
How to Radicalize Responsibility. Feminism and Rape*

by

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Abstract: Il saggio si propone di esplorare le possibilità della giustizia oggi tenendo presente sia le argomentazioni femministe sulla dicotomia tra cura e giustizia, sia le vie che il femminismo ha percorso nella ricerca di una giustizia alternativa. Sotto questo aspetto, la risposta dell'attivismo delle donne e il loro impegno contro diverse forme di violenza, come gli stupri di massa o la prostituzione forzata in tempo di guerra o nel dopoguerra – in particolare per quanto riguarda i paesi della ex Jugoslavia - possono offrire un contesto per riflettere sui numerosi dilemmi inerenti agli approcci e alle soluzioni di carattere etico, sociale, giuridico. Benché la mia analisi si concentri in particolare sulla questione dei legami tra genere e giustizia e su quella dell'ottenimento della giustizia (se essa sia possibile e in che misura gli specifici modelli di giustizia, - come le udienze pubbliche, i tribunali alternativi – si ripercuotano sul senso di sopravvivenza delle donne e sulla loro dignità, sostengo la necessità ampliare gli orizzonti etici ed epistemologici.

A friend of mine, Gabriela Mischkowski, reminded me of my own discomfort by highlighting the words that Fatima Memisevic had stated five years earlier: “I am going to talk about rape. Don’t be embarrassed,” (Mischkowski 2007, p. 1). This happened at a conference in Sarajevo in May 2007 and she is one of the very few activists in international circles who is still gathering stories of women who suffered the trauma of rape during the war in the territory of former Yugoslavia, primarily in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and of course with the support of local women’s groups. At that moment I felt restless although a deep anxiety is the proper name for what I had been faced with more and more during these last years,

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and this concerns, ironically, the fact that we are not embarrassed anymore. We, as ordinary humans, have become resistant to our own disturbance.

A voice in public of a woman who had survived such a horrible and unspeakable experience by ringing out empty — like an echo — only confirmed the absence of a public voice in recent times. And a total absence of public attention concerning this issue, if we put aside responsibility as an issue for the moment. It is more than evident that public sentiment towards sexual violence against women under war circumstances has been exhausted and “consumed”¹, just as quickly as alliances or agencies who wanted to identify with this particular voice have disappeared from the public spectrum.

Fatima Memisevic repeated her own trauma through exposing herself once more, being aware that by expressing her own vulnerability it would no longer cause any human reaction, but a “civilised” or “cultivated” human distance, or even, I suppose, an unbridgeable one. This very simple and sincere gesture, which does not count beforehand on the empathy for Others and which knows in advance that the public audience is not to be relied on or that it has “withdrawn” until the next occasion, opens up a series of questions which I would like to highlight here. Among others, whether there is still some common basis for claiming against such drastic forms of violence without calculation or unconditionality, or, to be more precise: what do human arguments count on to share empathy² with those who are exposed and subjected to violence within various global conditions and contexts?

Or, within a wider frame, what are the feminist responses to the conditions of human vulnerability that follow from events such as war, political trauma, colonization, exploitation, torture, modern slavery, rape, disappearance? After almost seventeen years from the first enormous public attention towards wartime violence against women at the international level, which was framed within the discursive marker of “mass rape” or within a more ideological coverage (that is, rape as a means of ethnic cleansing — and of Muslims in particular), rape has returned, as Jasna Baksic-Muftic, a professor of women’s human rights from Sarajevo, says: “into the framework of individual self and it becomes a personal psychological temptation tied in to the question of how to live with one’s survived experience” (Baksic-Muftic 2004, p. 51). And, following her remark, “rape has returned outside the lights of the camera, outside the interest of journalists, human rights activists, NGO activists, and women have been left to confront their trauma alone” (Ibid, 51). Are they not, like those women who had undergone the trauma of the genocide of Srebrenica, “knots without a net” as was explained by writer Aleksandar Hemon (Hemon 2005) which requires “a new language or new

¹ Intensification of consumerism within neoglobal capitalism equally affects material products, images and human suffering (see: Huggan 2001); therefore public interest for issues of rape situated within the discursive mixture of Balkan, barbarism, war violence and exoticism fell off simultaneously with the disappearing of the need for ‘consuming’ women as objects of war rape primarily through the image of cultural otherness.

² Although there is full ambivalence around the notion of empathy especially because of its commodification within the industry of human charity, here I use it in the affirmative sense, of re-inventing human feelings to each other or primary responsiveness, and therefore, responsibility for the Other.

symbolic framework for the negotiation between silence and speech within the official political noise around us that prevents one from reformulating identity and community outside the conventional registers that produce trauma/violence/loss” (Husanovic 2008, p. 201).

In the meantime, the most important cases were closed at the International Criminal Court (ICC) and *ad hoc* International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY)³ at which several individuals were found guilty⁴ for setting up detention camps and for sexual abuse on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the testimonies of more than a dozen victims of rape and sexual slavery were heard. I agree that the advent of the Tribunals that were established in the 1990s, also including the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), advanced the development of international jurisprudence on sexual assaults, and rape in particular, by explicitly identifying rape as a crime against humanity, by broadening the scope of crimes of sexual violence, by reinforcing the recognition of rape as a form of torture and, ultimately, recognizing rape as a form of genocide (Strumpfen-Darrie 2000, p. 1). But I wonder how this advent within legal discourse and legal framework relates to the issue of justice for women who are survivors of such violence. To recollect, in 1993, when the United Nations Security Council established the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to prosecute serious violations of humanitarian law committed in the course of the Yugoslavian armed conflict, one of the primary missions highlighted by the Tribunal’s first president, Antonio Cassese, was “to render justice” (Cassese 1994, p. 48).

At first glance, two questions appear: First, what constitutes “rendering” justice? The second, which I found more relevant to this particular matter, is what does it mean to “render justice”? Or, going further, can justice “be rendered” to those to whom justice applies foremost? And additionally, through which types of layers do we explore the impacts of “rendering justice” and with what kind of certainty? Juridical, political, feminist, universal, individual, gender? Kirsten Campbell (2005), in her very prolific article *To Render Justice: Models of ‘Justice’ in the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia*, explored the ways how the above-mentioned Tribunal utilises this task of “rendering justice”, focusing upon cases of sexual violence. She spoke about four models of justice denoted as “procedure”, “punishment”, “recognition” and “reconciliation” and how sexual violence (namely rape⁵ and sexual assault) as a newly recognized crime

³ For example, at the last trial which lasted eight months and ended in 2001 (the case of Kunarac, Kovac, Vukovic), sixteen victims of rape gave testimonies and three individuals were found guilty by which rape was treated as a crime against humanity (Baksic-Muftic 2004, p. 53) .

⁴ The most well-known cases were: the Delalic case, Furundzija, Kvočka and Kunarac, which served as the basis for feminist interpretations of sexual violence as a crime as well as for various expert analyses to this regard.

⁵ According to Human Rights Watch, in investigations and statements, before any particular event, rape and the sexual assault of women in situations of conflict have been characterized more as random events or incidental aspects of war than as illegitimate acts that violate humanitarian law. “Rape, nonetheless, has long been mischaracterized and dismissed by military and political leaders — those in a position to stop it — as a private crime, a sexual act, the ignoble act of the occasional

within war circumstances refers to them. It should be noted that thanks to international feminist efforts at the beginning of the nineties, especially in response to reports of *mass rape* in the former Yugoslavia, sexual violence against women was acknowledged as a crime against humanity in the United Nation's statute for the international tribunal⁶ and as such implicitly became "engendered". It opened up a new horizon of looking at the entire problem but also new theoretical disputes around this.

Instead of analysing any of these models, I would rather mention some paradoxical points to this regard. Although sexual violence is acknowledged as a crime against humanity⁷ and is therefore to be punished, the very procedure at the court that mirrors the two above-mentioned juridical or so-called classical models of justice — as procedural and as punishment — signifies an "inhuman site" in return. Above all, the legal ritual of testifying itself reinforces a certain type of violence upon those (in this case, women) who had already been subjected to the violence — through re-enacting the authority of law and invoking a punishment, but first of all through restoring and reinventing an act of trauma without human protection. Or, without feeling humanly secure where vulnerability is exposed to the utmost extent. Different reports noted that the whole situation at the trials showed the ease with which the offender can exploit the vulnerability and weakened resistance of his victim not only because rape, for example, leaves deep psychological scars on the woman victim or survivor, but because the victim herself suffers from deep psychological pain that contains various blockades⁸ and sensors to different aspects of human capacity to comprehend this as a whole. On the one hand, women survivors receive permission to discourse within a legal frame that includes a "promise" of punishment of the offenders as an opportunity to testify about their (in)humanness; on the other hand, the very same discourse relies in advance on a dehumanized relation. But yet it is simple and to a certain extent pretentious to say that there is a legal discourse that produces these dehumanized effects; that is more than that or, as Judith Butler pointed out on another occasion, keeping in mind the complexity of facing and treating violence nowadays: "Here the dehumanisation emerges at the limits of discursive life, limits

solider; worse still, it has been accepted precisely because it is so commonplace." (Human Rights Watch, 1995).

⁶ In the aftermath of WWII, rape was recognized as a crime along with other atrocities and offences committed against any civilian population including murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, torture... See among others, the *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War* (1949).

⁷ According to Kirsten Campbell's stand (Campbell 2005, p.13-14), sexual violence as a crime against humanity contains four notions of injustice: injustice against an individual person which derives from the violation of her/his fundamental human rights; injustice that concerns 'principles of humanity' through violation of universal values, injustice that targets humanity as a whole and injustice that touches upon international humanitarian law.

⁸ Mischkowski considers that the reason for this is one very decisive difference between rape and other forms of human rights violations, namely, the social consequences of the crime which includes social prejudices, female shame, guilt, condemnations by the community, etc. "For the rape survivors, admission of rape often enough entails exposure to open contempt, discrimination, if not social death." (Mischkowski 2007, p.2)

established through prohibition and foreclosure” (Butler 2004, p. 16). Women — survivors of rape who were longing for a fair and just trial — found themselves in a very human trap: in order to achieve justice, they had to allow themselves to pass through the unbearable traumatic experience of injustice by using and exposing their own selves, especially their bodies which became a significant field, to determine the border of “truth *versus* justice” or “justice *versus* care”.

But first of all, let me explain a key ambiguity that sexual violence as a crime against humanity constitutes and which concerns individual/universal dichotomy as a juridical and ethical issue and certainly an issue of justice. It is certain that women’s groups insisted on this definition in order to make this problem a matter of human affairs by attacking the inhuman substance of the act. In other words, only by addressing a source of common inhumanity, would it be possible to touch on the “universal” as both an implicit reason and claim and therefore engage legal authority. Although the jurisprudence of the Tribunal understands the crime of sexual violence in relation to the rights of the individual and therefore sexual violence as a violation of the fundamental human rights that constitute the person *as* a subject, their right to physical and subjective integrity, only in relation to a collective gives to this act an attribute of universal, or, constituted it as a crime against humanity⁹. In this case a key proof is that sexual assault, namely rape, is a part of a systematic act of hatred committed against a civilian population. This above-mentioned argument has various far-reaching implications and dilemmas around humaneness and justice in general, and on victims of violence in particular.

If justice for the survivors of rape under humanitarian law derives from the violation of the principle of humanity as a universal virtue, does the whole procedure ensure the possibility or presence of the principle of humanity for every concrete victim, or survivors who had already experienced dehumanisation? Or does the presence of the subject of this violation challenge or target the very principle of humanity to that extent that the basis of a universal humanity of persons becomes a place of desolation, a place of absurd or lack of possibility at all? Or whether the norms of human rights enable the constituting of a position or an atmosphere to reintegrate human beings within the shape of humans? The criminal act that is described as a violation of sexual integrity as well as the moral and physical integrity of a victim such as is sexual violence against women, is captured within the legal discourse of the individual right to autonomy, namely to bodily self-determination and so-called free will. But what is the subjective integrity that is supposed to be re-called or refigured at the trial, or which definition of humanity would it use, if at all? Ironically enough, the absence of integrity or personhood especially in terms of bodily conditions was the only condition under which women who had experienced mass rape were able to survive at all¹⁰, while

⁹ “Tribunal held that crimes against humanity ‘transcend the individual because when the individual is assaulted, humanity comes under attack and is negated. It is therefore the concept of humanity as victim which essentially characterizes crimes against humanity’” (Campbell 2005, p.11) .

¹⁰ “My entire body was cut up. And even today I carry those scars,” says Asmira. “While they were raping me, my six-month-old daughter was crying. That made them angry, so they turned to her, to stab her with the bayonet, and I screamed, begging them, and then I blacked out”, says Asmira. (Source: editorial from “Oslobodjenje”, 22 May 2006).

taking control over one's own life and one's own body is for them *sine qua non* for continuation of life.

It is obvious that the above-mentioned tribunals reinforced prohibitions against rape and other sexual violence; it is more than obvious that by prosecuting rape as a war crime in terms of the legal scope became a sort of significant achievement. What is not obvious but very questionable is whether justice was achieved or could be achieved at all within the legal framework despite involving justice as an axiological or self-assumed category of judgments. And, if possible, to whom does it have a value and which meaning does it have for women victims or survivors.

“There is no question [...] that in terms of international humanitarian law, the two tribunals namely, ICTY and ICTR, brought women's issues front and centre and have tried to ensure that sexual crimes are perceived in and of themselves as war crimes, not as peripherals” (Micklo 2001, pp. 6-7), is how one of the rare female judges, Patricia Wald at ICTY, elaborated on the certain success of women's efforts.

But coming back to the previous questions posed upon feminists, what are the feminist responses to such conditions of extreme human vulnerability such as war rape, forced pregnancy, torture, modern slavery? And, can “success” be reached only through the “translation” of individual or particular woman's suffering into a commonality of the universal? One cannot think in terms of the universal¹¹ without invoking the whole conceptual structure on which such thinking exists and keeps on existing. Or on justice either.

Going further, a woman who has been exposed to violence needs more than recognition of her own human rights not only to receive opportunities for continuation of her life but to restore her primary sense of self, meaning and worth from both social and intimate relations. In this regard a step forward in terms of legal advancement seems to be of considerable importance. In order to understand the condition of the female survivor as the subject, is as equally important as to identify the gaps because of which neither justice nor truth could fulfil such a deep abyss within this, as I would define it — the nullified self of a woman.

From a feminist perspective there are two major issues to discuss when wartime rape matters. The first touches on the unsolvable debate about what is political when rape is in question, and the second searches for wider social restorative and ethical approaches for women survivors. Women's experience of rape in war is determined by a variety of factors, including ethnicity, male power, race, nationality, position of “war sides” just as wartime sexual crimes against women “serve” specific functions; from enforcing hostile occupation and terrorizing specific civilian communities to being a vehicle of ethnic cleansing, humiliation or extermination. Therefore, all these elements embraced a concept of the political to a certain extent and through the very politicisation of the political made changes to war crime laws possible and were crucial in pressuring prosecutors to investigate such crimes. In the context of war, rape, as Tina Sideris notes “both in its aims and

¹¹ The universal paradigm is based on an asymmetric binary dichotomy that produces and signifies domination, inequality and male order and that has been recycled and mutated within various ongoing practices; discursive, social, gender.

its effects, perhaps more than other act of violence perpetrated by one individual against other, highlights the political intention of interpersonal violence” (Sideris 2001, p. 147). But what is a key political argument of feminist theoretical elaboration and what was evident within the procedures at the trials is the concept of gender. However, many other political reasons or causes are involved, gender roles and gender identities have been in the forefront of theorizing and addressing the links between violence, war and rape with dominant notions of masculinity, male power and militarization. Despite the obvious, possible provability and acknowledgement of problems within the legal framework, the main paradox at the same time is the fact that gender-specific crimes and gender-related crimes¹² along with the proof that women are those who have been the major victims of these crimes simply because of their sex, did not fulfil the concept of the political itself¹³ or if it did, it happened in very rare instances. Thus the implication of this, at first glance, confusion around the political is either a lack of confronting this specific power regime of male order and consequently challenging it, or the refusal of facing a gender-specific responsibility in the long-run.

By ignoring this argument as a political matter, that is, that women’s bodies became pure battlefields for war targets of male warriors (Brownmiller 1975) or that victims of sexual violence were above all women, not only did the tribunals fail to “render justice” by facing their own failures but escaped fully confronting it. The legal procedure that relies on both signifying gender-specificity and rejecting it to address the very sense of the political including its gender-power system, persistently provides not only ambiguous actions but deceptions. One of the very rare Croatian feminist lawyers, Ivana Radacic, gives a most accurate assertion to this in her text *Granice međunarodnog kaznenog prava: jesu li zene napokon unutar granica?* [Boundaries of international criminal law: Are women finally within the boundaries?] whereby, even though women are recognized as victims thanks to the above-mentioned *ad hoc* courts, with their establishing “the boundaries of international law are slowly opening up for women, but to a degree that does not threaten the existing female-male relations too much” (Radacic 2004, p. 52). This implicit “calculation” contained in the stubborn concept of the political as the boundary towards transforming gender order becomes a boundary to justice itself. Whenever committed and regardless of the different politically exposed targets or strategic interests, wartime rape constitutes an abuse of power relying on gender-based motivation, the assertion by men of their power over women.

The second issue, namely seeking for more restorative approaches for women survivors, deals with a problem that cuts across many of the questions already discussed in this paper. That problem has to do with attributing the justice concept of responsibility or better yet, radicalizing responsibility. The repetition of the

¹² It is worth noting that the gender aspect of such violence was acknowledged as a crime within the legal framework as being massive, organized and systematic.

¹³ An interesting remark in the report by the Human Rights Watch entitled *Rape as a Weapon of War and a Tool of Political Repression* states that this type of abuse because of its largely gender-specific character which means “that is committed by men against women has contributed to its being narrowly portrayed as sexual or personal in nature, a characterization that depoliticizes sexual abuse in conflict and results in its being ignored as a crime”. (Human Rights Watch, 1995)

original trauma through testimonials/witness accounts by women at the court in order to prove a crime against humanity not only reflects the issue that leads to the support of different political claims such as those of genocide or ethnic cleansing (Kesic 2002, p. 317), but shows all the vulnerable and controversial aspects of understanding crime or achieving justice. National politics are inscribed in the bodies of raped women either as evidence of the success of their war strategies or negation of the other “side” (nation, enemy, and other), along with various symbolic messages of the patriarchal culture or religious worldview, the politics of negation, destruction or obliteration of the Other. This unbearable surplus of symbolic, social and ideological meanings in their tensions and erasure, which is implicitly attached to the female body, brings about a desubjectivization of both the woman and the body, not only during the legal process but beyond it. At the same time, it bears witness to the layers namely aspects of ownership upon the very same bodies which were made transparent in part and within the trials themselves.

The bodies of women victims become a marker for testifying and hierarchizing various types of crimes which, as a consequence, has the “realization” of various types of justice that transcend any particular human, namely, woman’s body. The body becomes symbolic material for establishing evidence, a place in general, and the act of rape relevant as an object of general social significance (international law, war crimes, even social justice), and not as a crime in itself¹⁴, and which refers to both the bodily personality and person of the body, a very concrete woman as a person/subject of her body.

Where the tribunal’s intention is to recognize the harm of the crime to its victims by considering the experiences and witness accounts by the victims relevant for justice in order to fulfil its “truth-finding” function, it does not necessarily follow that it is possible to bring justice or reach the truth.

Probably for the reason that justice – in contrast to humanitarian law in the Derridian sense is incalculable – there is no possibility of “translating” such traumatic experience into any legal code, or probably because of its own phantasmic impossibility. In a situation of complete absence from one’s own body and one’s own existence within it, and “(a)fter the destruction of identity, family and community, what could constitute justice?” asks Campbell (Campbell 2005, p. 27), and I ask along with her, “What could constitute justice at all?”

“(A) (f)eminist approach to caring by broadening our understanding of what caring for others means”, as Joan C. Tronto (Tronto 1992, p. 184) pointed out, might be the solution, or for a start, a challenge. Carol Gilligan’s (1996) appeal for speaking in a “different voice” that involves the ethics of care, contextuality and concern for others is inscribed in a entire set of alternative practices that search for

¹⁴ Belma Becirbasic, who in her Master’s thesis *Tijelo kao tekst: Strategije upisivanja patrijarhalnog diskursa u tijelo* [*The Body as Text: Strategies for Inscribing Patriarchal Discourse in the Body*] addresses the problem of raped women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, considers this kind of procedure as leading to the absolute banalization of crime as a traumatic event for women and that it forever ties the woman to the traumatic event; she (the woman) herself becomes marked by the crime and is an obligatory guide to the crime; “she is the substantial track of the despised Other and outside of that has no identity at all” (Becirbasic 2008, p. 91).

wider social restorative approaches¹⁵ (including public hearings, alternative courts of justice, courts of women¹⁶, self-support groups). The examples of testimonials by women from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda and Korean women before the Tribunal Court in Tokyo fifteen years ago¹⁷ speak significantly about this.

Feminist engagement seeking alternative justice that pre-dated the emergence of restorative justice is primarily connected with an ethics of care centred on responsibility and relationship as concrete and active claims and therefore it is very questionable whether the criminal justice system can either partially or even at all satisfy the aspirations of a women-oriented concept of justice. But yet and even despite the different theoretical and practical disputes on this issue, by affirming an alternative set of practices through which they offered a care/response orientation to a justice/rights system (Daly-Stubbs 2006, p. 5), feminists have insisted on bringing women's voices and experiences into the legal frame. Why? One of the potential answers to this is to persistently address the politics of gender in making justice claims as a legal and political issue being aware of the problems of the permeability of criminal justice towards identity concerns, and sex/gender identity in particular or, in other words, its capacity of recognizing those concerns through a normative framework and procedure. On the other hand, the very scope of arguments in favour of woman as a subject among feminist theorists nowadays alternates between a theoretical stand that the category of woman, and likewise woman victim or survivor is not coherent but differentiated and contains its own order of differences; and its implications that it always proves anew that the issues of abuse, exclusion and oppression, or vulnerability itself affect women across the globe differently and therefore explicitly show that different positionalities and subjectivities are those that matter.

But allow me to go back to women's testimonies which are of importance for facing both the complexity and ambiguity of "transitional" justice. On a personal level, the women's act of narrating sexual or other types of violations through this type of framework signifies "a structural tension related to healing and justice" (Franke 2006, p. 13) in order to, following author's main idea, deal with a painful past and to claim a self who has a future, and on a community level, it may be

¹⁵ In this paper restorative models of justice, such as truth commissions whose main aim is to construct an alternative history of past abuses as well as to facilitate victims to reconcile and recover from various past harms are not elaborated.

¹⁶ The courts of women were initiated 1992 by the Asian Women's Human Rights Council and El Taller International in order to speak and hear the truth from powerless and oppressed women and/or communities so as to communicate a voice of resistance as well as public consciousness throughout the world. As how one of their outstanding leaders Corinne Kumar emphasized: "The Courts of Women seek legitimization not by dominant standards but its claim to the truths of the dispossessed, of the denigrated" while "silenced women are reclaiming their political voice and in breaking the silence refusing the conditions by which power maintains its patriarchal control." (Kumar 2007, p. xxiii).

¹⁷ When Kim Hak-sun and two other former Korean comfort women filed suits against the Japanese government at the Tokyo District Court in December 1991 demanding a formal apology and individual compensation (Ueno 2004, pp. 69-91), they not only shifted a historical paradigm in articulating a crime against them which had been committed fifty years earlier but they re-established themselves not only as subjects of rights but as subjects of human power.

utilised for various objectives in the service of rebuilding post-conflict identity(-ies), remasculinisation or retraditionalisation of society. The potentials of misuse of women's narratives through the inversion or shifting the point of trauma is always present and it signifies how the demand to deal with the healing procedure as an individual-collective hybrid of traumatised rather than a very distinctive sensitive act of woman as a particular human being is problematic. On the one hand, and which is shown by the particular experience of some women from Bosnia and Herzegovina who dared to publicly talk about rape, they are part of the corpus of social trauma, and on the other, they are nearly invisible subjects, cast aside and worthless, often not fitting in into their social community and often with distance and uneasiness towards women who have also survived something similar. One of the rare recent studies (Becirbasic 2008 pp. 84-85) shows how within individual traumas there is often the process of shifting and displacing of traumatic knots/layers ("traumatic transfer"), by which the diminishing of the act of rape in relation to the absence of its subsequent acknowledgement from society is especially significant.

It is not perchance that most of the testimonies became possible only under certain, namely *engendering*, conditions when women survivors received the support of women around and close to them or when women's organisations provided support through creating trust-building and safe surroundings¹⁸, along with lobbying, addressing problems, naming agents of oppression, demanding compensation for women survivors¹⁹. There is neither judgment nor a neutral determination in any particular case; instead, there is a desire to express empathy with a particular woman and particular experience, and share solidarity through sharing stories, by voicing and hearing, as well as to provide a possibility for public human awareness on a global scale.

Even though all this hints at a utopian drive of feminist imaginary around women's community, its collective ethos and its responsibility, there are serious questions and dilemmas that need to be addressed or opened up.

Can we and from which perspective might we speak about the responsibility of one gender and what sense is there in a concept of engendering justice and the endeavour for searching for new social possibilities? How does the problem of responsibility first emerge to women? Through sharing empathy with woman as the Other that relies on an imaginary of women's togetherness through common oppressed history or through identification with suffering as "an original traumatised and return to self where I am responsible for what I did not will"

¹⁸ Even then, there are certain blockades, fears and various controversies and dilemmas for a range of reasons that show how women feel uncomfortable about exposing experiences of violence publicly and how deep trauma signifies an unspeakable horizon of vulnerability.

¹⁹ Thanks to pressure by women's organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, changes and amendments were made to the *Law on Principles of Social Protection, Protection of Civil Victims of War, and Protection of Families with Children* in mid-2006 whereby women who had survived war rape, namely "sexual abuse and rape", received the status of civil victims of war and could then seek social and other rights set forth in the Law. (Amended Article 54 of Law in "Sluzbene novine Federacije BiH" ["Official Gazette of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina"], no.39/06/26.07.2006).

(according to Butler 2005, pp. 88-89) in Levinas's sense? What primarily motivates women, and feminists in particular, to take responsibility for acting against women's suffering? And then for other Others?

For what to be ethically responsible within these acts and what ethical demand stands behind this? There are no clear or ultimate answers and we are moving in an area of uncertainty and fragility. From personal experience I might say that those who have acted within areas of various support and within international coalitions throughout the world become political agents sometimes without clear articulation, an assumed and determined political agenda and sometimes even without a choice. However, many of them took on the risk of responsibility regardless of the whole complexity of contesting, unclear and to a great extent ignored concerns around human conscience, consciousness and ethical responsiveness to violence. Butler makes the significant point by saying that "responsibility is not a matter of cultivating a will, but of making use of an unwilling susceptibility as a resource for becoming responsive to the Other." (Butler 2005, p. 91) Responsibility means responsiveness to others but under certain conditions.

Therefore, an appeal for radicalizing responsibility concerning rape in a wider sense means both questioning the conditions of gendered power systems, social injustice, humiliation on sex/gender basis, militarisation and global violence to the most extent as well as creating framework to enable justice and reinvent a potential of human. In this regard reimagining the community that would count on inclusivity of feminist agenda and singularity of human dignity, might be one of the proposals.

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