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Explain the relationship between a soldier's identity and the concept of masculinity. Use an example to illustrate it.

The tendency of nations to go to war against one another is a strong reason behind the existence of national military forces. Soldiers stand as the most important members of every military force since they are the ones who actively proceed in the line of battle in every war. With lives at great risk, soldiers do not resist any urges to quit the frontlines to preserve the honor they bestow on their nation. With that, it is inevitable to think that the identity of a soldier should constitute the following attributes – bravery, wit, obedience to commands and high sense of discipline. It is in those particular attributes in which one could describe the traditional characteristics of an ideal soldier.

It is from the embodiment of the aforementioned attributes in which one would traditionally identify a soldier to masculinity, or traits referring to that of men. Men usually stand as symbols of aggression, toughness and strength – characteristics that fit with the usual image of a soldier. The social perception on men as brave individuals makes them highly suitable candidates to become soldiers, compared to that of women who usually project images of submission and cowardice in the face of turmoil. Wit is another attribute of a traditional soldier that fits the bill of masculinity, given that the devotion of focus for winning a war requires the use of creative wisdom to get past through compromising situations. Warfare would not prosper towards achieving the goals of parties in conflict if not one soldier practices witty tactics for attaining victory. Wit, in that sense, is a masculine

attribute that society sees as rarely evident among women, who tend to focus on the emotional side of situations that affect them. The phrase “mind over matter”, being a popular parlance, is highly applicable to soldiers at the battlefield, given that they have to give up their fear of getting killed by confronting their enemies through the use of firearms to ensure the survival of their military force towards victory. Such scenario is highly attributable to masculinity, hence the traditional notion of soldiers being men. Femininity, as a socially constructed notion assigned to any traditionally defined woman, does not suit the foregoing since its emphasis on emotions and submissiveness stand as complete opposites to masculine traits such as sharp mental focus and aggression. A disciplined demeanor is another trait assigned to masculinity. Staying away from activities deemed unnecessary for any given purpose or task is a crucial attitude soldiers have to pay when in duty, especially in times of war. That does not suit the definition of femininity when held in the strictest sense, since society tend to see women as easily swayed by emotions and other unnecessary distractions compared to the rigidity exhibited by men heralding masculine behavior strictly. An example that shows the connection between masculinity and becoming a soldier is the case of Saint Joan of Arc. As Joan of Arc led the French army to victories in battles during the Hundred Years’ War of the 15th century, many viewed her as someone who is highly determined and disciplined – attributes that are somewhat unbecoming of traditional women of her time. Her leadership has been able to command the respect of many members of the French army, which resulted to triumph for France that led to the coronation of Charles VII as king. The death of Joan of Arc was due to her execution by

her enemies, who claimed that she was a witch due to her unusual demeanor as a woman to lead the French army to several victories during the war (DeVries, 1999).

Sexual violence against women during armed conflicts is not only physically and psychologically harmful to the women but also to the men they are related to. Explain this statement.

There is no dispute against the argument that sexual violence is gravely offensive to women, much more during times of war. Conflicts associated with war characterize the whole scenario of anarchy compared to the flow of civilized everyday life during peacetime, as enemy nations face one another through destructive military exploits. Along with that scenario of anarchy comes the fact that nations at war do not regard the rule of law in damaging private property and lives of people that may come in the way of military campaigns. The sheer aggression of military members that may emanate in times of war would thus bring forth the inevitability that there would be several criminal acts happening in the process of warfare. Among those criminal acts most accounts in history has acknowledged is the commission of several acts of sexual violence against women such as rape, forced prostitution and sexual abuse committed against children.

Sexual violence provides highly traumatic consequences to victims and their relatives alike. Violation against the consent of women to have sex or submit to various kinds of sexual abuses is a blatant disregard of their human rights, and that is highly common in times of war. In a scenario where nations are concerned with destroying the bases of their enemies during war, sexual violence becomes a violation informally sanctioned by erring elements of any

military contingent of nations at war. As a form of social destruction, sexual violence is effective for nations to attain victory, since it could affect the psychological stability of members of a society plagued by such kind of violation. Trauma could induce people to break down in the face of war where sexual violence abounds. In that aspect, women are not the only ones that could stand as victims of sexual violence in terms of warfare. Men related to them also have a great tendency to suffer negative physical and psychological consequences too.

During peacetime, harmony within society allows for related characteristics such as proper formation of families to emanate. A man and a woman held together in consented union with one another has the freedom to build their own family and take care of household matters free from any coercive matters. With that, it is only proper to think that when any form of violence affects women, the men related to her would also suffer due to the unharmonious consequences that arise. Sexual violence is a gravely offensive act that could destroy harmony among societies, especially in times of war. The physically destructive effects of war are already damaging enough for affecting societies. The addition of sexual violence makes matters worse, since that affects the integrity of social structures existing within affected societies. There is a clear understanding that every society has its own constructs regarding sexual relations, particularly in relation to consented instances. In that case, sexual violence stands as a forceful instance that deliberately violates the values a society holds for sexual relations.

Men could therefore gain negative effects from sexual violence committed

against their female relatives during times of war. Aside from the fact that sexual violence in itself damages socially held values within a society, it also aggravates the trauma associated with warfare. In this context, men are not just limited to the husbands or fiancés of women affected by sexual violence. Other related people – fathers, sons, or any other relatives, also stand to gain damage from sexual violence committed against women related to them. The agglomeration of elements of social destruction brought by war and acts of sexual violence could prove destructive to any person in society, especially if the victims are those related to them, regardless of gender. In this case, familial affinity stands to gain damage sexual violence during war.

References

DeVries, K. (1999). Joan of Arc: A military leader. United Kingdom: Sutton Publishing.