

Humiliation, Rape and Love: Force and Fraud in the Erogenous Zones

*'Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues'
(Hobbes in 'Leviathan')*

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(Dr. psychol., Dr. med. Evelin Gerda Lindner, University of Oslo, Institute of Psychology, P.O.Box 1094 Blindern, N-0317 Oslo, Norway, e.g.lindner@psykologi.uio.no, <http://folk.uio.no/evelinl>)

Abstract

This paper is about the intersection between war, sexuality and gender. It encompasses micro-social relations and macro-social structures and integrates several theoretical and disciplinary traditions (social psychology, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, feminism, history and international relations) Its object is to discern the logic of male-female relations expressed in two kinds of society: those societies that accept the standards associated with human rights and those societies based upon the principle of honour that reject or are unfamiliar with human rights as a framework for living. The paper brings to visibility the meta-logic of humiliation that informs these two frameworks based, respectively, upon the idea of human rights and the idea of honour. Once this meta-logic has been understood, it allows strong links to be seen between public and private spheres: on the one hand, the arena of warfare between nations and ethnic groups, on the other hand, the arena of love and sexuality between individuals.

Keywords: Rape, love, honour, dignity, marriage, war

Introduction

This paper asks the following question: How have perceptions of love and sexual abuse, especially rape, in male-female relationships been altered with the spread of human rights as a set of standards for judging human behaviour? Behind this questions lies another: How have perceptions of human identity been transformed by the transition from honour to human rights? This refers to the transition from traditional values and practices that emphasise the collective honour of the group, especially its male membership, to more 'modern' values and practices that emphasise the dignity of every individual, regardless of gender. Throughout the paper, particular attention will be paid to the way that transformations of this kind impact upon the nature of humiliation and the way it is experienced within male-female relationships.

The increasing use of rape as ‘weapon’ in war is a pressing current problem. Romantic love as a historically relatively new and fragile basis of social institutions as marriage is another contemporary difficulty. Both, seemingly unconnected, are introduced in this paper into one common conceptual framework, namely the meta-logic of humiliation.¹ The backdrop is the present process of globalisation that brings people and cultures together and permeates societies at all levels, thus driving transitions that were unimaginable until recently.²

Humiliation involves the imposition of harm upon a victim who is, or has been made or has become, helpless.³ Humiliation has the potential to cause intense suffering, probably more intense than any other assault. This assertion is supported by the research of, for example, Retzinger and Scheff (Retzinger, 1991; Scheff and Retzinger, 1991) who study shame and humiliation in marital quarrels. They show that the suffering caused by humiliation is highly significant and that the bitterest divisions have their roots in shame and humiliation.

The approach adopted in this paper contributes to the integration of several theoretical and disciplinary traditions. It draws upon such fields as social psychology (the author’s own core discipline), sociology, anthropology, philosophy, feminism, history and international relations.⁴ The guiding themes are the dynamics of humiliation and, in particular, the polymorphous character of love and rape as a framework for encounters between men and women.

This paper draws upon evidence collected by the author in two contexts. The first context is work as a clinical psychologist in Germany (1980-84) and Egypt (1984-91). The second context is research⁵ as a social psychologist examining the part played by humiliation in

¹ See Lindner, 1999; Lindner, 2000a; Lindner, 2000b; Lindner, 2000c; Lindner, 2000d. The theory of the humiliation process will be developed further in a book I am currently writing in collaboration with Dennis Smith. Smith is professor of sociology at Loughborough University (UK), see his publications: Smith, 2000a; Smith, 2000b; Smith, 2000c; Smith, 1999; Smith 1997a; Smith 1997b; Smith, 1991; Smith, 1984a; Smith, 1984b; Smith, 1983; Smith, 1981.

² New information communication technologies are the driving force in these transitions. See the relevant work in this area carried out by Ray Loveridge (Hooley, Loveridge, and Wilson, 1998; Casson, Loveridge, and Singh, in Boyd. and Rugman, 1997). See also Cooperrider and Pasmore, 1991; Tjosvold, 1996; Zhu, 1999.

³ That helplessness may have many causes, including deception and self-deception. For example, a woman who is being manipulated into believing that she is loved, while in fact she is abused, is helpless; her helplessness stems from deception by the perpetrator and/or her own lack of good judgement. This example will be pursued later.

⁴ This paper belongs also in the line of work that seeks to make innovative interconnections between clinical psychology and social psychology. See, for example, the work of Scheff (Scheff and Retzinger, 1991; Scheff, 1997a; Scheff, 1997b; Scheff, 1988; Scheff, in Kemper, 1990). See also Volkan, 1997; Volkan, 1988; Volkan, Demetrios, and Montville, 1990.

⁵ Its title is *The Feeling of Being Humiliated: A Central Theme in Armed Conflicts. A Study of the Role of Humiliation in Somalia, and Rwanda/Burundi, Between the Warring Parties, and in Relation to Third Intervening Parties*. See project description on www.uio.no/~evelinl. The project is supported by the Norwegian Research Council and the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I am grateful for their support, and would also like to thank the Institute of Psychology at the University of Oslo for hosting it. I extend my warmest thanks to all my informants in and from Africa, many of whom survive under the most difficult life circumstances. I hope that at some point in the future I will be able to give back at least a fraction of all the support I received from them! I thank Reidar Ommundsen at the Institute of Psychology at the University of Oslo for his continuous support, together with Jan Smedslund, Hilde Nafstad, Malvern Lumsden (Lumsden, 1997), Carl-Erik Grenness,

armed conflict, especially its role in genocide and massacre. About 200 interviews have been carried out in Africa (Somalia, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Egypt) and Europe (England, Norway, Germany, Switzerland) from 1997-1999.

The argument made in this paper takes the normative stance that the sexual aspect of human relations ought to be deeply influenced by the idea of human rights. However, while professing to the standards associated with human rights, the paper also seeks to discern the logic expressed in societies based upon the principle of honour that reject or are unfamiliar with human rights as a framework for living. Furthermore, the paper brings to visibility the meta-logic that informs these two frameworks, one based upon human rights, the other based upon the idea of honour. Once this meta-logic has been understood, it allows strong links to be seen between public and private spheres: on the one hand, the arena of warfare between nations and ethnic groups, on the other hand, the arena of love and sexuality between individuals.

The paper is organised in four parts. In the first part, a typology is presented. It distinguishes between different ways in which physical encounters between males and females are perceived and experienced. The typology is constructed with reference to two factors. One factor is the extent to which the relationships within which the encounters occur are framed in terms of love and nurturing as opposed to hostility and destructiveness. The other factor is the degree to which traditional honour as opposed to human rights is emphasised by the parties concerned.

In the second part of the paper, the tension between honour-based marriage and loving relationships grounded in human rights is explored. The third part of the paper turns to the question of hostile sexual encounters and destructive relationships. In the fourth part the corrosive effects of false love in a human rights society are discussed.

A typology of male-female relationships

Richard Exley once wrote: 'A true friend is one who hears and understands when you share your deepest feelings. He supports you when you are struggling; he corrects you, gently and with love, when you err; and he forgives you when you fail. A true friend prods you to

Jon Martin Sundet, Finn Tschudi, Kjell Flekkøy, and Astrid Bastiansen. Michael Harris Bond, Chinese University of Hong Kong, helped with constant feedback and support (see Bond, 1996; Bond, 2000; Bond and Venus, 1991; Smith and Bond, 1999; Bond, 1998; Bond, Chiu, and Wan, 1984). The project would not have been possible without the help of Dennis Smith, professor of sociology at Loughborough University (UK). Without Lee D. Ross's encouragement my research would not have been possible; Lee Ross is a principal investigator and co-founder of the Stanford Center on Conflict and Negotiation (SCCN). I also thank Pierre Dasen, Professeur en approches interculturelles de l'éducation, Université en Genève, Département de Psychologie, for his most valuable support. The project is interdisciplinary and has benefited from the help of many colleagues at the University of Oslo and elsewhere. I would especially like to thank Johan Galtung (Galtung, 1996; Galtung and Tschudi, 1999), Jan Øberg, William Ury, Director, Project on Preventing War, Harvard University (Ury, 1999; Fisher, Ury, and Patton, 1991), Heidi von Weltzien Hoivik and Andreas Føllesdal (Weltzien Hoivik and Føllesdal, 1995), Dagfinn Føllesdal (Føllesdal, in Robert Sokolowski, 1988), Thomas Pogge, Helge Høybråten, Thorleif Lund, Thomas Hylland Eriksen (Eriksen, 1993), Unni Wikan (Wikan, 1984), Asbjørn Eide and Bernt Hagtvat (Eide and Hagtvat, 1996), Leif Ahnstrøm, and Jan Brøgger (Brøgger, 1986).

personal growth, stretches you to your full potential. And most amazing of all, he celebrates your successes as if they were his own.’⁶

FIGURE ONE

LOVE AND HOSTILITY

<u>Negative Pole:</u> Hostility and Destructiveness	<u>Positive Pole:</u> Love and Nurturing
Hands and arms <i>pushing down</i> the other: rejecting, excluding, diminishing, and crushing.	Arms <i>wrapped around</i> the other in love and respect.

Figure I: Love and hostility

If sexuality is placed in the positive context of true friendship then it becomes the language of love (see Figure I). This language is tactile. My beloved speaks to me through touch, gives me touch-signs of love. I do not feel harmed or humiliated by this touch. On the contrary, I feel a wave of warmth traversing my body, I feel happy. Even my immune system gets stronger, and my glands excrete beneficial hormones. In short, this is the most positive expression of sexuality. Surely, most people would agree: ‘If another person were to touch the most private parts of my body, then I would like it to be in this context.’⁷

At the other, negative, pole are child abuse or the mass rape of women in a civil war. A person who commits rape or abuses a child for sexual pleasure inflicts profound suffering on that individual stemming from the fact that the victim’s inner core of dignity is torn apart and humiliated.⁸ When rape is used as a weapon in war situations it imposes a multiple humiliation. It humiliates not just the individual victim but also her entire clan, her tribe, her ethnic group.⁹

In both love and sexual abuse, the location or setting is the same: the body’s erogenous zones. In the first case they are a joyful field of play, zones of care and creative complicity. In the second case they are a crime scene, zones of force and fraud.¹⁰

⁶ I owe this reference to Dr. Yehia Abdel-Hamid Ibrahim Abdel-Aal, Professor in Social Science, Assiut Governorate, Egypt.

⁷ See Brehm, 1992; Crooks and Baur, 1996; Duck, 1991; Erber and Gilmour, 1994; Feeney, 1996; Fehr, 1996; Fehr, 1999; Fletcher et al., 1999; Fletcher and Fitness, 1995; Foucault, 1990; Foucault, 1979; Foucault, 1987; Hendrick and Hendrick, 1993; Smith 1997b; Smith, 2000b; Sprecher, 1999; Sprecher and McKinney, 1993.

⁸ See for example Campbell, 1994.

⁹ See the Human Rights Watch Report from September 1996: *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence during the Rwandan Genocide and its Aftermath*. See also Brewer, 1999; Meznaric, in Moghadam, 1994 and Moghadam, 1994.

¹⁰ ‘To this war of every man, against every man, there also is consequent; that nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law: where no law, no injustice. Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues’ (Hobbes, 1662, 145).

The two cases may also be described in terms of the movements of hands and arms. The positive pole represents loving arms that open up to the loved person, welcome her, and then wrap lovingly and respectfully around the loved person. The negative pole represents hands that push a person down into the mud (humiliation is related to 'humus,' meaning that the humiliated one is reduced to the level of the earth¹¹). These hands might hold weapons intended to destroy the 'unwanted' human being after having degraded them, reducing them to the level of a 'rat' or 'cockroach.'¹²

When I love a person with my whole body and heart, then I 'put my arms around' the loved one, not only my arms of flesh and blood, but also metaphorically: I wrap the loved person into my thoughts, my warm feelings, my care. I embrace the person who is dear to me with my whole being without suffocating him or her. At this extreme positive side of the continuum we see two people's bodies wrapped around each other in deep love, love which includes care for the well-being of the other, not just fascination for and by the other's ecstatic feelings. This would be the outer positive pole.

The outer negative pole would be presented by the war lord who orders his men to exterminate the enemy but first, to rape the enemy's women - in order to demonstrate the enemy's utter unworthiness. This act of utter rejection is the opposite of welcoming opening arms. In this case, hands and arms engage in a brutal 'pushing down' or 'putting down' movement: a mixture of stabbing and burying, a thrusting-into-the-ground that crushes the life out of the victim. In daily life encounters at the outer poles will mostly be the exceptions; most human encounters occur somewhere between the outer poles, and feelings of love and hatred are often both present, warring for dominance.

The other dimension of the typology (see Figure II) addresses the degree to which honour (especially the public honour of the male, the family and the group) are emphasised as opposed to the inner human dignity of the individual, male or female. The dynamics of humiliation as a social process and a psychological experience differ greatly between 'honour' societies and 'dignity' societies. In honour societies, social identity is tied in with two things: a sense of membership on equal terms with your peers within a group (for example, the aristocracy, other males) and a sense of superiority over those groups that are 'below' your own (for example, the peasantry, females).

¹¹ Lakoff and Johnson describe orientational metaphors as up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, and central-peripheral (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

¹² 'Now, we do know well that in some genocides the victims have been perceived by the regime as a threat and publicly characterized as less than human, as apes, pigs, cockroaches, vermin, and the like. The Nazi view of the Jews well exemplifies this. Not only were they the lowest of humanity, if at all seen as human, but they were believed to be a direct genetic threat to the master race of Aryans and a pollutant of the good German society and culture' (Rummel, 1995).

FIGURE TWO

HONOUR AND HUMAN RIGHTS

‘Honour’ Society	‘Human Rights’ Society
<p><i>Imperative:</i> Protect the public honour of the group (family, village, clan), especially its male membership.</p> <p>Inter-personal and inter-group humiliation is a <i>routine</i> and <i>legitimate</i> strategy for maintaining social hierarchies.</p>	<p><i>Imperative:</i> Protect the inner core of dignity possessed by each individual without exception. Humiliation is unacceptable.</p> <p>Care to <i>avoid</i> humiliating others is routine. The psychological damage caused by humiliation is more intense than in honour societies.</p>

Figure II: Honour and human rights

Humiliating your inferiors through insults and violence is a routine strategy for maintaining hierarchical social relationships within an honour society. It is accepted as normal and legitimate even though its victims may resent it. By contrast, in dignity societies - in other words, societies that recognise the central importance of human rights - the use of humiliation is thoroughly disparaged. This is because humiliation is always an attempt to impute fundamental differences between the humiliator and the victim, to exclude and degrade the latter, to declare that the victim is inferior and unworthy. This is unacceptable when the social order is legitimised by the idea that all human beings have equal dignity, irrespective of differences in respect of gender, ethnicity, nationality and any other form of group membership.

These differences between honour societies and dignity societies have been analysed at length elsewhere¹³ but may be briefly illustrated here with reference to the way rape is treated. In honour societies, the honour of the group is damaged if the worthiness of any single member of the group is attacked or compromised. If the damage cannot be made good, avenged, or ‘paid for’ in some way, then the damaged element has to be cut out or destroyed. In such societies, families treat unmarried females as exchangeable property¹⁴ for use in making marriage contracts with other families. The honour of the family is closely tied to the virginity of unmarried daughters. If a girl is raped, the whole family feels shame: how could such a daughter make an honourable marriage?¹⁵

One of the family’s fears is that their daughter’s damaged hymen could be understood by her future husband as an attempt to dishonour his family. A damaged hymen is a dishonourable gift to give from one family to another. It is humiliating to receive such a gift and humiliating to be accused of offering it. All members of the raped girl’s family feel ‘soiled’ or ‘damaged’

¹³ See *Humiliation and the Human Condition: Mapping a Minefield* (Lindner, 2000c).

¹⁴ See for the practice of exchanging women between groups Marcel Mauss and Claude Lévi-Strauss (Mauss, 1950; Lévi-Strauss, 1968; Lévi-Strauss, in Coser and Rosenberg, 1957).

¹⁵ Many years of psychological work in Cairo, Egypt, brought me in contact with a whole range of ways of tackling rape, from harsh patriarchal honour-oriented approaches described here, to very loving, and also to extremely western oriented ways. Cultural boundaries are porous, and the more so the more globalisation brings people together.

by the rape just as a whole body is affected when disease attacks a particular limb. The rape may set in motion a remorseless logic: either the daughter must marry the rapist, the very person who abused her, or she must die.¹⁶

Honour-killings appal a human rights society. This is because in such a society rape is primarily seen as a violation of the girl's inner core of dignity. To view the young woman only as a token of a family's public honour is intolerable in a human rights context. To punish her further by killing her is seen to compound the offence in an incomprehensible way. This point of view is so familiar to a modern reader that there is little need to elaborate it.

In societies where male sexual aggression is seen as being stronger than the male's capacity to exercise control over it,¹⁷ female circumcision may be carried out with the intention of providing a kind of 'protection' against this very male sexual aggression perceived to be embodied in the clitoris, and/or may be meant to 'strengthen' the hymen/family honour.¹⁸ In such contexts, also, wearing a veil may not be rejected as a limitation upon freedom but, rather, accepted by women as a valuable protection providing them with a respect that in their eyes is absent in western societies. These remarks are intended to contribute towards understanding these practices and their cultural logic, not towards defending them.

The two dimensions may now be put together to complete the typology (see Figure III).

¹⁶ See Wiseberg (Human Rights Internet, HRI, www.hri.ca) for the currently increasing attention to 'honour-killings' as violation of human rights, as opposed to just being treated as private affair (Laurie S. Wiseberg at the 'Seminar om Sosial Utvikling og Menneskerettigheter,' 10th February 2000, Diakonhjemmets Internasjonale Senter, Oslo).

¹⁷ See Lindner, in Breines, Gierycz, and Reardon, 1999, where I explore the functionality of male uncontrolled ferocity for his role as defender of the group in a world of 'anarchy' as described by Hobbes and used as basis for Classical Realism in International Relations Theory. It is evident that a society who encourages her men to be aggressive in war situations has problems controlling man's fierceness when he comes home (see also Zurbriggen Eileen L. 1998). As I learned during my years as clinical psychologist in Egypt, the society as a whole takes over the task of controlling the male, for example by institutionally keeping him away from women, for example through segregation or veiling. The current development of a global village diminishes the 'need' for 'ferocious warriors,' thereby opening up for a society which transfers the responsibility for control of male 'wildness' to men individually, freeing society as a whole from this task.

¹⁸ In this context, the clitoris is interpreted as being a 'dangerous' trace of maleness in the female body, perplexing as this philosophy may sound for a western audience, and unjustifiable it is from a modern scientific point of view. I am aware that I might be misinterpreted as wishing to excuse honour societies and their handling of women. This is not my intention. However, seven years of working as a clinical psychologist in Egypt have taught me humility, not in order to excuse anything, but in order to allow for understanding. Western human rights based rage sometimes is too arrogant and forecloses the possibility to actually discern a logic in honour societies' handling of women, a logic which has to be understood calmly and with respect in order to be argued against more efficiently. Common western assumptions are that men are the source of such brutalities as honour killings, - what is often overlooked is that women, - mothers and grandmothers, - are often bearers of such traditions as much as their male counterparts. Women as well as men have to be included in conversations about human rights.

FIGURE THREE

HONOUR, HUMAN RIGHTS, RAPE AND LOVE

	Rape	Love
Honour society	Aggressive male sexuality is accepted as a 'natural hazard,' 'useful' for war. Rape violates a family's public honour. Killing the raped daughter, or marrying her to the rapist are imaginable solutions. Female genital mutilation and veiling are 'necessary' forms of 'protection' in a male honour society.	Male-female relationships are hierarchical, a relationship between superior and inferior. The possibility of mutual respect on equal terms is not included.
Human rights society	Aggressive male sexuality is regarded as illegitimate. A man is expected to be able to control himself. Rape violates the victim's inner core of dignity.	Male-female relationships are between equals. Full mature love entails respect for the loved person's human rights and inner core of dignity.

Figure III: Honour, human rights, rape and love

In this section a typology has been developed which links together love, rape, honour and dignity. In the following section the tension between honour-based marriage and loving relationships grounded in human rights is explored.

Love, honour and human rights

Full and mature love between partners means the interweaving of souls of equal adults. It means including the loved person with all his or her needs, respecting the loved person's human rights, treating him or her as an independent human being, as an end, not as means (Kant); in short, it means putting my arms around the loved person.

Does mature love mean wanting to be together with the loved person? Yes, normally. Sentences such as the following seem to speak the language of love: 'I love you so much, I cannot be without you!' Or: 'I love you so much, you are as important to me as the air I breathe!' Spontaneously one might respond to such sentences with the comment: 'What would love be, if the lovers did not need each other!' But, after a second thought, it may become clear that the phrase 'I cannot be without you' may easily express a deep lack of mature love.

This is because such sentences may come from a jealous husband who locks up his wife in the house when he goes out to work, and forbids her any contact with anybody except with him. Is this love? The husband might say: 'Yes, this is love, this is extreme love.' His wife might accept that and actually feel loved. She might gladly sit at home, watch some television, prepare the dinner, feel honoured that she is so important to him, and wait for his return every

evening. But she may also feel unduly imprisoned, frustrated by not being able to go out, humiliated by his lack of faith in her, humiliated by the fact that he is not strong enough to let her be anything else but a crutch to keep him going, frustrated and humiliated by him not letting her have a life of her own.¹⁹

At this point it becomes especially clear that a human rights perspective yields fundamentally different evaluations of this discussion of love than a traditional honour perspective. Husbands and wives who gladly accept locking away the woman are most likely to be found within a traditional honour society. The wife who feels humiliated by these practices is most probably living in the context of a human rights society.

Conclusion: 'I need you' cannot be sufficient for defining mature love. Full and mature love is expressed in the following sentence: 'I need you, but if my needs make you unhappy or destroy you, I am strong enough to protect you from them, or, I am strong enough to let you go.' The line between mature love and clinging love with exploitative effects is difficult to draw. Full love needs to ask the loved person a lot of questions: 'Which of my needs make you happy when I ask you to attend to them? Which of my needs do not make you happy, or even burden you? Which solution can we find for those needs of mine which make you unhappy?' Full love knows a lot about the partner's special individual make-up. Full love interweaves. Full love is not content with saying: 'Sorry that it hurt you what I did, I thought you liked it, I did it out of love!' Full and mature love is only full and mature through dialogue.²⁰

How does sexual desire relate to love? Sexual desire is a frail flower. It unfolds best in a context of spontaneity. No man can order his penis to become erect; no woman can command her body to open up. This is the widely misunderstood problem with spontaneity. It cannot be ordered. Spontaneity is also the opposite of customary practice. How many women 'deliver' their body to their partner's use, 'think of England,' and hope that it will be 'over' soon. The use of the other's body as legitimate part of marriage: this is the opposite of love. It is closer to rape. Even so, it is the traditional framework of marriage.²¹

The objectification of the other is an act of subjugation and humiliation, and this makes authentic desire for the beloved person impossible. Humankind is currently learning about human rights and about the inner core of dignity in each person, but humankind has not yet adapted all facets of life to these principles.²²

¹⁹ Consider also other factors that may act against the desire to be with the loved one. What if I have a contagious illness, should I then not protect the loved person from myself? What if I am much older or younger than the person I love, and I know that I cannot give her the family he or she yearns for? Should I then keep my feelings to myself the rest of my life, give him or her the chance to find a more suitable partner, and never declare my feelings to my beloved? Or what if I am the prison guard or therapist of the person I love, and it is unethical to proceed with declaring my love? What if I am in love with a dissident in a country that toils under a cruel dictatorship, and my feelings, if I declared them, would endanger the life of my loved one?

²⁰ See classical work by Max Scheler. In his first period, for example in *The Nature of Sympathy* Scheler focuses on human feelings, love, and the nature of the person. He states that the human person is at bottom a loving being, ens amans (Scheler, 1954).

²¹ Rape within marriage has only recently been incorporated as liable to be punished into the judicial body in Germany.

²² Kimmel (1997) identifies elements which need special attention if necessary changes shall succeed: Privilege is essentially invisible and must be discovered (a white middle class man thinks he is a

The West has to learn a lot, rather than looking down on the rest of the world.²³ Marriage based on feelings is bound to be more difficult to manage than marriage based on sets of rights and obligations as in traditional arranged marriages. Arranged marriages are astonishingly stable, and provide children with a secure environment in which to grow up. The West has not yet learnt to interweave marriage based on love with stability and emotional security for children. Feelings of love cannot be ordered. This is why divorce is bound to happen in a love context more often than in the hierarchical context of traditional honour societies. The West seems to be quite blind to the fragility of love, the difficulty of sustaining it. Love requires continual dialogue and individual tailor making of the relationship.

Divorce exposes sharply the transition of humankind from traditional honour-based social and cultural structures to human rights-based structures. In the old framework, divorce is regarded as a shameful and humiliating event, while in the new framework the opposite is true: namely, the avoidance of divorce may be seen as humiliating to the inner truth of the partners. While in the old framework partners have to stay together at all cost, in the new framework they should work on friendly separation if necessary, staying together as friends, and as parents if they have children, while separating as partners.

The last task is extremely difficult because human rights concepts of dignity *intensify* feelings of humiliation, which in turn deepen rifts. Forgiving each other and caring jointly for children while being separated as partners is an art the West has not yet mastered. The West should understand that introducing love grounded in human rights into marriage fundamentally changes our dearest traditional beliefs about marriage's nature. Introducing love rooted in human rights makes marriage much more demanding and can easily turn any separation into a bitter war. People in those regions in the world where arranged marriage is normal are appalled by the West's lack of family cohesion.

In this section the argument has focused upon the nature of love in honour and dignity societies and their transition. Now the argument turns to the implications of rape and allied phenomena in the two kinds of society.

'average' human being and does not realise that he is a privileged white middle class man); violence stems from a feeling of powerlessness, men beat and abuse during the breakdown of patriarchy; men still feel 'entitled' to power, even if they do not have it (this women "stole" my! Job!); disenfranchised men with uncertain future may be tempted to go to ethnic nationalist violence; there are rape-prone and rape-free cultures, we have to emulate the latter; for a culture of peace we have to take special care of women's' property rights after marriage, and at fathering (Kimmel, 1997, see also Kimmel, 2000).²³ See Hatfield and Rapson, 1996 and Rathus, Nevid, and Fichner-Rathus, 1997.

Hostile sexual encounters and destructive relationships

We read in the Human Rights Watch report *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence during the Rwandan Genocide and its Aftermath* in the introduction: ‘During the 1994 Rwandan genocide, women were subjected to sexual violence on a massive scale. These crimes were perpetrated by members of the infamous Hutu militia groups known as the Interahamwe, other civilians, and soldiers of the Rwandan Armed Forces. Administrative, military and political leaders as well as heads of militia, directed or permitted the killings and sexual violence in an effort to further their political goals, and therefore bear responsibility for these abuses.’

Shattered Lives documents the widespread rape of women during the genocide, and confirms that women were gang-raped, raped with objects such as sharpened sticks or gun barrels, held in sexual slavery (either collectively or through forced “marriage”) or sexually mutilated. These crimes were frequently part of a pattern in which women were raped after they had witnessed the torture and killings of their relatives and the destruction and looting of their homes’ (Human Rights Watch Report 1996).

‘I survived only because the men who planned to rape me and then kill me, got into a fight with each other and instead killed each other. My parents had been killed in front of my eyes not long before. The killers, they were neighbours, did refrain from killing me together with my parents because they planned to rape me and then kill me by putting a long stick into my vagina. They killed each other before they could carry out their plan, therefore I have only some scars, but not many.’²⁴

In Somalia, and in other blood-revenge societies women traditionally are *not* systematically raped or killed in wars or periods of violent reprisals (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1997). Wars and blood-revenge are carried out between men, and women can move around freely. They are so to speak ‘invisible.’ Kari H. Karamé²⁵ told me during a personal conversation in 1997 that during the years of fighting in Lebanon there was a kind of contract between the warring parties not to rape each other’s women. She recounts: ‘It just happened twice, when fighters from ‘outside’ came, for example Palestinians. But a lot of sexual violence happened in connection with men, they were castrated, died of that, etc.’

Compare the following testimony collected during fieldwork in 1997-98: ‘In Somalia we are used to settle disputes between clans through negotiation. Elders sit together and decide which compensation (diya) has to be paid for wrongs inflicted. Even if somebody has been killed, the traditional compensation procedure has a good chance to work. There is one thing though which never was part of traditional quarrelling between clans, and this is rape, especially mass rape in front of the family. This is new. It happened for the first time when Siad Barre’s dictatorial regime sent soldiers to annihilate us. Soldiers would rape our women in front of their husbands and families.’²⁶

²⁴ This account I obtained during my fieldwork in Africa 1999 from a educated young woman in Burundi. She wishes to stay anonymous.

²⁵ Kari H. Karamé, Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI).

²⁶ This is the account of several Somali men from the North of Somalia, the self-proclaimed republic ‘Somaliland,’ collected in November 1998. I merged together their accounts into one testimony. These informants want to stay anonymous. They all belong to the Isaaq clan. The former dictator Siad Barre tried to annihilate the Isaaq clan during the 1980s, the rape of women in front of their families was one

'It is somehow a 'tradition' that young men of one clan steal camels from another clan, and sometimes a man gets killed. But women were never touched, never. There might have been a seldom case when a girl was alone in the semi-desert guarding her animals, and a young man having spent a long time in the desert lost control and tried to rape her. She would resist violently, and at the end the solution would perhaps be that he had to marry her. But mass rape, especially rape in front of the family, this never happened before, this is new.

...

Have you noticed how many Somali families live apart? Have you ever thought about the reason why so many Somali women with their children live apart from their husbands? It is because the men cannot live with the humiliation that they were not able to defend their women against the soldiers who raped them. The husband cannot live together with his wife, because he cannot bear to be reminded of his inability to protect her. The perpetrators intended to humiliate their enemies and they succeeded thoroughly. Rape creates social destruction more 'effectively' than any other weapon.

...

This is the reason why today Somalia is so divided. We Somalis are united through our common ethnic background, we speak one language, and are all Muslims. Why are we divided today? Humiliation through rape and its consequences divides us. The traditional methods of reconciliation are too weak for this. It will take at least one generation to digest these humiliations enough to be able to sit together again.'

The Somali men cannot live together with their raped wives, because they cannot bear the humiliation, and the rifts in the social web of society cannot be healed because of the legacy of rape. The same is true for Rwanda and Burundi. Survivors of the genocide in 1994 in Rwanda (where Tutsi and moderate Hutu were killed under orders of extremist Hutu) got very annoyed when I asked about reconciliation: 'All this talk of reconciliation! It irritates me! The government talks about reconciliation. How can I reconcile myself with people who made my grandmother parade naked in the streets before raping and killing her? Speaking of reconciliation would mean that I speak also on behalf of my grandmother. How could I!? Never! Co-existence is the maximum I will ever want to imagine.'

The recent upsurge in war-rape is thus in some societal contexts a new phenomenon. It draws women into the 'game.' This represents, so to speak, a 'democratisation' of war, a transition from combat among a select group of honourable warriors, to torturing, raping and slaughtering everybody. Leaders who want to create the conditions for spontaneous mass mobilisation for war might see war-rape as a cheap way to minimise the cost of getting willing soldiers. In populations that have humiliated each other enough, the divisions and hostilities run so deep that war fever infects the whole population.

To summarise: Rape can have humiliation as its primary goal, or humiliation may be a 'side-effect.' A would-be humiliator may look for ways to humiliate other people, let us say people of another ethnic group, and find that raping the enemy's women is one possible tool among others for humiliating the enemy. Rape in this case is carried out with the deliberate intention of causing humiliation. The main object is, typically, not to humiliate the raped woman herself, - she may be insignificant in the rapist's eyes - but, much more important, to

of his soldiers' tactics. The informants talked about the weight and severity of the problem of rape only after many hours or days of conversation. Somali women usually spoke more openly about the impact of rape than Somali men.

humiliate her 'men.' However, whether or not the deliberate objective of rape is to humiliate, to be raped is always painful and humiliating. This is so whether it is honour or dignity that is being attacked.

There are, broadly speaking, four ways, rape, sex and humiliation can be connected (see Figure IV).

FIGURE FOUR

RAPE, SEX AND HUMILIATION

	Enjoyment of Rape as main intention; Humiliation as an <i>unintended</i> consequence, or as an intended but <i>secondary</i> factor			Humiliation as the main intention; rape used as a means to achieve this
	Rape carried out without conscious intention	Rape consciously intended as sex	Rape as sex plus humiliation	Rape intended as humiliation
The rapist's intention	The rapist is mentally disturbed and has no conscious intention to rape a woman.	The rapist's intention is to have sex with another individual.	The rapist wants to have sex and sadistic pleasure from forcing and humiliating somebody.	The rapist's intention is to employ humiliation as a weapon in war.
The rapist's targeted victim	The rapist targets another individual.	The rapist wants to have sex with another individual.	The rapist wants to have sex and sadistic pleasure from forcing and humiliating somebody.	The rapist's intention is to humiliate the 'enemy' as a group, especially the male protectors of the women.
The rapist's wish for the victim's reactions	The rapist does not reflect consciously on the victim's reactions.	The rapist wants the victim to enjoy it.	The rapist wants the victim to feel humiliated. He may wish the victim to receive masochistic pleasure.	The rapist wishes the whole group to feel humiliated.
The victim's actual reactions	The rape victim feels humiliated.	The rape victim feels humiliated.	The rape victim feels humiliated.	The rape victim feels humiliated; in addition the whole group feels humiliated.

Figure IV: Rape, sex and humiliation

Rape is humiliating even if the rapist does not have the intention of actually causing humiliation; for example, the rapist may be a disturbed person who does not really know what he is doing. Damage is done to the victim even though the rapist may want to give his victim pleasure and may even be convinced he is doing so. However, victims of rape do not enjoy the experience. This discrepancy between the perceptions and attributions of the actor and the one acted upon is not restricted to situations of rape. It is replicated in *all* cases where someone who defines herself as a 'helper' discovers to her dismay that the recipient of the help actually feels humiliated by it and not helped.

This exposes how crucial the framing of the situation is, both by perpetrator and victim (or actor and re-actor). So are differences between their perceptions and attributions. Humiliation is not just a physical encounter; it is also, in fact it is mainly, a mind game. Somebody who intentionally sets out to humiliate another party has the aim of ‘lowering’ the other, partly in front of third parties, but especially in the eyes of the humiliator and the victims themselves. Humiliators want their victims to ‘understand’ that they are ‘rats,’ ‘cockroaches,’ or ‘despicable worms.’

The humiliator’s aim is to act upon the perceptions and self-identities of both participants to the humiliation process: perpetrator and victim. Humiliators want their victims to lose their former sense of self, to be deprived of self-respect and self-esteem, to be degraded in their own eyes. Humiliators also want to convince themselves that the victim actually deserves to be abused.

However, humiliators do not always achieve their goals, not with themselves,²⁷ and not with all victims either. In cases of great power balance, for example, a would-be humiliator may not be taken seriously; a ‘slave’ would not be able to insult a ‘master,’ because the master would just laugh. In other cases, victims manage to keep their self-esteem strong in the face of humiliation; a Nelson Mandela managed to prevent humiliation from spoiling his dignity. Humiliation is effective only if victims actually lose their self-respect, if their sense of self is altered. Ironically, some effective instances of humiliation may be unintended. This was seen in the discussion of rape and it applies generally to cases where victims receives ‘help’ that they perceive as humiliating (see Figure V).

FIGURE FIVE

THE HUMILIATOR’S INTENTIONS AND THE VICTIM’S PERCEPTIONS AND ATTRIBUTION

	The victim feels humiliated	The victim does not feel humiliated
The perpetrator wants to humiliate	Rape in war.	A ‘master’ laughs in front of a ‘slave’s’ wish to humiliate the ‘master.’ A Nelson Mandela manages to prevent humiliation from spoiling his dignity.
The perpetrator does not want to humiliate	Rape that is intended to give pleasure. Or the rapist is mentally disturbed and does not intend any humiliation.	Co-existence, co-operation, love.

Figure V: The humiliator’s intentions and the victim’s perceptions and attributions

²⁷ Perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide in 1994 (where children were killed as brutally as their parents) are said to be under psychiatric treatment because they suddenly see children’s fingers on their plates when they eat (Nairobi 1999, unconfirmed).

In this section rape has been analysed in terms of its complex relationships with humiliation. It has become clear that the motivations ascribed to the perpetrators by the victims of sexual abuse are of special relevance. If the victim perceives the perpetrator as not being in control of, or not responsible for, his or her actions this alleviates some of the hurt. However, if the victim discovers that he or she has been deceived this intensifies the hurt. This deception may be a result of the perpetrator's deliberate design or it may be a consequence of the victim's self-deception, bad judgement or wishful thinking. In the remainder of the paper this theme will be explored further.

'False love' as 'rape'

Kanin asked rapists about their behaviour towards women (Kanin, 1985), and found out that the actual rape was just the 'tip of the iceberg.' The rapists did not take moral boundaries at all seriously in sexual matters and, furthermore, they believed that their peers had the same approach. They used all kinds of techniques to get women into bed. In particular, they told them lies and falsely declared themselves to be in love with them. They felt 'justified' and encouraged by their peers to make sexual conquests by deceit. The following table gives exact numbers:

TABLE ONE

Methods self-reported rapists used (on other occasions) to manipulate women to have sex with them (compared with controls who had not admitted to date rape)

	Rapist (N = 71)	Controls (N = 227)
Attempt to intoxicate female with alcohol	76*	23α
Falsely professed love	86	25
Falsely promise 'pinning,' engagement, or marriage	46	6
Threaten to terminate the relationship	31	7
Threaten to leave female stranded	9	0

* 28% also involved marijuana

α 19% also involved marijuana

Table I: Kanin 1985, adapted from Sabini, 1995, page 429²⁸

Table I shows how widespread the phenomenon of falsely professed love is.²⁹ It shows that men deceived women on this matter not only in the rapist group but also in the control group. Men who falsely profess love treat their victims as means, not ends. They obviously hypothesise that a woman will give her body more readily to a man if she is in love with him. Such a man manipulates a woman into loving him. He is, so to speak, saving money, because he would have to pay a lot to a high-class call-girl, and would still not get her devotion and passion. Some men find it very clever to make such 'shrewd deals.' Other men will be less 'shrewd.' Sabini (429) summarises studies that show that men with old-fashioned attitudes

²⁸ See also Ullman, Karabatsos, and Koss, 1999; Prior, 1988.

²⁹ Men and women both lie. Women also 'play around' with men. And it is self-evident that a man suffers as much as a woman when he finds out that he loves somebody who only 'wants his money.'

toward women and their role in society are more lenient towards date rape, and of deceit, than are men with less conservative attitudes.

The majority of partnerships can be found in the range between full love and false love.³⁰ If somebody tells lies and is aware of it, the case is straightforward. But what about cases where partners authentically believe in different definitions of love?

Alice³¹ came to me as a client because her marriage had collapsed. Alice is an intelligent well-educated European woman. She told me the following: 'I met Robert 10 years ago. He is 18 years older than me. When I met him, I just came out of a relationship with an abusive man who could not endure an intelligent woman at his side. I was happy to meet somebody who was older and kinder. I yearned for kindness, for being taken care of, for not being hurt several times a day. I was touched and happy when Robert said that he needed me. My former husband never said that, he only said that I was old and ugly. I was happy about the new compliments in my life. I was ready to give Robert everything, I was happy to have found somebody who finally loved me, and obviously did not feel threatened by me, my education, my intelligence.'

'Robert lived and worked in Indonesia, and I moved to Indonesia to join him. He was separated from his wife who lived back in Europe, and he told me that he considered me his wife now, but that he could not get a divorce because of the laws back home in his country. I accepted. I preferred a happy relationship to a painful marriage. When I arrived in Indonesia I was full of plans, wanted to do research, get another degree, have a family.... Nothing of that happened. Now I am 10 years older and I have nothing. I have wasted all these years on this man. And the worst, I did not even recognise that I wasted the time while I did it! Every time we wanted to realise one of my goals, there was an existential crisis in his life. He had problems with his job, problems with his family, we always lived in emergencies. I hardly ever relaxed. I was all the time busy helping him with his problems, hoping that we would start 'our' life 'then,' that also 'my' life would start one day. It never started.'

'How on earth could I so stupid and accept all that? I think I did it because my mother taught me that a good woman is loyal to her man. My mother is very religious and believes that a wife has to support her husband. Today she reproaches me and asks me why I did not get my degree, why I do not have a family. She does not want to recognise that my wish to get her approval drove me into that. And what does Robert say? He says: "But why did you not tell me that you were not happy! If I only knew that I would have arranged our life differently!" I used to answer: "But you knew what hopes I had for my life! You knew that! And when we decided to stay together you promised to take care of these hopes! And do you not remember how often I cried? You used to tell me off then, you used to accuse me of being weak. You told me to be optimistic, that was all you did!"'

³⁰ A marriage will rarely be built only on false love. However, one spectacular case was unveiled in 1989 when the former communist German Democratic Republic, DDR, collapsed. The DDR had a watch-dog organisation, Staatssicherheit or Stasi, which aimed at securing the population's communist enthusiasm. A female dissident, Vera Wollenberger, had a Stasi 'shadow' whose job it was to inform the Stasi about her activities and contacts. He married her and had a child with her, everything as part of his job. She divorced him as soon as she learned about the truth of her husband's feelings, and many sympathised with her and felt deceived and humiliated in her place.

³¹ The names have been changed

Alice continues, exhausted from a life of emergencies and sacrifices: ‘Stupid me, I tried terribly hard to relax and be optimistic! Whenever I thought I was not optimistic enough, I felt guilty of not loving him enough: How could I be weak in supporting this wonderful man who had so many troubles, I told myself. How blind, how stupid, I say today! How could I ever be proud of being intelligent while being so stupid? And proud of being a ‘good woman’? But now I realise that Robert used all these emergencies to hide behind them, to avoid real commitment to me. He was not really interested in my needs, my dreams, my happiness. He needed my presence, he enjoyed me being near him, this was what he wanted. I feel today that I was a valuable object to him, let us say like an expensive Chinese vase, in other words, he loved me like one loves a piece of art that one looks at everyday. He did not think of giving the loved object food or protect her from illness, of course not, because vases do not need that. It may even not be a lack of love on his side; it is lack of ability to be empathic. I did not recognise to what degree he is isolated within himself. His kindness is not fake, he is kind, but he is deeply limited to himself, to his own needs and wishes, his kindness has its limits as soon as his needs and wishes are endangered.’

‘Today my loyalty to him, as well as my intelligence, which made me proud once, make me feel disgusted of myself. I am not only ashamed of myself; I feel that I humiliated myself in front of the Alice who once thought highly of herself. I feel exploited by Robert; he manipulated me into helping him and sacrificing my life for him. And at the end he leaves me with the feeling that it was alone my fault, that I exploited myself, and he is even right! *I feel that he raped me, in a slow process, a slow humiliating rape, which I allowed. I could kill Robert. He destroyed me and my inner core of dignity. What he did to me is worse than overt rape. A brute rapist does at least not lie. Robert raped me and made me believe it was love. The resentment, pain and suffering which this brought into my life cannot be measured*’ (emphasis added).

The case of Alice may be described as one of ‘love-rape.’ This case shows how fine and difficult the line is between full love and exploitation. Robert offered false love to Alice. He was either too weak to recognise this or ‘shrewd’ enough to avoid recognising it. He lied to himself about his love, or just stayed uninformed about himself. Either he found it more convenient to believe that he really loved her, while in fact he employed his talent for manipulation to escape difficult sacrifices that would have been necessary for full love. Or he was just a very weak person, and was therefore unable to confront the fact that he was not able to give Alice full and mature love. If Alice assumes that he more or less consciously deceived her, he is a bastard in her eyes. If she assumes that he is a weak man, he is a pitiable creature, - for Alice both versions are about as bad. A bastard she hates, a weakling she pities. What she never can restore is respect for Robert.

To employ the image, introduced earlier, of the arms (which open up or push down), full and mature love puts the arms around the loved one without suffocating him or her; clinging love imprisons the loved person with arms clinging too hard; false love finally holds the partner, but looks into another direction while doing that, not seeing the other as a real other. To put it another way, eyes are as important as arms.³² I can hold somebody in a casual manner, ‘looking through’ the other, or I can look deep into their eyes.³³

³² For the ‘face of the other’ see Lévinas (Lévinas and Hand, 1989; Lévinas, 1998; Peperzak and Lévinas, 1993).

³³ The work of Richard Sennett is relevant here, he addresses false love and authority (Sennett, 1993).

The story of Alice and Robert illustrates the point that cases that move from the positive to the negative side are among the most difficult and painful. Alice lives in a false world for years, only to discover that she has been deceived, that her judgement was not good enough. The humiliation stemming from exposed love-rape is deep because it mirrors the conceptual distance between love and destruction. Love is the complete opposite of destruction. Rape and war are conceptually much closer since both intend destruction. Therefore the depth of the hurt inflicted by love-rape may be expected to be greater than that stemming from war-rape. To detect that my inner core of dignity has been violated while I believed it was love is the worst humiliation imaginable.

It is humiliating to discover that those who are claiming to protect you are actually restricting your freedom. That was Alice's experience. It is also the experience being undergone by millions of women, as they become part of the global human rights revolution. This process is bound to create great suffering. A woman who finds out that female genital mutilation and wearing the veil are actually violating her inner core of dignity will feel enormous revulsion. She will no longer believe that they are necessary 'protection' in a world of male aggression, but will interpret them as collective cultural 'rape,' as deeply humiliating.

Conclusion

This paper contributes to the task of mapping the field of love, rape, and humiliation. In doing so it presents full and mature love as a reference point. Serious obstacles lie in wait on the way to full love. Especially important is the suffering inevitably associated with the transition from traditional honour concepts to human rights beliefs and attitudes. This transition needs to be studied with empathy and its wounds must be healed.

One disturbing feature of this transition is the gruesome and increasingly frequently employed practice of deliberately using the deepest feelings of the population at large as a weapon of war – for this is the function of war-rape. This has to be studied carefully in order to find means of reversing this trend.³⁴

The systematic manipulation of feelings to produce hatred or love is an especially potent force in societies that are in transition from honour ideals to human rights ideals. Those who are newly liberated from traditional authoritarian hierarchies are particularly vulnerable to manipulation in this way. This is because many long-established restraints and boundaries are weakened. The breakdown of hierarchies has happened at many levels during the past century. This includes the end of the European colonial empires and the erosion of the patriarchal family.

The breakdown of the extended family dominated by the male elders has swept away a complex tissue of norms and constraints that used to regulate sexual relations, for better or for worse. People in human rights societies have acquired great freedom in their personal lives. However, despite the triumph of those ideals, human rights societies are still in their infancy in respect of the task of developing a microstructure of norms and practices for achieving those ideals in personal relationships.

³⁴ On related themes, see Stepan Mestrovic's *Postemotional Society* (Mestrovic, 1997).

For example, 'false love' acquires great significance in human rights contexts where partners are expected to build their relationships on each other's feelings and to depend on their authenticity. Understanding and handling 'false love' is a central challenge for the maintenance of cohesion of future society. It is vastly underestimated by society at large and mainly addressed as a 'personal problem' to be handled amongst friends or through therapy.

Western couples are invited to take love as the basis for marriage, an institution that is central to the stability of society and future generations. But society leaves couples to cope alone with love and its difficult implications. 'False love' can never be eliminated any more than can lying and double-dealing in other aspects of life. However, people can learn to recognise the problem and, perhaps, as a result, avoid its worst effects. Social analysts have a responsibility to examine the dynamics of love more closely. We need to understand the part played by love in a '*decent society*' (Margalit, 1996), and discover how humiliation can best be avoided.

To build a decent society is not only a national and local task, but also an international, global challenge. A '*decent global village*' ought not to entail war-rape. The global community, including its social researchers, carries the responsibility to study and understand this phenomenon more thoroughly, in order to be better prepared for preventing it.

The two examples of manipulation just mentioned, war-rape and false love, have been chosen because they illustrate the core argument of this paper. They are particular instances of the meta-logic of humiliation in male-female relationships. Hopefully, the argument has effectively traced the skeletal structure of this meta-logic. Hopefully, it has also shown some hidden interconnections that exist between the many forms that gender relations take: in the public and private spheres, in honour societies, in human rights societies, and in societies undergoing transition between those two states.

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