Embodiment, Authority and the International Criminalization of Sexual Violence against Women

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EMBODIMENT, AUTHORITY AND THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINALIZATION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN[1]

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Abstract: This article analyzes interviews with African American women about their work prosecuting sexual and gender based violence at international tribunals. The analysis distinguishes abolitionist and early feminist themes from psychologized human rights discourse on trauma. Thus, these feminists avoid pathologizing victims, unlike much policy discourse on trauma and crisis intervention.

In 1999 *Women and Therapy* published interviews with women involved in international criminal prosecution of rape in a special issue devoted to atrocities against women in the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. This article analyzes the texts of two of these interviews with African American women. The first is with Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia between 1997 and 1999 and an original drafter of its rules. McDonald also oversaw genocide cases before the Rwanda Tribunal. The second is with Patricia Viseur-Sellers, a Legal Adviser on Gender Related Crimes and Senior Acting Trial Attorney for the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. I am interested in two premises running through these interviews that articulate both old and new political discourses of bodily autonomy which different generations of feminists have appropriated in order to publicly assert female sexual freedom: firstly, the themes of embodiment as a source of political knowledge and of bodily violation as a question of freedom; secondly, the conflation of ideals about psychological health with ideals of individual freedom, bodily integrity and democratic politics. Both women speak of slavery, mass war crimes, rape, torture and genocide as similar kinds of traumatic political processes, which not only cause individual psychological problems but also give rise to further social violence. My analysis distinguishes the

classically abolitionist themes, which inspired women's organizations to take up the question of sexual autonomy from late twentieth century psychologized human rights discourse while also showing the historical continuities within feminist theorizing on the politics of sexual violence.

Female embodiment and political authority on the government of women's issues

McDonald and Viseur-Sellers speak of their bodily empathy for victims of atrocity, particularly sexual atrocity during foreign conflict, as a source of authoritative knowledge that informed their legal thinking. When asked about how they found listening to evidence of sexual violence during the Yugoslav and Rwanda tribunals, both women emphasize their bodily empathy with female victims of rape specifically, if obliquely, in terms of having a vagina and not a penis. They speak of female embodiment as a source of knowledge that makes them more likely to notice sexual violence. McDonald puts it this way:

> As a woman, I can feel the act of rape. I can empathize with it. Men look at it differently, if they are sensitive. It is almost as though they see themselves in the shoes of the perpetrator, and they see more the damage that can be wrought, because they could be a perpetrator themselves. I feel, as a potential recipient, that I can feel the pain more. I don't want to be too graphic, but I can feel it in my body more than they can. (Sharratt & McDonald, 1999, pp. 32-33)

McDonald (1999) tells of how a male prosecutor failed to prosecute rape in indictments he wrote based on evidence before the Yugoslav Tribunal. When queried, he claimed there was no support for such charges in the evidence. McDonald went through the materials herself finding "numerous statements referring to rape" by witnesses who said they would testify before the Tribunal if called. When she showed the prosecutor her findings he apologized; however, she had seen

no movement on the issue since then, even though the man in
question voiced a commitment to prosecuting sexual crimes
(Sharratt & McDonald, 1999, p. 31). With this story McDonald
asserts the importance of women's participation in international
justice; when it comes to prosecuting atrocity female
embodiment as well as legal qualifications matter.

Similarly, Viseur-Sellers (1999) speaks of her bodily empathy
with rape victims: "I know from myself personally that when I
started doing this work I didn't go back to my gynecologist for
two years. I'm sure that was part of my reaction to the sexual
violence" (p. 57). She thinks that embodied identification with
victims ensured that prosecutors brought more indictments of
rape:

> [M]any women in the office made an attempt to integrate
> gender policy internally in order to support and accelerate
> our gender policies in the investigations and prosecutions
> of sexual violence. They were very supportive, and
> caught the connection between their everyday life as
> women and the possibility of sexual violence during
> armed conflict. (Sharratt & Viseur-Sellers, 1999, p. 55)

She talks about how over time, and because of the commitment
of women in the office, the topic of sexual violence stopped
being "disquieting, shocking, intrusive or invasive" and became
a valid matter of business for the Tribunal (Sharratt & Viseur-
Sellers, 1999, p. 55).

Ruminating on the difficulty of bringing sexual violence
against women to public attention, McDonald notes that this
required not only an embodied identification on the part of
legal staff but also their willingness to identify with women
politically. Both men and women can find this a challenge:

> It can be very difficult to identify with women's
> issues, for men because of their position of power,
> and for women because some may be reluctant to be
> identified as women. They want to pretend that they
> are equal and that they made it on their own. When

> we talk about sex crimes, sex and gender are important. Many women do not want to acknowledge gender or race. (Sharratt & McDonald, 1999, p. 31)

Here, the judge draws attention to how sexual violence marks victims as powerless and feminized within a culture that conflates power with masculinity. Consequently, both men and women may want to avoid identification with or as victims of sexual violence. McDonald thinks that the professional expertise with victims of sexual violence held by many women working on the Yugoslav Tribunal ensured that the issue did not get ignored because of people's reluctance to associate with it. Many Tribunal staff already had a political commitment to fight sexual violence.

McDonald and Viseur-Sellers speak of their embodied experiences of blackness as also affecting their response to the Tribunals in Yugoslavia and Rwanda and their capacity to identify with victims. In the course of the interview both recount instances when other people socially categorized them as black, assuming they would fit stereotypes of how they wore their hair or expressed their sexuality. Ruminating on racism's lingering legacy in the US, McDonald, daughter of a "half Swedish and half African-American" mother described as "lighter than I am, very light" describes how:

> Once in New York I made an appointment over the phone at the same beauty parlor where my mother has her hair washed and cut. However, when I arrived, I was told right to my face that they did not do "that kind of hair," even though my hair is not that different from my mother's. (Sharratt & McDonald, 1999, p. 29)

McDonald says she prefers being in Europe, away from that legacy. However, Viseur-Sellers (1999) points out that Europe has its own legacy of racism:

> Where I used to live in Belgium men would stop me
> because they thought I was a prostitute on the street.
> I had to tell them, "No I'm not a prostitute but if you
> are looking for one, come with me, maybe I can
> help you." Then I would say in a loud public voice,
> "This man needs a prostitute. Does anyone know
> where he might find one?" They see a tall black
> woman and from their colonial legacy of Zaire the
> only black woman that they imagine is a sexual
> partner. And thus they act surprised and devastated
> when I tell them I am not a prostitute. I am an
> American, an educated American, and they don't
> have anywhere to fit that in psychologically because
> it's not a part of their worldview in Europe. I think
> Europeans need to truly deal with their own colonial
> legacies and sexual myths associated with this
> legacy. (p. 60)

Their bodily link with victims of war crimes is felt in terms of
being identified as sexualized social outsiders as well as being
able to imagine the experience of vaginal rape.

Viseur-Sellers (1999) identifies African American women's
experience of "institutionalized sexual violence" as slaves with
Yugoslav and Rwandan women's experience of war-time rape.

> One thing that I was thinking yet have never
> articulated was the passage of African-American
> women through institutionalized sexual violence
> and raping and the question of how this is related
> to Yugoslav women or Rwandan women today. In
> many ways, and for very good reasons, we tend to
> focus a lot within the women's movement on the
> question of rape. But I think sexual violence is so
> much broader. Violence in general often occurs
> prior to the act of rape. With slavery it goes much
> further than that. Breeding was sanctioned; forced
> birthing was sanctioned; selling of children was
> sanctioned. What about forcing someone to be a
> wet nurse? What about the master or the state

> owning your breasts and you don't own the liquid
> in them? That is sexual violence, yet it is not rape.
> (p. 77)

She hopes that the tribunals leave a legacy that recognizes sexual violence in general, not just rape in the sense of forced penetration with a penis, but also as a crime against humanity. The Rome Statute, which established the International Criminal Court, fulfilled this vision by explicitly naming sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, and "any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity" as crimes against humanity (UN Doc. A/Conf.183/9, 1998).

This assertion of knowledge based upon embodied experience derives from a tradition of abolitionist discourse about bodily integrity, which inspired nineteenth century international women's organizations. Abolitionists in the anti-slavery movement successfully claimed the authority of lived experience to counter eyewitness accounts that slaves in the southern US lived in "happiness and comfort" as the London *Times* reported in 1852 (*Times*, 1852, p.7). Former slaves, such as Mary Prince, who published their stories, addressed such claims. Prince (1831) asserted that people in England had been misled by visitors from the West Indies as to the truth of slavery. She said:

> I have been a slave myself--I know what slaves
> feel--I can tell by myself what other slaves feel,
> and by what they have told me. The man that says
> slaves be quite happy in slavery--that they don't
> want to be free--that man is either ignorant or a
> lying person. I never heard a slave say so. (p. 23)

Such voices transformed public discourse on questions of freedom and personal autonomy, popularizing themes of political philosophy. Autobiographical and fictionalized slave narratives made popular reading in the mid-nineteenth-century-Anglophone world, and characters and scenes from such stories adorned calendars, cups and nursery wallpaper (Fisch, 2000). By the 1900s, Anglophone political discourse could no longer

seriously entertain arguments in favor of slavery (Harrington,
2010).

Feminist "abolitionists" who opposed mandatory vaginal
inspection of prostitutes for venereal disease adopted
abolitionist arguments to assert women's better knowledge of
the female body. Scoffing at doctors who claimed the
examination did no harm, Josephine Butler said:

> If all the male doctors in the world were to tell me
> with one voice that the operation is painless, and two
> or three female prostitutes (even the lowest) were to
> whisper in my ear with sobs and shudders (as they
> have done) that "the pain is dreadful," . . . I should
> believe the female prostitutes, and not the male
> doctors—simply because I am a woman. I know my
> own make, and I know that women, who by the
> hundreds tell me the same tale, do not lie to me.
> (quoted by Wilkinson, 1870 p. 22 in Trumble, 2001,
> p. 59)

Butler, who grew up in a family passionately engaged with the
fight against slavery, led an international struggle against
mandatory vaginal examination which fuelled the formation of
the earliest international feminist organization in 1875, the
International Federation for the Abolition of State Regulation
of Vice.

By the early twentieth century women's international activism
meant that at the League of Nations even conservative male
politicians conceded the need to consult women over questions
of the government of the female body, such as international
trafficking in women. The League of Nations eschewed
interfering in internal politics of nations with the exception of
matters of slavery and people trafficking. Women's
organizations discussed women's customary and legal status in
all nations as slavery or slave-like because of paternal rights to
sell daughters into marriage or prostitution and marital-
exemption clauses in rape law. They linked women's equal
citizenship and economic rights with their right to bodily

autonomy as individuals within marriage and kinship systems. The League provided a forum for such arguments but its anti-slavery committee ruled against considering status-of-women questions (Miers, 2003; Miller, 1994; Rupp, 1997).

While women's international bureaucracy flourished within the UN, the problem of sexual violence and violence against women rarely appeared on its agenda throughout the decades of the Cold War. Anti-slavery groups continued to report on marriage and prostitution customs as "slave like" but were at the "bottom of the UN human rights hierarchy" (Zoglin, 1986, p. 328). The women's organizations in the UN rarely intervened in human rights discourse, articulating feminist concerns within the discourse of development while human rights organizations did not discuss violence against women (Berkovitch, 1999; Connors, 1996). Feminists active in the UN system did have a political analysis of sexual violence; however, they could get no traction on the issue, for example in 1985; the UN General Assembly refused to pass a resolution condemning "violence against women" so that the wording had to be changed to "domestic violence" (Barry, 1979, p. 67; Pietila & Vickers, 1996, pp. 64-68, 133, 143).

Only five years later UN feminists faced a transformed political context in which they could talk about violence against women and be taken seriously. This was not because, as some analysts assume, "the nature of warfare is changing, in ways that increasingly endanger women and girls" (Ward and Marsh, 2006, p.3). The only thing unusual about the rapes during conflicts in the 1990s was that mainstream authorities noticed and problematized them as human rights violations (Barstow, 2001; Brownmiller, 1975; Gertjejanssen, 2004; Harrington, 2010; Tanaka, 2002). The astute campaigning of UN feminists to link human rights with women's rights in the radically altered post-socialist international order brought the politics of sexual violence into the mainstream of UN politics. Charlotte Bunch (1995) describes how a network of feminist activists working within the UN system decided that feminists needed to be "in on" human rights discourse because of its increasing salience and that violence against women provided, "The issue

which most parallels a human rights paradigm and yet is
excluded. You can see in violence all the things the human
rights community already says it's against: it involves slavery,
it involves situations of torture, it involves terrorism" (Bunch
quoted by Friedman 1995, p. 20). Subsequently, this network
targeted the 1993 UN human rights conference in Vienna,
ensuring that the Vienna Programme of Action included a
chapter on women's human rights. (Bunch and Reilly, 1994;
Connors, 1996, pp. 169-170). Also in 1993, feminists
succeeded in getting the UN General Assembly to adopt the
Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women
and appoint a Special Rapporteur on the issue (Pietilä, 2002,
p.53). In 1995, the World Conference on Women in Beijing
helped consolidate the slogan "women's rights are human
rights." The UN Division for the Advancement of Women
reviews implementation of the Beijing Platform at the national
and regional level every five years (Division for the
Advancement of Women, 2010). In the twenty-first century,
United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000),
1820 (2008) 1888 (2009), 1889(2009), and 1960 (2010) link
"women, peace, and security" and condemn sexual violence
putting the issue at the heart of international discourse on
security if not the practice (Tryggestad, 2009; Harris &
Goldsmith, 2010).

Embodied authority played a crucial part in deciding which
actors could speak on questions of sexual violence. The high
profile of African American legal experts in the Yugoslavia and
Rwanda Tribunals reflects this acknowledgment of embodied
authority. McDonald (1999) speaks of being catapulted into the
company of much more senior judges on the Yugoslav
Tribunal, who deferred to her:

> It is amazing because I was the presiding judge, the
> youngest, African-American and a woman. But I
> believe I was respected by both judges. One is ten years
> older than me, the other 20. Yet they respected me and
> told me how quick I was and how much control I had
> over the trial proceedings. I asked one of them when we
> were assigned another case, ''Why don't you take the

position of presiding judge?'' ''No,'' he answered, ''you are doing a good job, just keep doing it.'' (p. 26)

The Yugoslav Tribunal created the position of legal adviser on gender-related crime, which Viseur-Sellers filled, marking it off as an area of specialized expertise within the broader field of atrocity.

The medicalization of sexual violence as trauma

When sexual violence re-entered international politics in the 1990s as a human rights issue, feminists had already developed an established body of knowledge and expertise on the question. Feminists had theorized the link between private rapes and rapes that happened in the context of public political conflict as residing in the common psychosocial impact of the violence. For example, Dianne Russell's (1982) *Rape in Marriage* cited Amnesty International's *Report on Torture* to argue that significant numbers of women suffered torture at the hands of their husbands. Russell argued that violent men used the same techniques on their wives as those described in the *Report*. In both domestic abuse and political torture the perpetrator aims to establish psychological control over their victim. Like torturers, abusive husbands isolate their wives from other significant relationships, use demonstrations of omnipotence, threats, degradation, especially sexual degradation, alongside occasional indulgences and affectionate treatment, the combined impact of which put women into a state of "debility dependency and dread" (Russell, 1982, pp. 282-285). Reflecting upon the impact of violence against women at a social level, on the cover of *Against Our Will* Susan Brownmiller theorized rape as "a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear" (Brownmiller, 1975). Viseur-Sellers (1999) acknowledges this analysis when she says:

> In municipal or domestic situations, you do have a community that is perhaps affected [by sexual violence] on a certain level, with all women being aware that one shouldn't walk through dark parking

> lots at night because we know there is danger. I don't think it's to the level of traumatization, but we have a sense of what is dangerous. Moreover, there is a community reaction in terms of the domestic rape situation. (p. 57)

In the 1990s, feminists interpreted wartime rape through the lens of their existing theories of sexual violence and suddenly had an international audience for such analysis.

In the 1970s, United States anti-sexual-violence feminists had successfully worked alongside anti-Vietnam-war activists and anti-torture campaigners to formulate a theory of integrity violation as a psychological technique of power. This theory linked combat violence with rape and torture in public or private through the concept of psychological trauma. Trauma theory suggested that experiencing or witnessing violations of bodily integrity put people at risk of psychological disturbances such as numbing and avoidance of the memory, combined with intrusive waking re-experiencing of the trauma, nightmares and anxiety. Activists and experts united to get Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) recognized in the 1981 revised edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Bloom, 2000). Therapy for PTSD typically leads the patient to produce an account of the traumatic event which assigns appropriate responsibility to the perpetrator and victim and recasts the victim as a survivor. Full recovery involves the survivor transforming into a "thriver," who has scrutinized her own conduct to cast off the negative effects of victimization and is no longer controlled by the trauma (Davis, 2005, p.167-68, 177-78, 193-206).

This model of trauma and recovery has affected how international authorities deal with collecting evidence of war crimes. The Yugoslav wars of the early 1990s occasioned "probably the first war ever where not only the body and the material needs but also the soul and the psychological needs of the traumatized has been taken seriously on *a large scale*" (Arcel 1994, emphasis in original, quoted in Stubbs 2005, p. 54). The UN Commission of Experts noted its concern with

"the danger of PTSD and its impact on witnesses" after the suicide of a witness who spoke to them during their investigation of violations of international law during the Yugoslav conflict (Commission 1994 Annex IX A. para 63). They incorporated mental-health expertise into their investigation, and this became normal practice at all stages of war-crimes proceedings. According to Viseur-Sellers (1999), both the Yugoslav and Rwanda Tribunals provided witnesses with access to mental health support:

> When investigators in the field interview someone or contact a potential witness who is in a bad psychological state, they will usually attempt to put them in contact with local social services … Then, when they come to The Hague to testify, they have access to medical and psychological services here. When they return home there has to be follow-up. The person still needs services and they need to have access to that local NGO. (p. 72)

She also suggests that people listening to evidence and supporting survivors may need professional assistance as well, "The bailiff who is calling out the case, listens to that testimony every day. What is their reaction? What about the guards who are sitting next to the accused?" (Sharratt & Viseur-Sellers, 1999, p. 60). Reflecting on her own reaction to listening to the evidence, McDonald says, "maybe I am traumatized and I don't know it. It will take a long while for me to feel the full effects of this experience. It was horrible. I couldn't sleep during the Tadić trial. I think it is still inside me" (Sharratt & McDonald, 1999, p. 37).

In the international arena, theories of trauma conceptualize communities and whole societies as traumatized and suggests that recovery also needs to happen on a communal as well as individual level. Viseur-Sellers (1999) says, "in the context of a war, the crime of rape is no longer 'just' rape. It's a crime against humanity manifested through sexual violence … the sexual violence that occurs during an armed conflict is distinctly related to the political and the societal upheaval that

has led to war in the first place" (p. 56). For McDonald (1999) war crimes stem from the same psychosocial source as racism, segregation and slavery.

> [W]hat is happening here is, in a sense, what I have seen as a civil rights lawyer, only that it is happening on a much larger level. Racial intolerance and hatred has not, in my lifetime, risen to this level of destruction. Slavery happened a long time before I was born. (pp. 27-28)

She sees the conflict in Yugoslavia as intolerance and hatred at its most intense, similar to slavery and stemming from the same psychology which underpinned the denial of civil rights to African Americans. Indeed, she analyzes the Yugoslav conflict in order to better understand the struggle against racism.

> When I sit on the bench I am used to, not the horrible atrocities, nobody can get used to that, but I am used to the concept of people being intolerant to each other. At the Tadic trial, I asked a principal, "How can you explain these atrocities when Muslims, Croats and Serbs had gone to school together, lived together, intermarried with each other?" Now I asked him this question because I wanted to know about the conflict, but also because I wanted to know for myself. How can you explain this important battle for desegregation in the 1950s and it's now thought that everybody is going to go to school together and supposedly everything is okay, yet it is not. There is re-segregation and there is intolerance on a different level. (Sharratt & McDonald, 1999, p. 29)

The concept of trauma and its psychological effects links violence from seemingly different historical and cultural contexts as having a common impact.

Both McDonald and Viseur-Sellers (1999) agree that atrocity left unresolved drives continuing intolerance and violence. McDonald understands the Yugoslav conflict and racial

conflict in the US as arising from a failure to resolve past atrocity: "Well, it is all based on intolerance and a lack of respect for difference, and also a failure to resolve what has happened in the past" (p. 28). For Viseur-Sellers (1999) the historical legacy of slavery also provides one of the connecting points between the experiences; she expects that the Rwandan genocide will leave a legacy felt by generations not yet born.

> In Rwanda, the sexual violence that occurred during the genocide, is that related to an African-American sense of slavery? I don't know. I haven't thought about it that much, but what I will say is there will be a psychic legacy in Rwandan society due to the sexual violence. Why should individual psychic scars and societal scars be anything new? I think it's normal. It derives from patriarchy and it is part of the legacy of sexual violence. (pp. 59-60)

This view accords with Yael Danieli's theory of inter-generational trauma; Danieli worked for the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies at the UN and advocated for strong psychosocial programmes in peace-building and refugee work as a way to prevent future conflict (Danieli, 1998).

Medicalization, Trauma, Stigma and Disempowerment

Critics of this new attention to trauma worry that it introduces foreign political domination in the guise of therapy. Vanessa Pupavac (2004) claims "that international therapeutic governance pathologizes war affected populations as emotionally dysfunctional and problematizes their right to self-government, leading to extensive external intervention" (p. 149). In the *British Medical Journal*, Derek Summerfield (2002) complains that "talk therapy implicitly aims to change not just a person's behaviour but their mind – the way a person construes" and that in the context of international intervention this amounts to "pacification" by defusing emotions that could fuel political challenges and change (p. 1106). Workers with experience in delivering aid to refugees have argued that

emphasis on a biomedical concept of trauma may stifle local ways of conceptualizing and responding to extreme suffering (Becker, 2000). After all, trauma theory developed in a specific historical and cultural context: the 1970s Cold War "West," where it made sense to medicalize suffering and take one's problems to a therapist (Bloom, 2000; Davis, 2005; E. Herman, 1995; Young, 1995).

In response to such criticism, international trauma programs have increasingly sought to work with local cultural and community responses rather than impose rigid medical model of individual traumatic stress to be treated by talk therapy (Kienzler, 2008). Viseur-Sellers (1999) argues that individual therapy in the absence of social reconstruction will do little good: "We must talk about rebuilding civil society, as that is the only way that witnesses will ever have long-term psychological protection" (p. 72). Thus, she suggests that politically healthy communities maintain psychologically healthy individuals.

Viseur-Sellers (1999) invokes both African-American traditions and psychological notions of healing in stressing the importance of official apology to prevent further conflict:

> African-American literature speaks of redemption. The perpetrator must seek redemption through an apology to the victim/survivor. … But only when the apology is sincere. You have to acknowledge guilt in relation to the problem you caused. (p. 74)

McDonald suggests that on-going racial tension in the US stems from lack of official recognition and compensation for slavery:

> Many people in the United States say, "What's the problem? We have the Civil Rights Act and you are equal. There is no problem." But you do not beat someone for ten years and then stop and say, "Well I stopped. What is the problem?" I want you to know that you have beaten me for ten years. I want you to

acknowledge the horrific experience of slavery, the complete destruction of a culture. (Sharratt *&* McDonald, 1999, p. 28)

Thus, biomedical constructs only partially inform their understanding of trauma and recovery; while using psychological language of trauma, both women also draw upon their knowledge of African American experience and history in their thinking about political atrocity.

Both McDonald and Viseur-Sellers suggest ways international experts can contribute to de-stigmatizing, or in Pupavac's (2004) terms, de-pathologizing populations and individuals who have suffered trauma. McDonald sees a role for international court proceedings in reducing collective stigma. She argues, "There has to be individual accountability so that there won't be group stigmatization" (Sharratt & McDonald, 1999, p. 33). Nevertheless she acknowledges:

"there is more to it than that because it is a community problem. … However, that doesn't mean that when a Serb is tried the whole Serb nation is on trial. But in a sense it does go beyond the individual, because you need to look at what caused the individual to act in the way he did, so that you can hopefully avoid repetitions in the future." (Sharratt & McDonald, 1999, p. 34)

Viseur-Sellers (1999) discusses the stigma of sexual violence. She suggests that societies need to find ways to remember and honor rape victims just as we remember and honor war veterans:

something we need to do to really de-stigmatize rape. … I gave a speech in Washington in the fall, and I mentioned our indictments, saying that in the future we will know all the names: Foca, the Bungalow, Omarska [an infamous detention center]. A member of the audience approached me afterwards, and said, ''You

> recite the names of those places as if you were referring to Gettysburg, as if they were monumental.'' And I replied, ''Yes, I am, because this is exactly what they are.'' (p. 74)

This idea of honoring rape victims concurs with Susan Rimmer's suggestion that in Timor Leste children of war rape and their mothers be treated as veterans of the conflict and entitled to the same assistance and respect as other veterans (Rimmer, 2006).

Conclusion

Only since the 1990s, has a psychosocial theory of violence as trauma entered mainstream international policy and practice in the United Nations system. Critics of this change in international discourse have argued that a narrow biomedical understanding of trauma risks pathologizing individuals and communities who depend upon international assistance following conflict or disaster. However, the relatively recent political history of trauma theory shows its roots in abolitionist, pacifist, human rights and feminist traditions. Since the 1970s, the concept of trauma linked feminist critiques of private violence with anti-war and human rights critiques of public violence: in both contexts theorists argued that violence worked as a technique of psychological domination to render victims submissive and compliant. Viseur-Sellers and McDonald's political defense of individual bodily integrity draws upon this rich thread of ethical thinking about the body embedded in practical political struggle in defense of oppressed people. Their reflections upon stigma suggest possibilities for psychosocially aware interventions to avoid some of the pitfalls of trauma theory.

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