms of feeling traditionally assigned to one sex and denied to the other, between woman as feeling and nurturing, woman as the traditional keeper of the emotions, and man who shows "grit" instead of pain and need. Just before World War II, boys in a Montreal high school studied Shakespeare's Henry V, while girls studied As You Like It. During the same period, in the Soviet Union, boys focused on the war sections of War and Peace while girls concentrated on the peace sections. 96

Violent competition is supposed to promote male maturity in America. Men often feel complimented when they're called "real sons of guns." Then they can join John Wayne in what Karl Menninger called the "Great Shoot-Out." John Wayne died of cancer from shooting a film in a Utah canyon which had been rendered radioactive by atomic tests. However, Hollywood's John Wayne is alive and well in the heart of every "big, badass Super Sergeant," and in his methods of discipline—including forbidding all bowel movements for the first week of Marine boot camp.

I have described some of the thrills which authoritarian leaders long for. They are fascinated by cruel relationships. Tyranny's death-grip can

be imposed, not only on the "Master Race," but on many of us. Much has been made of the Marine Corps' sense of community: it provides a home and roots for men who feel confused. But the Marines' community demands that each worshipper be ready to dissolve his identity into the bodysoul of the charismatic DI. 98 The Marine Corps offers its members a bond, an oath that—if they shed their individuality—they will become *emanations* of, one with, the Supreme Legion. This transformation is based on the sexualization of destructive power and on the rewards of surrender. 99

The dissolution of identity is not community, though it can relieve loneliness. Its success is due to the recruit's ability to regress to an earlier stage of development, in which he is again an unseparated appendage of the domain ruled over by the Giant and Giantess, the DIs of the nursery. That kingdom reflects some laws of our social structure. That social structure may carry in its womb some seeds, not only of bogus manhood, but of militarist totalitarianism, where happiness is a warm gun.

Happiness is a warm gun
(Mah-Mah, bang-bang, shoot-shoot)
Happiness is a warm gun
When I hold you in my arms
And I feel my finger on your trigger
I know no one can do me no harm
Because happiness is a warm gun
(Mah-Mah, bang-bang, shoot-shoot)¹⁰⁰

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