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Op-Ed 1

Rape as a Weapon of War

All throughout the world men women and children continue to be sexually assaulted. Rape is something that has happened for as long as there has been recorded history. However it seems that in time of war there is an escalated rate of rape and sexual assault by both men and women. In *Confronting Global Gender Justice: Women’s Lives, Human Rights* rape is a topic that is brought up and written about often. There is a whole chapter that deals with genocidal rape.

The book takes a different stance than normal books do when dealing with this topic. The chapter deals with how women are the perpetrators of sexual assault and rape crimes and the reasons behind that. Being a female in societal terms is being dainty, soft, sweet and a mother. Being those things a woman cannot possibly commit these types of crimes, especially not against another woman. What I would argue is why not? To me this is the same thing that we do when we talk about a white male that commits a crime versus a black male who commits the same crime.

When a black male commits a crime, his race is always mentioned, he is usually portrayed as being more violent and he is stereotyped. When a white male commits that same crime his race is not mentioned. There is usually mention of how he seemed so normal or he never seemed had problems. There is usually an excuse or a rationalization for why he committed that crime. We do the same thing when it comes to rape. Men who rape are not talked about in the same way as women who rape. Women who rape must have some type of defect, either she is angry and trying to get back at men or women. Or she is angry because she cannot be a mother. What kind of rationales are these? Maybe just maybe people who commit crimes are bad people. Maybe a woman just is drawn to the power dynamic or rape in the same way that a man is. By no means is there an excuse for these crimes, but just because of someone’s gender or race is different does not mean we should look at the crimes any differently than any other.

Rape is a tool during war that can leave a whole society in shambles. This is because it takes away the “purity” of the marriageable and already married women there. By doing that you then tarnish the continuation of that population because people will not want to marry a woman who has been raped and she will not have children. Thinking in terms like that, anyone who is out to ruin another population or society would commit sexual crimes. It does not matter what gender, race, and ethnicity a person is and we should stop trying to rationalize these crimes based off of someone’s characteristics. All over the world we try to push for equality but we do not look at heinous crimes equally.