Unfolding the 'Comfort Women' Debates

Modernity, Violence, Women's Voices
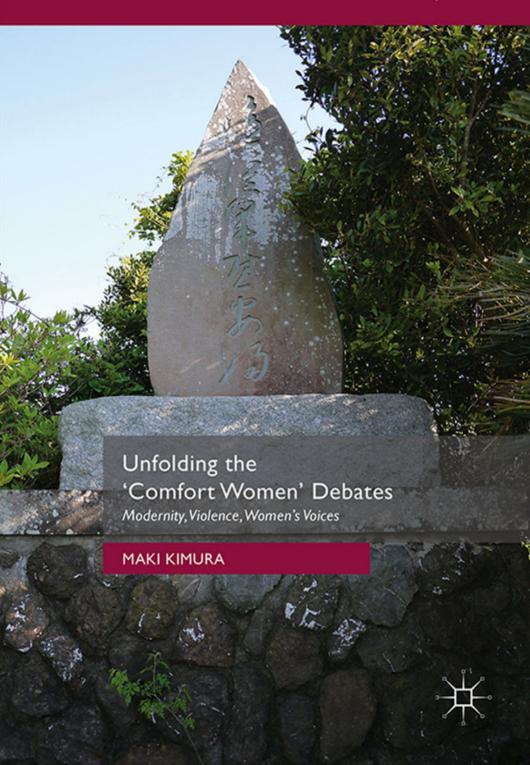
MAKI KIMURA

Genders and Sexualities in History

Series Editors: John H. Arnold, Joanna Bourke and Sean Brady

Palgrave Macmillanís series, Genders and Sexualities in History, aims to accommodate and foster new approaches to historical research in the fields of genders and sexualities. The series will promote world-class scholarship that concentrates upon the interconnected themes of genders, sexualities, religions/religiosity, civil society, class formations, politics and war.

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Maki Kimuraís *Unfolding the 'Comfort Women' Debates* is a distinguished contribution to the 'Genders and Sexualities in History' series. It is a historically nuanced and rigorously researched exploration of the controversial ëcomfort womení debates. At national and international levels, disagreements about the ëcomfort womení have stimulated discussions about legal responsibility, criminal prosecution, and financial compensation for war crimes. Crucially, Kimura asks us to reflect on the politics of recording, documenting, studying, and writing history. She probes orientalist interpretations of the ëcomfort womení issue and suggests new ways to think about the relationship between modernity and evil. The book is essential reading for anyone interested in the nature and extent of sexual violence against women in armed conflicts. It will also speak to a wider historical readership, in its framing of the interpretative and methodological issues involved in global questions of human rights.

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Acknowledgements

This book could not have been completed without the support of many people over the years. Their encouragement finally convinced me that even though I did not until recently belong to any particular group or network of 'comfort women' redress movements in Japan (or elsewhere), there was a way to contribute to the movement by writing this book. They also reassured me that, as our ideas materialize through the intersection of our social experiences, I need not be afraid of presenting ideas that could be considered different and unique.

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Introduction

1
A Question of History

In May 2013, Hashimoto Toru,[1] the Mayor of Osaka, Japan, and the co-leader of the Nationalist Japan Restoration Party, caused an outcry from some international communities, particularly those of feminists, by commenting that the 'comfort women' system during the Second World War was 'necessary'. Hashimoto was fiercely criticized, not only by feminists but also by the media, the wider public in Japan and even by some conservative Japanese politicians. However, this incident exemplifies how the dominant political climate in Japan surrounding war atrocities during the Second World War, including the 'comfort women' system, has, particularly over the past decade, turned nationalist and reactionary in a way that deeply disturbs feminists and left activists. This tendency has worsened since Abe Shinzo became Japanese Prime Minister for the second time in December 2012. He attempted to withdraw the Kono Statement of 1993, which acknowledged the involvement of Japanese authorities in organizing the 'comfort women' system,[2] and to review the pacifist constitution so that Japan can use force to participate in settling international conflicts.

However, nationalism is not the only problematic aspect of Hashimoto's comment (Kimura, 2013). The 'comfort women' system, since it became widely known in the 1990s, has raised an extensive range of issues, such as: the gendered and racialized nature of war and militarism; the role of testimonies in historical documentation; political subjectivity and war compensation; the violation of human rights; and the de/construction of a national memory of war and authoritarianism. Hashimoto's comment and the ways that it was reported, debated and criticized nationally and internationally reminds us that the issues surrounding 'comfort women' are still far from settled, and of the immense complexity in situating the 'comfort women' system in wide and complicated historical and political contexts. This is also well demonstrated by further strengthening of the revisionist claim that the Japanese government is not responsible for the 'comfort women' system, after the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper published a special report in August 2014. The *Asahi Shimbun* reported that articles they published in the 1980s and

throughout the 1990s that used Yoshida Seiji's memoir as the evidence of the use of coercion by Japanese authorities in recruiting the women, should be withdrawn, as the historical accuracy of the memoir has been questioned (*Asahi Shimbun*, 2014b).[3] The *Asahi Shimbun* also emphasized that this does not imply that there was no coercive nature in the 'comfort women' system (*Asahi Shimbun*, 2014c). Nevertheless, revisionist media and ultra-nationalist politicians took this opportunity to claim strongly that the incorrect reporting of the 'comfort women' system, where the Japanese authorities forcibly dragged innocent women to become 'comfort women', presented an inaccurate history of Japan. They also argued that this tainted the image of Japan because it was accused by the international community of sexual slavery when this was not what actually happened.[4]

1.1 The emergence of the discussion on 'comfort women'

The term 'comfort women' refers to women who were sexually exploited by the Japanese military during the Second World War.[5] The existence of 'comfort women' and the so-called 'comfort stations', in which soldiers had access to 'sexual services' of these women, were known for a long time (in Japan) through, for example, memoirs of soldiers or independent research studies, but only to limited groups of people. Some research studies were conducted in the 1970s and 1980s; for instance, in the Republic of Korea (South Korea), Professor Yun Chung-ok of Ewha Women's University initiated research into 'comfort women' in the 1980s, and called for a full investigation into the issue and political recognition of these women. This developed into the request by women's groups in South Korea for the Japanese government to carry out an inquiry into the 'comfort women' system just before the South Korean President Roh Tae Wu's visit to Japan in May 1990. In Japan, a former journalist, Senda Kako wrote a book *The Comfort Women* in 1973, which became a best-seller and sold several million copies.[6] Also, Kawada Fumiko, a freelance journalist, published a biography of a former 'comfort woman', Bae Bong-gi, in 1987, after listening to her life story over ten years.[7]

However, the brutal exploitation that 'comfort women' suffered only became more widely known when the actual experience and ordeals of these women were disclosed through their testimonies, and they started to file lawsuits against the Japanese government. The 'comfort women' system began to be recognized as a serious human rights violation and the subject of political debate, particularly in Japan in the 1990s. Kim Hak-sun gave testimony about her experience at the Korean Church Women United office on 14 August 1991, and she became the first publicly known Korean 'comfort woman'. Together with two other women, she filed a lawsuit in the Tokyo District Court on 6 December 1991.

In January 1992, following the lawsuit, Yoshimi Yoshiaki, a historian in Japan, reported that he had uncovered Japanese government documents

that show the involvement of the Japanese military in 'recruiting' women and organizing comfort stations (*Asahi Shimbun*, 1992). Until this 'discovery' of official documents, as it is termed, the Japanese government had firmly and repeatedly denied government involvement in the operation of comfort stations. They reiterated, even after these documents came to light, that comfort stations had been organized and managed as private businesses. However, in July 1992, after some official, though very limited, inquiries, the Japanese government finally admitted for the first time its 'minor' involvement in managing and supervising comfort stations. Scholars and feminist activists established non-governmental organizations to support the victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system. These organizations also undertook research into the 'comfort women' system and the women's lives and experience, both through their testimonies and through official documents that have become increasingly available.

This issue particularly attracted the attention of feminists in Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and other Asian countries, who organized the first Japanese Military 'comfort women' Asian Solidarity Conference in Seoul in August 1992; but the stories of sexually exploited women also moved feminists beyond these geographical boundaries. The courage of the former 'comfort women' in testifying to their painful experience deeply stirred feminists, human rights and other activists as well as the wider public, regardless of their nationality, gender and age. The women's determination and the empathy of those who support them, especially feminists, has enabled the development of national/regional/international networks helping to gain recognition of these women's sufferings. Women's narratives of their experience also became vital for those concerned about the issue of war compensation and reparation in Japan, as, after fifty years the Japanese government admitted, with a lot of reservation, a certain level of involvement of Japanese authorities in the operation of the 'comfort women' system;[8] this has opened up the possibility that the war compensation issue may see a political solution in the near future. 'Comfort women' victims, feminists and other activists and scholars demanded that the Japanese government should acknowledge its full responsibility and pay compensation to these women. Such a political claim led to a series of heated discussions in Japan concerning 'comfort women', which eventually became known as 'the issue of "comfort women"' (*Jyugun Ianfu Mondai*).

Under this mounting political pressure, in August 1993, a year after the Japanese government admitted some involvement in the 'comfort women' system, it presented the second report and Kono Yohei, then Chief Cabinet Secretary, issued a statement acknowledging some level of coercion in the organization of the 'comfort women' system. In August 1994, Murayama Tomiichi, the first Socialist Prime Minister in Japan since 1948, presented a governmental plan on war reparations. Under this plan, the Peace, Friendship and Exchange Initiative was to be founded in support of historical research

and to develop better communication and understanding between Japan and the Asian countries concerned. Regarding compensation to 'comfort women' victims, the Murayama government proposed a small amount of money to be provided from a private charity fund, which was to be set up as part of this arrangement. This plan was, however, strongly criticized by the victim-survivors and the activists who supported these women, as it was considered merely a way to circumvent the legal responsibility of the Japanese government.

Despite the controversy and protest, the Asian Peace and Friendship Fund for Women (the Asian Women's Fund) was established in July 1995. By this time, the Japanese government had decided to subsidize the operational cost and to provide welfare and medical care for the 'comfort women' victims, but not to finance provisional compensation ('atonement money') from the governmental contribution (Asian Women's Fund (AWF), 1995; *Asahi Shimbun*, 1995a). Demanding official compensation for individual 'comfort women' by the Japanese government, support groups in Japan criticized and rejected the Asian Women's Fund, and launched an alternative citizenship fund to provide financial assistance to the women (*Asahi Shimbun*, 1995b). Nevertheless, the Asian Women's Fund went ahead from 15 August 1996 with the payment of 'atonement money' to those women in the Philippines who agreed to receive it, with a written apology from the Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro.

As most 'comfort women' victims refused to accept this 'atonement money' from the Fund, the Japanese government made a statement in October that receiving this money would not prevent them from continuing legal proceedings against the Japanese government (AWF, 1996). However, the Fund caused serious conflicts within support groups of 'comfort women'; many women and support groups rejected the Fund and the money offered, but some women chose to accept. The Fund was criticized for causing a division within the 'comfort women' support movement, and alternative voluntary funds and support organizations were established in Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and other Asian countries to assist 'comfort women' victims who refused to receive 'atonement money' from the Fund (Jeong, 2008).[9] In South Korea and Taiwan, their respective governments provided financial support to the women in 1997 and 1998 equivalent to the 'atonement money' so that the women could avoid receiving the money from the Fund (WAM, 2013).

The 'comfort women' issue was discussed at the international political level for the first time in the 48th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in February 1992 (UN, 1992). Since then it has been discussed in various official UN bodies and other (human rights) organizations linked to the UN, such as the International Commission of Jurists. The human-rights-violating nature of the 'comfort women' system was recognized and extended discussions took place in the Commission on Human Rights (and then the Human Rights Council), the Sub-Commission on the Prevention

of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the Sub-Commission's Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In 1995, Radhika Coomaraswamy, a Special Rapporteur on violence against women and its causes and consequences, presented a preliminary report to the UN Human Rights Commission in which the 'comfort women' issue was discussed in the context of violence against women in situations of armed conflicts (UN, 1995a).[10] In January 1996, the following year, she further submitted a full report on the issue as an addendum to the report on violence against women, its causes and consequences, to the 52nd session of the Commission (UN, 1996). The report confirmed the legal responsibility of the Japanese government and called for compensation to individual 'comfort women'. Linda Chavez was also appointed as a Special Rapporteur in the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, and conducted research into 'the situation of systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery-like practices during wartime, including internal armed conflict', covering the issue of 'comfort women'. After submitting a number of working papers,[11] she was succeeded by Gay J. McDougall, who completed a full report on this matter in 1998 (UN, 1998). The report yet again emphasized the legal responsibility of the Japanese government and the need to establish mechanisms for prosecuting those who were responsible and compensating the survivors (O'Brien, 2000: 19; Matsui, 1998: 4).

As this demonstrates, the 'comfort women' issue has received increasing international acknowledgement in the context of increased awareness of women's human rights, in particular violence against women, since the 1990s. With the report of horrific incidents of sexual violence during the conflict in former Yugoslavia at the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, women's human rights, including those related to violence against women, were recognized as an 'inalienable, integral and indivisible part of human rights'; and this was documented in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action for the first time (Charlesworth and Chinkin, 2000: 246–7; Matsui, 1998: 3–4). This prompted the adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the UN General Assembly in December 1993. The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action in 1995 further acknowledged women's rights as human rights. Such development of the international legal framework has helped to gain recognition of gendered aspects of slavery, such as forced prostitution and pimping, trafficking in women, and violence against women in armed conflict as forms of the violation of human rights (Charlesworth and Chinkin, 2000: 236).

Heightened awareness of women's human rights urged the international women's movement to demand the prosecution of those responsible for sexually exploiting and violating women during armed conflicts. This movement achieved the recognition of the international community that sexual

violence against women in armed conflicts, such as rape, sexual slavery and/or forced pregnancy, should be treated as a 'crime against humanity', which is within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. The International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda (ICTY and ICTR) included rape as a crime against humanity. Following this move, the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice successfully achieved the inclusion in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 'rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity' as a crime against humanity (ICTY, 1993; ICTR, 1994; ICC, 1998; VAWW-NET, 2002: 13). Such recognition also initiated civil society to establish the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal for the Trial of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery (WIWCT) in Tokyo in December 2000. Through the Tribunal, feminist and citizen groups attempted to bring justice to compensate for the lack of state and/or international prosecution of those who were responsible for the 'comfort women' system.

However, despite all recommendations made by UN human-rights bodies and specialized agencies such as the International Labour Organization to the Japanese government since the 1990s, as well as the judgement of the above Tribunal, the Japanese government has not so far made much progress on finding a solution to this issue. During the 111th Session of the UN Human Rights Committee held in July 2014, the Committee considered the State Report of Japan and adopted the concluding observations that the Japanese government should 'take immediate and effective legislative and administrative measures' to solve this issue, including criminal prosecution of those who were responsible and full reparation to victims (UN, 2014). During the meeting, however, it was reported that the Japanese representative expressed that the term sexual slavery is inappropriate to refer to 'comfort women' (Takita, 2014).

As the Japanese government has not shown any sign of taking full responsibility, feminists have also started to explore other political measures to address this issue. This resulted in the US House of Representatives passing (non-binding) resolution 121 on 31 July 2007, calling on the Japanese government to formally acknowledge, apologize and accept full responsibility for the abuses of 'comfort women'. This was followed by similar resolutions in the Netherlands, Canada and the European Parliament on 13 December 2007 (Amnesty, 2008). Although to date no acceptable official apology and compensation has been offered to the women by the Japanese government, the continual effort of 'comfort women' victim-survivors and feminist activists and scholars internationally has kept the issue on the political agenda at national, regional and international levels for over twenty years.[12] Such a global movement was made possible because women's testimonies of their experiences not only revealed and highlighted the injustice they suffered but also addressed the violation of human rights regularly and globally

happening during the war and in peacetime. This is why the testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors became one of the crucial aspects in the discussion of the issue.

'Comfort women's' testimonies have been vital in raising various questions beyond the violation of women's human rights. First, these testimonies stimulated a strong demand from feminists in Japan for the study of history to be more gender conscious. The feminists criticized the lack of gendered perspectives in existing work on history, which has ignored women's experience of and in history, and claimed that this has distorted historical 'truth'. They emphasized the need for the rewriting of history with ingrained gendered perspectives to appropriately reflect historical 'truth'. In this process, they also questioned what should be considered as legitimate historical record and documentation and the politics of writing history. Second, these women's testimonies have also triggered a heated debate about the understanding of the circumstances and the status of 'comfort women'; some claim that 'comfort women' were (military) prostitutes who were paid sex workers in war-affected areas and who knowingly volunteered to became 'comfort women'; others consider the women to have been sexual slaves who were 'forced' to provide sex to soldiers against their will without any recompense. These different perspectives usually represent the divide between right-wing scholars and politicians, and left-wing and feminist scholars and activists. Third, the engagement with the testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors has addressed the question of the national and gender identity of people in Japan. These people wondered to what extent they and the present Japanese government are responsible for the past wrongdoing of the country and how this memory should be taught to and remembered by younger generations.

In short, the testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors and the discussion surrounding the 'comfort women' system have raised fundamental but complicated questions about history: the political and social nature of history; the politics, of the writing, of and the study of history; the ways in which history is politically constructed at specific times and places; and how history mobilizes and is mobilized by specific political subjectivities. The call, therefore, for writing history incorporating gender and the debates over historical 'truth' surrounding testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors should be understood in the context of re-examination of modern historiography and the study of history, influenced by the work of feminist and Marxist historians as well as post-structuralist/post-modernist and post-colonial critics. This entails, first, critical examination of the political construction of gender, which is the central force in social organization, but often hidden and invisible (Scott, 1988: 27); and second, understanding that writing history about the past is the very practice of the present and of its power relations (Dean, 1994: 28–9). With the emergence of post-structuralist/post-modernist theories on representation and discourse, as seen in Michel

Foucault's approach to history, a naive understanding of history and the historical 'facts' and 'truth' being out there began to be challenged.

1.2   Framing issues: the discussions surrounding 'comfort women' in the 1990s

It is often believed that the existence of 'comfort women' was 'unknown' or 'hidden' for fifty years because the Japanese military government, after its defeat in the war, destroyed huge numbers of documents on the 'comfort women' system. However, records of the Allied Forces show that they were aware of the existence of the system, as they interviewed Japanese soldiers and civilians including Korean 'comfort women' who were captured nearer the end of the war (Yoshimi, ed., 1992).[13] War literature such as novels and the diaries and memoirs of former soldiers published in Japan after the Second World War often made reference to comfort stations and the women who 'worked' there (Takasaki, 1994; The Center, 1994a; 1994b), and in the 1970s and 1980s a few independent research studies were conducted on 'comfort women' in South Korea and Japan. In addition to the work of Yun Chung-ok, Senda Kako and Kawada Fumiko mentioned earlier, Kim Il-myon published his study *The Emperor's Forces and Korean Comfort Women* (1976) in Japan, claiming that the lack of knowledge on 'comfort women' was a collective amnesia. Yamatani Tetsuo's film *Okinawan Halmoni (An Old Lady in Okinawa): The Testimony of a Comfort Woman* about a former Korean victim-survivor Bae Bong-gi living in Okinawa, Japan, whose biography would later be published by Kawada, was released in 1979. In the 1980s more books were published, including, in South Korea, *My Mother was a Military Comfort Woman* (1982) by Yun Chung-mo[14] and, in Japan, *My War Crimes: The Forced Draft of Koreans* (1983) by Yoshida Seiji.[15] Shirota Suzuko, a Japanese victim-survivor, published her life story *Maria no Sanka* (*Mary's Hymns of Praise*) under a pseudonym in 1971, but it went out of print soon after publication. However, after she recounted her experience again to a pastor of the Kanita Women's Village, a rehabilitation and care institution for vulnerable women in Chiba near Tokyo, a memorial to 'comfort women' was erected, according to her wishes, on the premises in 1985; her life story and the erection of the memorial was reported in a radio programme in 1986 (Awa Bunka Isan Forum, 2009; 2014).

Given these examples, it is more appropriate to argue that the 'comfort women' system and the existence of these women were not necessarily unknown. Rather the system was not problematized widely nor was extensive research conducted until a number of former 'comfort women' started to come forward to talk publicly about their experiences in the 1990s (Yoshimi, 2000: 33).

As mentioned above, however, it should be noted that some effort to engage with women's own accounts of their experience, highlighting the

systematic sexual exploitation, had already been made during the 1970s and 1980s. For example, Kawada met Bae Bong-gi, a Korean victim-survivor, then living in Okinawa Island in Japan, and listened to her life story in an attempt to comprehend women's sexual exploitation (Kawada, 1994: 11, 297). Kawada focused on Bae's narrative because she regarded this as the only way to comprehend the 'comfort women' system in the absence of any systematic studies of the system. It was believed then that most official documents concerned had been destroyed after the war, so that any extensive archival research on the 'comfort women' system was considered to be impossible. Kawada's work on Bae's life story was published as *A House with Red Roof Tiles – a military comfort woman from Korea* (1987).

Reflecting on her days of listening to Bae, Kawada stated that due to the lack of comprehensive research into the 'comfort women' system then, and to the extremely difficult life that Bae had experienced, she could not fully grasp Bae's life experience (Kawada, 1994: 297–8). Yun Chung-ok similarly embarked on critical research in the 1980s to investigate what had happened to girls of her generation who had been drafted by Japan during the war, as she had wondered for a long time why so few had returned to their home villages (Yun *et al.*, 1992: 13–14). Her research, also in part based on interviews and the oral history method, was presented as four serial articles in *Hangyore Newspaper* in South Korea in January 1990 (Yun *et al.*, 1992: 13); this inspired other (Korean) feminists to undertake further research into the issue of 'comfort women' through women's testimonial narratives.

The emergence of a number of testimonies of 'comfort women' victims in the 1990s also encouraged historians in Japan to look into official archives more comprehensively. In the late 1980s, Yoshimi, who first presented Japanese official documents on 'comfort women' to the public in 1992, came across official documents related to the 'comfort women' system in the National Institute for Defence Studies Library at the Self-Defence Agency in Japan. Deeply moved by Kim Hak-sun's testimony made in December 1991 and her courage in coming forward, he went back to the library and managed to track down the documents concerned (Yoshimi, 2000: 35). He subsequently campaigned for the disclosure of further official documents and, in 1992, published as an edited volume some of the documents he and other scholars had found, to make them more publicly accessible. In April 1993, together with individuals of wide-ranging backgrounds, including scholars in history and international relations, legal experts and activists, he founded an independent and non-profit research institute The Center for Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility (O'Brien, 2000: 7; The Center, 2014). It aims to carry out research into Japanese war crimes, uncovering more official documents, and to fulfil Japan's responsibility to Asian war victims (The Center, 2014). Many interviews with former 'comfort women' were also conducted by researchers affiliated with the Center.[16]

Independent feminist researchers in Japan also carried out further research into the 'comfort women' system, consulting official documents and testimonies of 'comfort women' victims, and contributed to a fuller understanding of the system. For example, feminist historian Suzuki Yuko explored the system within the context of Japanese colonialism and critically examined the relation between Japanese colonial policies on Korea and the development of the 'comfort women' system (Suzuki, 1992). Considerable attention was given not only to testimonies of 'comfort women' survivors, but also to those of soldiers and civilians who worked in the Japanese military. Many of these testimonies were later published as collected volumes.[17] Takasaki Ryuji (1994) critically examined more than fifty wartime diaries and memoirs that describe comfort stations and 'comfort women', and similar work was undertaken by the Center for Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility (The Center, 1994a; 1994b).[18] Books aimed at a younger audience, such as those by Nishino (1993) and Ishikawa (1993), were also published in an attempt to offer young people an opportunity to learn about 'comfort women' as a critical part of history. The number of research studies and publications concerning 'comfort women' increased throughout the 1990s and into the new millennium.

Given the limited presence of and access to official documents, in particular during the early days of the discussion on 'comfort women', researchers considered testimonies of 'comfort women' to play a vital role in uncovering the full picture of the system. From the beginning, testimonies of 'comfort women' survivors posed a challenge to the study of the modern history of Japan. They opened to question the ways that (mainstream) modern history is recorded, documented and studied, predominantly focusing on written materials, in particular the (government) official documents. Less attention has been paid to other forms of record, such as oral history or gendered aspects of history. As these women's testimonies have offered alternative ways to record, study and understand the modern history of Japan, they have attracted the immediate attention of a wider public – a shift that, as discussed earlier, is similar to the feminist and social history approaches made in Europe and North America.

For example, publishers in Japan considered the inclusion of a short commentary on the 'comfort women' system in school history textbooks and it was referred to in junior high school history textbooks for the first time in 1997.[19] Women's testimonies also raised questions about the objectivity, neutrality and transparency of history and the claims of its association with historical 'facts' and 'truth'. Given this, feminists (in Japan), influenced by the 'her-story' approach, embarked on rewriting history, endeavouring to subvert the prevailing understanding of history, which had overlooked gendered experience. Feminists challenged the naive understanding of history as strongly associated with objectivity and 'truth'. However, these norms continued to haunt the discussion on 'comfort women' and the

testimonies of victim-survivors, and what follows is an attempt to explain how, at times, this has actually undermined feminist arguments against revisionist critics.

In the 'absence' of official documents and traditional history's lack of interest in gender, the testimonies of 'comfort women' victims were welcomed as they were believed to uncover historical 'truth'. They were treated as newly discovered data, or information that could revise existing (gender-blind and male-centric) knowledge of history and engender a truer understanding of the past. Gaining information, not known before, from testimonies, and critically engaging with official records available to substantiate what women had testified, feminist activists and historians have attempted to draw a full picture of the 'comfort women' system. This includes: the scale and extent of the system; the degree of involvement of the Japanese government; and women's lives in comfort stations. However, in encountering these testimonies, we can also question whether they should be treated as alternative historical data that ultimately can uncover historical 'facts' and 'truth'. Here, two possible problems can be identified.

First, as the 'comfort women' system was deemed to be an example, though possibly one of the worst, of the universal oppression of women, survivors' testimonies have often been seen as yet another piece of evidence that can provide the 'truth' of history – the prevalence of women's oppression. Perceiving their testimony in this manner, indeed, was an important drive behind bringing the issue of 'comfort women' to the wider public sphere, developing collaboration with women of diverse backgrounds who challenged the universal oppression of women. However, this also ran the risk of overlooking differentiated experiences of oppression suffered by women, potentially overgeneralizing women as a single, unified category, implying the homogeneity of their experience of gender oppression, and assuming they can understand each other's pain. This is the very point that is problematized by feminist historians and other scholars in Europe and North America in working on 'her-story'.

The second point is more complex and concerns the effect of claiming the existence of the 'truth' of history. This issue became particularly problematic when Japanese revisionists started to dismiss women and challenged their testimonies, claiming they were fabricated and full of lies. To counter this revisionist claim, as will be shown in Chapter 5, feminist and left critics inadequately repeated that these testimonies are the 'truth' of history. Although revisionist arguments should strongly be challenged, feminists and left-wing critics underlining the importance of historical 'truth' does not seem to have been the most effective or appropriate counter argument. This is because it appears contradictory to claim the existence of the 'truth' of history when criticizing (other) metaphysical notions such as objectivity and neutrality – the underpinning of traditional history – as gender-biased.

Indeed, this point was clearly identified by Ueno Chizuko, feminist sociologist in Japan in the late 1990s.

Treating testimonies as the transparent (therefore stable and unchangeable) historical 'truth' is also problematic as this can prevent feminists and left-wing scholars from acknowledging the inconsistency identified in some of the testimonies and offering any reasonable explanation for it. As will be explained later, it is this inconsistency that has been used by the revisionists to assert that these testimonies are unreliable and fabricated. Moreover, the claim that women's testimonies present the single and transparent 'truth' often overlooks the intervention and the mediation of the researcher and/ or interviewer in delivering testimonies, as well as how they are consumed, from interviewing, transcribing, translating and editing the testimonies, to publication or broadcasting. It is essential to note, however, that without continual and enormous effort and the altruistic actions of these researchers with both linguistic skills and cultural and political sensitivities, victim-survivors' testimonies could not reach a wider global audience. Moreover, devoid of collections of testimonies made available through this complex and challenging process, most research studies, including this book, on the 'comfort women' debates undertaken outside survivors' immediate linguistic and cultural environments would not have been possible.

This multi-layered translation and interpretation process of testimonial narratives can, however, prevent the reader of these testimonies from identifying what is actually said and meant by these survivors. For example, the discussion of testimonies of Chinese victim-survivors from Shanxi province, which will be presented in Chapter 5, is mostly based on the Japanese translation of their testimonies. As they recounted their experiences in a local Chinese dialect, their words have sometimes gone through (at least) two processes of translation, from the local dialect to Mandarin Chinese and then from Mandarin Chinese to Japanese (and then to English for this book). Working with such testimonies delivered through the process of multiple mediation and translation, researchers are required not only to consider critically what 'truth' means in this context, but also whose voices we are listening to and can actually hear. This provides a constant reminder for researchers, particularly those who may be linguistically and culturally less qualified, including myself, of the impact of the linguistic, and possibly cultural, limits of our research. At the same time, such limitations also suggest that engaging with the testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors is to enquire whether we can and how should listen to these women's voices.

This further requires from researchers and activists a serious reflection on their relation to the testimonies of 'comfort women' victims. Engaging with these testimonies always entails a crucial questioning of the identity and positionality of the listeners/audience. As will be explored later in this chapter, any fixation of identities, and any assumption that these pre-fixed

identities would automatically define how we should and can engage with the testimonies and ultimately with victim-survivors themselves, should be contested. However, this is not to suggest that we can be completely free from the influence of such categorization and identification. For instance, whatever the category of 'Japanese' implies, 'I' am required to constantly negotiate and renegotiate its meaning; born as a Japanese citizen and still travelling with a Japanese passport; I received most of my compulsory and higher education in Japan, but have spent the past twenty years studying and working in UK universities. I, as well as other researchers, have to question how such positionality can impact on my research and how this is interpreted by others.

The testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors brought up another related concern of modern history: the centrality of shared memories to the sense of belonging, the formation of political subjectivity and the role of emotion and affect in this process. This issue was mainly addressed through two sets of debates on history education in Japan and Japanese war responsibility. In 1996, heated debates sparked off in Japan on whether a short commentary on the 'comfort women' system should be included in school history textbooks. Schools in Japan (particularly state primary and junior high schools) are required to use ministry-approved textbooks in teaching that meet the requirements of the (National) Curriculum Guidelines. Publishers put teams of experts together, prepare the drafts of textbooks in subjects such as Japanese literature, English, mathematics, science, social studies, history and citizenship studies, and submit these drafts to the Ministry of Education (now the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) for screening and approval.

The process of production demonstrates how school textbooks reflect ideas of history, nation, citizenship and belonging in Japan – in particular those of the Japanese government – and construct a shared memory of history. As the views of younger generations are shaped by teaching using these textbooks, the decision on what content is to be included, especially in history and social studies textbooks, has always been one of the crucial political debates in contemporary Japan, becoming possibly more intense in the post-cold war era. As international political power and relations were being renegotiated, and with the emergence of diverse ethnic identities and political movements, the existing understanding of belonging, citizenship and nation began to be challenged. Discussion about textbooks against the background of changing global politics is of the utmost importance. As scholars such as Laura Elizabeth Hein, Mark Selden and Tessa Morris-Suzuki argue, school education is central to state building, clarifying the implications of citizenship and shaping the memories of the past (Hein and Selden, 1998: 3; Morris-Suzuki, 2001: 300; 2013: 14).

Despite revisionist protest, Japanese publishers decided to include a short commentary on 'comfort women' in their textbooks and all seven history

textbooks approved in 1997 to be used in junior high schools included comments on 'comfort women'. Right-wing critics opposed this inclusion, claiming that the factuality of women's testimonies was unsubstantiated and the topic, which involves sex and violence, was inappropriate to teach to junior high school students.[20] They also argued that the reference to 'comfort women' in textbooks imposed a biased and 'incorrect' view of history and forced young people to internalize shameful and negative images of Japanese people; so these textbooks were self-tormenting or even 'masochistic'. Led by Fujioka Nobukatsu, a professor at Tokyo University, these critics set up a group, the Japan Society for History Textbook Reform, to produce alternative history and citizenship studies textbooks based on their reading of history.[21] While the group's approach is based on revisionism and the Emperor-centred view of history, they call their perspective 'Liberal historiography'.

The views within the group were diverse, and not all outspoken nationalist critics have been involved. However, these nationalist critics still share a common attitude to 'comfort women'; they all question the validity of the testimonies of these women and claim that the Japanese government was not responsible for the operation of the 'comfort women' system, thus challenging calls for compensation for these women. They consider 'comfort women' to have been licensed prostitutes, who willingly worked under (then legalized) state-regulated prostitution and earned a lot of money. They also argue that there is no convincing reason to teach schoolchildren about the 'comfort women' system, as licensed prostitution was not unique to Japan. They maintain that such a system was a necessary evil, merely responding to so-called male biological and 'natural' sexual desire (under a special and extreme circumstance), and is not an appropriate topic to teach schoolchildren (Tawara, 1996; Uesugi, 1996: 290–2; Nishino, 2001: 61).

Meanwhile, left-wing critics and feminists criticized their labelling of 'Liberal' as inappropriate and unacceptable; and they accused them of being insensitive to and ignorant of the Japanese colonial past. Left-wing scholars condemn the revisionists as thoughtless because they are not accepting the 'reality' of the past and the fact that they, as Japanese citizens, are also responsible for the deeds of Japan's past. Many feminists and left-wing critics argued that the 'comfort women' system was an obvious example of historically common women's oppression and that the revisionists are complicit in the way that these women had been mistreated (Matsui, 1997: 3–4, Yoneda, 1997: 17). This has escalated to heated discussions between these two camps on what is a legitimate understanding of Japanese history, what should or should not be taught in the history class at school, and how to make this decision.

However, overwhelmed by insistent revisionist demands and the general political drift to the right, the number of textbooks that made reference to the 'comfort women' system declined throughout the first decade of

the twenty-first century. In 2001/2, the year that the revisionist textbooks obtained the ministry approval, the number of textbooks that commented on 'comfort women' dropped (Uesugi, 2002: 2). In April 2010, a right-leaning newspaper, *Sankei Shimbun*, reported that Nihon Shoseki Shinsha, the publisher of the last remaining textbook that had the commentary on 'comfort women', had decided to withdraw the submission of their new draft for the 2010 screening (*Korea Joongang Daily*, 2010, Takashima, 2010). After 2012 therefore, no government-approved textbook used in junior high schools in Japan has a commentary on the 'comfort women' system or about victim-survivors (WAM, 2013: 65).

In the meantime, since the history and citizenship studies textbooks that the Japan Society for History Textbook Reform produced for junior high schools were approved by the Ministry of Education for the first time in 2001, further approvals of their textbooks have been made in 2005, 2009 (for junior high schools), and 2011 (for senior high schools). These textbooks have been officially used in schools where local education authorities adopted them as part of their teaching resources,[22] and the Society also claimed that 4 per cent of children at school are using their textbooks.[23]

Both the South Korean and Chinese governments have made official complaints to the Japanese government regarding the approval of textbooks submitted by the Japan Society for History Textbook Reform. Feminists and left-wing historians have also been challenging this right alignment of politics around educational policies, and the implementation of these textbooks as teaching materials in schools. They complain that these textbooks are supported by the Emperor-centred historical view, that they reject a scientific approach to history and downplay the history of Japanese invasions of other Asian countries and atrocities that Japan committed during the war.[24] However, as strong public opinions support Japanese children in learning narratives of history that make them proud of being Japanese, the struggle of feminists and left-wing historians to reverse the situation has not met with much success.

The growing popularity of textbooks written by the Japan Society for History Textbook Reform and a gradual drift towards more nationalistic attitudes to education and politics in general in contemporary Japanese society may party be explained by the effect of ultra-nationalist politicians in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). These politicians share a similar historical view to the critics and scholars associated with the Japan Society for History Textbook Reform, and many of them have acquired ministerial roles (Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21, 2013). The Prime Minister Abe Shinzo is the most notable example of such a politician. In February 1997, just before the start of the new academic year, when history textbooks with a commentary on the 'comfort women' system were to be used in junior high schools for the first time, a group of MPs of the LDP founded a (study) group on Japan's future and history education.[25] Abe was appointed as the

secretary of the group, which problematized the inclusion of the commentary on 'comfort women' and advocated the revision of history textbooks.

After the first Abe government was formed in September 2006, the group was revitalized and it aimed to review the 1993 Kono Statement (Yamamoto, 2013: 72). The LDP has also encouraged its politicians to undertake various activities in order to exert their influence at local assemblies and on local education boards in the selection of textbooks (Szczepanska, 2014: 33, 120). In December 2012 the LDP won the general election under the leadership of Abe for the second time, and during the election campaign the LDP's manifesto included the plan to review and respond to 'incorrect' historical discourses such as those on 'comfort women' (Yamamoto, 2013: 76). As stated above, while the Prime Minister Abe claimed that his government is not planning to withdraw the Kono Statement, nearly half of his Cabinet ministers have been members of this (revisionist) group (Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21, 2013).

Concerned with the impact of such right alignment on education, Yoshimi and other researchers who have painstakingly worked on the issue on 'comfort women' to illuminate the Japanese government's war responsibility, launched a website on 'comfort women' in August 2013. They are particularly troubled that without formal teaching on 'comfort women' in the classroom, younger generations are now obtaining information on 'comfort women' from the internet, where nationalist discourses are dominant. The new website aims to tackle this trend (*Asahi Shimbun*, 2013; Fight for Justice, 2013).

The second debate concerning shared memories revolved around the issue of Japanese war responsibility and political subjectivity. Questions posed were: to what extent are post-war Japanese generations held accountable for crimes conducted by the Japanese military government during the Second World War; and how to nurture the political subjectivity in Japan that takes responsibility for remembering the crimes committed by Japan? This debate, which mainly took place during the 1990s, was often referred as 'the debate on historical subjects'.[26] In discussions concerning both history education and textbooks, and historical subjects, critics and scholars who took part referred to their individual and collective identities and belongings as 'we Japanese', 'our' or 'us'. For example, '*we Japanese* have to teach *our* children history, which enables them to be proud of being Japanese', or 'Japanese students have to know *our* past horrific conduct during the Second World War', or else '*as a Japanese male, I* often think about how I can engage with the issue'.[27] Such a use of language immediately poses the question of who is indeed hailed as 'Japanese' and what kind of collective memory Japanese citizens share. Although Japanese citizens present and past are not identical, and the society of Japan has gone through a massive change after the Second World War, the homogeneity and continuity of the society and Japanese citizens often seemed to be assumed in this debate. Such narratives

imagined a consistent collectivity of Japanese citizens, and a society and culture with an inherent and fixed Japaneseness; and this fails to fully acknowledge that the Japanese as a collective is historically, socially and politically constructed, and entails a certain kind of political subjectivity.

In addition, the debate has demonstrated a complex understanding of the relationship between the state/government and its citizens/public; in particular between the Japanese government and Japanese citizens and/public. In demanding an official apology from the Japanese government for its past atrocities, some 'comfort women' victims differentiate the responsibility of the Japanese government and that of individual Japanese people, stating, for example, 'I hate the crimes committed by the Japanese government, but I do not hate Japanese people' (Yi Yong-su in Yanaihara, 1995: 45).[28] Similar attitudes can also be observed when people in Japan accuse the Japanese government of not fulfilling its responsibility, dissociating themselves from the Japanese government. Needless to say, the political implication of people in Japan simply criticizing the Japanese government and distancing themselves from it is quite different from victim-survivors drawing a line between the Japanese government and its citizens.

In summary, the discussion on 'comfort women' has raised critical questions, not only about the writing of history but also about belonging and collective memory, highlighting how history is politically grounded in a particular space and time. However, a naive assumption that there is a pre-given and unchangeable category of 'Japanese', for which a consistent and single narrative of history is possible and desirable, seems to have been shared by critics of different political perspectives, particularly during the 1990s. This caused considerable tension between left- and right-wing critics, preventing them from developing any productive dialogue: they promote contrasting images of ideal 'Japaneseness' and narratives of Japanese history. The emotive language that they employ has also suggested how the study of history and politics, which has been considered 'rational' and scientific, is deeply influenced by emotion and affect.

While the political issues and debates have often been influenced by emotion, traditionally, the study of history and politics has dissociated itself from the discussion of feeling. Emotion, considered as being in the sphere of the private, has long been disregarded as the basis of a legitimate political claim and any emotional or non-rational claim in politics has been undermined. However, as Lauren G. Berlant (1997) suggests, recently not only have emotion and affect played a key role in political debates, but they have also become central to what we understand as 'political'. A growing interest has been shown in the place of emotion and affect in the public sphere, to the extent that Berlant maintains that the feminist slogan 'the personal is political' in the 1970s has been reversed and now replaced by 'the political is personal'. She refers to this new space as 'the intimate public sphere' (Berlant, 1997: 4, 177–8). The discussion surrounding the 'comfort women'

system, thus, is one of these examples of the contemporary development where emotion and affect become central in formulating the discussion on belonging, citizenship and the idea of the political.

1.3   Discourses of modernity and Orientalism

In addition to the question of history and the voices of women (testimonies), another related, significant issue raised in the discussion of the 'comfort women' system is the discourse of modernity and Orientalism. In preparing the first report on the 'comfort women' system to the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur Radhika Coomaraswamy and other members of the team visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), the Republic of Korea (South Korea), and Japan in July 1995 and had meetings with sixteen victim-survivors.[29] The report, which was supported by most nation states, included four quotations with a distinctive character from the testimonies of survivors; two out of four women's testimonies described how they had witnessed Japanese soldiers beheading fellow 'comfort women' one after another with swords.[30]

The incidents of beheading 'comfort women' were, indeed, commented on in testimonial narratives of 'comfort women' victims. However, the reference to beheading of 'comfort women' is fairly limited in over 100 testimonial narratives of victim-survivors that became available by the beginning of the first decade of the twenty-first century in Japanese and English. Even when cases of beheading were mentioned, these were more likely a single incidence and not cases of multiple beheadings. Instead of beheading, however, victim-survivors testified to other equally horrific acts of violence that Japanese soldiers inflicted on them. These include: Yi Sun-ok having been stabbed with a sword after refusing to have sex with a soldier (The Korean Council *et al.*, 1995: 118); Wan Aihua severely beaten until her bones were cracked and broken (Senso Giseisha, 1997: 34); a piece of blazing wood pressed against Mun Pil-gi's skin and her skin badly burnt (The Korean Council *et al.*, 1993: 125);[31] or Yi Sang-ok dragged with a rope around her neck as a punishment for attempting to escape (The Korean Council *et al*, 1995: 128–9).

While incidents of beheading could have happened, it is equally intriguing why this particular representation of atrocities was chosen in the report; whether the decision to include this depiction of atrocities was possibly influenced by a certain Orientalist view towards Japan, a stereotypical image of samurai soldiers performing *hara-kiri* (a ritual suicide through stabbing one's stomach) or *uchikubi* (beheading).[32] When the report was published, only a limited number and range of research studies on the 'comfort women' system were available in English. Therefore, the report played an important role in circulating the knowledge about 'comfort women' beyond Asia. It may be possible that the report further evoked the image of barbaric and

pre-modern Japan that created the 'comfort women' system. This is troubling not simply because Japan and its culture are stereotyped, but also such a view could attribute the evil of violence to the non-civilized Orient, dissociating the evil from modernity and the West.

In *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Zygmunt Bauman explains how he once believed that the Holocaust was 'an interruption in the normal flow of history, a cancerous growth on the body of civilized society, a momentary madness among sanity' (Bauman, 1989: viii). War crimes and atrocities in recent history, whether it is genocide or the abuse of prisoners, have often been considered as incidents that can be dissociated from everyday life of normality. That is to say, they are seen as accidental disruptions of civilization, or deviations from modernity. However, even if war atrocities that happened in the West, such as the Holocaust, have indeed been regarded as the interruption of civilization, it is questionable whether the brutality of the Japanese military during the Second World Word would be considered in the same manner. In fact, it is often believed, both in and outside Japan, that Japanese culture and people are completely different from western culture and people and that this has particularly been demonstrated by the Japanese war atrocities during the Second World War. As Yuki Tanaka (Tanaka Toshiyuki) (1996) explains, post-Second-World-War views on Japanese War atrocities shaped and were shaped by this notion of Japan and its culture as inherently different.

The popularity of Iris Chang's book *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* has well demonstrated this tendency. After its publication in November 1997, it was positively reviewed and became one of the bestsellers in the US in 1998 (Inokuchi and Nozaki, 1999: 49–51). Overall, it was highly acclaimed as having revealed a 'long-forgotten' wartime barbarity: the massacre and rape of thousands of civilians in Nanking (Nanjing) by the Japanese military in 1937. While its crucial role in (re)storing the memory of the incident was highlighted, for more critical historians of Asia and Japan, this book is problematic and contains many flaws (Fogel, 1998). Chang claimed that she is critical of works such as *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* by Ruth Benedict, which attributes Japanese atrocities to Japan's (distinctive) culture (Chang, 1997: 13, 54–5).[33] However, she also sees that the twentieth-century Japanese identity was the construct of 'a thousand-year-old system in which social hierarchy was established and sustained through martial competition' (Chang, 1997: 19). This view, despite her claim, creates a narrative that a unique and traditional (or ahistorical) *Bushido* ethic in Japan, which highly honours sacrificing one's life for one's lord, actually caused Japanese atrocities. Such a narrative is deeply problematic, however, as Fogel argues, and will be demonstrated in Chapter 4. This *Bushido* ethic was itself considered to be the modern invention of 'tradition' (Fogel, 1998: 818).[34]

Chang's repeated claim that the memory of Japanese war atrocities had been suppressed and put under a gagging order in its post-war society cannot

be substantiated either (Chang, 1997: 12, 15, 200, 220). For example, Seaton (2007) argues that in post-war Japan there was accumulation of war narratives instead of suppression. Indeed, whereas the ultra-nationalists in Japan, including some LDP politicians, challenged the factuality of the Nanking Massacre and other Japanese war atrocities, as mentioned earlier, groups of historians and activists in Japan conducted research into the Nanking Massacre for many decades (Fogel, 1998: 819). This materialized as a number of books published on the Massacre since the 1980s and as the commentary on the Massacre that was included in Japanese history textbooks throughout the 1980s to the early 1990s.[35]

Despite such critical readings of *The Rape of Nanking* by specialists and scholars of Asia, its popularity among the mass media and the wider public suggested that the portrayal of Japanese culture and people as unique is socially more appealing. For example, in the *New York Times* Book Review, Orville Schell drew a comparison between the ways in which the history of the Massacre had been denied in Japan (and the Chinese government's reluctance in bringing up this issue) and how the Holocaust had been dealt with in Germany and other western countries. Referring to Benedict's work, he highlighted the difference between Asian values of 'shame' influenced by Confucianism and Christianity-based 'guilt' cultures. He argues that Japanese people are not concerned with their wrongdoing unless they 'get out into the world' (Schell, 1997).

As Inokuchi and Nozaki suggest, however, such a comment could further encourage the image of Japan and Japanese people as idiosyncratic, failing to acknowledge their responsibility to their past contacts (Inokuchi and Nozaki, 1999: 53). This not only completely overlooks a long history of research into the Massacre (in Japan) mentioned above, but also the fact that English-speaking countries had not been interested in the Massacre for a long time; the book was sensational because the Allied Force and the US did not carry out any investigation into the Massacre after the Second World War. This discourse of idiosyncratic Japanese culture is often replicated when academics and the media give more and regular attention to the denial of war atrocities by conservative politicians and the revisionists in Japan today, marginalizing the activism of more 'progressive' grassroots movements. As indicated above, conservative politicians in the LDP have indeed placed pressure on the revision of school textbooks and their selection by local education authorities. However, as Szczepanska (2014) argues, they are not representative of public opinion in Japan and more progressive voices also exist that accept Japan's responsibility for its colonial past and war atrocities.

The perspective that attributes Japanese war atrocities to the unique tradition and culture of Japan, failing to place these atrocities within a wider context of the history of modernity, was reflected in the way that the 'comfort women' system was initially discussed during the 1990s. Two

reasons can be suggested why the atrocities of Japan are removed from the context of modernity. First, it is because of the politics of 'othering' that has been illuminated in the discussion of 'Orientalism'. Since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978, the representation of the *Orient* (non-West) has become the focus of discussion, as this demonstrates a power relation between the *Orient*/Other/colonized) and the West/Self/colonizer. The *Orient/*Other, cultures and geographical regions outside western civilization, are, while essentialized, disregarded and exist only in relation to the West, defining the West as the Self.

The relation between the *Orient* and West is not power-neutral or equal; the latter is the one that exercises domination and power, producing the knowledge about the *Orient*/Other, whereas the former is treated as a passive entity waiting to be represented (Said, 1978: 1, 5, 108–9). While Said sees Orientalism as 'a mode of discourse' (Said, 1978: 2) this does not mean that the *Orient* is a mere imaginary creation of the West without any reality. Cultures and geographical places beyond the West indeed exist, but the crucial point is that there is a lack of correspondence between the reality of the *Orient* and its representation. The problem is that such 'misrepresentation' is not something that can merely be corrected once a more accurate and truthful reality of the *Orient* is revealed, as the system of representation is also grounded in the material, such as social, economic and political structures (Said, 1978: 6). A further difficulty, as will be seen in the next chapter, is that this Orientalist view can be internalized by the so-called Other; in the case of the discussion on 'comfort women', this can happen with those who feel a strong affinity with Japan.

Another, but related, factor that has influenced the perception of Japanese war atrocities is faith in the Enlightenment. Although in the tradition of modern (western) political and social thought, violence and other evil deeds have often been understood as an integral part of civilization and modernity, this view is not always widely shared by the public. While modern political and social thoughts that were developed after the Enlightenment do not present a single unified body of theory, they still share common assumptions about the nature of the human condition and society: the universal applicability of reason; science as the basis of knowledge; and the belief that these are the key to the progress of 'the natural and social condition of human beings' (Hamilton, 1992: 81). As will be discussed in the next chapter, such a trust in modernity as progress based on reason and the system of justice leads to a perception that brutal conduct and other evil deeds of human beings are pre-modern. This modern/pre-modern binary also parallels the hierarchical relation between the West/Self and non-West/Other. The exploration of the connection between modernity and evil will illustrate that war atrocities in modern history, including those carried out by non-western states and parties such as Japan, are not a pre-modern expression of violence, but in fact an integral part of modernity.

Outline of chapters

As demonstrated above, the discussion surrounding the 'comfort women' system presents wide-ranging issues. This book is not intended to add new 'historical' information to the study of the 'comfort women' system and its victim-survivors through freshly uncovered historical documents or first-hand interviews. Instead, it draws on the existing studies and debates on the 'comfort women' system as a starting point to explore the political, social and scholarly implications that arise from them. It aims to examine various matters brought up in the 'comfort women' debates within a new analytical framework, drawing on broader discussions on modernity, gender and violence. Through such an analysis, the book argues that the 'comfort women' system should be understood as the intersectional oppression of gender, race, class and colonialism, which is founded on modern licensed prostitution. It also illuminates the importance of testimonies of victim-survivors beyond 'truth-value', and as the site where women recover and gain their voices and agencies. By unfolding the complexities of debates surrounding the 'comfort women' issue, the book further attempts to illustrate why countering revisionist discourses in Japan has been challenging, despite the continuous demand of feminists and other progressive activists for the Japanese government to recognise its responsibilities.

The remainder of the book consists of three parts. The first part addresses the question of the 'comfort women' system in broader discourses of modernity. Drawing on post-colonial studies such as those of Edward Said, Franz Fanon, Uma Narayan and Naoki Sakai, Chapter 2 examines how the 'comfort women' debates have evolved, influenced by Orientalist discourses on modernity, which associate evil with the non-western and pre-modern 'Other'. Many critics in Japan have made efforts to listen to the 'comfort women' victims' sufferings and to sincerely engage with the issue of war responsibility. However, while struggling against such an Orientalist perspective, which considers Japanese war crimes as deriving from a historical Japanese national character and unique, the argument of some critics could paradoxically evoke a similar cultural essentialist view of Japanese culture and society.

Attributing the cause of war atrocities to Japanese pre-modern characteristics means dissociating evil deeds from modernity and everyday normality. In order to challenge this nexus of West/modern/progress and non-West/pre-modern/barbaric, Chapter 3 extends the discussion of modernity and evil, looking at a selection of twentieth-century works in which the relationship between modernity and evil, in particular the Holocaust, is considered. It takes the work of Hannah Arendt as a key representative, as her distinctive understanding of evil, mainly of the Holocaust, as embroiled in the nature of modernity is particularly important. Her work has a specific significance when her unproblematic application of

the modern/pre-modern and subject/the other distinction is taken into account in her discussion of colonialism/imperialism and racism in the US. The chapter thus directs its attention to post-colonial understanding of colonial violence and racism, and concludes that this provides better grounds for understanding the 'comfort women' system. Chapter 4 investigates how the 'comfort women' system was developed, based on modern licensed prostitution rather than on its assumed long tradition of licensed prostitution. It presents licensed prostitution in Japan, not as an example of its pre-modern characteristics, but as a modern construction, the practice widely adopted during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the West with the rise of imperialism and militarism. It illuminates how Japan, influenced by European countries, introduced this system to regulate sexuality and sex to maintain the social order of gender, 'race' and class. Through this analysis the chapter argues first that control over sexuality and the body in the modern times is not unique to Japan; and second that the regulation of sexuality itself plays a central role in modernity, nation-states and especially in militarism.

The second part *Probing Historical 'Truth'* examines the questions that the testimonies of 'comfort women' victims raised, in particular those relating to the claim of truth effect, and explores feminist attempts to engage with the voices of the women. In addition to its unprecedented extent and scale of exploitation, the distinctiveness of the 'comfort women' system lies in the presence of testimonies of victim-survivors. Chapter 5, therefore, examines their testimonies and introduces their complexity. After exploring the experience of sexual enslavement, drawing mainly on testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors, the chapter analyses the intense debates about the reading of the testimonies between the revisionists and feminist and left-wing critics that took place in Japan during the 1990s. It aims to highlight some of the problems that arise when the testimonies are assessed in the light of historical 'truth/fact'. It further illuminates how the truth claim can often prevent feminists and left-wing critics from providing an effective challenge to the revisionist argument that undermines the dignity of victim-survivors and their testimonies. The chapter therefore suggests that more diverse ways of engaging with testimonies, founded on a broader feminist discussion of narratives, are central in understanding the richness of the testimonies.

Referring in particular to the feminist literature on women's voices, Chapter 6 explores the methodological challenges of studying testimonies, and more broadly of narratives in general, to probe a more constructive approach to engaging with victim-survivors' testimonial narratives. Revisiting the arguments of feminist standpoint theory concerning the limits of a truth claim, the dilemma of seeking the truth in the women's narratives is addressed. The chapter emphasizes that the narratives of 'comfort women' victim-survivors should be handled beyond truth effect and demonstrates the ways

that narratives are constructed through inter-subjective interactions. Here, the importance of paying attention to silence and the process that entails listening, including the problems of translation, is also highlighted.

The third part, *The Limit of Representation,* explores further the ways of listening to and representing the testimonial narratives of 'comfort women' victims. Chapter 7 turns to another methodological question of engaging with the narratives of victim-survivors, namely the question of representing their voices. Drawing on the wealth of debates in Holocaust studies, which closely parallel the discussion of the 'comfort women' issue in their preoccupation with representations of historical 'truth', this chapter challenges a naive assumption that realistic or undistorted representation is possible and required. While the chapter is concerned with the possible exploitation of voices of those who are marginalized, including 'comfort women' victims, reading the testimonial narrative of Rigoberta Menchú through Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's analysis of the subaltern's voice, it also suggests the possibility of their agency in this process of representation. Applying the theory of interpellation discussed by Louis Althusser and Judith Butler, the chapter argues that the testimonies should be considered the site of subject formation where the agency of those marginalized emerges.

Based on this argument and referring to Spivak and Butler, Chapter 8 returns to the testimonial narratives of 'comfort women' victims to illuminate how they are indeed the site of subject formation with the possibility of subversion. It further demonstrates the centrality of inter-subjectivity in this process, in particular the presence of those who are eager to listen to their voices and silence. The chapter argues that by being recognised as 'comfort women' victims, through narrating their awful experiences, they may be able to exercise their agency and not only become victim-survivor activists but also offer the possibility of challenging existing social norms.

In addition to drawing together various discussions presented in previous chapters, Chapter 9 further illuminates how the experiences of 'comfort women' victims have been silenced for more than fifty years. While it also emphasizes the success of transnational feminism in gaining international recognition of the suffering of victim-survivors, it also explains possible obstacles in achieving justice for the women. It concludes by highlighting the importance of the effort to record and remember their experiences, and of continually exploring the way to bear witness to pain even if this is not (always) possible.

Part 1

Modernity and the System of 'Comfort Women'

2
The Struggle Against Ultra-Nationalism and the Entrapment of Orientalism

2.1 The prevailing power of Orientalist discourse

Discussions surrounding the 'comfort women' system have instigated fundamental questions about history. To fully comprehend these diverse and complex discussions that have developed in Japan (and beyond), which have been referred to as 'the eruption of' the 'comfort women' issue (Seaton, 2007: 55), we need to connect them with existing and broader debates on the history, culture and society of Japan within a particular political formation. The international community, influenced mainly by English-speaking media, popularly believes that war memories have been 'inadequately addressed' in Japan and that the Japanese people lack knowledge about the Second World War. However, diverse cultural and social narratives of the war have existed in Japan since the war (Seaton, 2007: 4). While the Japanese government has often attempted, through the textbook approval system, to obscure the devastation that the war caused and Japanese war atrocities, more progressive public opinions and groups have always existed, raising awareness of the catastrophe of the war and of Japanese war responsibility (Obinata, 2004: 18–22; Yoshida, 2005: 101). As it evolved, therefore, the discourse on 'comfort women' in Japan was affected by these diverse narratives of the war.

It is crucial, however, to understand how these narratives, including those on 'comfort women', emerged in the 1990s, and have been mediated and circulated under the influence of dominant narratives of the English-speaking Allied nations. A 'good war' of the Allied nations is juxtaposed with the atrocities of fascism in Japan (Seaton, 2007: 6). It is equally important to stress that the discussion surrounding 'comfort women' emerged in the context of intense reformation/transformation of the global social and political order. Revisiting and re/constructing the collective memory of previous international wars and other national and international conflicts

became an urgent mission in developing the sense of belonging and shared community as well as in formulating a new world order.

As addressed in the previous chapter, one of the major problems presented in the early discussion of the 'comfort women' system is that the system has often been associated with Japanese uniqueness, or its pre-modern culture; there has been a failure to situate it within a wider context of the history of modernity. Such a view reflects an implicit faith in Enlightenment and modernity, considering it a progression, moving away from pre-modern barbarism, while 'othering' non-Western cultures. Traditionally, (Western) modern thought has barely developed any discussion on the centrality of evil and violence in modernity. At the same time it has created the 'Other', often in the form of 'uncivilized', 'pre-modern' people of the non-West, who are frequently associated with the dark or evil element present in modern society. As Tanaka (1996) points out, such a view of the dichotomous nexus of West/modern/progress and non-West/pre-modern/barbaric has been influential on studies of Japanese atrocities during the Second World War. Until quite recently at least, these atrocities were treated as unique and Japan as a special case, and such a perspective was also reflected, particularly during the 1990s, in the discussion surrounding the 'comfort women' system. It needs to be highlighted that this perception has been common in studies of Japan and the Second World War conducted not only outside Japan but also within Japan.

This is the very reason why the discussion on the 'comfort women' system (in Japan) has become extremely complicated, and also why Said's Orientalism becomes particularly relevant to the analysis of this discussion. In *Orientalism* Said introduced a new concept, highlighting cultural and political power in representing the Other, which is a constituent feature of colonialism and post-colonialism. Said's work on Orientalism has provided a great insight into how cultures of the non-West, namely the Other, have been and can still be represented by the West, but it also offers another vision that is helpful in examining the discussion surrounding 'comfort women'.

This relates to the question of how the Orient, or the Other actually represents itself; in addition to Said, the work of Franz Fanon further explores this issue. With the demise of the so-called grand narratives, the dominant voices of the West over the non-West also started to be contested. In an attempt to present the 'counter-narratives' of those who had been dominated (and silenced), Said himself turns to Fanon in his later writing and illuminates the emergence of 'counter-hegemonic agency' (Gates, 1991: 458–9). However, the issue is that these 'counter-narratives' themselves may not be completely independent of grand narratives. As Fanon himself suggested, even the colonized Other can internalize the Western gaze towards the Other. Fanon argued that having been strongly influenced by 'colonialist subjugation', the colonized people experience self-alienation (Childs and

Williams, 1997: 50). This implies that instead of removing himself/herself away from the white master, the black slave, namely the colonized or the Other, looks up to the master with desire and envy (Gandhi, 1998: 20; Loomba, 1998: 145). While blackness is indispensable for the construction of the white Self, or, say, the Orient and Asia for the West and Europe, whiteness causes the black Other to be unacknowledged and disappear. The black slave, it is argued, cannot accept blackness him/herself, as they have internalized the negative image of blackness, which is so deeply ingrained in the racist and colonial structure (Loomba, 1998: 144; 24). In the now famous passage, Fanon described the moment a black person discovers his blackness and feels ashamed of himself:

> 'Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!' … I was responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors. I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic character- istics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave-ships, and above all else, above all: 'Sho' good eatin'. (Fanon, 1970: 112)

This complexity of internalizing negative and derogatory views associated with the blackness and racialized Other was also the concern of W.E.B. Du Bois, who explained this through the concept of 'double consciousness' (Rawls, 2000: 243). He described how black people are deprived of their own self-consciousness, and can only perceive themselves through 'the eyes of the others [masters]' (Rawls, 2000: 244). While his concept of 'double consciousness' illustrates a particular experience of African-Americans, it can also apply to those who are commonly in 'post-slave' conditions (Gilroy, 1993: 126). This implies that those who were colonized or are from cultures that have been defined as non-Western cannot understand or write about themselves without a certain influence of Orientalist perspectives.

What the work of Fanon and Du Bois indicates is that the idea of Orientalism is much more complex than Said had initially suggested. A cultural imperialist representation of the Orient may be 'distorted' and 'inaccurate' and demonstrate the power relations between the West and the Orient as Said claims. However, the self-representation by the Orient or the Other also takes place within the same (post-) colonial discourse and power relations, which often undermine the experience of the non-Western Other. Therefore, while self-representation can be the opportunity for the Orient/ Other to reclaim its cultural power of representation, it does not necessarily guarantee any 'better' or 'truer' representation of the Other (Childs and Williams, 1997: 103–7).

The constellation of debates surrounding the 'comfort women' system is a complex one, partly because it often operates within the above paradigm (of the West/modern/progress vs. non-West/pre-modern/barbaric/stagnation),

but also because of the very fact that Japan itself was a colonizer. The study of the culture, history and society of Japan has always been entangled with the question of modernity and the modernization of Japan, which was marked by two moments in its modern history: the Meiji Restoration of the late nineteenth century, and the post-Second World War democratization. This chapter, thus, attempts to offer an analysis of the discussion surrounding the 'comfort women' system generated mainly in Japan over past twenty years, drawing on the concept of Orientalism and cultural imperialism, and the hierarchical power relations between the West and non-West. The revisionists/ultra-nationalists have ignored the anguish of 'comfort women' survivors and have tried to construct a narrative of national history that erases their experience. On the other hand, feminists and left-wing critics take the sufferings of these women and Japanese war responsibility seriously and have challenged the ultra-nationalist argument.

The dilemma posed is that in an attempt to contest the revisionist claim and to highlight the extraordinary operation of the 'comfort women' system, the early feminist discussion presented a picture of the 'comfort women' system as entirely unique to Japan. This has paradoxically led to the reproduction of a nationalistic and essentialist discourse of Japanese culture and history. Although the specificity of the 'comfort women' system needs to be illuminated to acknowledge the pain of 'comfort women' victims, this claim for the recognition of injustice suffered by survivor-victims seems to have been appropriated for some time by an Orientalist, cultural essentialist discourse. This seems in turn to have prevented feminists from offering a constructive historical and social analysis of the 'comfort women' system that can effectively challenge both the ultra-nationalist discourse and cultural imperialism, at the same time as appealing to the wider public in Japan.

The atrocity of the 'comfort women' system was elucidated as the result of pre-modern social structure and of being removed from the context of modernity without much comparative analysis with similar, if any, cases. The dearth of broader discussions on the tangled relationship between modernity and the 'comfort women' system during the 1990s could partly explain why the ultra-nationalist discourse became more poplar and widely accepted by the general public in Japan.

2.2   Feminist discourses on sexually oppressive Japanese culture

As explained above, the tendency to attribute the cause of wartime atrocities to the peculiar uniqueness of the Japanese people and culture is not only observed among the scholars of Japanese studies outside Japan, but also widely identified in both academic discussion and popular culture in Japan. Tanaka points out that many people in Japan see that Japanese people and culture are distinctive, and that this self-image is often employed to explain

and to reconcile Japanese war crimes during the Second World War (1996: 3–4). In referring to the proliferation of narratives that form a collective memory of the Second World War in Japan, marking the fiftieth years after its conclusion, Harry Harootunian also argues that Japanese people were reminded that 'they are not really modern but Japanese' (2000a: 716).

In the discussion of contemporary gender discrimination and sexual violence in Japan, feminists in Japan have often attributed its cause to Japanese tradition and pre-modernity, described as a Japanese particularity. Since the 'comfort women' system has been regarded as a historically unprecedented practice of sexual exploitation and violence, many early research studies on this topic looked into the socio-cultural conditions in Japan that may have led to the construction of the 'comfort women' system. Diverse discussions were presented and feminists have provided different reasoning for the development of the 'comfort women' system. However, some emerging patterns are noticeable. Critical of the work of well-known Japanese feminists, such as Yamashita Akiko and Minamoto Atsuko, another feminist scholar, Ehara Yumiko, illustrates how they claim that a particular sexual attitude in Japan expresses pre-modern characteristics. They see the system of licensed prostitution as the most obvious example of such pre-modernity, and argue that this peculiar sexual culture provided the social and political background to the rise of the 'comfort women' system (2005, 58–9: 1994, 209–10).

In an attempt to offer an explanation of why such a historically unprecedented system was developed in Japan, other feminists also look into Japanese 'tradition' or 'culture' and identify them as its causes. For example, Suzuki is one of the few feminists in Japan who underscored the nature of colonial and class oppression as well as gender oppression in the 'comfort women' system from the early 1990s. At the same time she, too, claimed that the regulation of sexuality – both human reproduction and sexual desire – in Japan, which was organized and controlled by the Japanese government and the Japanese military, laid the ground for the 'comfort woman' system (1992: 36–8). These complex and systematic policies of regulating sexuality in Japan were part of a public health system and consisted of two different sets of technologies of 'bodily discipline' and 'mass regulation' (Frühstück, 2003: 2). Sabine Frühstück calls these regulations 'colonizing sex', and, as will also be explored in Chapter 4, such regulation of sexuality was not unique to Japan; it has been observed throughout modern nation-states, and was indispensable to their statecraft. Japan, in fact, developed its policies following Western examples and scientific knowledge borrowed from the West (Frühstück, 2003: 6). However, Suzuki's arguments and her reference to Japan as the 'state of obscenity' somehow sound as if Japan was a special case (1996: 57).

Another feminist scholar in Japan, Ogoshi Aiko, who has been actively participating in the discussion on 'comfort women' and the redress

movement, identified the traditional oppression of women in Japan in Buddhism, in particular the *Jyodokyo* sect of Buddhism that developed in twelfth-century Japan (1994: 81–2; 1996: 129; 1997a: 111). She saw this as the origin of a unique culture of (licensed) prostitution in Japan, where women became the object of sexual desire. Ogoshi argued that this attitude to sex has also been common and widespread in Japan throughout modern times, and this led to the creation of the 'comfort women' system (1997a: 116–17).[1] Ogoshi's extended range of work shows her strong commitment to reflecting the dark legacy of Japan during the war, her deep concern for 'comfort women' victims who experienced such an ordeal, and her efforts to counter the revisionist claim, and it is not my intention to deny its significance. My argument is that her explanation, in particular in the 1990s, of how and why such a system was developed, highlighting its uniqueness in order to challenge the revisionist argument, could have been entrapped by the Orientalist discourse. The extended reference to her work below is not because it is the most problematic, but because her wide-ranging writings have been influential in feminism and on the wider audience in Japan (and beyond).

In one of her pieces of writing, Ogoshi described the 'comfort women' system as 'an unprecedented state-approved rape system' and argued that it is embedded in a Japanese (sub)culture that glamourizes sex and sexual culture, and that this was most evident in legalized and licensed quarters for prostitution (1997a: 117). This culture of sex, she claimed, reflects a particular 'ideology' or norm that views women only as sexualized beings, namely as objects of male desire (Ogoshi, 1996: 196–200; 1997a:116–17).[2] Ogoshi also suggested that no strict sexual morality or taboo existed in Japan, and that the absence of rigorous regulation around sexuality and a rather relaxed attitude to sexual conduct has also been legitimized by various religious and traditional practices in Japan, in particular those of (Japanese) Buddhism (1996: 197).

Ogoshi explained that the development of Buddhism in Japan has been influenced by Shintoism, a synthetic form of traditional beliefs and other native and local beliefs, and is distinct from Buddhism in other cultures (1996: 155). In general, abstinence is required in Buddhism and sexual liaisons (with women) are first and foremost what should be avoided. Women are considered unclean and wicked, and will infect men with impurity and corrupt them through sexual relationships. Ogoshi argued that by disapproving of men's sexual relationships with women, *Jyodokyo* Buddhism of Japan developed a unique teaching. In this sect of Buddhism, she argued, even when men committed the sin of having (sexual) relationships with women, they would eventually be saved by the Buddha (Ogoshi, 1996: 155–6). The original idea that having sexual relationships with women was a sin and men needed to stay away from them, was twisted and transformed. It came to be understood that because of their very sins of sexual desire,

men are even more deserving of salvation. Men's sexual liaison with women therefore became tolerated. In this context, providing comfort to these men and assisting them to their salvation with their bodies was the only option that women had for their own salvation (Ogoshi, 1996: 197–9).

Ogoshi argued that such *Jyodokyo* teaching resulted in the devaluing of the lives of women, as they were treated as mere objects of male sexual desire and not as equal partners to men. The female body as impure and the negative image of the life as a woman was exploited to control male sexual desire. Ogoshi maintained that this sexual objectification of women justified by Buddhism has underpinned gender and sexual relationship and practices in Japan. Such a sexual attitude, it was suggested, has also been prevalent in Japan throughout the modern period since Japan opened itself to Western countries in the mid-nineteenth century. She further argued that this structural exploitation of women also introduced division between women; some were treated merely as sexual objects, while the purity of others was protected. This resulted in the culture of extensive licensed prostitution, which was to be organized by the central government, and which became the foundation of the 'comfort woman' system (Ogoshi, 1997a: 115–17).

Exploring the social and historical conditions that brought about the 'comfort women' system is crucial, and Ogoshi's argument may provide an insight into why the 'comfort women' system was particularly developed in Japan. At the same time however, in her endeavour to underscore the distinctiveness of the system in order to acknowledge the injustice suffered by 'comfort women' victims, gender relations and religious culture in Japan were presented as if they were unchangeable.[3] This is hugely problematic as such an argument could end up reproducing a notion of traditional and static Japanese culture, an Orientalist discourse, which is the basis of both cultural essentialism and cultural particularism.

Not only Buddhist teaching, but also gender values and relations, such as the family structure and the practice of prostitution, have been constructed through the interaction with various other social and economic relations and structures of the time. This point was not addressed explicitly in Ogoshi's discussion. Designated quarters for licensed prostitution existed since the Edo Era, before licensed prostitution was more expansively implemented in the Meiji Era (1868–1912). However, as will be examined in Chapter 4, modern licensed prostitution in Japan differed significantly from its premodern counterpart; it was organized following the Western model of the regulation of prostitution (Fujime, 1998: 90).[4] Such an analysis supported by works of Fujime and others, thus, defies the claim of the culture-specific roots of the 'comfort women' system. These studies challenge what Ogoshi referred to as a distinctive traditional 'sexual ideology (norm)' in Japan which, it is claimed, was exploited in developing the 'comfort women' system (Ogoshi, 1996: 206–7).

Another drawback of feminist explanations of women's oppression in Japan is that they often present somewhat oversimplified categories of men and women, and this is also noticeable in Ogoshi's analysis of feminism and its challenge to gender inequalities and exploitations. In her discussion of the development of feminism, Ogoshi (2000b) explained that (in Europe and the US) feminist focus has shifted from re-evaluating female roles in the male dominant social system and promoting gender equality within the existing system, to challenging systematic gender exploitation and violence (2000b: 207). Feminism has not only criticized the system of male dominance, but has also attempted to eradicate this masculine structure by defying the dichotomy between men and women itself. However, this, she argued, has overshadowed other social and cultural differences such as race, ethnicity and sexuality that intersect with gender differences and generate inequalities. Ogoshi claimed that feminists are now more conscious of diversities among both men and women – categories that have long been regarded as pre-given and fixed (Ogoshi, 1996; 2000b: 296–7).

However, despite presenting such a critical insight, 'women' as a category was at times articulated in Ogoshi's work in a slightly essentialized and unified way. For example, she stated in her discussion on 'comfort women' and war responsibility:

> This idea also is closely linked with *a gender category of 'women', who have been targeted for sexual violence and exploitation in events of violence since the beginning of history*, because of their being 'women'. And they have been silenced in the hierarchical social structure that has maintained discrimination and dominance. (Ogoshi, 2000a: 8; translated from the Japanese text; my italic)

> This does not mean that women have been completely dissociated from wars. *Women too have been entangled with series of wars since the beginning of history* and their bodies have been exposed to violence that was legitimized by the war. However, it is after the modern era when the number of wars increased and the means of war have dramatically transformed that women became much more likely to be the victims of violence. (Ogoshi: 2000b: 291; translated from the Japanese text; my italic)

On the one hand, Ogoshi's work casts light on the socially constructed aspect of gender categories of women and men; on the other hand, comments such as those above refer to women as if they are fixed and unchangeable throughout history, regardless of cultural, social or geographical differences. The second quote above also suggests the historical construct of gender category and women's experience. Elsewhere Ogoshi also argues that the 'sexual ideology (norm)' influenced by Buddhism is more systematically implemented by (centralized) governmental authority (Ogoshi, 1996: 200). However, the focus here seems to be rather on the increase (in quantity)

in women's victimization, and not on changes in the nature or form of oppression.[5] Ogoshi (2000b) also claims that we now need to turn to the work of female political thinkers such as Rosa Luxemburg, Simone Weil and Hannah Arendt, as they critically analysed nation-states, colonialism and (military) capitalism as the sources of war, which have been insufficiently addressed by male thinkers (2000b: 292, 297). She explains that their analysis stemmed from their shared experience of discrimination based on their gender. Such a comment suggests that while Ogoshi's work questions the idea of a fixed and essentialized category of 'women', it relies on a unified category of women as a way to point to the (universal) system of male dominance.

This unfortunately gives an impression that historically and culturally women have shared the same experience of oppression, and women's sufferings are homogenous. This would also explain why the belief that was developed in twelfth-century Japanese Buddhism has been offered in her discussion as an influential factor in the oppression of women in Japan, although the socio-cultural and political contexts that surrounded this Buddhist teaching are different for each historical time. In Ogoshi's analysis of women's oppression, women often appear to be uniformly the victims of male oppression and the attempt is made to identify the cause of this oppression.[6]

Discussions such as those of Ogoshi exemplify how, through cultural essentialism/exceptionalism and gender essentialism, the feminist challenge to women's oppression and the emphasis on differences can actually strengthen an Orientalist discourse of 'cultural imperialism' as Uma Narayan (1998; 2000) explored. From the beginning of feminist movements everywhere, nationally or transnationally, feminists were aware of the importance of acknowledging 'difference among women' in order to avoid gender essentialism. They were not only mindful of the danger of over-generalizing women's experiences, but also of representing privileged women's experience (often the experience of Western, white, middle-class and heterosexual women) as 'paradigmatic' (Narayan, 1998: 86–7). However, this has also brought about cultural essentialism as, in the course of recognising cultural differences, it has reproduced the essential and stereotypical difference between cultures and also between the cultures of 'West' and 'non-West'. Narayan (2000) called such understanding of cultures and cultural differences as the 'Package Picture of Cultures' – seeing cultures as something that can be neatly wrapped as packages differentiated from one other.

Such 'cultural imperialism', which essentializes cultures, also imposes sameness between 'cultural Others', while projecting imaginary 'difference' between these 'Others' and Western culture. Gender essentialism and cultural essentialism are, therefore, only different 'in degree or scope, and not in kind' (Narayan, 1998: 88), as they both privilege Western culture and values. The stark contrast between 'Western culture' and 'non-Western' is

often manifested in the imaginary representation of the colonized, which is influenced by stereotypes of the colonized held by Western colonizers. However, this is also the effect of the colonized 'embracing and trying to revalue the imputed facets of their own "culture" embedded in these stereotypes' (Narayan, 1998: 90). Western culture and values, such as 'liberty and equality', have thus been considered paradigmatic and superior, even though 'Western nations [which upheld such values] were engaged in slavery, colonization, and the denial of liberty and equality to large segments of Western subjects, including women' (Narayan, 2000: 1083).

Ogoshi's somewhat essentialized analysis of gender oppression in Japan is problematic not only because it considers culture in Japan as fixed and unchangeable and could hinder the examination of the 'comfort women' system in a wider historical and socio-political context.[7] It is also because its implicit complicity with paradigmatic Western culture and values prevents it from offering effective grounds to counter-argue ultra-nationalist claims. In the process of challenging ultra-nationalists, who attempt to obliterate the suffering of 'comfort women' victims from history and to present untainted (nationalistic) narratives of Japanese history by drawing on a traditional Japanese culture, feminists have often attributed the cause of Japanese atrocities to its cultural peculiarity. Paradoxically, this has also resulted in reproducing a notion of traditional and unchangeable Japanese culture. The difference between feminists and ultra-nationalists is that the former try to face the dark past of Japan, while the latter ignore it. The feminist version of Japanese culture therefore looks too self-critical and negative, and this is why ultra-nationalists have attacked it, calling it masochistic or a 'historical conception of self-oppression (*Jigyaku*)' (Harootunian, 2000a: 732). They assert that this is a bad influence on the Japanese younger generation, as they are made to feel ashamed of being Japanese. They therefore insist on the importance of offering an alternative and 'brighter' version of Japanese culture and history.

The ultra-nationalists, moreover, present examples of war crimes and military prostitution elsewhere to make the crime of the 'comfort women' system look banal.[8] Their claim that Japan should not be condemned for organizing the 'comfort women' system, as other countries had military prostitution or raped women on a mass scale, must certainly be contested. Feminists and left-wing critics in Japan had the challenge of considering how and to what extent the 'comfort women' system and other Japanese war atrocities are connected with war crimes and military prostitution that occurred in other places; unfortunately, this analysis was not forthcoming for some time.

The cultural essentialist argument of feminists inadvertently privileges Western culture and values, and this has often prevented feminists in Japan from analysing the 'comfort women' system, comparing it with colonial military prostitution in Western countries.[9] We need to seriously consider

why negative socio-cultural characteristics that may have contributed to the development of the 'comfort women' system were only attributed to Japanese tradition, as could be observed in Ogoshi's and other feminist arguments. Behind such an idea lies the complicated historical interpretation of Japan's modernity. This was developed particularly within the post-Second World War political paradigm that Japan lived under, which cherished Western (in particular American) culture and values. This paradigm imposed an ideal image of Western modernity that Japan had failed to develop, the hierarchical relationship between Western and non-Western cultures, and the belief that evil is not part of the ordinary modern life of Western culture. How such a perspective has become prevalent in political and social thought in Japan (since the Second World War), and has subsequently influenced (feminist) understanding of the 'comfort women' system, will now be explored.

2.3   The theory of Japan's modernity and feminist interpretation

The question of modernity in Japan, such as when it happened and whether it has any notable characteristics, has been extensively debated for a long time in various academic areas, including economic history after the war. However, it has also been discussed in the context of the history of fascism in Japan and the country's 'miraculous' economic growth in (the latter half of) the twentieth century (Gluck, 1993). As the theory of Japan's modernity is in itself a vast area of exploration, the focus here is on the discussion of modernity in the context of its relation to fascism in Japan. Some scholars argue that the transformation of Japan to a truly modern society took place after the Second World War. This marked the beginning of democratic society in Japan, removing itself from feudalism and the Emperor system, which were the source of social oppression before and during the war. Here, society before and during the war and its post-war counterpart are distinguished, emphasizing the post-war socio-political reform as the beginning of modernization. Other critics, however, consider that the modernization project was launched in the Meiji Period, and heightened during the Taisho Period (1912–26), and see the post-war reform as the continuation of this modernization project, diverted temporarily due to fascism during the Second World War (Continuity Theory).

   Differences between these theories regarding when modernization started in Japan also bring about varied explanations as to why fascism developed in Japan. For the latter school of thought, it was the accidental outcome for late-coming nation-states such as Japan. The former school argues that fascism was an inevitable consequence for Japan as its modernization project was partial due to its pre-modern socio-cultural characteristics. (Ueno, 1998: 15–20; Narita, 2006: 25).

Despite the difference in their interpretations of when the modern era started in Japan, all these critics regard the Japanese wartime fascist experience as 'deviant', 'aberrant', or something 'outside' of modernity, and attribute its causes to specific socio-cultural factors in Japan (Ueno, 1998: 20; Narita, 2006: 25). This widely shared view of deviation in Japanese history has been pointed out by critics such as Yamanouchi Yasushi and J. Victor Koschmann. Yamanouchi states that the dominant understanding of Japan's modern history has been that the democratic practice that was developed in the Taisho Period was ended by the authoritarian system of 'irrational, ultra-nationalistic ideology'. This, it is understood, forced the nation to the 'deviant path of mobilization for war' and the Japanese history of democracy only went back on track after the defeat in 1945 (1998: 1). Similarly, Koschmann suggests that such a view is founded on a dichotomy of 'pre-modern particularism versus modern universalism', which claims that the authoritarian and expansionist nature of Japan during the war can mainly be explained by 'pathological factors peculiar to Japan'. This view further sees that post-war reforms were aimed to remove such 'pre-modern residue' or 'pre-modern rationality' (1998: xi–xii).

It has been argued that such a claim of deviance or peculiarity in Japan's history was clearly identifiable in the arguments of Maruyama Masao, a prominent post-war scholar in political thought, who offered a framework that became influential in understanding modernity in Japan (Ueno, 1998: 19; Narita, 2006: 25). Arguing that an ideal of the nation-state develops nationalism (*Kokuminshugi*) and links this with democracy, he sees fascism as a deviant style of nationalism (*Kokkashugi*) that is disconnected from democracy; fascism replaces 'dominance with consent' with 'dominance with homogeneity (*kakuitsusei*)'. Maruyama further claimed that whereas fascism in Germany and Italy was fascism from the bottom being supported by the populace, fascism in Japan was imposed from the top, by the ruling class (ultra-nationalism) without any fully developed political subjects. Maruyama argued that Japan's pre-war modernity was incomplete or inferior as it lacked the political subject that is central to modern values and practice (Kasai, 1998: 212–13).

The absence of the political subject was both caused by and resulted in a particular political and social structure in Japan in which society is vertically and hierarchically ordered 'like a chain', with the Emperor at the very top and as 'the absolute value entity'(Maruyama, 1963: 16). This, he claimed, not only led to the lack of a 'sense of subjective responsibility', but also to a situation where individuals were ruled by those who were above them. In order to manage this sense of oppression from above, individuals oppressed those who were at a lower level than them, and Maruyama called this principle the 'transfer of oppression', which modern Japan inherited from pre-modern (feudal) society (Maruyama, 1963: 17). Maruyama maintained that such a hierarchical structure and the psychology of 'the transfer of oppression' was

most explicitly demonstrated by the violence of the Japanese armed forces internally and internationally. (Maruyama, 1963: 18). There, soldiers who in their ordinary lives did not have any target for oppression, were given a superior position as members of the Emperor's armed forces. Maruyama explained that the brutal acts of the Japanese military in places such as China and the Philippines were the testimonies of 'an explosive impulse to free themselves' from this non-transferable oppression (Maruyama, 1963: 19). In his analysis of fascism in Japan, therefore, Maruyama identified its cause in Japanese cultural specificity, and in particular in its pre-modern characteristics.

This perspective on fascism developed in Japan has been dominant in academic discussion over decades. The view that attributes the cause of gender oppression, such as the 'comfort women' system, to Japanese pre-modern characteristics, can therefore be said to have been influenced by this political theory of Japan's modern history and modernity (Ehara, 2005). For example, in considering the 'comfort women' system, Yamashita Akiko explained that this was considered to be an act of sexual invasion of those who are vulnerable in order to release the sexual frustration of soldiers (Yamashita, 1991: 41). Ehara argued that Yamashita had explained the construction of the 'comfort woman' system through Maruyama's notion of 'transference of oppression', which is a 'typical' characteristic in Japan (Ehara, 2005; 58–9).

On the other hand, the feminist historian Suzuki, referred to earlier, highlights the impact of colonialism in the development of the 'comfort woman' system. She sees the system as the combined form of racial and sexual oppression and exploitation. She claims that Japanese colonial policy allowed the taking of young women from Japanese colonies for sexual slavery in order to prevent the spread of venereal disease in the military, and at the same time to destroy the reproductive capacity of colonized people (Suzuki, 1992: 33–4). Her research on the 'comfort woman' system is, therefore, historically contextualized, locating the system within the history of the Japanese modern nation-state and colonialism. Suzuki explains that the 'comfort woman' system was developed on the basis of state-regulated prostitution in Japan, which, together with the family-household *(Ieseido)* system, divided women into two categories of virgin/mother and whore.

Suzuki (1997b) maintains that although state-regulated prostitution in Japan showed some uniqueness, it shared common characteristics with that in other states, including the registration of prostitutes, taxation on prostitution and compulsory venereal disease examination of prostitutes. She, however, sees the 'comfort women' system, as the result of the Emperor system, and unique to Japan (Suzuki, 1992; 2000). She also argues that the invasion and colonization of other Asian countries was promoted in the name of the Emperor. Soldiers that carried out this invasion and colonization were considered children of the Emperor (and the 'comfort women' were

regarded as a form of gift from the Emperor). Ahn questions that such an approach 'emphasizes Japanese "exceptionalism", particularly in the exploitative aspect of the Japanese Emperor system (*tennôsei*)' (Ahn, 1999: 40).

A similar approach is also found in the work of Kawada. She, like Suzuki, argues that the 'comfort women' system differed from state-regulated prostitution, but also claims that the former originated from the latter. She explains that while licensed prostitution is a privately run system approved by the state government, with the 'comfort woman' system there was a direct involvement of the military and other authorities (Kawada, 1995: 83). Kawada describes the long history of state-regulated prostitution in Japan that has sanctioned the commercialization of women's sexuality, as the reason that the 'comfort woman' system was introduced without any particular obstacles. Although she admits the entwined relationship existed between the military/militarism and prostitution, she also suggests that it is exceptional for the military to take the initiative in setting up systems of prostitution and that this somehow emphasizes Japanese peculiarity (Ahn, 1999: 40).[10]

In examining the absent sense of guilt of Japanese ex-soldiers who visited the comfort stations during the war, Ikeda Eriko suggests that men's lack of sympathy towards the 'comfort women' victims can be explained by a commonly held discriminating view of prostitutes. She attributes this to the tacit social acceptance of men purchasing women for sexual services throughout the long history of endorsed prostitution in Japan, dating back to the twelfth century (Ikeda, 2000: 132),[11] and maintains that the sex trade is still prosperous in Japan today. This argument illustrates that Ikeda, too, somewhat underplays socio-political changes in prostitution over time. Different forms of prostitution produce distinct ideas and attitudes (of men) towards prostitutes. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, the utter disrespect for prostitutes only emerged in the course of the development of modern licensed prostitution. What feminists such as those above argue therefore can actually reproduce Maruyama's theory, claiming that the sexual exploitation of women through the 'comfort women' system was caused by Japanese incomplete modernization, influenced by its pre-modern peculiarity.

Feminists in Japan such as Ogoshi are highly aware of the problem of the work of Maruyama and other scholars and its influence on feminism. In examining the modernization of Japan in her work, Ogoshi underscores that her aim is not to highlight Japan's immature modernization caused by the residue of its pre-modern characteristics. Rather, she maintains that her intention is to emphasize the specificity (*dokujisei*) of the modernization of Japan, which is different from modernization in Western nation-states (Ogoshi, 1996: 53; also 1991). She considers that this standpoint is completely opposite to the position that idealizes Western modernization and belittles any other type of modernization as immature or deviant. She disdains Maruyama, who claimed the modernization of Japan as undeveloped, and claims that her perspective is rather closer to the work of deconstructionists

such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who resists the establishment of 'global theory' (Spivak, 1988a: 84); Ogoshi calls this 'Cultural Deconstructionist Feminism (*Bunka Kaitai ha Feminism*)' (Ogoshi, 1996: 44–5).

Why the theories of feminists who reject the (modernist) theory of Maruyama actually end up with similar characteristics can be explained by the problematic way that post-modernism (as a critique of modernity) was received in Japan. This has been eloquently articulated by critics such as Ehara (2005), Harootunian (1989), Koschmann (1993) and Sakai (1997). In Europe (particularly in France) and the US, the postmodern critique of (Western-centred) modernity and its normative values entailed a fundamental questioning of modernity that involved an extensive and serious self-criticism. However, as Japan is not 'West', the postmodern approach in Japan has simply been directed to challenging the centrality of Western culture and values and not to a critical reflection on Japanese society. Rather, it brought about self-appraisal, self-affirmation and self-congratulation of Japanese society and culture, which can transcend the problem of modernity (Ehara, 2005, 62: 1994, 212–3; Koschmann, 1993: 421). This is not dissimilar to the wartime intellectual discussion on overcoming modernity, which has led to ultra-nationalism (Koschmann, 1993: 421). As a feminist like Ogoshi is aware, such an absence of self-reflection in postmodernist discussion in Japan can invoke a Japanist approach; feminists believe that they should therefore make a serious attempt to be more critical of Japanese society and culture (Ogoshi, 1991: 192–3). Ehara points out that such feminist efforts 'paradoxically' make discussions such as Ogoshi's similar to the modernist theory of Maruyama, in claiming that the pre-modern sexual attitudes and culture in Japan resulted in the construction of the 'comfort women' system. Thus, while she is clearly aware of the problem of Japanese cultural determinism/essentialism, Ogoshi's argument seems to struggle to completely disconnect itself from it (Ehara, 2005, 63: 1994, 213). Unlike the modernization that took place in Western culture, Ogoshi maintained, Japanese modernization is characterized by pre-modern apparatus such as the Emperor system, which was reinvented and introduced as a tradition of Japan during the modernization (Ogoshi, 1996: 53). She explained that as modern civil society, which is supported by modern individual subjects and is indispensable for (Western) capitalism, was missing in Japan, it looked for an alternative system and 'ideology' of its own to develop capitalism. Japan eventually developed capitalism under the initiative of the authoritarian state, and this was supported by an oppressive Emperor-family system, which originated in the political and cultural tradition of Japan, but was reinvented in the Meiji era as a central social and political ideology.

Ogoshi further argued that capitalism and the state in Japan operated through an unprecedented oppressive 'ideology' and system of exploitation, and that under such a social and political structure women were discriminated against and became the target of exploitation (Ogoshi, 1996: 52–3).

However, Ogoshi's claim for culturally and historically specific modernization of Japan is slightly problematic, because it was not only in Japan where the state government took the initiative in introducing capitalism and leading various other modernization projects. During the Second World War, Western states, such as the United States, also underwent structural changes to improve their economic and political efficiency (Yamanouchi, Koschmann, and Narita eds., 1998). Moreover, as Eric Hobsbawm argued, what are now considered old traditions often only found their origins in the recent times and were sometimes reinvented as traditions in the modern era (1983: 1). Ueno (1990) has indeed eloquently deconstructed patriarchal family structure in Japan (the family-household system), which was often considered the typical pre-modern characteristic, claiming this to be the modern invention of family structure in Japan. Yoshida highlights the recent shift in the study of history, attempting to situate the history of modern Japan, including the Emperor system, in a broader historical setting of the nation-state (2013: 11–13). Not only the family-household system, but also other gender relations and structures in modern Japan began to be explored within such an analytical framework (Osa, 2014).

In short, what feminists such as Ogoshi highlighted as unique characteristics of Japan are commonly found in modern societies, and have been constructed particularly in the process of building modern nation-states. Ogoshi maintained that during modernization in Japan women and other groups were the target of discrimination and exploitation. If the concept of deconstruction is applied more thoroughly however, it could be argued that women as an oppressed group was only 'constructed' through exploitation and discrimination, because women as a category did not precede their oppression. In addition, there is no unified experience of exploitation and discrimination as women, since various social differences such as class and race intersect with gender. Nevertheless, in Ogoshi's discussion the pre-given unified category of women as the target of oppression seems to be assumed before the discrimination takes place. Ironically, feminist eagerness to acknowledge the oppression that women have experienced (through history), sometimes weakens social and political contextualization of gender issues and gender oppression. This not only would invoke cultural essentialism/determinism that negatively looks at the 'Japanese culture', but also privileges Western cultural values. This articulation of Japanese and Western cultures is not appealing to the wider public in Japan and they thus start to embrace the ultra-nationalist discourse instead.

2.4   War responsibility and developing (political) subjectivity

Though it is vital to explore the specificity of the 'comfort women' system, feminist analysis such as that outlined above has often resulted in reproducing the idea of a peculiar traditional culture as the basis of the system,

and considered it rather as an exceptional and isolated phenomenon. Such a 'cultural essentialist' view is closely related to an Orientalist and Eurocentric perspective and, as argued, this is not only about how the West sees the non-West, but also how the non-West could also acknowledge itself through such an Orientalist perspective they essentialize their own culture or tradition and see it as fixed, unchangeable and also problematic. The influential modernization theory of Maruyama demonstrates how the culture in Japan was, particularly, seen through such a Western gaze after the Second World War, and how not only cultural essentialists or traditionalists but even feminists could operate within such a paradigm.

Sakai argues that the Japanese national tradition and Japanese culture and people as a (fixed) category were actually used as a means to facilitate the US occupation after the war (2000: 803). This was considered an effective way for the US to govern Japan after the war and indirectly to control it politically and economically. Even the absence of a modern national subjectivity in Japan was (further) reinforced by the US occupation through not prosecuting the Emperor Hirohito for his war crimes, but appropriating him as the symbol of its national unity. Sakai maintains that when the crime of the Emperor, under whose name the Pacific War was fought and war atrocities committed, was pardoned, it became impossible to accuse the Japanese public – who used to be his subjects – of brutal conduct during the war (2000: 805–6). The issue of political subjectivity in Japan was raised in the discussion of the 'comfort women' system, partly because it is considered that the system had not been problematized for such a long time because there have been no political subjects to take responsibility for the crime committed. How to enact the political subject of 'the Japanese', therefore, has been debated in a wider discussion of war responsibility. It is argued that the political subject of 'the Japanese', who can offer an apology to the victims of the Second World War, and particularly to those in Asia, is crucial in the development of Japanese society.

Assuming the lack of a modern political subject as the source and sign of Japan's incomplete modernization, as argued by thinkers like Maruyama, critics in Japan (who make efforts to confront Japan's dark past of colonialism and war atrocities) have been concerned about forming a modern political subject as the proof of a true democratic transformation. However, such an aspiration unfortunately brought about, to some extent, a rather nationalistic idea of 'the Japanese'. For example, a literary critic, Kato Norihiro, argued that in order to offer a sincere apology to non-Japanese victims of the Pacific War in Asia, establishing a national subject through the process of mourning for Japan's war dead, both soldiers and civilian victims, is first required (Kato, 1995: 286; Koschmann, 2000: 741). The logic behind his argument is that because of the post-war paradigm that was developed under the US occupation, the Pacific War was condemned as having been initiated by an unjust Japanese invasion, so that Japan's war

dead have been disrespected and ignored. What he emphasized therefore is that Japan needs to become 'a subject of apology' first and foremost, that is to say, to construct 'we Japanese' through acknowledging and grieving for Japan's war dead (Kato, 1995: 275–6; Koschmann, 2000: 747, 750).

A philosopher, Takahashi Tetsuya, problematized Kato's argument in the sense that it essentializes the identity of 'the Japanese' (and is thus nationalistic) as the process requires a self as Japanese without its relation to the Other. Instead he suggested that 'consciousness of shame' that is evoked by the encounter with Asian victims should be the basis of an ethical and political subject (Takahashi, 1995a: 177; 1995b: 249; Koschmann, 2000: 750). However, Koschmann points out that in challenging Kato's rather nationalistic subject formation, Takahashi paradoxically constructed idealized national subjects who 'feel perpetually guilty for the war crimes of an earlier generation'. As they are concerned with offering a genuine apology for Asian victims of the Pacific War, these critics obviously stand far apart from the ultra-nationalists. Nevertheless, what these discussions demonstrate is that sincere gestures to face Asian victims of the war can still evoke nationalistic discourse by constructing an ideal national subject. As they are also chained by nationalism (though 'enlightened', to borrow Koschmann's term), challenging ultra-nationalist discourse becomes difficult.

Concerned that an attempt to genuinely reflect on Japanese war crimes can actually provoke nationalistic discourse, Sakai argues that what is required in Japan is not to construct unified (exclusive) national subjects and national identity through *Kyokan* (sympathy), which can offer an apology. He maintains that deconstructing this category of 'the Japanese' or 'Japanese people' is crucial in challenging communalistic national identity, and this can be achieved by opting to live together with wide-ranging groups of people and being attentive to the pain of those who suffered (Sakai, 2006: 184). Since the early 1990s feminists in Japan have worked together with feminists and victim-survivors in other Asian countries such as South Korea, the Philippines and Taiwan. In August 1992, the first Asian Solidarity Conference on Japanese military sexual slavery was organized in Seoul and delegates from various Asian countries have met once every year since to exchange information.

The issue of 'comfort women' was also brought to the UN for the first time in the same year by the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (The Korean Council) and has since been discussed in various UN human-rights bodies and institutions (Shin, 2011: 15). Such transnational (feminist) redress movements helped feminists (in Japan) to critically reflect on the way to engage with this issue, establishing communication with victim-survivors and feminists transnationally, and seeking redress for injustice done to these victim-survivors. This has been the very process of exploring how to deconstruct 'the Japanese', as Sakai (above) addressed.

This has enabled feminists in Japan to be part of the transnational femi-
nist movement to address sexual violence and sexual slavery during war as
the violation of human rights in an international domain. In addition, a
feminist organization in Japan, Violence Against Women in War Network
Japan (VAWW-NET), successfully initiated the organization of the Women's
Internation War Crimes Tribunal (WIWCT) in response to victim-survivors'
wishes to punish those who are responsible (Kim, P., 2001: 211). It took place
in December 2000, supported by seven victim countries, and the Public
Hearing on Crimes Against Women in Recent War was organized at the
same time. These activities prompted feminists in Japan as well as in other
Asian countries to work collaboratively on the 'comfort women' issue with
feminists beyond Asia, such as in the North America, Europe and Australia.
Resolutions were discussed or passed in these national and European legis-
latures calling on the Japanese government to formally acknowledge and
accept full responsibility for the abuses 'comfort women' victims were
subjected to.

Obviously, this has not been an easy journey. Kim Pu-ja makes reference
to Yun Chung-ok's critical comment on Matsui Yayori, who was one of the
leading figures in the organization of the WIWCT. Yun saw that Matsui
considered the 'comfort women' system as only a problem of (Japanese)
patriarchy and failed to see how this also presents the problem of racial
discrimination in Japan against Asian people.[12] Indeed, despite (or because
of) such transnational feminist communication, some feminists in Japan,
while concerned about achieving the redress, simply have claimed the need
to transcend national boundaries and nationalism, failing to acknowledge
the varied social and historical implications of nationalism in different
countries. For example, since 1995, the Japanese feminist Ueno has argued
that feminism should move beyond nationalism, alleging that South Korean
feminism has been influenced by nationalistic discourses and that it has
caused a division in the feminist redress movement (Ueno, 1998: 129; 194).

Kim, a Korean-Japanese feminist, has repeatedly criticized that Ueno
appropriates the arguments of, say, Yamashita Yongae, a Korean-Japanese
feminist, or Park Yu-ha, a female Korean scholar in Japanese history, who
have been critical to nationalism in the feminist redress movement in South
Korea. By identifying herself with their positions, Ueno's argument, Kim
claims, can blur the responsibility of Japan and the Japanese people (whoever
it means) as the victimizer (Kim, P., 1998: 194; 2008: 116). The problem
is, that while criticizing nationalism in both Japan and South Korea, and
aspiring to feminist solidarity without nationalism, Ueno's claim overlooks
the fact that feminism in Japan lacks a critical awareness of the history and
legacy of Japanese colonialism; this could actually reproduce such 'imperial
feminist' discourses (Kim, P., 1998: 201; 2008: 116).

The encounter with critical feminism posed by minority groups in Europe
and the North America, for example Asian-American feminism, had a huge

impact on feminism in Japan in acknowledging that a critical perspective on racism and the legacy of colonialism is missing in their discussion. Learning from these minority feminists who revealed racism in US culture, feminists (in Japan) have become more aware of how the idealized image of a democratic US actually hid racism and racist policies adopted by it during the Second World War. Ogoshi describes how feminists in the US were enthusiastic about the WIWCT held in 2000, while they were extremely reluctant to accept as a state crime the US military attack on Afghanistan, which took place at around the same time. They even argued that it was a 'just war' to rescue Afghan women from oppression by the Taliban regime (2005: 19). This has enabled feminists in Japan to recognize how people in Japan, including generations of feminists, have indeed been complicit with racism in Japanese society and remained ignorant and naive about it.

Hyun Yi Kang (2003), Kandice Chuh (2003) and Lisa Yoneyama (2003) analyse the positive impact that Asian-American feminists, the community that they also belong to, made on the discussion of the 'comfort women' issue and the redress movement. By bringing the 'comfort women' issue to the centre of the feminist dialogue in the US, Asian-American feminists have successfully challenged the 'racism, imperialism and class bias' of feminism in the US (Kang, 2003: 43). The interest in the 'comfort women' issue in the US, particularly in the Asian-American community, also led the US to be involved in the redress and reparation movement, as its legal and legislative systems as well as more informal means in the US have been utilized. Yoneyama called this process 'the Americanization of redress and historical justice' (Yoneyama, 2003: 57). This can be observed in a series of events such as a lawsuit that fifteen 'comfort women' filed with the US District Court of Columbia in 2000; US House of Representatives resolution 121 in 2007 and similar resolutions passed in various State Senates and Assemblies; and the erection of memorials to 'comfort women' victims in Palisades Park, New Jersey in 2010 and in Glendale, California in 2013.

Such a move enabled the 'comfort women' issue to be known more generally beyond Asia and also uncovered how the US was not only implicated in silencing victims of Japanese war atrocities, but itself also violated human rights. However, it could be a double-edged sword (Yoneyama, 2003: 82). Kang and Yoneyama argue how institutionalizing the study of 'comfort women' in US academia could simply function as the way to redeem feminism (in the US) from the allegation of racism and imperialism. Yoneyama further highlights how through this 'Americanization' the Asian-American community runs the risk of being complicit in reproducing the American imperialist myth: 'the enemy population's liberation from the barbaric and the backward and its successful rehabilitation into an assimilated ally are both anticipated and explained as an outcome of the US military interventions' (Yoneyama, 2003: 59). Sensing the discourse of US supremacy in such 'Americanization of redress', on 14 June 2007 a group of Japanese revisionists,

including MPs, placed a paid public comment in the Washington Post entitled 'The Facts (about "comfort women")', denying the responsibility of the Japanese government. By collaborating with Asian-American feminists, feminism in Japan has been offered an opportunity to reflect on its own racism and imperialism and to challenge revisionist claims collectively. At the same time however, not recognizing the danger that this 'Americanization' entails can also fuel the revisionist movement further, not only in Japan but in certain Japanese-American communities.[13]

This chapter has attempted to illuminate how even the genuine efforts of feminists and other critics in Japan to engage with the 'comfort women' issue and victim-survivors and to refute the revisionist claim could be trapped in Orientalist and cultural essentialist discourses. This also implicates them in reproducing the cultural imperialist idea, under which Japanese society has evolved since the Second World War. Because Japanese conservative elites have also lived within this cultural imperialist paradigm, they too have internalized the divide between the West/White and non-West/Japan, but in a more provocative way. As Yoneyama argues, Japanese nationalists would not therefore accept Japan's crime of colonialism and racism until the US or European countries redressed their legacy of colonialism and racism.

As feminist arguments sometimes implicitly strengthen the inability of cultural imperialist discourse to question the US or Europe about their accountability for colonialism and racism towards non-Western people, the revisionist attack grows stronger by encompassing those who want to repel cultural imperialism. The problem of the Orientalist and cultural essentialist view is that it also confines the dark and evil side of humanity within non-modern, usually non-Western, cultures or traditions. Behind such an Orientalist view lies faith in modernity, and this has arisen from the failure to share widely discussion of the relationship between modernity and evils (of violence). Thus it is often assumed that evils belong to the pre-modern or non-modern era, and all evils were swept away by modernity (or the Enlightenment). However, I argue, on the contrary, that evil is an integral part of the Enlightenment and such a view would provide a clearer indication of how the 'comfort women' system should be understood within history. I, therefore, now turn to explore perceptions of evil in modern thinking, focusing in particular on the work of Hannah Arendt.

3
Modernity, Evil and Violence

3.1   The absence of the social analysis of modernity and evil

Although the history of modern times has been pervaded by violence and war, social analysis of the relationship between modernity and violence and other evil deeds did not take place for a long time. In the tradition of 'Western' Enlightenment thought, it is often assumed that human reason and the activities of the mind can prevent human beings from committing evil deeds (Meade, 1996: 121), and that the passage of history will bring progress (Felman, 1999: 209). Progress here means that society moves itself away from 'barbaric' violence and aspires to build society without violence. Modernity has, in short, been considered as 'universal rationality, economic growth, scientific progress and peace' (Malešević, 2010: 17). Therefore, the discussion of the dark side of modernity, which is the foundation of the modern economic, social and political system and of the Enlightenment thought that upholds modernity, has for a long time been limited in political and social theories. Indeed, many modern and contemporary political and social theorists, in particular those who are more liberally oriented, have believed that modernity could replace military regimes with those based on industry and economic efficiency (Tiryakian, 1999: 475; Joas, 2003: 45). Such a view has heavily influenced the way that war atrocities have been long understood as a deviation from modernity.

Some attempt to unmask the problem of modernity is clearly made by Marx and his followers, who criticized the capitalist mode of modern production because of its exploitation of workers. For them, violence and war was 'a structural determinant of modernity' (Tiryakian, 1999: 4). Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud have also been named as those who were suspicious of modernity (Maldonado-Torres, 2008: 2). However, it was later in the second half of the nineteenth century that feminists and post-colonial intellectuals started to scrutinize modernity and Enlightenment thought more systematically, as they became aware that the oppression of women and colonized people is the creation of modern societies. Feminists influenced by second-wave

feminism in the 1970s have challenged gender-blind canons of (Western) philosophy and political theory. They assert that modernity is sustained by the hierarchical dichotomy between mind (reason) and body, which associates men with reason and women with the body, and that this has been translated into gender inequality and the exploitation of women. To challenge such a dichotomy, which results in gender inequality, some claim that women have reason and mind equal to that of men; others give emphasis to the importance of the body in order to challenge the inferior status given to women because of their association with the body; and still others try to question and deconstruct the dichotomy of men and women itself (Prokhovnik, 1999: 2).

As mentioned, philosophers such as Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger, and later those 'post-structuralists' and 'postmodernists', including Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, who were influenced by their work, have also criticized the metaphysics or metanarratives that are central in Enlightenment thought. Foucault's work explored how modern societies have been governed by the power internalized through bodily discipline, and it has been suggested that this could potentially result in the corrective bureaucracy of violence and war. Postmodernists in general, however, did not show much interest in the relationship between modernity and violence or other evil deeds. Moreover, in claiming differences without an authoritative voice, these critiques of modernity not only tend to be abstract and theoretical, but also uphold the metanarrative of the authoritative and superior status of Western civilization, which is supposed to be only culturally specific (Harootunian, 2000b: 10).

Indeed, confidence in modernity founded on Enlightenment thought is far from being lost, and we can think, for example, of the work of Jürgen Habermas. While he fiercely challenges certain aspects of modernity, he also values the possibilities of modernity, which we can see in his aspiration for cosmopolitanism (Habermas, 2001). This is to say that despite an extensive critique of modernity and the Enlightenment thought that sustains its norms, there seems to be an implicit but continuous trust in the ideal of Enlightenment and reason (Gilroy, 2000: 74). As Bauman puts it, in the self-consciousness of modern Western society 'the morally elevating story of humanity emerging from pre-social barbarity' is deeply rooted, and this story is widely supported by sociological, historical, and philosophical experts (Bauman, 1989: 12). The reality of modernity, however, is something quite different: this is well demonstrated by the history of colonialism, and the problematic nature of modernity and Enlightenment thought such as reason and progress has increasingly been called into scrutiny.

Drawing on the works of writers such as Du Bois and Fanon, post-colonial scholars started to examine the concept and practice of modernity and the ways that evil and violence is an integral part of European modernity (Maldonado-Torres, 2008). As Narayan notes, while liberty and equality was

presented as the paradigm of 'Western values', the Western states were fully involved in slavery and colonization, denying liberty and equality to those who they colonized, but also marginalized groups of their society such as women (Narayan, 1998: 89–90).

The discussion surrounding the Holocaust – war atrocities and an ultimate example of evil – also clearly demonstrates the critical as well as ambivalent understanding of the relationship between modernity and evil. As Western civilization has been considered as the 'exclusive source' of humanism since the Enlightenment, the Holocaust, which happened in its centre, poses a critical question (Bernasconi, 2008: 54). As mentioned in Chapter 1, although many have long considered the Holocaust a momentous disruption of civilization, as the following discussion shows, others have underscored the link between the Holocaust and modernity. In order to understand Japanese war atrocities, such as the 'comfort women' system, in the context of modernity, the following sections will look at the twentieth-century work in philosophy and political theory that draws attention to the relationship between modernity and the Holocaust. It takes, in particular, the work of Hannah Arendt as a key representative, because her distinctive understanding of the Holocaust, as embroiled in the nature of modernity, is particularly important. Her work also has a specific significance when her application of the modern/pre-modern and subject/the Other in her discussion of colonialism/imperialism concerning totalitarianism and racism is taken into account. This can exemplify the challenge of exploring the relationship between modernity and evil without being influenced by the Orientalist or racist view. Since the 1990s Arendt's analysis has been highly regarded in Japan by feminists and a wide range of critics who work on the issue of 'comfort women' and other legacies of the Second World War and Japanese war responsibility. However, cultural imperialism, or at least the lack of (post-)colonial perspective, in her work has rarely been identified and criticized in Japan. Later in this chapter therefore, attention is directed to the post-colonial understanding of violence, and it is argued that this provides a firmer basis for understanding the 'comfort women' system.

3.2   Discussion on the Holocaust

Emmanuel Levinas published an article entitled 'Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism' in 1934, shortly after Hitler came to power, and this, in some way, foresaw the coming Holocaust. In the Prefatory Note attached to the English translation, which was published in *Critical Inquiry* in 1990, he explains his urge to write this article and its rationale. He states that the philosophy of Hitlerism questions the very principles of civilization, as National Socialism is not organized because 'human reasoning' has provisionally gone wrong, or because of 'accidental ideological misunderstanding'. He is also convinced that we can logically be led to 'elemental

Evil' and that Western philosophy is helpless in preventing this (Levinas, 1990: 63). In the tradition of Western thought, particularly in Christianity, spirit was regarded as superior to reality, thus detaching man from the physical world. The spirit can only achieve freedom through freeing itself from the physical world that it has been connected to (Levinas, 1990: 66). On the other hand, the body is considered as something eternally foreign, as well as the embodiment of inferior matter, which has to be abandoned for the spirit to be freed. However, the idea of identity would often be confirmed by the warmth of or pain in our bodies. This is to say that the body not only connects us with the world, but, as Levinas stresses, '*(i)ts adherence to the Self is of value in itself*' (Levinas, 1990: 68). The possible struggle of the (free) spirit with its duality, as it is chained to the body, is in fact not an issue, as the essence of the spirit is inherent in the fact that it is restricted by the body (Levinas, 1990: 68). Levinas stresses, therefore, that separating the spirit and body betrays the actual foundation from which the spirit (and body) emerges (Levinas, 1990: 68–9; Bell, 1999a: 120). Levinas draws attention, as Gilroy argues, to how 'Hitlerism finds and founds a new definition of freedom from an acceptance of being constrained by the body' (Gilroy, 2000: 175). The spirit does not become obscured, as it does in materialism, but rather its essence gains a new identity through the way that it is restricted by the body; importantly, the fascist movement recovered this lost body, gave it back to people and allowed them to enjoy its pleasure (Gilroy, 2000: 175–6).

This logic of Hitlerism, namely its attachment to the body, which is the reaction to the split of the spirit and the body under the Western modernity, invokes the longing for the blood, and thus appeals to heredity and the past connection. There, the community should be based on flesh and blood, any rational communion between spirits becomes suspicious and race needs to be invented if it does not exist (Levinas, 1990: 69; Bell, 1999a: 121). This implies, as Levinas states in the conclusion of this article, that racism is not something that we can merely claim as conflicting with particular aspects of Christian and liberal culture, but with 'the very humanity of man' (1990; 71). Levinas' argument in this article is distinguished, not only because of its prophetic element but also because this is one of the early attempts to explore the essential connection between modernity based on Western Enlightenment thought and evil, such as racism. However, what is not entirely clear is whether Levinas is claiming that evil element is an integral part of the Western Enlightenment mode of thinking itself, or that the Western philosophy is merely incapable of preventing the evil deeds. This poses a fundamental question: whether Nazism is the very product of Western civilization and modernity, or is a mere unintended outcome of these social systems.

The relation between modernity and evil, or the dark side of modernity, is more clearly expressed in the work of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer

on anti-Semitism. They claim that the project of the Enlightenment was 'the disenchantment of the world; the dissolution of myths and the substitution of knowledge for fancy' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997: 3). However, despite all the civilized knowledge, disasters still prevailed over what is considered as a fully enlightened world. Civilization has, Adorno and Horkheimer argue, attempted to limit mimesis – that is, human physical assimilation to nature and the environment around them – so that human beings can be well incorporated into a capitalist system (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997: 204; Bell, 1999b: 142). Mimesis is first controlled and then replaced by rational practice, especially by work (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997: 180). While any expressive mimetic behaviour is regarded as exaggeration and outlawed in civilized societies, the anti-Semites see the Jews as engaging in such an uncontrolled mimetic gesture. Adorno and Horkheimer argue that the anti-Semites consider the mimesis of the Jews as natural and emotional and not culturally oriented, and that this needs to be controlled by civilization (Bell, 1999b: 143). They further attempt to explain how anti-Semitism and fascism ended up embracing this mimesis, which was once forbidden by civilization. 'The ritual discipline, the uniforms' and all the other mechanism of fascism that are seemingly irrational were aimed at authorizing mimesis, and anti-Semites only 'become a collective' to mark this moment (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997:184–5).

Not only was this mimesis of mimesis the forbidden pleasure, but the public also presented the ambivalence to liberty that they were promised (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997: 172). They endured the disparity between the happiness that civilization promised them through liberalism and capitalism and the actual reality. Adorno and Horkheimer claim that instead of criticizing capitalism for its unfulfilled promise, anti-Semites targeted the Jews as a scapegoat, as the Jews appear to have achieved their happiness within this capitalist system (Bell, 1999b: 144). Here 'the dialectic of Enlightenment is transformed objectively into delusion' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997: 204). This is why Adorno and Horkheimer maintain that anti-Semitism is 'the actual reversion of enlightened civilization to barbarism' and that 'self-destruction has always been characteristic of rationalism' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997: xvi–xvii). For Adorno and Horkheimer anti-Semitism and fascism were, thus, born out of modernity.

In her *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Hannah Arendt illustrated the association between the Enlightenment and evil more explicitly. The work, which was subtitled *A Report on the Banality of Evil* and first appeared as a report in the journal the *New Yorker* in 1963, triggered heated debates and was criticized by different groups, in particular those within the Jewish community. The report's polemical narratives are focused on a philosophical reflection on the now oft-used phrase 'the banality of evil'. They were polemical as they appeared to place the blame on the Jewish people,

especially their leaders, for their complicity in the extermination of the Jews, while vindicating the deeds of Eichmann and other Germans in the name of 'banality'. This confused and irritated many readers (Benhabib, 1996: 176; Lang, 1994: 45).

A good example of the criticism of her report is the open exchange of letters between Arendt and Gershom Sholem in 1963. Sholem, a prominent Jewish scholar and professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, expressed his bewilderment at reading her report. The reasons that Sholem gave for his disapproval of Arendt's work summarize well the way that her work was publicly received (Bernstein, 1996: 128). At the same time, they demonstrate the reluctance to accept that evil is intrinsic to modern life.

Sholem's disapproval of Arendt's work was most openly directed at her quoting from a Nazi source and describing a Jewish leader, Leo Baeck, as a 'Jewish Führer' on the one hand, and calling Eichmann a 'convert to Zionism', on the other (Sholem and Arendt, 1963: 51). Nor did he fail to show his disappointment at her thesis on 'the banality of evil'. He considered her argument unconvincing, and found it difficult to see its relation to 'radical evil' that she had analysed earlier in her book *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951). He believed that evil such as the Holocaust cannot be banal, and can only be radical or absolute. Arendt responded to his criticism by saying that she did not have any intention to portray Eichmann as a Zionist, but only used his own words, and that she was not claiming a certain group of Jews as traitors, but raising the question of 'the cooperation of Jewish functionaries during the "Final Solution"'(Sholem and Arendt, 1963: 54–5). Suggesting the Zionist movement was (to some extent) responsible for the Holocaust – a view that was expressed as early as 1945 in the article entitled 'Zionism Reconsidered' (Yano, 1997: 219) – Arendt argues that the Holocaust is not an isolated or exceptional incident, but only became possible because of such a systematic collaboration of Zionism.

Despite all the criticisms, Arendt never meant in the report or other writings that the Holocaust, or Eichmann and other people's involvement in the extermination of Jews was banal (Benhabib, 1996: 176). Nor did she blame the Jews for not resisting the Nazi government (Sholem and Arendt, 1963: 55; Arendt, 1978b: 15). *Eichmann in Jerusalem* does not (merely) claim that we are all potential Eichmanns under certain socio-historical conditions, nor suggest 'the need for a moral mission to prevent the repetition of genocidal murder' (Bergen, 1998: ix–x). 'The banality of evil' referred to 'a specific quality of mind and character of the doer himself', and this was also the concern of her earlier writings (Benhabib, 1996: 176). The doers can be understood here, both Eichmann and other Germans, and the Jews who collaborated, and this suggests how an evil deed such as the Holocaust could have been integral to an ordinary modern society instead of a mere disruption of it.

3.3   Arendt on the banality of evil and thoughtlessness

On thoughtlessness

In the first edition of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, and in *The Human Condition* (1958) Arendt explained that evil means radical evil, which is beyond human ability, and fundamentally destroys human events (Benhabib, 1996: 90; Shibata, 1997: 252; Arendt, 1958: 241, 246). However, at the Eichmann trial, what she found was not a monster but someone with a normal attitude or even a good family man. Arendt maintains that Eichmann did not have 'insane hatred of Jews' nor was he a 'fanatical anti-Semite'; on the contrary, he had some 'private reasons' for not hating the Jews (Arendt, 1994a: 25–6). Here, Arendt had to revisit not only her own idea of evil but also that in the tradition of Western thought, which metaphysically sees evil as ultimate wickedness and corruption (Benhabib, 1996: 174).

In a reply to Sholem, who notices and indicates her change in the idea of evil, she explains that she realizes that evil is extreme, but can never be 'radical' or with any depth or 'demonic dimension'. As evil only spread on the surface and there is nothing deeper, thought that engages with the issues in depth cannot find anything about evil and this is what is meant by 'banality'. 'Only the good has depth and can be radical' (Sholem and Arendt, 1963: 56). As demonstrated in this letter, what struck Arendt about Eichmann was his 'thoughtlessness', and she undertakes further examination of how thought and thinking is itself connected to good and evil.

In the lecture in 1971 titled 'Thinking and Moral Considerations', Arendt revisited questions such as 'What is thinking?' and 'What is evil?' (Arendt, 1984: 9). She asked whether the practice of thinking, that is to say 'the habit of examining and reflecting upon whatever happens to come to pass', could 'condition' men from committing evil deeds. Thinkers since the time of Socrates and Plato assumed that 'only people filled with this *erôs*, this desiring love of wisdom, beauty, and justice, are capable of thought' (Arendt, 1984: 28). However, Arendt understands that this would not be a practical answer to the question concerned – the relationship between thought and good/evil (Arendt, 1984: 28–9). Reflecting her narratives of *Eichmann in Jerusalem* and the controversial idea of 'the banality of evil', she explained that this is not a theory, but simply a claim that 'the phenomenon of evil deeds' cannot be attributed to 'any particularity of wickedness, pathology, or ideological conviction in the doer'. What she tries to argue is that even though the deeds could be monstrous 'the doer was neither monstrous nor demonic' and if there is any personal distinction, it is his/her 'extraordinary shallowness'. She emphasizes, instead, that this is 'not stupidity but a curious, quite authentic inability to think' (Arendt, 1984: 7).

Arendt then points out how Eichmann always adhered to clichés, that is to say, conventional standardized codes of expression, such as those of the Nazis during their regime, and later the new code of crime at the trial.

This, she argues, made him helpless when he was confronted with the situation in which he could not apply any of the codes he was familiar with. It is his complete lack of ability to think that attracted the attention of Arendt (Arendt, 1984: 8). She argues that the philosophy of metaphysics, where the issue of thinking and its relation to evil could be explored, has now collapsed. The critics of metaphysics, such as Nietzsche, talked about the death of God and of the true world, and the disappearing distinction between such a supersensory realm and the sensory realm, which had resulted in the eradication of the latter altogether (Arendt, 1984: 10–11). However, the claim of the modern death of God or the end of (metaphysical) philosophy only concerns itself with the changes in the ways of thinking, and does not engage with the ability to think itself.

Arendt stressed that thinking is a vital aspect of human beings, and 'man' needs to think beyond what he knows. Differentiating thinking and knowing, she argued that 'the need to think can be satisfied only through thinking' but not through the desire to know (Arendt, 1984: 11–12). She also claimed that this distinction between knowing and thinking is important, as if 'the ability to distinguish right from wrong' is connected to 'the ability to think', the practice of thinking should be encouraged in everyone, regardless of the level of intelligence (Arendt, 1984: 12–13). This is to say that she contested Kant's comments on morals and philosophy that '(s)tupidity is caused by a wicked heart' as inability to think is different from stupidity, and it is not caused by wickedness. What she tries to argue is that the problem was that 'to cause great evil' a wicked heart is not necessary (Arendt, 1984: 13). It is, Arendt argues, thoughtlessness that matters and causes evil, and that institutional socialization, in particular the modern bureaucratic institution, brings about such thoughtlessness (May, 1996: 89, 101).

However, it is thinking rather than thoughtlessness that was Arendt's persistent preoccupation throughout her life, particularly in its relation to action (Canovan, 1992: 268; Kohn, 1996: 154). Arendt identifies thinking with 'Penelope's web', which 'undoes every morning what it has finished the night before' (Arendt, 1978b: 88; Canovan, 1992: 253). Thinking is an internal dialogue with oneself (Canovan, 1992: 268; Meade, 1996: 121; May, 1996: 99), and could be the means to prevent evil-doing (Arendt, 1984: 15). Arendt assumes that thinking generates both consciousness and conscience, and this prevents one from committing particular deeds so that one should not afterwards feel conscious and guilty of what one has done (Canovan, 1992: 269; Meade, 1996: 121). And it is this very process of thinking, not knowing or knowledge, that is crucial for Arendt (Arendt, 1984: 11; Meade, 1996; 122).

Arendt also claims that thinking pushes us towards the world of appearance, namely, doing. Doing, such as the ability to say, or judge, is different from thinking, but thinking enables judging, and judging realizes thinking in the world of appearance (Arendt, 1984: 37). Mass society, however, makes

thinking, thus judgement, impossible. When Arendt refers to the 'banality of evil', she does not mean that any of us could be Eichmann, but rather suggests the widespread decline of our power of judgement, which is caused by declining participation in judgement in mass society. There, the ability to 'think without rules' is deteriorating and this is what greatly concerned Arendt (Villa, 1996b: 184).

In the tradition of moral philosophy, it is assumed that men cannot deliberately engage in wicked acts, as most (rational) people distinguish right from wrong and therefore are aware of the moral course of action. Claiming 'the banality of evil' and arguing that evil originates from thoughtlessness that is the result of modern society, Arendt attempts to criticize this traditional assumption (Meade, 1996:111). Evil-doing is thus entwined in modernity and conducted by supposed-to-be-rational human beings. However, although Arendt claims that modernity is the source of this thoughtlessness, which can cause the evil deed, this does not necessarily suggest that she actually criticized the foundation of modern political thought as the basis of the evil deeds. More importantly, given her argument in 'Thinking and Moral Considerations' that 'thoughtlessness' is the source of evil, a further question may be asked: how does Arendt explain Heidegger's participation in National Socialism, when 'thoughtlessness' is the last thing that we associate with him? (Villa, 1996b: 181).

While Arendt attributed Eichmann's involvement in the Final Solution to his lack of thinking, there is a serious attempt to vindicate Heidegger's involvement with the Nazis in this and her other writing (Villa, 1996b: 179; Canovan, 1992: 263). Stressing the importance of thinking, she rationalizes his conduct and seems to forgive his 'mistake' (Benhabib, 1996: 55). This clearly highlights the ambivalence of her critique of modernity and the Enlightenment tradition of political thought and its relation to evil. Whereas she suggests that modernity is entangled with evil in her discussion of Eichmann, where Heidegger is concerned, her critique that modernity is the source of evil seems to disappear.

Arendt in defence of Heidegger

In 'What is Existenz Philosophy?' written in 1946, Arendt provided an overview of modern European (German) philosophy, and clarified Heidegger's philosophy in this context (Arendt, 1994b: 176–82). Heidegger is concerned with the meaning of being, the long-argued question since the time of Kant, who ruined the ancient concept of Being by destroying the unity of Being and thought (Arendt, 1994b: 177; Benhabib, 1996: 47). Given this disjuncture between essence and existence, 'Heidegger claimed to have found a Being in whom essence and existence are identical' (Arendt, 1994b: 177). The fundamental condition of being is being there, *Dasein*, which is pinned down at a certain temporality, space and time, and characterized as 'Being-in-the-world' (Villa, 1996a: 120). Heidegger present this being-in-the-world'

of *Dasein* as the critique of traditional epistemology from Descartes to Kant, in which the mode of being is separated into 'I' as knowing subject, and the 'world' as object. Through the being-in-the-world of *Dasein* Heidegger tries to re-establish the primordial mode of being, that is the harmony between *essential* and *existential* (Arendt, 1994b: 177; Benhabib, 1996: 52). While Heidegger's 'Being-in-the-world' is very abstract, it allows him to access the 'phenomena' and the appearance (Benhabib, 1996: 52). Arendt considers that Heidegger's insight that being-with-others (*Mitsein*) is the significant feature of *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world, and is the basis for admiring his philosophy (Benhabib, 1996: 52–3).

At the same time, Arendt was critical of Heidegger that his politics did not match his insight. Although the world is always *Mitsein,* lived with others, for Heidegger the authentic form of *Dasein* was not *Mitsein* but to become aware of the temporary and spatial constraint of *Dasein* (Benhabib, 1996: 53). For Heidegger, Arendt argues that, 'the meaning of Being is noth-ingness' (Arendt, 1994b: 176). She provides an intimidating account of Heidegger that he is a philosopher of 'egoism', and compares him with Karl Jaspers, whose emphasis on communication and openness towards others she highly favoured (Canovan, 1992: 254; Villa 1996a: 232). Heidegger's Being-in-the-world, Arendt claims, did not avert him from developing the Self whose authenticity lies in its distance from social relations (Villa, 1996a: 232; Arendt, 1994b: 181). Arendt considers that this Worldlessness of Heidegger is interpreted and criticized as the 'worldlessness of modernity' (Villa, 1996a: 232). The breakdown of social networks triggered social atom-ization in modern mass society, and this has deprived human beings of the fundamental quality of worldliness, that is to say, the common and shared experience with others that assures the plurality of perspectives required for the development of politics (Benhabib, 1996: 55).

Nevertheless, such negative assessment of Heidegger's philosophy had been reversed by the time she completed the manuscript of a lecture 'Concern with Politics in Recent European Philosophical Thought' in 1954. In this work, while she questions the political significance of Jaspers' philos-ophy of 'communication', she presents Heidegger's concept of the world as the way to tackle the challenge of plural politics (Canovan, 1992: 262–3; Villa, 1996a: 120). Furthermore, by the time she wrote 'Thinking and Moral Considerations' and 'Martin Heidegger at Eighty' in 1971, she had started to praise Heidegger as 'the transcendent philosophical genius of the time' (Canovan, 1992: 255). This made her engage again with the relationship between the profundity of philosophy and stupidity (Canovan, 1992: 25). In contrast to Habermas, who identifies Heidegger's disrespect of intersub-jectivity, and thus anti-political tendency in Heidegger's thought, Arendt aims to see how Heidegger's extremely unpolitical nature of thought led him to forget praxis (Villa, 1996a: 230). There is no space for the political in Heidegger's thought, as reifying thought was the only real action (Villa,

1996a: 230). Arendt regards Heidegger's involvement with the Nazis as his abandonment of his unworldly home and that this error resulted from 'the purity of Heidegger's philosophical temperament' but not from 'the affinity between Heidegger's thought and National Socialism' (Villa, 1996a: 231; Arendt, 1978a: 303). This is how she attempts to protect Heidegger's philosophical reputation, which was tainted by his political involvement with Nazism.

Arendt explains Heidegger's association with the Nazis as an example, not so uncommon, of entanglement between philosophy and totalitarianism and forgives his action. While Arendt was in favour of Socratic unity of thinking and political action, she was also aware of the conflict between the two and the tendency of philosophers to support tyranny (Canovan, 1992: 261; Benhabib, 1996: 55). The Platonic idea claims that philosophical contemplation is superior to political action, as the absolute truth can only be pursued in the solitude of philosophical thinking (Canovan, 1992, 258–61). As thinking interrupts all the other activities and challenges and dismantles the established rules, it is inherently dangerous. This nihilism of thinking, however, can itself be the power to save mankind from catastrophe as morality is the by-product of thinking. Nevertheless, thinking does not aim to mould mankind against evil (Villa, 1996b: 186; Arendt, 1984: 24–6). Drawing on the similarities between Plato and Heidegger, Arendt highlights the possible connection between philosophy and tyranny (Arendt, 1978a: 303; Canovan, 1992: 261; Benhabib, 1996: 55).

She argues that philosophers have a tendency to support strong governments being left undisturbed, as philosophical thinking requires solitude (Canovan, 1992: 261). Withdrawing into their thought, philosophers find that the power of logic can be imposed on other people, and therefore generates authority at the expense of human plural experiences. Solitude can develop into loneliness, which precludes philosophers from cooperating with others (Canovan, 1992: 261–2). Identifying the connection between thoughtlessness and evil deeds through observing the Eichmann affair, Arendt suggests that the philosopher's withdrawal may be of advantage as this would permit some reflection on political action by exercising judgement (Arendt, 1984: 36–7; Canovan, 1992: 269). In an attempt to defend Heidegger against the consequence of his political deeds, Arendt also offers another view on the effect of the philosopher's withdrawal from public affairs (Arendt, 1978a: 303). Whereas she earlier claimed solitude as vital for philosophical thinking and thus for political judgement, withdrawal, she later argued, also weakens philosophers' common sense. This means that they are in fact more likely to misjudge the political situation (Canovan, 1992: 270, 273).

In the metaphysical tradition, thinking was expected to serve human affairs of acting or praxis, subjugating the realm of appearance (Villa, 1996b: 189). The demise of metaphysics and the collapse of the hierarchical

dichotomy between the suprasensory and the realm of appearance provide two alternative paths to thinking, either moving to the reality of appearance or withdrawing completely from this realm of public affairs. Heidegger took the second option, focusing on 'pure' thinking, and Arendt argues that his 'error' resulted from this solitary character of thinking (Villa, 1996b: 190–1). Also in the metaphysical tradition, although judgement is rejected due to its reflective nature, a certain connection between thinking and judging has been maintained. Heidegger, however, cut this connection completely (Villa, 1996b: 192). Arendt suspects that evil-doing can result from 'thinking' as well as 'thoughtlessness'. 'Thinking', however, has been very much rooted in Western philosophy from ancient metaphysics through Enlightenment thought to the present (Villa, 1996b: 189). If 'thinking' is ever involved in evil-doing, this is simply explained as accidental or a 'mistake', and this connection is not necessary or inherent.

Arendt's attempt to defend Heidegger weakens her critique of modern Western philosophy and her suggestion of the relation between modernity and evil. She seems, in fact, reluctant to admit the possibility of evil emerging from the core of the Western philosophical tradition. Instead of repudiating the 'tradition-inspired' link between thinking and judgement (going back to Kant and further back to the Socratic), she chooses to make Heidegger an exception (Villa, 1996b: 181).

Villa suggests that Arendt's defence of Heidegger is not intended to support the assumption of Western moral philosophy that the thinking being is moral, but to criticize philosophy or thinking for its solitary undisturbed states (1996b: 181). Villa argues that Arendt's essay 'Martin Heidegger at Eighty' was written not to make an excuse for his errors, but to suggest the strange affinity between the worldliness of philosophy and thoughtlessness, and that their respective alienation from the real world would similarly result in the death of judgement (Villa, 1996b: 192). While Arendt disapproves of the alienation characterized in the Western philosophy of thinking, she also attempts to save Heidegger through reinforcing the dichotomy of thinking (the realm of purity) and judgement (the political realm). Arendt seems to suggest that thinking entails the lack of judgement and not the error in judgement, but she still gives significant weight to thinking and thus is not critical of the foundation of modern Western thought.

3.4   Arendt on racism and colonialism

Arendt highlights how both thoughtlessness and 'thinking' could lead to evil-doing, and suggests the critical and fundamental connection between Heidegger's philosophy – the absence of judgement – and his involvement with the Nazis. However, she defends Heidegger by claiming his action was due to the purity of his thinking. This reservation of criticism against the core of modern Western philosophy also results in her somewhat problematic

understanding of another evil in the history of modernity, namely colonialism/imperialism, and the impact of Western modern thought on it.

In her first major published work, *The Origins of Totalitarianism (The Origins)*, Arendt examines imperialism as well as anti-Semitism and totalitarianism. It is suggested this is an early work (and one of only a few by white European critics) that claims the connection between imperialism and totalitarianism, and in particular National Socialism. It has thus been intellectually highly influential (King and Stone, 2008: 2, 4; Gerwarth and Malinowski, 2009: 281). Apart from a few exceptions, such as the work by Shiraz Dossa (1980) and George Kateb (1983), this aspect of her work was long neglected. Since the 1990s, however, there has been growing interest in violence and genocides in colonial contexts and their implications for the Western world, and re-engagement with *The Origins* through this postcolonial perspective (Gerwarth and Malinowski, 2009: 279–80; King and Stone, 2008: 2). Arendt's claim that the violent history of imperialism is integral to the development of totalitarianism, which is now often referred to as 'the boomerang effect' (Arendt, 1973: 206, 213), is indeed extremely insightful. At the same time, however, her problematic understanding of the issue of race could potentially weaken her already rather awkward analysis of the relation between modernity and evil discussed above.

Political philosophers such as Seyla Benhabib suggest a difficulty in seeing the link between totalitarianism and imperialism in her arguments, as the examples of imperialism that Arendt gives, such as British imperialism, cannot be counted as totalitarianism. Benhabib's argument is based on the grounds that although Britain conquered and colonized India and Egypt, and France colonized Algeria, they were (with the exception of the Vichy government) at least democratic states (Benhabib, 1996: 76). Benhabib and other critics such as Richard H. King, Dan Stone, Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski therefore point out that her claim should be read as a suggestion of the common inability of Western (European) modern nationstates to defend themselves from the violation of rights and totalitarianism. It is also her indication of the transnational (European) nature of racism and anti-Semitism that needs to be acknowledged, although their extent and effect could be varied (Gerwarth and Malinowski, 2009: 283; Benhabib, 1996: 76). Indeed, Arendt argues that while Britain and France have been democratic states, the genesis or trace of totalitarianism may still be recognized in imperialism in Britain and France. She claims that even British imperialism, which provides her with the analytical framework of imperialism, demonstrates the characteristics of totalitarianism such as: 'Lying under anybody's nose were many of the elements which gathered together could create a totalitarian government on the basis of racism' (Arendt, 1973: 221).

Colonial violence indeed was caused not only by authoritarian states, but by France, Britain, the United States and the Netherlands, which remained mostly as democratic countries throughout the twentieth century (Gerwarth

and Malinowski, 2009: 289). Based on Arendt's work, some explained the massacre in Africa and the Holocaust as peculiarly German. Understanding her argument in this way can, however, challenge such a suggestion of a causal and direct link between German imperialism (colonial massacre in German Southwest Africa) and National Socialism (Gerwarth and Malinowski, 2009).

This also highlights her insight into how the experience with the non-European Other in 'imperialism' prompted the development of the system of racism, and this eventually was brought back to European home countries (Benhabib, 1996: 76). Kathryn T. Gines points out that Arendt has a clear distinction between colonialism and imperialism, and claims that the latter dates between 1884 and 1914 (Arendt, 1973: 123). Arendt states that colonialism took place in America and Australia where legal and political institutions were adopted on sparsely populated land 'without a culture and a history of their own' (Arendt, 1973: 186). Imperialism is, for her, different from colonialism as it is based on a completely new concept of political expansion, and racism can be considered its 'by-product' (Gines, 2008: 39–43). Gines, however, argues that although imperialism (as Arendt defines it) may be different from colonialism in terms of its historic moment, and aims and its impact on totalitarianism, it is important to underscore the connection between colonialism and imperialism. In particular, colonialism also shows the expansionist and oppressive nature of imperialism, and the trace of racism (in Europe as well as in America) can already be found during colonialism and the slave trade before the time of imperialism (Gines, 2008: 30). As Gines points out, Arendt's understanding of colonialism and imperialism and attribution of racism to imperialism also impacts on her overall analysis of racism and on her own view on 'non-Western' people. This should be noted, as it is vital to understand how it has influenced Arendt's view on the relationship between modernity and evil, and her ideas on thinking and judgement. To borrow the expression of King and Stone, this is the question whether 'her ethnocentric cultural anthropology discredits her philosophical anthropology, that is, her account of the human condition of plurality and political being in the world' (2008: 14).

While Arendt suggests a strong link between imperialism and totalitarianism, she also denies the possibility of imperialism (in the West) committing extreme brutality. She states that:

> The happy fact is that although British imperialist rule sank to some level of vulgarity, cruelty played a lesser role between the two World Wars than ever before and a minimum of human rights was always safeguarded. (Arendt, 1973: 221)

Or else, if any cruelty is inflicted by imperialism, she tries to provide some justification for this. For instance, she makes reference to the massacre of

native populations by the Europeans and explains that the natives were considered to somehow lack human character, so that the Europeans could kill them devoid of consciousness and conscience of committing murder. She even blames the native tribes of 'the Dark Continent' for such massacres, claiming that massacre is actually the tradition of these tribes (Arendt, 1973: 192–3). Indeed, it is suggested that Arendt's view of Africa is very much influenced by Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (Gines, 2008: 50; Bernasconi, 2008: 61).

Arendt maintains that one of the characteristics of (British) imperialism is 'indifference and aloofness', as the imperialists often aspired to a higher purpose and lacked genuine interest in their subjects. She argues that their attitudes were different 'from the cruelty and arbitrariness of native despots in Asia' and 'from the exploiting carelessness of conquerors, of the insane and anarchic oppression of one race tribe through another' (Arendt, 1973: 212). Here, we can highlight her suggestion that the negative elements of cruelty and violence originated from the non-European Other. Arendt also seems to support the claim that the British 'acquired their empire in a fit of absent-mindedness…rather than as a result of deliberate policy' (Arendt, 1973: 207). This is as if to say that evil deeds such as the colonial violence of imperial Britain should be understood as an accident, the result of mere absent-mindedness rather than the very policy intrinsic to imperialism/ modernism. While Gail Presbey takes this point and asserts that her statement sounds rather apologetic, suggesting that the British did not intend any harm or evil in their colonial expansion, Gines argues that this account parallels Arendt's claim that the thoughtlessness of Eichmann prevented him from the act of judgement (Presbey, 1997: 166–7; Gines, 2008: 48). Gines maintains that Arendt recognizes the wrongdoing of the British, but also suggests that Arendt's sympathetic attitude to the British (and the Boers) can be very disturbing (Gines, 2008: 49).

This attempt to dissociate Western civilization from cruelty (or evil), and to attribute evil to non-Western culture, reproduces the binary oppositions of pre-modern/modern, non-West/West, barbaric/civilized and mythical/ rational that the supporters of modernity, such as Habermas, take for granted (Sakai, 1997: 155). Unaware of being trapped in such binary oppositions, and unwilling to critically challenge the core element of Western civilization and modernity, Arendt's work itself becomes complicit with a certain evil-doing in modernity: not anti-Semitism but racism towards the non-white groups, as critics such as Gines (2008), Presbey (1997), Anne Norton (1995) and Robert Bernasconi (2008) argue. Norton indeed identifies Arendt's problematic understanding of race and racism in Arendt's essay 'Reflections on Little Rock', published in 1959, and claims that this is not so different from what she terms as 'the common prejudices' of American people (Norton, 1995: 248; Arendt, 1959: 46). In this essay, Arendt argues that forcing parents to send their children to an integrated school against

their will is the denial of their rights, that is, 'the private right over their children and the social rights to free association', which are accorded to parents in all free societies (Arendt, 1959: 55). She also claims that forced integration means to the children a very serious tension between their private life (home) and social life (school). Arendt emphasizes that whereas such tensions are common in adult life, children are better not to experience them and therefore should be protected from being exposed to these tensions (Arendt, 1959: 55).

Her account illuminates her intention to safeguard the domain of 'private' as autonomous under a growing mass society (Benhabib, 1996: 147). She strongly believes that 'the social' (or sometimes private) and 'the political' should be kept separate. In the US, people organize themselves socially into groups, differentiating themselves from (and discriminating against) the other on the basis of class, ethnicity, and/or profession. Arendt therefore considers that just as equality is the norm for the political realm, discrimination is a social right. What political institutions have to ensure is that social discrimination is not legally (politically) enforced. The formation of different social groups is not only 'an aspect of social preference', but also considered as 'desirable' as far as it promotes plurality (Bell, 1999a: 66). The problem with her argument here is that racism becomes a private and/or social matter removed from the political sphere (Norton, 1995: 259). Arendt also misunderstands the black-white racial relationship. She does not see the difference between the American black issue and 'racial divisions' such as that between Jews and Gentiles. She never grasps that the black issue is rooted in the condition of slavery, based on the idea of racial inferiority developed in Western modern societies (Benhabib, 1996: 153). Neither does she understand how access to the realm of 'appearance', where political action and decisions are taken, can be unequal (Bell, 1999b: 76). Similarly, her failure to understand racism and violence in the US is illuminated in her writing in 'On Violence' about the Black movement that:

> Serious violence entered the scene only with the appearance of the Black Power movement on the campuses. Negro students, the majority of them admitted without academic qualification, regarded and organized themselves as an interest group, the representative of the black community. Their interest was to lower academic standards. They were more cautious than the white rebels, but it was clear from the beginning … that violence with them was not a matter of theory and rhetoric. (Arendt, 1972: 120)

Such a statement demonstrates some fundamental problem of the recognition and representation of the black people and their politics, particularly in the US. However, if any 'misunderstandings' are found in her argument, it is claimed that she should be forgiven on the grounds that she is writing

from outside about an unfamiliar terrain. She explains in her preliminary remarks that:

> Finally, I should like to remind the reader that I am writing as an outsider. I have never lived in the South and have even avoided occasional trips to Southern states because they would have brought me into a situation that I personally would find unbearable. Like most people of European origin I have difficulty in understanding, let alone sharing, the common prejudices of Americans in this area. Since what I wrote may shock good people and be misused by bad ones, I should like to make it clear that as a Jew I take my sympathy for the cause of the Negroes as for all oppressed or underprivileged people for granted and should appreciate it if the reader did likewise. (Arendt, 1959: 46)

As Norton points out, here Arendt seems to assume that we cannot be both oppressor and oppressed at the same time (Norton, 1995: 259). Being a Jew, it is suggested, she can sympathize with 'all oppressed or underprivileged people'. Moreover, posing herself as an outsider due to her European origin, and because she had never lived in the South, she assumes she can distance herself from the position of the oppressor. Her attitude is paradoxical, as having examined the issue of radical evil in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, she clearly recognized that colour problems do, indeed, exist and this originates from European imperialism (and colonialism) (Benhabib, 1996: 148). She also makes reference to the point that 'the color problem in world politics grew out of the colonialism and imperialism of European nations' (Arendt, 1959: 46). Arendt's problem also lies, as Gines points out, in her treatment of racism in the US, as she reduces it to discrimination and a social problem and fails to see it as a political issue that arises from slavery, which is 'a racial institution of labour exploitation' (Gines, 2008: 44).

Like Dossa, Norton also critically challenges Arendt's comments on Africa and African people as inappropriate (Dossa, 1980: 320; Norton 1995: 253). Some of the examples of these remarks include 'human beings who, living without the future of a purpose and the past of an accomplishment, were as incomprehensible as the inmates of a madhouse' (Arendt, 1972: 191), and 'tribes of which they have no historical record and which do not know any history of their own' (Arendt, 1972: 192). Norton is also critical that, to distance herself from her own sentiments, Arendt adopted another voice, that of the Boers, and by using their voice has silenced the Africans. Benhabib (1996) defends Arendt against the criticism posed by those such as Norton and Presbey, and claims Arendt's failure to acknowledge Africa as an entity (with a history) is due to her refusal to speak of Africa as a fixed category, as she is aware of the fictitious nature of the category of Africa. Benhabib maintains that Arendt recognizes that differences exist in 'Africa' and tries to distance herself from 'white supremacism' or 'Pan-Africanism',

which treat Africa as one unified category, thus essentializing it. Benhabib also argues that Arendt's analysis of the mind of the Boer is not intended to silence Africans, but to give emphasis to the impact of the European encounter with Africa on European morals and that she indeed brilliantly articulates the relation between the European experience in the 'Dark Continent' and the *Heart of Darkness* in Europe (Benhabib, 1996: 85–6).

Benhabib claims that the only weakness of Arendt's argument is her not fully developing how this relationship lies at the root of the emergence of European totalitarianism. It is, however, still difficult to completely dismiss the critical reading of Arendt also presented by Norma Claire Moruzzi, that argues that Arendt's analysis is Eurocentric and she naively accepts the racist view of *Heart of Darkness*, considering Africa as merely savage (Gines, 2008: 50). Arendt identifies the origin of totalitarianism in the European encounter with the Other; a critical insight that was hardly raised by post-Second World War 'white' critics. Nevertheless, she fails to fully acknowledge the injustices suffered by Africans and also black people in the US (Bernasconi, 2008: 63), and attempts to excuse evil deeds, such as the violence and cruelty of the colonizers, and blames the 'natives' instead (Presbey, 1997: 174). And this can suggest Arendt's aversion to criticizing Western civilization/modernity as the source of totalitarianism. Her lack of critical awareness of the problem lies within modernity or her refusal to see it, in particular, in the context of its role in colonialism, and this leads to her limited understanding of and controversial comments on racial issues. The political freedom of the US that she highly admires was only achieved by its imperialism, clear racial divisions and social slavery, and this is what Arendt does not address sufficiently (Grosse, 2006: 47; Bernasconi, 1996: 4, 22). This directs us back to Arendt's persistence in separating the Western philosophical tradition from evil such as the Holocaust and her belief in the possibility of restoring the dignity of its tradition (Bernasconi, 2008: 62, 56). At the same time, it also puts in question her understanding of the human condition/status that she extensively wrote about (Dossa, 1980).

In Japan the work of Arendt has been discussed widely in relation to issues of 'comfort women' and war responsibility (Takahashi *et al.*, 1999). Her work has often been referred to, in particular her discussion of how justice calls for judgement and punishment of the crime and the need for the compassion to those in pain. However, apart from a few exceptions such as Takahashi and Iwasaki (1997: 141, 152) and Ogoshi (1998: 154), until recently, there has not been much reference to the problematic aspects of her work.[1] Even when it is acknowledged how this could have impacted on her philosophy, it is not pursued or else it is simply accepted as a minor error. Shimizu Kiyoko, for example, recognizes that Arendt's argument in the 'Little Rock' article demonstrates her lack of understanding of the seriousness of racism in the US. However, Shimizu, drawing on Terashima Toshiho's work, also claims that 'this is a mere example of where her perception is clouded by

theory' (Shimizu, 1997: 101–2; Terashima, 1989: 104). Neither Shimizu nor Terashima explore further in these articles how her view could have affected her theory. On the other hand, King points out that this 'shed fresh light on several fundamental characteristics of her thought' (King, 2004: 117).

The drawback of Arendt's views on non-Western culture and black people is, indeed, not something superficial but can seriously affect the core of her work, such as that on thinking and judging, in which reason, as demonstrated above, plays a central role. According to Arendt, thinking is a precondition of judging. However, whereas thinking can deny the perspective of others, judging is the capacity to 'think with others'. As Heidegger, who re-examined the world of thinking and was a great philosopher, could not judge, Arendt explores the importance of a strong link between thinking and judging. Albrecht Wellmer suggests that although Arendt tries to distance herself from Kantian philosophy, she still has to maintain judgement as a rational faculty and scientific conception of truth (Wellmer, 1996: 36).[2] This emphasis on reason is the weakness of her work. As we can see from her argument concerning African and black people in the US, the idea of reason is very exclusive and not applicable to certain groups of people in her argument. King argues that Arendt's thought was enmeshed with 'normative humanism', which assumes discriminations among different people and human cultures (King, 2004: 119). The further dilemma is that this problem is not always recognized in the discussion of her work in the 'comfort women' debates. This could foster further understanding of Japanese war atrocities and the public evasion of war responsibility in Japan through the rather colonial or Orientalist perspective of them being premodern and lacking political subjectivities.

In summary, using the work of Arendt as an example, this chapter aims to illuminate two key arguments. First, while the relation between modernity (and Western Enlightenment thought) and evil has been extensively explored, there is a continuing reluctance to identify the source of evil at the very core of Western philosophical and socio-cultural traditions. Nazism (that is to say totalitarianism) is seen as the break with Western cultural tradition. This is to say that it is entirely acceptable and possible for Eichmann to commit evil deeds, but not Heidegger. Second, there may now be some – albeit very limited – acceptance that the evil deed in the form of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust happened in the centre of modern European civilization. However, it has not been acknowledged enough in mainstream Western philosophy that this very same Western civilization systematically inflicted colonial/imperial violence on non-Western cultures. As previously discussed, Arendt in fact claims that brutal violence originated from the colonial Other. This suggests that Arendt and those who are less critical of her work assume the 'parallel correspondence among the binary oppositions: pre-modern/modern; non-West/West; mythical/rational' (Sakai, 1997: 155). It is crucial to emphasize that the

discussion of the system of 'comfort women', particularly that in the 1990s, developed within such a problematic perception of modernity, evil and the non-West.

It is mainly in the work of scholars of post-colonial studies, the history of slavery, and discrimination against and the exploitation of non-white people, that the shadowy side of modernity has been illuminated (Gandhi, 1998: 21). For example, referring to Du Bois' writing, Gilroy argues that at the centre of his understanding of modernity lies violence and racist terror against non-European (black) people (Gilroy, 1993: 118). Similarly, the works of Aimé Césaire, Fanon and C.L.R. James, as well as those of Bernasconi and Karuna Mantera, scholars of Du Bois, highlight how these '(post)colonial' writers claim that European civilization is responsible for colonial racism and racial violence. This can be contrasted with Arendt's insistence that imperialism and totalitarianism is the break with the Western tradition (Bernasconi, 2008: 55–6; Mantera, 2010: 104). Here not only modern administration and bureaucracy, but also the Western philosophical tradition, such as Kant's philosophy, is scrutinized (Bernasconi, 2008: 55, 59). Nelson Maldonado-Torres' study also illustrates how the response to modernity by Levinas, Fanon and Enrique Dussel, who are considered to inhabit racialized subject positions, identify the origins of violence in Western modernity. Building on their work, Maldonado-Torres claims that one of the key features of Western modernity is a paradigm of war where 'the death ethic of war', dehumanization and violence, is naturalized through colonialism, racism and gender divisions (Maldonado-Torres, 2008: 4, 6). Rather than the Holocaust marking the end of European humanism, this suggests that the development of humanism directed itself to dehumanization and the negation of racialized and colonialized subjectivities (Maldonado-Torres, 2008: 238).

This understanding of the relationship between modernity and evil (such as dehumanization and violence) presented by thinkers influenced by post-colonial perspectives is highly important in the discussion on 'comfort women'. As already pointed out, the reason for the development of the 'comfort women' system and the cruelty the system entailed was generally explained as originating from Japan's long 'tradition' of licensed prostitution. This is often considered to be uniquely Japanese, as the non-Western, pre-modern and barbaric Other. In the light of the critical re-examination of modernity above, in the next chapter the history of licensed prostitution in Japan and in the West will be examined to demonstrate that this form of regulation of sexuality, in particular the exploitation of women and their bodies, is an intrinsic element of modernity. Through such an argument, it aims to underline that evil deeds such as racism and gender and colonial violence are an integral part of modernity. At the same time, it tries to challenge the power relationship that still operates at an epistemological level between West and non-West, while highlighting the existence

of colonialism in a non-Western context. In the following chapter, there-fore, it is argued that modern licensed prostitution in Japan is the product of modernity, and the 'comfort women' system and the violence it inflicted on these women should be understood in this context of modernity and colonialism.

4
The Origin of the 'Comfort Women' System

4.1 Constructing gender discourse in modern Japan

Military 'prostitution' or other forms of sexual exploitation and violence during war have always been widespread, but it is often suggested that sexual exploitation and violence on such a large scale as the 'comfort women' system cannot be identified at any other time in history. The 'comfort women' system may be unprecedented in many respects, such as the way that women were mobilized and 'recruited', and the diversity in its organization and operation (Yoshimi and Hayashi, 1995: 4–6). While distinctive military culture influenced the development of the 'comfort women' system (Yoshimi, 1995a: 208–9), this should not be attributed to a unique Japanese culture/tradition or to the effect of Japanese pre-modernity, but should be seen as the outcome of modernity itself, as discussed in Chapter 2. Specific Japanese socio-cultural factors cannot be ignored in understanding why and how the 'comfort women' system was developed and organized, but this should be contextualized against historical and geographical backgrounds. This requires a particular attention to the formation of the modern Japanese nation-state and its national subjects from the late nineteenth century, and how it incorporated certain norms of gender and sexuality, which led to the construction of the 'comfort women' system.

It is important to acknowledge that the 'comfort women' system is inseparable from the development of modern licensed prostitution in Japan. This is not to suggest that 'comfort women' were paid 'prostitutes', so that the criminality of the system and the responsibility of the Japanese government can be ignored. Nor is it to claim that the system of 'comfort women' grew out of the 'traditional' culture of licensed prostitution, as has often been argued. Rather, this book aims not only to illustrate that licensed prostitution was a key and newly organized institution in modern society that configured gender and racial structure, but also the exploitative nature of the modern gender system, which became the basis of the 'comfort women' system. This chapter will first look at the construction of gender discourse

in modern Japan to illuminate the modern nature of regulated prostitution, despite a commonly held view that Japan has a long cultural 'tradition' of licensed prostitution. This modern gender discourse divided women into a binary category of good and 'fallen' women, which laid a foundation on which the 'fallen' women were to be exploited through the system of regulated prostitution.

The Meiji Era that followed the Meiji Restoration in 1868 marked the formation of a new gender structure in Japan. Some critics argue that the strict binary gender differences, which are characteristics of modern society, were not present before the Meiji period in Japan (Sogojyoseishi Kenkyukai, 1993: 118–21; Yokota, 1995: 364). Others highlight a long, continuous history of oppression of women in Japan, and attribute the formation of the 'comfort women' system to this tradition, as discussed in Chapter 2. While the ruling (*samurai*-soldier) class in the preceding Edo Era had a tendency to belittle women, their views were not necessarily shared by other social classes (Nolte and Hastings, 1991: 153). Before the Meiji restoration, women of the non-*samurai* classes indeed contributed to familial craft, trade and agricultural production, and the work of women was valued as much as their reproductive and care roles (Liddle and Nakajima, 2000: 52). Moreover, the disrespect of women by the *samurai* class should be distinguished from modern gender hierarchy, because this was not based on the capitalist division of labour. After the Meiji Restoration, however, as those men from the lower *samurai* class took control of the Meiji government, subsequent policies relating to women and the family partly reflected their views (Ueno, 1994; Nolte and Hastings, 1991: 171). At the same time, new gender roles and practices were constructed, negotiating competing ideas of different classes while introducing Western gender roles and practices.

New policies and regulations introduced by the Meiji government, and the journalism that emerged in the early 1870s, inspired diverse discussions on gender roles and relations between men and women. While male intellectuals and political elites strongly criticized the Confucian custom of *danson jyohi* (the superiority of men) in the Edo Era, their notion of equality between men and women was based on clear and hierarchical gender differences (influenced by Western ideals). For example, despite the rise of the Movement of Freedom and Popular Rights, the political rights of women were not seriously taken into consideration, though this can perhaps be explained by the lack of support even for universal male suffrage (Sotozaki, 1986: 15). Women were not treated as equal with men on matters of civil rights, such as property rights, either, although exceptions were made for unmarried women or widows. Many of the male elite were educated in Western countries, 'enlightened' ('*keimo*') by Western ideas, and thus were considered to have progressive ideas. However, in developing new gender norms in Japan, influenced by those in the West, they also (unintentionally) introduced a modern hierarchical gender division and inequality. Women

as mothers and wives, inspired by Western (Victorian) values, became an idealized role, and this was later to evolve into the *ryosai kenbo* ideology ('good wife and wise mother') (Sievers, 1983: 22; Inoue, 1975: 38; Hirota, 1995: 205).

Yamakawa Kikue, a leading female socialist in the Showa Era (1926–89), claims that it was Nakamura Masanao, a Christian intellectual and educator in the Meiji Era, who coined this term. It was originally used to encourage women to be better educated, but eventually transformed to mean women as primary carers at home (Ogoshi, 1997b: 32–5). This shift, from an aspiration for Japanese women to be modern (Westernized) and educated, to the appreciation of more 'traditional' and submissive women at home, is often considered to be regressive in terms of improving women's status in society. While this can be seen as an overturning of the more enlightened (Westernized) attitude to women, in fact this was not the case; state policies towards women were always aimed at strengthening national economic and military power, and what the state promoted through this ideology could simply be varied at any time (Liddle and Nakajima, 2000: 50). Under *ryosai kenbo* ideology, women were considered to have a specific role in contributing to the nation through household management and caring for children – imperial subjects for the future nation – and the old and sick. They were denied political rights and prevented from participating in political activities. The households they were left to manage were considered not as private, but as official and public units. The education of young women and girls was emphasized, but this was aimed at meeting the national agenda, that is to say, to promote an assumed 'traditional' Confucian idea of the family and to focus on practical domestic skills to fulfil the above role, which resulted in the development of different curricula for girls and boys.

With the intensification of militarism and imperialism, this ideology increasingly emphasized women as 'reproducer of military manpower and mother of the nation' (Liddle and Nakajima, 2000: 54–5). The idea of 'good wife and wise mother' was initially promoted mainly among upper or middle-class women, and it only began to be imposed on lower-class women under the total mobilization during the Asia-Pacific War (Hirota, 1995: 206). Idealized gender roles intersecting with class were therefore constructed, and this was well presented in the emerging feminist discourses on women in the early twentieth century. Feminist and elite women focused only on women of their class, either ignoring or looking down on lower-class women, and this is exemplified in the work of Tsuda Umeko, Yosano Akiko and Hiratsuka Raicho (Hirota, 1995: 217).

Just as with their Western counterparts, lower-class women, with the burden of work in the field or factories, could not subscribe to the gender discourse of the elite, which exclusively focused on the role of women in the household. Behind the development and promotion of the 'good wife and wise mother' ideology among the upper and middle class, the image of

the 'fallen/bad' women associated with lower-class women also emerged, widening the division between different classes of women. Modern, regulated prostitution was founded on this very distinction between 'good' and 'fallen' women, exploiting the bodies and sexuality of lower-class women while protecting those of upper and middle-class women. Whereas the Japanese government mobilized and took advantage of the labour and sexuality of women of all classes during its modernization, this divide meant that lower-class women, and subsequently those from colonized territories, were subjected to particular forms of exploitation. The modern Japanese nation-state was built and expanded through this exploitation of women's bodies and sexuality (Song, 1997: 181).

This dichotomization of women was not however a Japanese invention. The divide between 'good' and 'bad' women, namely chaste woman/virgin and fallen woman/whore, and modern, regulated prostitution, which was based on and reproduced such a division could already be identified in early eighteenth-century Europe. In modern (European) society, gender roles and norms were strongly maintained through the regulation of sexuality, which intersected with class and racial divisions, employing bodily discipline, and, as Foucault argues, in (modern) society power has been exercised through the discourse of sexuality. Following this approach, the next section will first look at the origin of regulated prostitution in France, second at the centrality of the regulation of sexuality and race in modern society, and finally at the introduction of the Contagious Diseases Acts in Britain as an example of such regulation of sexuality and race.

4.2   The origin of licensed prostitution

The development of licensed prostitution in Europe

During the French Revolution (1789–99) and Napoleonic Wars (1803–15), venereal diseases (VD) were spread through military transfer and they reduced the effectiveness of troops. In 1802 in Paris a dispensary was set up and prostitutes started to be registered with the police and underwent a bi-weekly VD examination (Fujime, 1998: 53; Barry, 1995: 91). This 'French system' of modern prostitution that developed through the nineteenth century (and spread throughout the world) can be distinguished from the practices of prostitution in the previous century (Corbin, 1990: x). As prostitution was considered to be 'both necessary and dangerous', it must be 'tolerated' but was in need of being closely 'supervised' (Corbin, 1990: 9). This meant creating a space that is enclosed and hidden from the honourable member of society, but visible and 'hierarchized' so that the authorities could supervise prostitution (Corbin, 1990: 9). Such a regulatory system of prostitution is a good example of the categorization and discipline arising from 'the rationalism of the Enlightenment', and the hospital, the prison

and the police played a key role (Corbin, 1990: 9–10). This disciplinary aspect and the involvement of modern institutions set modern prostitution apart from what had gone before. Whether registered voluntarily or by the authorities, both groups of women registered with the police underwent a medical examination at the police dispensary (Corbin, 1990: 31). As the regulatory practices evolved, health checks on prostitutes were further developed and more strictly enforced. The regulation of prostitution, therefore, was implemented in order to combat the spread of VD, but it resulted in legitimizing prostitution through state support and increasing the trafficking of women (Barry, 1995: 92).

From the 1870s onwards, the authorities came under attack for the protection they gave to the brothels, and the abolitionist movement emerged. However, it aimed only at stopping prostitutes from registration, challenging the system of licensing but not abolishing prostitution itself (Corbin, 1990: 225). Doctors concerned with the spread of VD supported 'neo-regulationism', which maintained the control of prostitution while abolishing abuses and arbitrary practice (Corbin, 1990: 256). During the Third Republic, from 1871 to 1914, the regulation of prostitutes shifted from enclosure to surveillance, and it was neo-regulationism that received public support. Concerns about VD, racial contamination and the white slave trade were emphasized and the intent of liberal abolitionism to liberate prostitutes was defeated (Corbin, 1990: 333–4).

The regulation of sexuality and race in modern society

Modern prostitution such as the above is an example of the regulation of sexuality developed in modern society. However, this regulation is not merely one part of modernity, but, as Foucault argues, the very central characteristic of modernity. Sexuality, which is not naturally given but a historical construct, is 'an especially dense transfer point for relations of power' (Foucault, 1990: 103). Foucault illustrated how sexuality as a discourse is crucial in understanding the operation of power in modern Western societies (Foucault, 1990: 11; Walkowitz, 1992: 8; Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 128–9). From the end of the eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, the middle class distinguished themselves from the working class, who were more closely associated with sex and sexuality (Foucault, 1990: 128–9). However, when the sexualization of individuals became more prevalent in society, the idea of sex/sexuality was expanded and subjected to more administrative and structural control, beyond middle class concerns (Foucault, 1990: 129–30; Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 141). Incest and 'unacceptable' (sexual) behaviour among the working class were perceived as dangerous; dispensaries were established in towns and cities to treat VD, and prostitution started to be regulated through a complicated system of medical reports and licensing brothels. Such an accumulation of disciplinary power was to address 'public hygiene' and 'the fear of racial degeneracy', and this suggests

that the question of race and nation was integral to the shaping of sexual practices (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 141).[1]

As Foucault repeatedly maintained, discourses on sexuality have been a strategy for the exercise of power in modern society, and through the control of sexuality the domination of the existing class and gender and racial formations have been reinforced. It is such an obsession with sexuality that marks the uniqueness of modern societies such as Victorian Britain, and this regulation also extended into more liberal twentieth century (Walkowitz: 1980: 4; 1992: 9). Different forms and levels of institutions involved in the social control and regulation of sexuality need to be addressed, and Foucault himself gradually shifts his analysis more towards the local/micro level of control and regulation. However, the state remains crucial in regulating sexuality, as sexual practices have significantly been formed by increasing state intervention and the emergence of a welfare state (Weeks, 1989: 13). Therefore, exploring the regulation of prostitution, which is an ultimate example of formal sexual control by the state, can reveal how modern society (and the state) is organized through the construction of gender, class and race boundaries.

As no one is outside the power of sexuality, both women and men are under the influence of the control of sexuality, and Katherine Barry, drawing on Foucault, suggests that power or control does not operate between opposite genders in an exclusive manner, namely one gender (men) controlling the other (women) (Barry, 1995: 75). It is important nevertheless to underline that in the discourse of sexuality and the operation of bio-power, individuals are never treated as entirely equal; systematic oppression of and domination over women and racialized groups are not only present but are also reproduced and further strengthened (Barry, 1995: 76).

While Foucault did not explicitly explore the relation between sexuality and race during his life, drawing on his later work Anne Stoler illustrates clearly how sexuality and race is entangled in modernity (Stoler, 1995: vii-viii). Although she does not say much about (modern) prostitution, Stoler argues that eighteenth and nineteenth-century European discourses on sexuality should be understood beyond the immediate European context, and with its empire and the racialized society firmly in mind. Obsession with racialized bodies and sexuality was not restricted to bourgeois culture in colonies, but bourgeois identities both at home and in the colonies are marked by racial thinking (Stoler, 1995: 7). Race and sexuality were 'ordering mechanisms' of the nineteenth-century bourgeois society, thus race and racism were not simply 'anchored', but structural constituents of 'post-enlightenment universals, as formative features of modernity, as deeply embedded in bourgeois liberalism, not as aberrant offshoots of them' (Stoler, 1995: 9).

To highlight this entanglement and the constitutive nature of race and sexuality, drawing on examples mainly from French Indochina and the

Dutch East Indies in the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, Stoler suggests that the boundary of race, namely that between 'colonizer' and 'colonized' was sustained through forms of sexual control (Stoler, 1991: 52). Various sanctions against female emigration and the ban on marriage of (male) employees in the Dutch East Indies and other colonies encouraged extramarital relations between European men and native women. In the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, concubinage became the dominant domestic arrangement for European men living in the colonies (Stoler, 1991: 58–9). Founded on the hierarchical colonial order of race and gender however, this concubinage functioned only when European identity and its domination was secure (Stoler, 1991: 60). When the racial boundaries became blurred and challenged over the course of the nineteenth century, concubinage was replaced with other sexual arrangements such as prostitution or more ideally with marriage between 'full-blooded' Europeans (Stoler, 1991: 60; Levine, 1996: 589).

The arrival of European women in the colonies at the end of the nineteenth century coincided with the realignment of racial policies and shaped racial divisions. Eugenic discussions also invoked the argument of the duty of European women to maintain racial purity and survival through educating children, and domestic management that protected children from the influence of local servants (Stoler, 1991: 73, 83–4). Concubines, who were once regarded as the protectors of European men, now became sources of ill health and a bad influence. Concubine children, as well as Creole children, were socially marginalized, and formed the European colonial poor, who threatened the integrity and heterogeneity of the 'European' Self (Stoler, 1991: 79). European women were thus incorporated as the 'instruments of race-culture' (Stoler, 1991: 83). These examples of marriage restriction and/or the liaison between local women and European employees during the nineteenth and twentieth century also suggests that individual sexual activities were apolitical and economic issues, which needed to be regulated as a part of the whole project of colonial dominance (Stoler, 1991: 57–62).

Contagious Diseases Acts in Britain

Sexual control, entangled with racial control, has therefore been a central aspect of modern society, nation-states and colonial domination. Regulated prostitution was crucial to such control, and it was introduced in Britain through the Contagious Diseases (CD) Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869 in an attempt to combat the spread of VD after the Crimean War (1853–6). The Acts were built on a regulatory scheme already operating, though less extensively, in British overseas territories such as the Ionian Islands, Malta, Gibraltar, Hong Kong and India (Levine, 1994: 580; Levine, 1996: 590; Howell, 2009: 190). The British authorities were anxious to balance male sexual desires, which were considered to be 'natural', with military efficiency. However, under these Acts, women, and not male customers or brothel owners, were

the target of control and punishment (Enloe, 2000: 54–5).[2] Any women that the special Moral Police identified as prostitutes were subjected to medical examinations, which were often conducted by brutal doctors and described by anti-Acts campaigners as 'instrumental rape by a steel penis' (Walkowitz, 1977: 81; Hyam, 1991: 64). Those who refused to be examined were taken before a magistrate and forced to submit to the examination; if they were free of diseases, they were officially registered as prostitutes and issued with a license. Ironically, it was the state that provided prostitutes (Barry, 1995: 93). Women with an infection were sent to 'lock hospitals' and forced to undergo treatment for several months (Fujime, 1998: 54).

The Acts were initially enforced in eleven garrison towns, military stations and naval seaports.[3] They not only controlled prostitutes, but pushed other women into prostitution; any women acting 'suspiciously' outside their homes could be identified as prostitutes by the special Moral Police. While prostitution had been widespread among working-class women before industrialization and the CD Acts, prostitutes then were not regarded as a special class and usually there were routes out of prostitution. However, after the introduction the Acts, prostitutes were segregated in brothels, restricted in mobility and separated from the rest of their community. This made it almost impossible for women to give up the business (Fujime, 1998: 54). Industrialization and urbanization increased the pressure on many women, in particular Irish or Jewish immigrant workers, to resort to prostitution for their survival. Police registration and health examination, which entailed public shaming, had a huge impact on changing both social attitudes toward prostitutes and the self-estimation of prostitutes themselves. The Acts therefore incorporated not only lower-class women but also the local police, health and court officials, into a social militarizing process that served the British Empire-building project (Enloe, 2000: 54).

The Acts, which were planned to be adopted nationally, were widely criticized and the abolitionist movement was guided by Josephine Butler and the Ladies National Association (LNA) (Hyam, 1991: 64; Barry, 1995: 95). While Butler's activity sprang partly from the idea of Christian rescue work of lower-class women, it was also radical as she condemned those who make profit from prostitution, such as pimps, brothel owners and even the state (Barry, 1995: 99). Butler considered that regulated prostitution was the product of the sexual double standard, due to women's lower economic status. Unlike her contemporaries, she saw the link between economic deprivation and prostitution, and tried to collaborate with the working-class women who were the most vulnerable target of prostitution (Fujime, 1998: 61). As a ban on prostitution would mean the violation of the freedom of women (to work as prostitutes), Butler confined her campaign to the abolition of regulated prostitution and was opposed to making prostitution illegal (Fujime, 1998: 65; Barry, 1995: 99). Unfortunately however, such an approach invoked a problematic dichotomy between 'free-willed' and

'forced' prostitution, suggesting that 'the reduction of sex to exchange' and some form of sexual exploitation is acceptable (Barry, 1995: 112, 92).

As regulated prostitution increased the trafficking of women and girls, abolitionists also tackled trafficking. Horrific reports of 'innocent' girls sold into prostitution and the campaign by Butler and the LNA successfully led to the suspension of the CD Acts in 1883 and their repeal in 1886 (Fujime, 1998: 65). However, the repeal did not prompt the abolition of regulated prostitution in other European countries such as France or Germany, nor were the CD Acts lifted in the British colonies (Fujime, 1998: 66–7). With the increased recognition of 'white slavery' in the early twentieth century, the focus of the prostitution debate moved on to rescuing white innocent girls in 'forced' prostitution. Here, not only were the social and economic conditions of working-class women that 'forced' them to become prostitutes ignored, but these women were also to be condemned (Fujime, 1998: 69). Discussion surrounding prostitution in Britain demonstrates how prostitution and the state's control over it created class and racial divisions, which led to the idea of the superiority of white middle-class (women) over working-class and/or non-white women) (Barry, 1995: 115; Fujime, 1998: 80). And this was more overtly expressed in European colonies.

In most British colonies, following the domestic CD Acts, the law came into force in the mid-1860s (Levine, 1996: 590). Regulated prostitution remained in the British colonies even after it was repealed in the home country, as prostitution was a crucial strategy of a masculinized colonial rule (Levine, 2000: 7) to regulate interracial sexual contact (Enloe, 2000: 58) and to control VD (Hyam: 1991: 66). Though criticizing the idea that the expansion of empire can be attributed to sexual drives, which were often 'repressed' in home bases, sex was, as Ronald Hyam argues, indeed an important factor in sustaining the colonies. Until the early nineteenth century, as in the case of the Dutch East Indies, mentioned earlier, it was common practice for army officers in the British Empire to have (local) mistresses, while lower ranks entertained themselves in the taverns and brothels. However, as mixed-race descendants posed a threat to the (white) British authority and domination, which was exemplified by the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857, intimate interracial liaisons between British men and local women started to be discouraged. In India, therefore, the taking of Indian mistresses declined, but the spread of VD became a huge problem (Hyam, 1991:118).[4] The British government faced a dilemma: increasing marriage quotas, which would be expensive; allowing intermarriage; or letting men continue to visit unhygienic brothels that would encourage the spread of VD.

The direct rule of India after the Sepoy Rebellion entailed the doubling of the number of British troops stationed in India, and 'recreational sex' with local women was considered inevitable (Levine, 1996: 589). To preserve the soldiers' health and military efficiency therefore, between the mid-1850s and

1888, regulated prostitution was introduced in seventy-five cantonments where the army was stationed (Hyam, 1991: 123). Prior to 1858, regular examination of women and the hospitals treating those who were infected had been regulated by local enactments (Levine, 1994: 583; Levine, 2003: 38–9). However, the system became more organized after the Cantonment Act of 1864, and then with the Indian Contagious Diseases Act of 1868, which extended control not only to military areas, but also to India's major cities and seaports (Levine, 1996: 590; Levine, 1994: 584–5).

The legislation served to refine sexual control over interracial sexual contacts, ensuring that 'certain kinds of men have certain kinds of sexual relationship with only certain kinds of women' (Enloe, 2000: 58).[5] Indian women were subjected to harsher control than their British counterparts (Levine, 1994: 585). To keep the women from contracting diseases, Indian prostitutes, too, were subjected to medical examination and registration, and those prostitutes who served Europeans were fined if they took native customers (Levine, 1994: 587). Military police often patrolled the districts of regimental brothels to segregate these areas. Public solicitation, which was only illegal in Britain when it caused social annoyance, was banned in India (Levine, 1994: 588).

When the CD Acts were successfully repealed at home, the Acts were also officially suspended in India in 1888 (Hyam, 1991: 125; Burton, 1992: 141). The new Cantonment Acts of 1889 and 1895 made no specific reference to VD, and the 1895 Act excluded VD from contagious diseases (Levine, 2003: 100, 116). However, under certain 'Cantonment Rules' directed by army officials, Indian women continued to be subjected to compulsory examination (Burton, 1992: 141). The suspension of the Acts increased VD infections, and new rules were issued in 1897; VD were returned as controllable contagious diseases and the health examination of prostitutes was carried out (Levine, 2003: 118–19). These 'regimental brothels' lasted until the twentieth century, and this demonstrates how sexual politics, the system to 'approve and register' women for the sexual needs of troops, was central in sustaining empire (Hyam, 1991: 126; Levine, 1994: 596–7).

Regulated prostitution was also implemented in other British colonies, and it thrived in the British colonies even after the First World War, and when Britain signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children (1921), the colonies were claimed as exceptions (Fujime, 1998: 56). Abolitionists such as Butler tried to rally opposition to state-regulated prostitution in the British Empire as well as in the Dutch and French Empires (Enloe, 2000: 59; Levine, 1996: 591; Burton, 1992: 140). Phillip Howell points out how anti-regulationist campaigners employed a map of the British Empire to highlight the Empire-wide practice of state-regulated prostitution in their 1887 meeting (Howell, 2009: 237). While they recognized that regulated prostitution caused suffering to Indian

women (and other colonized women), they also maintained the Western stereotype of Indian women as immoral and the origin of VD (Burton, 1992: 143–4; Levine, 1994: 579–600). Their focus therefore was on the well-being of British soldiers, and not on helping Indian women as an end in itself (Burton, 1992: 142; Levine, 1996: 604).

As mentioned above, other (Western) countries also introduced regulated prostitution throughout the nineteenth century, both at home and in overseas territories. With military expansion, by the time the First World War broke out, control over prostitution was tightened (Fujime, 1998: 79, 69). France, too, implemented regulated prostitution in its vast colonial territories such as Algeria, Vietnam and the French concessions in Shanghai and Tianjin (Fujime, 1998, 54; Tracol-Huynh, 2010). In the US, while regulated prostitution was not introduced at the Federal level, licensed prostitution was organized at the city level and through it class and racial divisions were strengthened. It was also in its colonies, such as in the Philippines, that the US noticeably introduced licensed prostitution. However, the government attempted to hide the relationship between the health examination of prostitutes and the military, due to consistent objections from the women's movement back home (Fujime, 1998: 54, 56).

As Enloe points out, this approach to regulating prostitution, which connects race, gender, the military and health regulation, continued even during the Second World War (Enloe, 2000: 64). This may have been more explicit in Nazi Germany and Japan than in Britain, France or the US. However, the widespread nature of regulated prostitution during the war also illustrates that it is in wartime and times of increased militarism that greater control on race and sexuality, particularly that of women, is exercised (Enloe, 2000: 65; Bhattacharyya, 2008). This further confirms that imperialism, military expansion and mobilizing men as their citizen duty since the Napoleonic War, was the basis of the system of regulating sexuality (Howell, 2009: 12).

4.3   State-regulated prostitution in Japan

Contrary to the popular belief in a long tradition of regulated prostitution in Japan, the licensing of prostitution in modern Japan was newly developed as the system of sexual (and racial) control replicating state-controlled prostitution in Europe (and the US). It developed through a series of state regulations in the 1870s (Fujime, 1998: 26; Garon: 1997: 90). The central feature of modern prostitution in Japan was the compulsory health examination of prostitutes for VD, organized by the police. It was also assumed that women worked voluntarily as prostitutes and were free to leave the job.[6] High taxes levied on those who engaged in the business meant that the state obtained substantial income and greatly benefited from prostitution (Obinata, 1992: 300–1; Fujime, 1998: 92, 94–6).

It is often claimed that Japan had licensed prostitution from the Muromachi Era (fourteenth century) or even before, in the Kamakura Era (twelfth to fourteenth centuries), and that modern licensed prostitution should be seen as a continuation of such a pre-modern counterpart (Hayakawa, 1995b: 187).[7] Believing licensed prostitution in Japan to be unique, this supposed 'long tradition' of licensed prostitution has often been considered as the sign of 'pre-modernity' and a peculiarity of Japan. However, licensed prostitution in Japan was substantially reorganized and developed in the Meiji Era; it incorporated indigenous practices to some extent, but largely developed following the Western model to support the newly organized modern military (Fujime, 1997a: 136; 1998: 87–8; Fujino, 2001: 11). Fujime Yuki argues that this strong link between licensed prostitution and the military made it particularly difficult to abolish licensed prostitution in the colonies, where the presence of military bases was unavoidable. Modern licensed prostitution in Japan, therefore, as well as in other countries, was inseparable from military and colonial expansion and the modern formation of gender, class and ethnicity (Fujime, 1997a: 137; 1998: 88). It is indeed these characteristics of the modern system of regulated prostitution, not a 'long tradition' of licensed prostitution, that formed the foundation of the 'comfort women' system.

The entangled relationship between military expansion and licensed prostitution also highlights how the conscription system introduced in the 1870s helped to construct a particular idea of masculinity and controlled male sexuality. Not only were women integrated into the state system as wives/mothers and workers/prostitutes, with their sexuality being controlled, but modern military manhood was inflicted on men through conscription and compulsory school education (Frühstück, 2014:164). The ideal male body with physical and mental strength and sexual potency, created through a Western diet, military exercise and health examinations, was considered to be the representation of national political and military strength (Frühstück, 2014 : 165). Conscription became one of the key institutions for constructing and disseminating a new Japanese masculinity and male identity as a soldier (Cook, 2005: 280). The narrative of heroism of *samurai* soldiers, forceful but also loyal to their federal lords, which became part of popular culture, was also exploited as the ideal image of masculinity (Hosoya, 2009; Karlin, 2014; Cook, 2005: 260). Such an idea of masculinity was juxtaposed with Western genteel masculinity, and was considered as an authentic Japanese manhood (Germer, Mackie and Wöhr, 2014: 5). This was the very invention of tradition to successfully implement institutions to develop national strength (Cook, 2005: 262). However, soldiers were not formed as citizen soldiers, but as loyal imperial subjects within the family-state system, where the Emperor was regarded as the father to all Japanese subjects (Cook, 2005: 285; Ahn, 2011: 216–17). While avoiding a perception of the specificity of Japanese military culture as 'pre-modern', as Maruyama

did to explain its brutality during the war, it is still crucial to acknowledge the distinctive nature of Japanese military and masculinity as one of the possible explanations of Japanese war atrocities.

The development of licensed prostitution in Japan

The beginning of the modern system of prostitution in Japan can be traced back to the red-light districts organized after Japan opened the country in 1854 under the Tokugawa Shogunate (government). Indigenous forms of licensed prostitution existed in the Edo Era, but it was not centralized or institutionalized in all the fortified towns, as some *daimyo* feudal lords had prohibited brothels. The pleasure quarters (and regulated prostitution) spread nationally only after the Meiji Restoration, when the modern centralized government was established (Tsurumi, 1990: 181; Liddle and Nakajima, 2000: 65). When the trade treaty was agreed between Japan and the US in 1858 (and later also with the Netherlands, Russia, Britain and France), setting up red-light districts (for foreign tradesmen) was requested by the foreign delegates. This request was discussed and met with some agreement, though it did not appear in formal documents (Fujime, 1998: 90, Kawamoto, 1997: 75–6). In November the same year, the Tokugawa government announced the plan to build red-light districts for foreigners. The first temporary brothel (*Komagataya*) opened its business in June 1859 in Yokohama, where a new port was under construction to keep foreigners away from the capital of Edo (Kawamoto, 1997: 75). In April 1860, when the Minasaki red-light district in Yokohama was opened, the Tokugawa government and brothel owners faced a difficult problem in recruiting women willing to serve foreign customers (Kawamoto, 1997: 100). This was partly because of the xenophobia that was widespread in Japan at the time, and it was considered that serving foreign customers was somehow distasteful and dishonourable (Kawamoto, 1997: 118–19). To solve the problem, women from outcast communities were targeted and recruited (Kawamoto, 1997: 134).[8] Similar red-light districts were developed in other towns and ports (Fujime, 1998: 90).

   The fall of the Tokugawa government and the Meiji Restoration that followed seemed to change the approach and policy towards prostitution and pleasure quarters. For the Tokugawa government, the diplomatic priority was to isolate Yokohama, so that foreigners could not access the Edo capital freely. At the same time they took advantage of such facilities and women to facilitate negotiation with foreign delegates (Kawamoto, 1997: 88, 165). The Meiji government officials, on the other hand, regarded this licensed prostitution system as disgraceful (old tradition), and attempted to reform it. Licensed prostitution during this period should however be considered as an emergence of a modern-style prostitution system rather than the mere reform of local prostitution practices that then existed. This can be demonstrated by the introduction of the examination of prostitutes

for VD together with lock hospitals, one of the central characteristics of the modern prostitution system. The first examination was arranged in Nagasaki, after being requested by the Russian Navy, and lock hospitals to treat prostitutes were built following the advice of British Naval doctors (Fujime, 1998: 90; Hayakawa, 1995b: 187).

Since women from the outcast communities were targeted for recruitment, the development of modern licensed prostitution in Japan, as with its Western counterpart, can be seen as part of the process of organizing the modern gender, class and racial relations system. The reform of licensed prostitution by the Meiji government, in fact, further implemented policing and the exploitation of women and strengthened modern gender, class and racial formation. This development, as with licensed prostitution in other countries, was inseparable from military expansion and the creation of a strong and healthy national population to support this expansion. To achieve this goal countries started to be concerned about improving public health, and Japan, too, developed mechanisms to manage and control the health of the population, and the health of conscripts, prostitutes and children was considered of the utmost importance. As prostitutes were often considered to be the source of VD, the development of licensed prostitution after the Meiji Era can be understood as part of this project of building a modern health regime (Frühstück, 2003: 6–7). Prussian, then German, medicine was particularly influential until the early twentieth century in Japan's development of a public health system (Frühstück, 2003: 79). However, it is essential to acknowledge that while male bodies and sexuality were also controlled, those of women, and in particular prostitutes, were (the most) exploited and used to improve the competency of male bodies for the efficient operation of the military (Frühstück, 2003: 37).

Through a series of regulations issued in the 1870s after the Meiji Restoration, regulated prostitution was reorganized. Governmental officials aimed to abolish the 'pre-modern' culture of human trafficking and slavery and to develop a 'new' system of prostitution where women were not forced but (in theory) 'voluntarily' participated in the business.[9] For example, a government official and penal law judge, Tsuda Mamichi, proposed the prohibition of human trafficking and slave-like services in 1869, maintaining that prostitutes under such service contracts were treated no differently from cattle. Tsuda considered that the trafficking of women prevailed due to licensed prostitution. As abolishing prostitution altogether was impossible, he instead suggested that Japan should introduce a Western model of prostitution, where women 'voluntarily' engaged in the business themselves, which was regarded as a better system (Hayakawa, 1998: 190).

The first step that the Meiji government took was the Ministry of Popular Affairs Notice in 1871, in which the government placed a ban on new brothels and on increasing the number of prostitutes, and recommended that local governors set up lock hospitals (Hayakawa, 1998: 191–2). The highlight of

the reform in prostitution came in 1872, when a series of orders, including the Ordinance Liberating All *Geigi* and Prostitutes (often referred to as the Order of Liberating Prostitutes) and the Order of the Ministry of Justice No. 22, were issued (Hayakawa, 1995b: 188; 1998: 195–9). This rather quick move was considered to have been initiated by an incident that occurred in June the same year (Hayakawa, 1998: 194; Garon, 1997: 91; Liddle and Nakajima, 2000: 65).[10] A Peruvian slave ship, the Maria Luz, loaded with about 230 Chinese indentured labourers docked at Yokohama for repairs. One of the Chinese slaves escaped and asked for help from a British warship. After the court case, it was ordered that as the slave trade was illegal, all Chinese slaves should be returned to China. However, during the trial, the Peruvian side defended themselves by arguing that human trafficking was not illegal in Japan because women and children were sold into prostitution (Sotozaki, 1986; 43; Garon, 1997: 91; Liddle and Nakajima, 2000: 65). Embarrassed by this claim, the Kanagawa local government (Yokohama port was under its charge) issued an order to liberate prostitutes.

The central government's Ordinance Liberating All *Geigi* and Prostitutes (Edict of the Grand Council of State, No. 295) followed, and this became the foundation of licensed prostitution in Japan. In the Ordinance, the trafficking of entertaining women (*Geigi*) and prostitutes was banned, and the Order of the Ministry of Justice No. 22 also stated that the claim that prostitutes and entertainers should repay their advance loans was no longer valid.[11] However, working as entertaining women or prostitutes was not itself explicitly or officially banned, nor did the Ordinance mention the status of these women. The interpretation of the Ordinance was therefore left in each local government's hands. The liberation of prostitutes outlined in these regulations provided no welfare or other support to prostitutes who were supposed to be 'liberated'. Worse, it deprived many women, who quit, of their means to survive, and eventually made them go back to the business of prostitution (Hayakawa, 1998: 200).

The Article 267 in the amendment of the Penal Code (*Shinritsukouryo*) in 1873 defined unlicensed prostitution as illegal (Obinata, 1992: 290; Hayakawa, 1998: 204). In Tokyo the same year, the Regulation on Prostitutes, Entertainers and Brothels was issued to tighten the control of licensed prostitution: the minimum age of the prostitutes to be fifteen years old; the duty of brothels and prostitutes to pay tax and to report any suspicious customers; and bi-weekly VD examination for prostitutes (Hayakawa, 1995b: 188; 1998: 201–2). Here, a licensed prostitution system was established to control and monitor prostitutes, while eliminating unlicensed prostitution (Obinata, 1992: 290). Under this system, it was assumed that women with economic difficulties would 'voluntarily' apply for a licence and pay monthly tax to local governments, and provide their service at brothels, which also were licensed. Examinations for VD became compulsory and they were funded by a monthly tax paid by prostitutes (Hayakawa, 1998: 202). Policies on

prostitution varied slightly among different local governments, but the Tokyo prefecture, where the Metropolitan Police was heavily involved in controlling prostitution, set the standard for other local governments.

The regulations were further elaborated through the 1880s and into the 1890s at the local government level. The ways of leaving the profession were described in detail to lessen brothels' domination over prostitutes, while the level of control over prostitutes was itself strengthened. Under these regulations, women could leave their profession even when they were still in debt and within their terms of contract if the brothel owners agreed. With the support of the Salvation Army and other social movements many women succeeded in leaving the business, demanding that brothel keepers and/or representatives of trade associations sign such an agreement. Given this, the Home Ministry enacted the Regulation on Prostitute Control in 1900 and freedom of leaving the profession was specified (Suzuki, 1997b: 26–8; Hayakawa, 1995b: 189). After 1900 however, many court cases started to give rulings that required prostitutes to pay back their debt-in-advance (even after they had left the business) (Hayakawa, 1998: 210).

One of the significant aspects of modern licensed prostitution is the involvement of the police in its management and control, and Japan is said to have been particularly influenced by the practice of the Paris Police (Garon, 1997: 92; Fujime, 1998: 92). Kawaji Toshiyoshi, who later became the Governor of the Metropolitan Police, spent a year in Europe in 1872, and studied the licensing system and the examination of prostitutes for VD by the police (Fujime, 1998: 89–90, 92). In the earlier version of the Penal Code (*Shinritsukouryo*, issued in 1870) no clause defines unlicensed prostitution as illegal. When it was amended in 1873, clause 267 was added to eliminate unlicensed prostitution, punishing unlicensed prostitutes and brothel owners (Hayakawa, 1998: 204). However, as Kawaji then suggested, state officials considered that it was dishonourable for the Japanese government to regulate prostitution with a state law, as it was explicit that the government itself authorized licensed prostitution. Following also the advice of official foreign employees of the government, such as the French legal scholar Gustave Boissonade, in 1876 the Council of State abolished clause 267 and made the management and control of prostitution the responsibility of the Metropolitan Police (Tokyo) and local governments. This masked the involvement of the central government in prostitution and the fact that the country was benefiting financially from licensed prostitution (Fujime, 1998: 92; Hayakawa, 1998: 204–6).

Suzuki also points out how licensed prostitution in Japan developed in line with the reclamation of Hokkaido, the northern island of Japan inhabited by indigenous Ainu people. Japanese rulers started to dominate the land from the fifteenth century and integrated it into Japanese territory in the nineteenth century. The Ordinance Liberating All *Geigi* and Prostitutes and the Order of the Justice Ministry No. 22 were, from the beginning,

not necessarily designed to protect women working as prostitutes and only prohibited human trafficking and servitude. Given Hokkaido's geographical and social specificity, the Hokkaido Reclamation Bureau further appropriated these regulations and promoted licensed quarters in Hokkaido (Suzuki, 1997b: 22–3, Hakodateshi, 2002: 1397–9). Suzuki suggests how the reclamation/colonization of Hokkaido was paired with the development and implementation of licensed prostitution in the area, and that this illustrates how licensed prostitution was inseparable from colonial and military expansion. This is clearly demonstrated by the way licensed prostitution was extended later in Japanese colonies and subsequently the 'comfort women' system developed.

Discussion on the abolition of prostitution

Enlightenment critics of the Meiji Era were against licensed prostitution. However, as seen above, Tsuda condemned human trafficking and forced prostitution, but did not propose a total ban on prostitution. Later, in 1875, he contributed an article to a journal *Meirokuzasshi* entitled 'Abolition of Prostitution', arguing that prostitution not only weakens morality but also national power by wasting financial resources, and he warned that the independence of the Japanese nation-state would be threatened unless prostitution was abolished. Prostitution was a serious (political) issue for him, but clearly he supported its abolition as part of statecraft and not to protect the human rights of prostitutes (Tsuda, 1989: 40–1; Sugaya, 1975: 87; Sotozaki, 1986: 47). A similar attitude can be observed in the writing of Fukuzawa Yukichi, a prominent Enlightenment scholar and educator, who considered licensed prostitution to be a necessarily evil (Yasukawa, 2013: 165–6). At the same time he did not hide his contempt for prostitutes when he wrote in 1876 that schools should not receive any donations from prostitutes, calling them 'non-human'. He asserted that they should be ashamed of their profession and should not even consider donating their earnings to good causes for ordinary citizens (Sotozaki, 1986: 47). Fukuzawa nevertheless encouraged prostitutes to go abroad to earn as part of the state policy of strengthening capitalism and expanding Japanese territory. These elite men, such as Tsuda and Fukuzawa, exploited the bodies and sexuality of women, in particular those who were most vulnerable, in the interests of the nation-state and capitalism, but were not concerned about it or about the reasons why women worked as prostitutes. This attitude would partly explain how and why the 'comfort women' system was developed and later implemented (Yasukawa, 2013: 167–9).

The movement to abolish (licensed) prostitution is said to have originated in the Gunma Prefecture in 1879, when a petition was submitted by Christian activists and members of the local assembly. During this struggle local leagues for the abolition of licensed prostitution were formed in Gunma and other regions, and these developed into the National League

for Abolishing Prostitution. The Gunma Prefecture was the first local government in Japan to abolish licensed prostitution in 1891 (ending licenses issued to prostitutes and brothels), and its success enhanced the abolition movement nationally. This movement initiated further actions by the Japanese Women's Christian Temperance Union (*Kyofukai*, active since the 1880s), the Salvation Army and *Kakuseikai* (the Purity Society, set up in 1911) throughout the 1890s, which continued until the 1920s (Sugaya, 1975: 90–1; Fujime, 1998: 100, 103). The abolitionist movement initiated in Gunma is often praised as a glorious victory of abolitionists, but Fujime (1998) questions what this 'victory' really meant to prostitutes as the problematic aspects of abolitionist movements that followed could already be identified in the movement in Gunma.

First, abolishing licensed prostitution did not mean that women who engaged in the business stopped working as prostitutes. As the abolition was not supplemented by options of alternative work or support to survive, those women simply went back to similar professions, serving in inns, bars or restaurants. As most abolitionists came from relatively well-off families, they were ignorant of the social condition in which women had to sell their bodies to survive. Second, the abolition of licensed prostitution never terminated state control over prostitution. In Gunma's case, collecting taxes from those engaged in the business, and regular VD examination of prostitutes were sustained. Abolitionists did not intend to protect women who worked as prostitutes, but only questioned the system of government-authorized prostitution. The main aim of the abolitionist was therefore to make prostitution and the involvement of the government invisible (Fujime, 1998: 102–3). Not only did they considered prostitution an evil trade, but also they saw those women who worked as prostitutes as shameful. This demonstrated a major shift in the perception of prostitution/prostitutes in Japan; while brothel keepers were treated with contempt in pre/early modern Japan, women who engaged in the business were not originally looked down on and were generally accepted as members of communities (Fujime, 1998: 103–4). By seeing prostitutes not as victims of economic deprivation, but as unruly and disrespectful, the abolitionist movement in Japan differed from the radical feminism of (early) Josephine Butler, but shared a similar attitude to prostitution and prostitutes with those who promoted social reform and purity.

The idea of women's emancipation started to be acknowledged in Japan in the 1880s. How the proponents of women's liberation not only overlooked the issue of prostitution and prostitutes, but also shared the widely held discriminatory view of prostitutes, was well illustrated in the writing of Shimizu Shikin, a female activist of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement. She claimed that prostitutes were the lowest of all women, and scorned them for knowingly and willingly becoming prostitutes in order to marry gentlemen (Fujime, 1998: 105, 157–8). Such a view was repeatedly presented throughout the 1890s, and was shared not only by governmental

officials, but also by other Enlightenment scholars who supported women's emancipation, as seen in Fukuzawa's argument.

Policy and attitude to prostitution and the discussion about its abolition in modern Japan should be understood within the geo-political context of the time. As Japan was a newly opened country in the process of industrialization and aiming to catch up with Europe and the US, policymakers and other elites in Japan were keen on introducing Western ideas and social practices. They were concerned about getting rid of perceived old and pre-modern practices of Japan, so that Japan was not treated as a barbaric pre-modern society. However, what they did not realize then is that in this process they had also internalized Orientalist ideals, and hierarchical class, gender and racial formations. In addition, the rapid modernization and industrialization of Japan meant a lack of time for the discussion of human rights and feminism, incorporating class and racial perspectives, to be fully developed.

The abolitionist movement continued in Japan during the first half of twentieth century, led by the Japanese Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and *Kakuseikai*. However, the discourse on prostitution and its abolition clearly shifted to the purification of society and the removal of prostitutes as sources of vice and corruption. Although this disregard of prostitutes in the discussion of abolition of licensed prostitution needs to be emphasized, how prostitutes themselves made an attempt, though limited, to challenge their servitude should be acknowledged in the history of the abolition movement (Suzuki, 1997b: 27–8; Fujime, 1998: 304). As noted above, from the late 1890s to early 1900s, with the help of the Salvation Army and other supporters, women started to demand that brothel keepers/trade association representatives should give permission for them to quit. Some women even took the case to the court and won (Hayakawa, 1998: 208–9). Although this free retirement movement was short-lived, as Suzuki maintains, these women's individual commitment to the movement was indispensable to the achievement of their exit from the business, and their subjectivity, while limited, should not be overlooked.

4.4   Japanese colonial expansion and licensed prostitution

Class struggle and licensed prostitution

(Regulated) prostitution in Japan further escalated with the social changes triggered by the growth of capitalism through state-led industrialization and the territorial expansion that accelerated from the 1890s. Through the Sino-Japanese (1894–5) and Russo–Japanese (1904–5) Wars, Japan colonized Korea, occupied Taiwan and expanded its territory in Manchuria. Rapid military expansion increased demand for military and overseas prostitution, and regulated prostitution not only thrived in Japan, but was also

introduced in colonies and the occupied territories (Hayakawa, 1995b: 190). In this process, Korean and Chinese women as well as women from lower classes in Japan were incorporated into the licensed prostitution system.

Militarization entailed demand for brothels in military towns and ports in Japan as well. Local councils and residents in some of these towns objected to the building of red-light districts in their locality, but due to the pressure from garrisons and the lure of lucrative tax income from the business, red-light districts were newly constructed or expanded in these garrison towns (Hayakawa, 1995b: 201; Fujime, 1998: 97–8). To prevent the spread of VD, control over prostitutes as the source of infection was tightened by the military and the police. After the first treaty was concluded between Japan and Korea in 1876, Japanese-run brothels were built in Japanese settlements in Korean ports and regulations equivalent to Japanese licensed prostitution were applied in these establishments (Hayakawa, 1995b: 214; Fujime, 1998: 99). Licensed prostitution was also brought into Taiwan and Manchuria through the 1890s and the early 1900s (Hayakawa, 1995b: 212; Fujime, 1998: 99).

Although abolitionist organizations such as the Japanese WCTU, Salvation Army and *Kakuseikai* fiercely attacked licensed prostitution in Japan, they were also enthusiastic supporters of Japanese expansionism (Fujime, 1998: 107–110; Suzuki, 1997b: 24–6; Sotozaki 1986: 242). They hardly objected to the introduction of regulated prostitution in colonies and occupied areas, but simply expressed their concern that Japanese prostitutes working in the overseas territories were disgraceful and that this ruined Japan's international reputation. Their call for abolition was the means to stop these women going abroad, and the abolitionists even cooperated with the authorities such as the police and military to control prostitutes in order to maintain social order and military health (Fujime, 1998: 110). They rarely saw that prostitutes were the victims of the 'good wives and wise mothers' ideology they promoted, and their view was far from the idea of women's liberation (Fujime, 1998: 110–12; Suzuki, 1997b: 32). While the feminism that evolved around a women's journal *Seito* (Blue Stocking) showed some solidarity towards prostitutes and criticized the way that abolitionists looked down on them, women's movements then were more or less influenced by this double standard; they did not challenge the state's benefiting from prostitution that exploited lower-class women. The condition of prostitutes and the ways that the state profited from prostitution only started to be problematized by the development of the proletarian movement after the end of the First World War, and the emancipation movement of outcast groups, which founded *Fujin Suiheisha* (Women's Horizon Society) in the 1920s (Fujime, 1998: 149, 163).

The land-tax system reform of 1873 introduced cash payment, which had an adverse effect on farmers. Other social reforms such as the introduction of the conscription system and compulsory school education, imposed

further financial burdens. Low-price machine-made commodities flooded in after unequal treaties with extremely low tariffs were signed at the end of the Tokugawa government and this ruined domestic industries. It put further economic pressure on the lower *samurai* class in cities, who lost their privileges when their stipends were abolished in 1876. They, as well as farmers, had for generations engaged in handicrafts production to supplement their income, but such production was hit hard after the introduction of machine-made, low-priced imported commodities (Tsurumi, 1990: 20–1). Strict deflationary policies adopted by the Finance Minister Matsukata Masayoshi to cope with rapid inflation after *Seinan Senso*, the last uprising of the *samurai* class in 1877, resulted in further economic hardship for small farmers. With some influence from the Freedom and People's Rights Movements, incidents such as uprisings of farmers broke out in Fukushima (1882) and Chichibu (1884).

Under these circumstances, a number of girls from poor families went to work in textile industries, such as silk and cotton mills and weaving. Modernization created new job opportunities for women such as teachers, nurses and telephone and telegram operators, but these were not an option for women from poorer backgrounds. As an advance loan was often provided to parents, the contract frequently restricted the freedom of these girls. An alternative option of work as a prostitute was available, which provided a higher advance loan (Tsurumi, 1990: 183). This was particularly the case for daughters from outcast communities who were excluded from society and were more likely to be economically disadvantaged (Fujime, 1998: 97). While the condition of prostitutes might have been the worst, the working conditions of textile workers were almost as appalling as they suffered from long working hours, low pay, no breaks, sexual harassment and ill health (Sievers, 1983: 75–8, Liddle and Nakajima, 2000: 61). Also, they were often recruited with false promises and were bound by contracts which were not dissimilar to trafficking. Patricia Tsurumi suggests that selling daughters to the mill and to brothels was then treated as if they were the same (1990: 187). As in other modernized countries, modernization and industrialization in Japan was only possible through the exploitation of women's labour, in particular that of women from the lowest class (Sievers, 1983: 57; Liddle and Nakajima, 2000: 61). The contemporary women's movement did not however see this intersectional exploitation.

The left and workers' union movements developed in the late Meiji and early Taisho Era, but in the early stages of socialism, women's issues, and in particular licensed prostitution was not on their agenda. The mobilization of socialist women from 1900 onwards, however, inspired the discussion of licensed prostitution. A socialist group, *Heiminsha* (Commoners' Society), founded in 1903, organized weekly socialist women's seminars; women discussed issues such as family and marriage, but also the problem of licensed prostitution. For later socialists, prostitution became the symbol

of the capitalist exploitation of women (Mackie, 1997: 53–4). When the proletariat women's group *Sekirankai* (Red Wave Society) was formed in 1921, Yamakawa Kikue and other members attacked the capitalist society as it had exploited working-class women through prostitution (Mackie, 1997: 102–3). Many who were active in the proletariat women's movement came from social backgrounds that forced women into prostitution. Yamakawa strongly opposed state-regulated prostitution and saw its abolition as the key to the protection of proletariat women, and to this end, she acclaimed the work of the WCTU to abolish licensed prostitution. Such an uncritical support for abolitionists became the standard approach of right and centre proletariat women's movement towards prostitution, failing to challenge the hypocritical nature of the abolitionist movement and to present an alternative way to confront sexual exploitation of women by the state (Fujime, 1998: 149, 168).

Among proletarian women's movements however, the women's divisions of *Suiheisha* (Horizon Society), a national association of outcast groups founded in 1922 to eliminate discrimination, was distinctive and the issue of licensed prostitution was constantly discussed (Fujime, 1998: 164). Many prostitutes came from these communities, partly because families were often poor, but also because the choice of jobs was limited due to discrimination against them. *Fujin Suiheisha* women's divisions were established at the local level from 1924. As witnesses of their family and friends being sold into prostitution, they were fully aware of the problem of the abolitionist movement (Fujime, 1998: 164). For example, they were apprehensive that the abolition of licensed prostitution would not necessarily improve the lives of their fellow women; they would still need to sell their bodies, whether legally or not. While criticizing the capitalism that forced women from outcast communities into prostitution therefore, they also illuminated the importance of improving the working conditions of prostitutes. Inspired by and with the support of these women's proletarian movements, through the 1920s prostitutes organized industrial action (Fujime, 1998: 304–6). While further research needs to be conducted in this area, contemporary newspapers and the journal published by *Kakuseikai* regularly reported the incidence of protests and strikes by prostitutes during the 1920s and 1930s (Suzuki, 1998). However, the challenge to licensed prostitution and the exploitation of prostitution declined in the 1930s, when the proletarian movement started to be suppressed under the militarized government, and the activism of outcasts groups began to focus more on the assimilation agenda and the support of national expansion policies.

Institutionalizing prostitution in the colonies and occupied areas

Militarization and the expansion of Japanese territories led to the implementation of licensed prostitution in Japanese colonies and other occupied territories. The abolitionist movement led by organizations such as the Japanese

WCTU and *Kakuseikai* supported the Japanese expansionism that entailed the introduction of licensed prostitution in these territories. Prejudice against other Asian women can partly explain this attitude. Discriminatory discourse towards other Asian ethnic groups appeared in Japan around the time of the Sino-Japanese War (as it was believed that Japan needed to be distinguished from other Asian countries that had been colonized due to their 'backward' traditions). Periodicals issued by the Japanese WCTU repeatedly reported how the Chinese and Koreans were 'uncivilized' and their women were oppressed, which legitimized Japanese military expansion to China and Korea to 'rescue' their women. Support for expansionism based on a discriminatory view of other Asian groups meant that abolitionists did not raise any concerns about licensed prostitution being implemented in Japanese colonies and occupied territories (Fujime, 1998: 107). Prostitutes in Japanese colonies experienced conditions much worse than their counterparts working in Japan, and local prostitutes within the Japanese system of licensed prostitution were considered to have suffered even more (Suzuki, 1998: 33–4).

By the height of militarization in the 1930s, the focus of the abolitionist movement was on the purity of the nation. This was in part affected by the discussion surrounding the development of the Venereal Diseases Act which was eventually enacted in 1928. The final draft bill targeted prostitutes, both legal and illegal, for the prevention of the spread of VD and penalized them if they provided sex knowing their infection. The Abolitionist Association organized in 1926 by *Kakuseikai* and the Japanese WCTU was relaunched as the National Purity Alliance in 1935. This was founded on the idea of eugenics, seeing prostitutes as genetically inferior, and also aimed to protect the health of the population and the ethnic purity of the Japanese Nation (Fujime, 1998: 317, 321; Suzuki, 1998: 27). Behind this purity movement licensed prostitution was introduced and expanded in Japanese colonies and occupied territories.

Korea

Prostitution existed in Korea before it was forced to open its ports in 1876, but was not widespread. However, as Japanese colonial expansion intensified and more military bases and Japanese settlements were built in Korea, the number of Korean prostitutes also increased. Due to colonial exploitation, many Koreans were deprived of their land, and women in these families became a pool of would-be prostitutes. They were eventually integrated into the Japanese system of licensed prostitution and they worked not only in Korea but also in Japan and Manchuria, just as Japanese prostitutes did. Yamashita Yongae argues that licensed prostitution in Korea was implemented in four stages (Yamashita, 2008: 57).

The first stage: After Korea was forced to open its ports in 1876 by the Treaty of Ganghwa (the Japan-Korea Treaty of Amity), the Korean Foreign

Ministry agreed to the opening of Japanese brothels in Japanese settlements in Pusan and Wŏnsan (Song, 1997: 172). In Seoul and Incheon, however, a port nearby, Japan banned prostitution. This was to 'preserve national dignity' as many Europeans and Americans lived there as well (Song, 1997: 172; Fujinaga, 2001: 198). While the Japanese government banned illegal prostitution, expelled those who degraded morality in Korea and restricted the ability of Japanese prostitutes go abroad, these were only token gestures to boost its reputation among European states and the US. From the experience of the reclamation of Hokkaido, the Japanese government believed that pleasure quarters were the key to attracting Japanese migrants to Korea and these quarters were developed and prospered (Song, 1993: 54).

The expansion of Japanese communities and the military stationed in Korea due to the Sino-Japanese War (1894–5) further accelerated the demand for and development of pleasure quarters. Red-light districts were developed in towns such as Pusan, Incheon (1902) and Wŏnsan (1903) and even in Seoul, where in 1904 Japanese expatriates built a red-light district in order to fund the Japanese resident association (Yamashita, 2008: 60). In cities and ports opened during and after the Sino-Japanese War such as Chinamp'o, Pyongyang and Mokpo, red-light districts were also developed (Song, 1993: 55). The Japanese Consulate in each town issued various regulations to control prostitutes and brothels (Yamashita, 2008: 60). As prostitution and related business expanded, the number of Korean prostitutes also increased in Korean society, and examination for VD symptoms, modelled on the Japanese system, was introduced (Yamashita, 2008: 65–6; Song, 1993: 60).

The second stage: After the Russo-Japanese War, the Protectorate Treaty was signed between Japan and Korea, and the Japanese government set up the Resident General in Seoul in 1906. It organized a Directorate Council Office (*Rijicho*) in each town, which took over the business of the Japanese Consulate (Song, 1993: 57; Yamashita, 2008: 61). Japanese residents associations often took the initiative to develop red-light districts to maintain social order and discipline, as well as to obtain income for resident associations. Directorate Council Offices tolerated the development of these pleasure quarters and renewed regulations to control Japanese prostitutes and brothels (Yamashita, 2008: 61). Under these regulations business was licensed, the residence of prostitutes was restricted, the minimum age of prostitutes was set, and the compulsory health examination of prostitutes was introduced. Prostitutes were called *Geigi* (courtesan and/or entertainer) and *Shakufu* (barmaid) and brothels were called 'special restaurants', but in reality this was licensed prostitution equivalent to that in Japan (Yamashita, 2008: 64; Song, 1993: 57).

As for the regulation of Korean prostitutes, in the light of concern about anti-Japanese feeling in Korea, the Police Bureau within the Korean government was made responsible for controlling Korean prostitutes (Song, 1993: 57).

In 1906, compulsory monthly VD examination of Korean prostitutes was introduced via the Police Bureau and prostitutes were required to pay taxes (Song, 1993: 60; Yamashita, 2008: 66–7). The Regulations on *Kisaeng* (courtesans and/or entertainers) and Prostitutes, issued by the (Korean) Police Bureau in 1908, set out these rules. While the control of Korean prostitutes was exercised directly by the Korean government through these Regulations, the Japanese authority increased control over them, and started to integrate them into the Japanese system of licensed prostitution (Song, 1993: 61).

The third stage: After the annexation of Korea in 1910, licensed prostitution was further institutionalized under the Director of Police Administration Bureau and the provincial Police Administration Bureaus within the (Japanese) Government General. Korean prostitutes as well as Japanese prostitutes started to be directly regulated by the Japanese authority (Song, 1993: 62; Yamashita, 2008: 72). Control was aimed at further implementing compulsory VD examination and regulating illegal prostitution (Yamashita, 2008: 72). While prostitutes were not confined to living in particular areas, and they were some regional differences, new regulations issued by the Director of Police Administration and the provincial Police Administration Bureaus strengthened control over the movement of prostitutes and provided detailed procedural instructions on the health examination of prostitutes. Some regulations now made clear reference to brothels (Song, 1993: 62; Yamashita, 2008: 74–5). Illegal prostitution was strictly controlled and punished. Regulations were not always applied to Korean prostitutes but discriminatory rules were often applied to them, such as the lack of specification of freedom to leave the business for Korean prostitutes, and the differentiated minimum age applied to Japanese (eighteen years old) and Korean (fifteen or sixteen years old) prostitutes (Yamashita, 2008: 74–5; Song, 1993: 62).

The fourth stage: The Director of the Police Administrative Bureau issued the Regulations on Brothels and Prostitution Control (Government General Police Administrative Ordinance No. 4) in 1916, standardized regulations nationally and fully implemented the Japanese system of licensed prostitution (Song, 1993: 62; Song, 1997: 174; Yamashita, 2008: 76). The conditions of prostitutes working in Korea set by these regulations were worse than those in Japan. For example, the minimum age of prostitutes was seventeen, a year younger than in Japan, and provisions on leaving the profession were hardly mentioned (Yamashita, 2008: 76–7). Prostitutes were also responsible for reporting any suspicious behaviour of customers, which implied that prostitutes even became an instrument for colonial governance (Song, 1993: 63). Under these regulations prostitution and related business grew in Korea and the number of Korean prostitutes doubled in five years (Yamashita, 1992: 158–9). From the later 1920s, the number of Japanese-owned brothels decreased, but instead many cafés and bars were opened and those who engaged in prostitution diversified (Yamashita, 2008: 85).

Although the implementation of the Japanese system of licensed prostitution that integrated Korean prostitutes aimed to control the spread of VD, it was not so effective (Yamashita, 1992: 162–3; Yamashita, 2008: 83). Discrimination against Korean prostitutes was clearly reflected in the lower payment that they received, such as lower advanced money and fees, though this was not specified in the regulations (Song, 1993: 64). Racial discrimination, limiting the movement of prostitutes, and surveillance and control by military police, which was observed in licensed prostitution implemented in Korea, were carried over and strengthened in the 'comfort women' system (Song, 1993: 64).

Under Japanese rule, rice exports from Korea to Japan were increased. Korean-owned land was increasingly merged into Japanese-owned and, and many Korean landowners and independent and poor farmers lost their land and jobs. Not only this deteriorating economic situation, but also male members of family leaving for Japan or Manchuria to find jobs, made Korean women more vulnerable and pushed them into prostitution. Trafficking of women and girls grew in Korea, while licensed prostitution was introduced and implemented (Yamashita, 2008: 88–90). Many Korean people who struggled to obtain jobs due to discrimination under the Japanese colonial rule started to work as recruiters. Both Japanese and Korean agents were involved in the recruitment system, in which women and girls were often recruited by deception or sold (Song, 1997: 180–1, 3). The increase in trafficking in Korea was partly because, when Japan signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children, it made the reservation that it was not applicable to Korea and Taiwan, Kwantung, Sakhalin and South Pacific Mandate (Hayakawa, 1998: 215–16; Song, 1997: 183, 186).

The case of Taiwan and China

Under the Shin Dynasty Taiwan was crucial for Chinese trade and was a vibrant island. In fortress towns such as Taipei or Tainan, brothels and other related businesses operated in confined areas forming pleasure quarters. In Taiwan it was common practice to adopt girls as maids or future brides for sons, and these girls were also adopted to become prostitutes (Hayakawa, 1995a: 35). The Japanese system of licensed prostitution was introduced where such indigenous forms of prostitution existed. Japan gained Taiwan in 1895 after the Sino-Japanese War, set up the Taiwan Government General and took control of the whole island by the early following year. Until military rule ended and civilian rule took over in March 1896, the only Japanese women who were allowed to travel to Taiwan were the wives of traders or of civilians working for the military, and housemaids.

In the absence of Japanese prostitutes, Taiwanese prostitutes were forced to serve Japanese soldiers and officials in restaurants and/or brothels in Taipei and other towns, and the need for VD examination was already

increased. With the relaxation of the travel ban for Japanese women, a number of Japanese prostitutes moved to Taiwan and the Taiwan Government General immediately began to implement the regulation of prostitution (Komagome, 2000: 122–3; Fujinaga, 2001: 203; Hayakawa, 1995a: 36–7). The introduction and implementation of licensed prostitution in Taiwan differed from that in Korea, as in Taiwan licensed prostitution was introduced at the strong request of the military, in order to control VD and to satisfy the sexual needs of soldiers. Also, around the time that licensed prostitution was introduced in Taiwan, many (illegal) prostitutes were the wives and widows of anti-Japanese nationalist fighters who had no other means to survive (Hayakawa, 1995a: 37). The Japanese system of regulated prostitution was introduced first in Taipei in June 1896 and then followed by Taichung and Tainan (Hayakawa, 1995a: 36; Komagome, 2000: 123; Fujinaga, 2001: 203). As in Japanese and Korea, compulsory VD examination of prostitutes was the key. In 1906, the Regulations on Brothel and Prostitute Control were issued to cover all regions in Taiwan, and regulations on licensed prostitution were further revised during the early 1920s. Provisions were fairly similar to those in Korea, but the minimum age for women to be prostitutes was sixteen, a year younger even than in Korea (Hayakawa, 1995a: 38; Fujinaga, 2000: 204). After the first brothel with Korean prostitutes opened in 1921, throughout the 1920s their numbers increased (Hayakawa, 1995a: 38–9, Fujinaga; 2001: 204, Komagome, 2000: 127).

In the beginning of the Meiji Era those who engaged in prostitution and related businesses started their trade in north-eastern China and Siberia. After the Russo-Japanese War, Japan obtained the lease of Kwantung, and in 1905 licensed prostitution was introduced through various regulations to control prostitutes and brothels. Provisions were similar to those in Taiwan, but the minimum age of prostitutes was seventeen (as in Korea) and Chinese women were also allowed to work as prostitutes (Hayakawa, 1995a: 39–40). As Japan expanded its control over Manchuria, particularly along the Manchurian Railway, licensed prostitution was also introduced in these areas. These were not only brothels run by the Japanese with Japanese and Chinese prostitutes, but by the mid-1910s, brothels with Korean prostitutes and brothel owners, influenced by the licensed prostitution implemented in Korea, were also opened. By the end of the 1920s, in north Manchuria, the number of Korean prostitutes overtook that of Japanese prostitutes (Fujinaga, 2001: 209, 214). In major cities in China, such as Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing, Japanese prostitutes and brothels existed and submitted to various controls by the Japanese authorities (Hayakawa, 1995a: 40–1; Fujinaga, 2001: 206). Japan took control over the southern half of Sakhalin after the Russo-Japanese War, and detailed regulations, introducing the Japanese system of licensed prostitution, were issued in 1907 (Fujinaga, 2000: 205).

Licensed prostitution as statecraft: towards the 'comfort women' system

Introducing licensed prostitution in Japanese colonies and occupied territories was, therefore, at the centre of Japanese colonial expansion and domination. Licensed prostitution was implemented in these areas, while the Japanese authorities started to encourage Japanese prostitutes to leave European colonies in Asia, particularly after the First World War, due to increased awareness in Europe of the problem of trafficking (Hayashi, 1995: 110–14; Onozawa, 2010: 143–4; Onozawa, 2012: 9). As Song Youn-Ok makes reference in the case of Korea, licensed prostitution implemented in Japan and its colonies was a 'modern framework for sex management … where colonial exploitation, social control, and the division of the colonized populace to weaken resistance all intersected' (Song, 1997: 179). Also, the strong link between the military and sex, the development of the recruiting business, the expansion of travel and the trafficking of Japanese as well as Korean and Taiwanese women under Japanese colonialism all became the basis for developing the 'comfort women' system.

In studying the 'comfort women' system, investigation of the involvement and responsibility of the Japanese military (and government) in organizing the 'comfort women' system is of the utmost importance. However, it is equally important to understand how the various businesses surrounding prostitution, such as recruiters, pimps and travel/transport agencies that developed under licensed prostitution in Japan and its territories enabled the establishment of the 'comfort women' system. At the same time, under Japanese colonial and military domination, how local Japanese businesses and pro-Japanese communities collaborated in developing the 'comfort women' system should be explored (Yoshimi, 2002: 3–4). Soh (2008) similarly highlights how the particular socio-economic context of 'colonial modernity' led to many Korean women falling victim to the 'comfort women' system. She argues that through modernization, industrialization and urbanization under Japanese colonial rule, the number of Korean working women, including those who worked in factories and in service industries increased. The aspiration of young (underprivileged) Korean women and girls for education, freedom and economic independence, becoming 'working-class new women', however, made them vulnerable to trafficking. Soh illuminates in her study how numerous testimonial narratives of the victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system reveal that their victimization happened in the process of pursuing their autonomy and independence.

In Japan, as a modern state, licensed prostitution was considered a necessary measure to control the spread of VD and the sexuality of the national population. In addition, taxes levied on prostitutes and related businesses were vital sources of income for local governments. Licensed prostitution

was therefore essential to statecraft. Consideration of why Japan was particularly concerned about controlling VD and how this was behind the development and implementation of licensed prostitution in Japan, also highlights a strange affinity between regulationists and abolitionists. As discussed above, the abolitionist movement did not aim to ban prostitution altogether, but only to abolish licensed prostitution sanctioned by the state, in which the police or other state authorities were involved in licensing and organizing VD examination. Like those regulationists who supported licensed prostitution, abolitionists did not recognize the racial discrimination that lay in the licensed prostitution implemented in Japanese overseas territories such as Korea and Taiwan. Moreover, abolitionists indeed shared the view with regulationists that prostitutes were the source of VD infection (Fujino, 2001: 12–14).

As it was believed that male sexual desire should not be suppressed, and indeed was impossible to suppress, how to prevent the spread of VD and also to protect women and children from infection became a political concern, and during the 1920s extended discussion took place to develop a bill on the Prevention of Venereal Diseases. Such a preoccupation with developing measures to prevent the spread of VD was part of 'the colonization of sex' in modern Japan to create 'a normative Japanese sexuality' and a healthy national population. This was realized through various bodily disciplines and mass regulations, such as the medical examination of conscripts and children, school hygiene, the criminalization of abortion and the legalization of birth control. The colonial and military expansion entailed further strengthening of these regulations as the instrument of colonial rule and military strategies (Frühstück, 2003: 2–3). The call to produce a healthy population to sustain imperial expansion was thus influenced by the discourse of eugenics and racial hygiene. Controlling VD infection as well as other 'hereditary' diseases to maintain the quality of the national population became the central concern in Japan from the mid-1920s, particularly after the conflict with China escalated in the 1930s (Frühstück, 2003: 12, 161–2.)

The Law for the Prevention of Venereal Diseases (1928) only enforced VD examination on prostitutes as well as *Geigi* and barmaids who were likely to engage in illegal prostitution, but the call to extend health examination to the whole population persisted (Fujino, 2001: 61–2). Concerned about the increase in the number of infections since the war with China broke out in 1937, the Japanese government started to develop the VD prevention programme, which targeted the whole population, while preparing to amend the VD Prevention Act (Fujino, 2001: 138). As VD was considered to be widespread in overseas territories, extending such a programme to the 'Great Eastern Asia Communal Zone' was discussed. However, as the intensification of war did not allow this to be put into practice, tightening control through the examination of prostitutes (both legal and illegal) in

these territories became the only available measures (Fujino, 2001: 140). This shared concern, based on eugenics, between regulationists and abolitionists, to prevent the spread of VD became, with the deepening of the military operation, the key impetus to the development of the 'comfort women' system.

With the intensification of the war with China in the 1930s, in order to prevent VD infections among soldiers the Japanese government required a more rigorous means of controlling prostitution. Exploiting the licensed prostitution system already in place in Japan and its overseas territories, and the extended network of trafficking of women it had developed, particularly in Korea and Taiwan, the Japanese government created the 'comfort women' system (Song, 1997: 203; Song, 2000). As Barry suggests, racism and sexism are often exploited as military strategy, and the 'comfort women' system can be considered such an example (Barry, 1995: 130–1). The first 'comfort station' that can be confirmed by various documents was built in Shanghai in 1932 (Yoshimi, 1995b: 3). The system spread with Japanese wartime operations, and many women from Japanese colonies and occupied territories suffered from brutal treatment by the Japanese Imperial Military.

In this chapter, I have argued that rather than seeing the 'comfort women' system as the result of the pre-modern characteristics of Japan, it should be understood within the wider context of the modern regulation of sexuality, which has been commonly observed in modern industrialized countries, particularly licensed prostitution. However, at the same time, some scholars maintain that it is vital to distinguish the 'comfort women' system from modern licensed prostitution, as the former arose within a specific geo-political context of colonialism and war.

Despite the strong link between licensed prostitution in Japan and the 'comfort women' system, such as the compulsory VD examination of women, and commodifying and consuming women's bodies and sexuality to enhance masculinity and national strength, different aspects between these two forms of sexual exploitation have been pointed out. Licensed prostitution was aimed at civilians (as well as soldiers) and run commercially and privately, while the 'comfort women' system was developed for military officers and soldiers, and the Japanese authorities were highly involved in its operation. Furthermore, as the 'comfort women' system was introduced mainly in colonies and occupied territories, the exploitation that women experienced was not only sexual but also racial or based on ethnicity. As 'comfort women' had to serve military personnel during armed conflicts, they were more likely to suffer various forms of violence than licensed prostitutes (Yamashita, 2008: 167–8).

Looking at the global history of modern regulated prostitution, however, Nagahara Yoko suggests that the control and the slave-like nature of regulated prostitution were often intensified in colonial territories. Nagahara also maintains that sexual violence and exploitation during war in modern

times has been perpetuated through sexual violence (often rape) used as 'the weapon of war' (physical, social and psychological assault against the enemy) and state-regulated or military-controlled prostitution. These two (separate) forms of sexual violence and exploitation often converge during wartime, in particular under colonialism. Nagahara, therefore, argues that the 'comfort women' system should be comprehended within this nexus of regulated prostitution, war and militarism and colonialism, which was also observed in European states and the US (Nagahara, 2014: 63–5).

Tanaka also defends such a view and maintains that the core feature of the 'comfort women' system does not diverge greatly from various examples of regulated prostitution and/or sexual violence (rape) during wartime. However, he stresses that the 'comfort women' system can be distinguished from other examples due to its extensiveness, forcefulness and severity in five areas. First, its geographical spread, covering the entire Asia-Pacific region, including the distance that women were forced to travel; second, the scale of the victimization of women; third, the ethnic diversity of the women who became the victims; fourth, the intensity of sexual violence and the length of victimization; and last, the direct involvement of the military and the government (Tanaka, 2008: 95–6).

As discussed earlier, the distinctive nature of the 'comfort women' system could partly be explained as the result of extensive networks of businesses developed around prostitution (and other service jobs for women) in Japan, its colonies and occupied territories, and the trafficking that often intersects with them. Particular cultural, social and political environments within which the Japanese military operated may also account for such differences. The Japanese military rarely allowed soldiers to take any time off and the provision of recreational facilities apart from comfort stations was limited, as the authorities believed that comfort stations had the most direct positive and uplifting effects on soldiers (Yoshimi, 1995: 52–5; Yamashita, 2008: 112–17). However, this could also have been because Japan did not have adequate material, infrastructure or technical resources, but only had human resources to support the prolonged war (Ahn, 2011: 217). For example, it is suggested that over 40 per cent of adult men between seventeen and forty-five years old with Japanese citizenship had been mobilized by the end of the war (Obinata, 2004: 59). The scale of victimization of the 'comfort women' system could be due to numerous comfort stations having been built as facilities for recreation and solace for such a vast number of soldiers. The ideal masculinity of Japanese men was considered to combine the characteristics both of aggressive soldiers and of submissive imperial subjects. Submitting to the orders of a superior was absolute and this often entailed violent bodily discipline so that violence towards the inferior became the norm (Yamashita, 2008: 113). Rape and sexual activities in comfort stations were used as measures to develop masculinity, while soldiers bonded with each other as imperial subjects. This is to say, (military) hierarchy was

maintained and sustained by sexual access. The 'comfort women' system is, thus, a particular intersectional exploitation and oppression based on gender, class, race, colonialism, militarism, Japanese imperialism and capitalism (Soh, 2008: xiii, 235).

Making an attempt to historically and socially contextualize the 'comfort women' system is important for a better understanding of the system. However, only focusing on the historical development and origin of the system can run the risk of overlooking the actual experiences of women who were forced to become 'comfort women'. As Soh argues that from a feminist point of view, lives within the system and what it meant for them, are equally or even more important to explore (Soh, 2008: 227). The distinctiveness of the system in part lies not in its assumed cultural peculiarity, but in women's own voices unfolding their experience. The 'comfort women' system attracted the attention of many people internationally, and was researched and problematized only because many women came forward to testify. However, the early attempts of feminists and historians to claim the truth of testimonies to rewrite history have for some time unintentionally and paradoxically overshadowed the dynamics of the testimonies. In the following chapters, I look at the women's testimonies in more detail, and address the dilemma of approaching the testimonies with the purpose of searching for historical 'truth/fact'.

Part 2
Probing Historical 'Truth'

5
Reading the Testimonies

As access to written documents concerning 'comfort women' has been limited, testimonies, particularly those by 'comfort women', have played a crucial role in drawing a clearer picture of the 'comfort women' system. The emergence of the testimonies of 'comfort women' victims coincided with a growing interest in testimonial narratives and autobiographies in various academic disciplines such as anthropology, history, sociology and literature. In the study of history, testimonies pose a fundamental question of how particular knowledge is legitimized to be remembered and the ways that this knowledge is recorded and documented; this is more than simply adding the experience of women to the mainstream of history. The dynamic nature of testimonies also means that engaging with them is a complex practice as listening to or reading them is not at all a straightforward process. After looking at testimonies of 'comfort women' victims, this chapter will address questions raised in engaging with these testimonies. As the difficulties associated with reading or listening to testimonies will be discussed in more detail in later chapters, in this chapter the particular question that testimonies pose regarding historical 'truth' and 'fact' will be addressed.

5.1 Testimonies of 'comfort women' victims

After Kim Hak-sun came forward as a 'comfort woman' in 1991, many women began to testify to the ordeal of their lives as 'comfort women'. Testimonies given in interviews with volunteer organizations, at public meetings and at court hearings were documented and broadcast on television and in films, as well as published as collections of testimonial narratives and auto/biographies. The analysis in this chapter relies heavily on published written materials, as they are the most accessible and wide-ranging, though other forms of testimony, such as those in films, are also drawn on.

The first point that needs to be emphasized in engaging with these testimonies is that the lives described by these women are diverse, although they share some similarities and can fall into certain common patterns. For

example, some women testified that they were 'forced to work', that is to say, were forced to provide regular sexual services to soldiers in fairly organized environments, while other testimonies suggest that these women were victims of multiple and gang rapes in war zones.[1] Researchers and activists who provide support to 'comfort women' victims have acknowledged that not all victim-survivors were sexually exploited by the Japanese military in systematically organized comfort stations. In China and the Philippines, where anti-Japanese struggles took place, women became the target of abduction, sexual torture, and multiple, gang, and systematic rape (Yoshimi, 2002: 7; WAM, 2008: 10; WAM, 2013: 21; Yamashita; 2008).[2] In particular, research identifies different types of sexual violence inflicted by the Japanese military in China. In addition to mass rape and repeated and gang rapes in war zones, and fairly systematized comfort stations in Japanese-occupied towns and cities, what are now termed 'rape centres' existed; in towns and villages of frontlines where comfort stations were absent, women who were abducted by the Japanese military and/or 'supplied' by local villages under the orders of the Japanese military, were imprisoned in their strongholds and repeatedly gang raped (Nishino, 2000: 165; WAM, 2013: 10).

Despite such differences, in this book these women will be treated equally with those who suffered sexual violence under the 'comfort women' system. Such an approach could be criticized as 'sweeping characterizations' (Soh, 2008: 236). However, the experience of multiple and gang rape and that in comfort stations is understood to share a lot of similarities. In addition, the incidences of systematic rape and the presence of comfort stations were interdependent, legitimizing the violation of women's bodies and sexuality through licensed prostitution. This brought about the 'comfort women' system and normalized mass/systematic rape in occupied and conflict areas, while the occurrence of systematic rape justified the need for comfort stations (Yoshimi, 2000: 66; Yamashita, 2008: 102; Ishida and Uchida, eds. (2004): 259–64; Qiu et al. 2014: 12). Furthermore, this approach could potentially avoid separating the victims into the problematic dichotomy of virgin and whore, as will be discussed later. However, this does not mean that all comfort stations and the experience of sexual exploitation were uniform and identical. As indicated above, comfort stations, or the place that sexual violation took place, varied considerably, thus individual women's suffering should be understood as different and unique.

Another crucial issue surrounding the testimonies of 'comfort women' victims is that the range of information that testimonies contain can significantly vary depending on the situation in which the women narrated their experience; for example, testimonies based on semi-structured interviews conducted by researchers and support groups present more detailed and structured information compared with those testimonies given in public hearings or to the mass media. Various other factors relating to how and when women spoke of their lives seem to have influenced what women

say or do not say. The discussion in this chapter, therefore, is based on the analysis of testimonial narratives that are diverse in terms of women's experience, content, presentation and structure. Although individual experience of being a 'comfort woman' differs greatly and a simple generalization should be avoided, there are still a number of recurring themes that appear in these testimonies.[3] These are (1) their backgrounds; (2) how they became 'comfort women'; (3) how they were forced to have sex with soldiers; (4) living conditions; (5) the range of violence they suffered; and (6) lives after their experiences as 'comfort women'.

Backgrounds of the 'comfort women'

Many women, particularly those who are from Korea and China, referred to economically disadvantaged upbringings. Poverty was often the result of unemployment, particularly that of fathers, the lack of access to land, colonialism, and the large size of the family.

> Kim Sun-dok, South Korea: ... [my father] was taken to the police station and subjected to a heavy beating. As a result of this, he took to his bed and eventually died. Mother had to carry on life with the five of us – two elder brothers, one elder sister, one younger sister and myself. Making a living was not easy by any means. We were desperate for food. (The Korean Council, 1995: 41–2)

> Lu Xiuzhen: I was born in the Year of the Horse [1917], in a village north of the Miaozhen River on Chongming Island. Both of my parents were poor peasants and had no means of supporting me, so they gave me to Zhu family to be their adopted daughter. (Qiu et al., 2014: 98–9)

Many women were prevented from attending schools, due to poverty, Confucian values in East Asia that discouraged women from being educated, and/or their distance from schools. However, some attended elementary schools for a few years and/or attended evening classes at temples or churches.

> Mun Pil-gi, South Korea: I wasn't allowed to go to school. When I was nine, mother sold about 10kg of rice to pay for my tuition and bundled me off to school. My father soon found out. He said that if a girl studied she would become too foxy. He rushed into my classroom, dragged me home and burnt all my books. That was the last of my education. (The Korean Council, 1995: 80)

The Japanese invasion and occupation also interrupted the education of many.

> Li Xiumei, China: When I was fourteen years old, the Japanese Army invaded our village. As the school was closed, my schooling was

interrupted after a year. (Chugokujin, 1999: 8 – translated from the Japanese text)

Some women attended higher education.

> Jan Ruff-O'Herne (lived in Indonesia), The Netherlands: After finishing high school I found myself adjacent to my old primary school again, attending the Franciscan Teacher's College. (Ruff-O'Herne, 1994: 50)

> Gertrude Balisalisa, The Philippines: Shortly before the war I was studying in the third year of law school. I completed my third year. (ICJ, 1994: 70)

Many women were not married, but married women were also taken. Marriages were sometimes arranged to prevent girls from being drafted.

> Yi Sun-ok (pseudonym), South Korea: An alarming rumour was floating around that the authorities were offering Korean girls to their government back in Japan. My father was afraid that I might be taken away, and discussed tactics with my uncle. They decided to register a marriage, in name only, not in actuality, between me and a Mr Pak from Ch'ŏngha district…. I never lived with Pak, and I had not even seen his face at this time. It was agreed that when I really married, my registration with Pak would immediately be cancelled. (The Korean Council, 1995: 116)

The means of recruitment

Various methods of 'recruitment' have been reported by women, but women's testimonies also suggest that the location and time of 'recruitment' and the type of comfort stations that women were kept at had a huge impact on the way that they were taken. In Korea, many women were recruited to work in restaurants, factories or hospitals, but who actually offered these jobs and to what extent the women could refuse the offer varied. Recruiters could be either Korean or Japanese civilians, and many women took up the offer to ease financial difficulties that their family had at the time.

> Kim Yong-sil, North Korea: One day when I was 18 years old, a Japanese man in a suit approached me and asked me to go with him, promising me a lucrative job. Judging it would be better than begging, in spite of my ignorance of the job, I followed him to a place where a dozen girls were already gathered. From there, we were driven by truck to the Hoeryong railway station. (The Executive Committee, 1993: 56)

Some were intimidated by village leaders (either Korean or Japanese) into accepting these job proposals. Women found it particularly difficult to refuse when jobs were offered by more authoritarian figures such as Japanese

policemen and civilian military employees. Even when women managed to decline the offer, in some cases they were taken away anyway. In some cases women/girls were abducted (by civilians or soldiers).

> Kim Yun-sim: One day I was playing outside jumping over elastic rubber cords with my friends. Suddenly a truck arrived. My village was so remote that even seeing a single truck greatly interested children. I stopped playing with elastic cords and followed the truck. In the truck there were three people, a policeman, a soldier and a man who spoke fluent Korean. The man fluent in Korean said 'If you'd like to get on a truck, why don't you try?' I was so pleased with what he said. I got on the truck tapping my feet. They started the truck immediately. I cried and asked them to let me get off, but they never listened to me. (Asia Forum, 1997: 20 – translated from the Japanese text)

In the Philippines, most women reported that they were forcibly taken by soldiers, and some of them witnessed their family members being violently treated when they were abducted.[4] Occasionally, they were captured as guerrilla suspects or relatives of guerrillas and drafted for sexual slavery.

> Rufina Fernandez: Immediately after we went back to a house we used to live in [in Singalong, the outskirts of Manila], the Japanese Military arrived and entered the house. They came to arrest my father as a suspected member of the anti-Japanese force which was active then. My father used to go and work in the mountains and in Manila and has never been involved with the anti-Japanese movement. We explained this to the Japanese soldiers. However they did not listen and beat my father. They spotted me, who had become fifteen during our flight, and tried to take me away. Seeing this, my father got furious and struggled to take me back, but was beaten to death in front of me. And my mother was next…. My brothers were beaten continuously before my eyes…. I attempted to intervene, but was also severely beaten about my head and was taken in a car almost unconscious…. This is how all my family was killed. (Asia Forum, 1997: 6–7 – translated from the Japanese text)

When villages were raided by Japanese troops, men were interrogated, tortured and killed, while women were raped. Many women from Mapanique in Luzon Island, for example, testified how their family were brutally executed, and then they were raped by soldiers (WIWCT, 2000a: 32–44).[5]

As in the Philippines, many women in China were forcibly taken from their home or the neighbourhood by Japanese soldiers and/or Chinese collaborators. Often women were captured and tortured to obtain information on anti-Japanese activities, and also subjected to multiple and/or gang rapes. As sexual violence was widespread, particularly in war zones

and the front line, many families had more than two women who became the victims of assault.

> Wan Aihua: I heard so much about the bad Japanese and their brutal acts that I decided to join a group of villagers who actively resisted the invasions of the Japanese army. At that time, I was eleven. Under those circumstances, I was caught three times by the Japanese army who raped, abused and mutilated me. ... (T)wo months later, on August 18 [in 1943], I was abducted [for the second time] by the river where I was washing clothes. ... It was the same thing all over again. I was taken to the same place and locked in a small room where many Japanese soldiers came and raped me in a brutal way, a way in which I cannot describe. Just like they did the first time, they threatened to kill me if I would not reveal the names of Pa-Lu Army [the Red Army] sympathizers and underground activists. When I refused to give out any names, they beat me and tortured me. (The Executive Committee, 1993: 68–9)

However, some Chinese women, like Korean women, were sent to comfort stations after being deceived with the promise of a job.

> Yuan Zhulin: In the spring of 1940, a local woman named Zhang Xiuying came to recruit workers. She said that cleaning women were wanted at hotels in the other cities in Hubei Province. I had never met Zhang before, but since it was very difficult to find a job at the time, several other young girls and I signed up. I was eighteen years old then and good-looking, so I stood out among the other girls. (Qiu et al., 2014: 103)

Testimonies of women from Taiwan suggest that many women were recruited by Japanese civilians with the promise of jobs, often in nursing (Ishikawa, 1993: 170).

> An anonymous woman: [W]hen I was seventeen, I heard from some of my friends that there was a Japanese man (not a military man) who was recruiting nurses for Southeast Asia. I thought that working in the hospital [I then worked at] would not have a good future, so I joined the group. At that time, I was happy because I did not know the truth. (The Executive Committee, 1993: 79)

Under colonial rule, some women were ordered to cook, clean and do laundry for soldiers in the barracks, and then were also forced to have sex with them at night.

> Ian-Apai (Lin Shen-Chung), an aborigine woman: This place was called Tongmen. Even before Japan colonized and ruled Taiwan, the Japanese

police were stationed here. This was the place where aborigine communities lived, and [one day] the Japanese Battalion advertised for a seamstress. A Japanese policeman came and ordered four of us to go and work for them. My family were poor. I went to work in a Storage Unit in Banyan. I was seventeen years old and was a virgin. I worked from eight in the morning to five in the evening. In the beginning, I went back home at night to sleep. Then, I was told to live in a room there … . I could not go home any more. During the night I had to have sex with, sometimes, up to five soldiers … . I was there about half a year. I became pregnant three times. (VAWW-NET, 2002a: 161 – translated from the Japanese text)

In Indonesia, some women were deceived by the promise of jobs, and others were taken forcibly from their homes (by soldiers).

Mardiyem: I went there [Banjarmasin in Kalimantan/Borneo] because there was an announcement by the Japanese mayor that the Japanese recruiters had come to Yogjarkarta to look for workers. I was invited to work in the theatre. I travelled on a ship from Yogjarkarta to Surabaya, and then to Banjarmasin. (Senso Giseisha, 1997: 123 – translated from the Japanese text)

Suhanah: That day, my parents had gone to the market to sell vegetables as usual. When I was playing alone in front of my house, soldiers came and suddenly grabbed my arm. As it was all of a sudden, I struggled and was beaten on both cheeks. Soldiers pointed a rifle with a bayonet at me and took me into a jeep-like vehicle. (Kawada, 1997: 99 – translated from the Japanese text)[6]

East Timor women were forcibly taken by the Japanese soldiers. Many of them were drafted for forced labour during the day, and then had to have sex with soldiers in the evenings.

Marta Abu Bere: [After being taken to Marabo], the Japanese Army forced us to work cutting the grass, making paths, and collecting wood and bamboo to build houses. After the work we were made to line up and were called by our names. And one day, a man by the name of Domingos from Atsabe took me to Japanese soldiers and I was forced to become a 'comfort woman' … . We were exhausted as during the day we engaged with various construction activities, and in the evening we had to provide sex to soldiers. Even cattle would be treated better. (WAM, 2006a: 38 – translated from the Japanese text)

In Malaysia, too, women were taken by the Japanese soldiers.

An anonymous woman from Serdang, outskirts of Kuala Lumpur:[7] On 22 March 1942, two Japanese trucks arrived in my village. When our family

were in the kitchen, five Japanese soldiers led by a Chinese [came in and] captured me and my older brother. My father, who tried to stop them was badly beaten. Three soldiers raped me in the house. When I put up the fight, I was beaten in the head and my lips were torn and bled. We were taken on a truck with two girls of about fifteen to sixteen years old from the village. ('Jyosei no Jinken' Iinkai, 1994: 139)

The way Dutch women were recruited was very different. They were picked up in the concentration camp by the Japanese soldiers without any explanation.

Jan Ruff-O'Herne: Suddenly there was a great commotion in the camp and a number of Japanese military men arrived in army trucks. ... However, this time the order was given: All single girls seventeen years and up were to line up in the compound. ... The selection process continued until ten girls were ordered to step forward. ... I was one of ten. ... Through our interpreter, we were told to pack a small bag of belongings and report immediately to the front gate, where the trucks were waiting to take us away. We were not told any details. ... A total of sixteen girls were then taken from the Ambarawa camps, forced against their will. ... The truck stopped in front of a large house. ... Seven girls were told to get out. I was one of them. We were soon to find out what sort of a house we were being forced to live in. (The Executive Committee, 1993: 60–1)

Some narratives of women from Korea, Taiwan, China and Indonesia suggest their experience of being trafficked or 'working' to repay in-advance money. These accounts imply the prevalence of the trafficking of women in Japanese colonies and occupied territories and how it facilitated the recruitment of women.

Yi Yong-nyo, South Korea: I arrived home to find a plump and elderly lady dressed in a long coat and wearing gold jewellery. She was waiting for me, and asked me to go home with her. She said that if I did so my parents would be better off and I would be given food and clothing. My mother sat facing the wall and said nothing while my father told me to go with her. I felt I had no choice. Later I learned that the lady had lent my father money which was supposed to be repaid by monthly earnings. (The Korean Council, 1995: 144)

How women were forced to have sex with soldiers

Many women were on either side of their twenties when they were drafted as 'comfort women'. However, testimonies also show that quite a few women

were under eighteen years old or even in their early teens.[8] Most had no previous sexual experience nor had any idea about sex.

> Hou Qiao Lian, China: I could hear the Japanese soldier removing his weapon and clothes. The naked man came closer, grabbed my clothes and shook them as if to order me to undress. As I didn't have my first period yet, nor any sexual experience, I was frightened and couldn't move. So, this man forcibly took my clothes off. The man got closer and realizing what was happening, I was terrified. He pressed me down on a mattress. I was horrified when his beard touched my cheek and his leg hair brushing against me. I struggled in vain, and eventually was raped and bled badly from my lower body. (Chugokujin, 1999: 22 – translated from the Japanese text)

Some were raped initially by officers or proprietors of 'comfort stations', and then were forced to provide 'comfort' to a number of soldiers. Others had to have sex with several soldiers from the beginning. Doctors and civilians employed by the Japanese military and Chinese collaborators raped them as well.

> Jan Ruff-O'Herne, The Netherlands: One day, a Japanese doctor arrived at our house. Immediately I thought that he would be able to help us. Surely, as a doctor, he would have compassion for us. I requested to speak to the doctor but he showed no interest, no sign of compassion or apology. Instead, the doctor ended up raping me on the first day of his visit. … Each time the doctor visited us [for venereal disease examination], he raped me and it was always in the daytime. (The Executive Committee, 1993: 66)

The number of soldiers women were raped by and were forced to have sex with each day ranged from a couple to several dozen. In more organized comfort stations women/girls had fixed 'working' hours, for example, from eight or nine in the morning to midnight, though these hours varied considerably at each comfort station. They were often busy at weekends.

> Mardiyem, Indonesia: On average, fifteen men came to my room [per day]. From 11:30am to 3:00pm, I had to serve soldiers … . Then, after that from 5:00pm to midnight, I had to serve civilian employees of the Japanese Military. Some 'guests' stayed overnight from midnight to dawn … . There were a few soldiers who bought tickets for four to five hours to make me rest, but on the busiest days, I was forced to have sex with twenty men. (Senso Giseisha, 1997: 124–5 – translated from the Japanese text)

Many women were abducted and subjected to gang rape in confined places, which were not as organized as other comfort stations.

> Guo Xi Cui, China: [She was abducted with her sister and her sister's children and was locked in a *yaodong* – a dwelling which is built by carving into the mountain – and was raped. After her first rape incident,] I was taken out from the *yaodong* to another *yaodong* night and day and was raped sometimes by one soldier and other times by several soldiers…. During the day, I was raped almost every day by many Japanese soldiers. (Chugokujin, 1999: 28 – translated from the Japanese text)

Even during their period, many women were forced to have sex with the soldiers.

> Yun Tu-ri, South Korea: When we had our monthly periods we were given gauze in lieu of sanitary towels, which we used whenever we weren't serving the soldiers. But we were made to serve soldiers even while menstruating, so we had no time to keep the towels in place…. When we had to continue having sex with soldiers, we rolled the gauze up and inserted it deep into our wombs. (The Korean Council, 1995: 189)

Some soldiers used condoms, but many did not. Women were often instructed to wash before or after sex with soldiers.

> Yuan Zhulin, China: The Japanese army required the soldiers to use condoms at the comfort station, but since many of them knew that I was new and probably didn't have syphilis, they would not use a condom when they came to my room. (Qiu *et al.*, 2014: 105)

Living conditions

Comfort stations were situated in former brothels, hotels, large local residences seized by the Japanese military, in garrisons and barracks, hospitals, schools and museums. Spaces were often divided by wooden planks into small rooms with doors made of blankets, and women were allocated to each space. Women were gang raped regularly in military tents and air raid shelters that were called tunnels, as well as in their own homes.

> Kim Bok-sun (taken to Japan, Vietnam, then to Burma), South Korea: We…arrived at a house [in Rangoon] with a signboard saying it was a comfort station.…The [comfort] station comprised two long buildings separated by a road. There were ten rooms in each building, giving 20 in total. It was new and had no gates or fences, so people walk in and out freely. There was one dining room and two bathrooms. Each room was the size of one *tatami* mat, and the walls and floor were built from

wooden boards. Each room had two blankets. Of the 20, I was put in room number 3, which was not far from the office, perhaps 7 or 8 m away. Each room had its number, and under my '3' was written my name, Mizuko. The entrance to each room was closed by a curtain…. We were watched closely, and couldn't run away. (The Korean Council, 1995: 154)

Yin Yulin, China: After that initial time [of raping me at my house], the Japanese soldiers stationed in the blockhouse on top of nearby Mount Yangma came to my house frequently and raped me.… Every day two or three Japanese soldiers came down the mountain to rape me at my home, which left me constantly terrified.… Frightened of the rapes while having no place to hide, my body was always trembling with fear. What a horror! … The Japanese soldiers also took me by force to their stronghold on Mount Yangma, where they raped me. (Qiu et al., 2014: 115–16)

As for meals, mostly they ate rice and a few side dishes, such as the Japanese pickled radish (*takuwan*) or the Korean pickled cabbage (*kim'chi*). In some cases, they had to cook or even to bring food themselves, but in other cases food was prepared by cooks or soldiers. What kind of food they ate and how much food they were provided with depended very much on their geographical location; those who were in South East Asia or Pacific islands had the opportunity to feast on tropical fruits, but many women testify to the insufficient provision of food and being starved. Towards the end of the war, shortage of food was commonplace.

Ines de Jesus, East Timor: In the comfort station, we did not have enough food. So, we were sent back home in turn to bring food, and shared this amongst us. (WAM, 2013: 35 – translated from the Japanese text)

Only a few women who were in more organized comfort stations received regular payment. However, even in comfort stations where soldiers made payment, women did not always receive payment or were not aware of how the system of payment worked. A few women remembered handing tickets given by soldiers over to traders, and were told that their earnings would be credited and they could receive them as a lump sum when they left. Even in these cases, as expenses such as travel, food and clothes were often deducted, women received hardly any money, except, occasionally, some tips or gifts from soldiers.

Zhou Fenying, China: There were two or three elderly women from the Town of Baipu who cleaned, delivered food and water and so on. There was also an old woman, a Chinese, who supervised the women and collected fees. This old woman gave us a yuan or so every month to buy daily necessities, but this money was far from enough. Because we were only given two coarse meals a day we were always hungry. I had to save

that money and ask people to buy me some food when I was starving. (Qiu *et al.,* 2014: 91)

Even if women managed to save money from tips they received, they never had the chance to actually withdraw the money.

> Mun Ok-chu (taken to Manchuria and Burma), South Korea: I saved money given to me by the officers. I was often able to get free drinks or cigarettes, and I exchanged these for cash, saving everything in my account. I was really upset when I lost the deposit book issued by the Himonoseki Post Office. (The Korean Council, 1995: 113)

In most cases, the issue of payment in comfort stations was never raised.

> Hwang Kum-ju (taken to Manchuria), South Korea: While working there, I was never paid. No cash and no tickets were given to me. (The Korean Council, 1995: 75)

> Huang Youliang, China: The Japanese soldiers never gave us anything or any money. They didn't even give us enough to eat, never mind paying us. (Qiu et al., 2014: 129)

Many women regularly received medical (venereal) examination by military doctors. Many of them suffered from venereal diseases, but were offered no or only basic treatment. They also suffered from tropical diseases such as malaria.

> Kim Hak-sun (taken to Manchuria), South Korea: Once a week, a military surgeon visited us with an assistant and gave us routine check-ups. ... If he checked us and found anything even slightly wrong, he would inject us with 'No. 606'. (The Korean Council, 1995: 36)

> Lin Yajin, China: No Japanese doctor ever gave us a medical exam or any treatment. If a girl fell sick, she would be thrown into cold water. As time passed I began to urinate blood and I had severe chest pains. The pain went from my chest to my left shoulder. Even today my chest often hurts, bringing back horrible memories of the past. (Qiu et al., 2014: 138)

Those who were pregnant were often forced to abort.

> Jan Ruff-O'Herne, The Netherlands: More anxiety came when I realized I was pregnant. I was absolutely terrified. ... Like pillars of strength, the girls gave me their support and advised me to tell our Japanese woman guard that I was pregnant. I approached the woman and as an answer to the problem, she produced a bottle full of tablets. I could not kill a foetus, not even this one. It would be a mortal sin if I did. I continued to refuse

the tablets and eventually they were forced down my throat. I miscarried a short time later. (The Executive Committee, 1993: 66–7)

Usually the women were given Japanese names. Sometimes they were called by the names of flowers but other times only by numbers.

Rosalind Saw, Malaysia: The hotel [Tong Lock Hotel on Jalan Burma] was a comfort station only for the Japanese Army, and about fifty women were there. Most of them were Chinese, and only three or four Malays. I was given the name of Hanako. (WAM, 2013: 31 – translated from the Japanese text)

Only a few women mention having time off or holidays. If there were any, they were very limited.

Ha Sun-nyo (taken to China), South Korea: On our free days, we took turns to go out in groups of ten with the proprietor's wife. There were restaurants and cinemas in the area, but our outings were limited to an hour and a half, so we were unable to look around much. If we were late back, we were beaten by the proprietor. (The Korean Council, 1995: 62–3)

Those who were not allowed to go out spent the time washing condoms, cooking, cleaning and doing laundry for soldiers as well as for themselves.

Kim Bok-sun (taken to Japan, Vietnam, and then to Burma), South Korea: Condoms were distributed to us and we used them on soldiers who didn't bring their own. But there were never enough to go around. So, we collected used condoms in a jar and washed them with soap in a nearby stream whenever we had time. (The Korean Council, 1995: 155)

Huang Youliang, China: There were always soldiers guarding the gate and they didn't let us go anywhere. We laboured during the day, mopping the floor, washing clothes, and so on. (Qiu et al., 2014: 128)

Violence the women suffered

In addition to all forms of sexual abuse, women frequently testified to other violence that they suffered, such as being beaten, kicked, stabbed with a knife, and tortured. Violent treatment was an integral part of their lives. Particularly when they were considered to be 'disobedient', such as refusing to have sex with soldiers as they were ill or menstruating, speaking in their own languages, and/or attempting to escape, they met with brutal conduct by Japanese soldiers or proprietors of comfort stations.

Rufina Fernandez, the Philippines: [W]hen it was reported that the US Military was approaching near to this area [the outskirts of Manila], the

Japanese officer who was the first one to rape me tried to kill me. He attempted to cut off my head with a Japanese 'samurai' sword. Just when I raised my arm to avoid the sword, it hit my arm. He struck with his sword anyway, so he cut my arm instead of cutting off my head. However, my arm bone was fractured and my arm was hanging by the skin. I collapsed in a sea of blood. (Asia Forum, 1997: 8 – translated from the Japanese text)

Most women dreaded soldiers/officers as they had sex with the women in a very brutal and inhuman manner.

Yun Tu-ri, South Korea: The soldiers were supposed to use condoms, but many tried to avoid them. Many of them were nasty. It was quite common to be asked to suck their penis. Some wanted to have sex while standing up. There were all sorts, and words fail me if I try to describe much of what they did. Some brought an erotic book with them, the '48 Rules', published in Japan, and demanded I should follow its instructions and pose for them. I would swear at them in Korean. Even today I still can't drink milk because it reminds me of sperm. (The Korean Council, 1995: 188–9)

Zhou Xi Xiang, China: I was not raped in front of my [communist] comrades. However, I was taken to nearby the hangout of the Chinese collaborators' army (*Seigotai*) and was raped there by the Japanese soldiers one after another. To rape someone when other people were around, I felt, was worse than a beast. (Chugokujin 1999: 36 – translated from the Japanese text)

Living under such merciless conditions, some women developed a personal attachment to those officers or soldiers who were less vicious and/or relatively more compassionate.

Huang Qiu-yue (pseudonym, taken to Japan, then to Indonesia), Taiwan: Two years had passed, and when I became twenty one years old, I met with a captain of the Japanese air corps called 'Yamamoto'. He bought a ticket with my number, and when he entered the room, he asked me why I was crying. Even amongst the Japanese, there are some good people. I can never forget this man Yamamoto. He was a man with morality and virtue. ... He eventually bought twenty tickets per week, but this was not to satisfy his sexual desire. He treated me as if I were his sister and bought extra tickets to help me. I always cried in the comfort station, and was thinking of committing a suicide. However, Yamamoto dissuaded me from killing myself and encouraged me to be brave and survive. He told me ... to return safe to Taiwan and see my parents. Soon, the War ended, and Yamamoto was captured by the Indonesian government. I requested

to visit him, but was not successful. (Senso Giseisha, 1997: 84–5 – translated from the Japanese text)

Some women did indeed attempt to commit suicide to escape from the dreadful fate of being 'comfort women'.

Kim Sang-hi (taken to Singapore), South Korea: [After being repeatedly raped by soldiers in the comfort station, she collapsed and was sent to a hospital.] I returned to the comfort station. After about ten days, I couldn't stand it and I drank poison with a view to committing suicide. That poison was a bottle of disinfectant. I was again taken to the military hospital where I remained for a long time. I was disappointed that I could not die as I had wished. (ICJ, 1994: 101)

Women received injuries not only from the violent deeds of proprietors and the Japanese military men, but also from being caught in battles and raids. In her autobiography, originally published in 1971, one of the few publicly identified Japanese 'comfort woman' victims Shirota Suzuko (pseudonym) described how 'comfort women' in Palau towards the end of the war lived under heavy bombing.

When a big bomber plane arrived, as it was difficult to reach the bomb shelter in the rocky mountain, we only jumped into a concrete unused sewage pipe. Eventually, a small bomb was dropped where a soldier from the Japanese Navy special force was taking refuge, and the sewage pipe was completely destroyed and its entrance buried. The bomber plane seemed to have noticed people coming in and out of this place. Three girls who were taking shelter with me died on the spot and I was also injured all over, could not escape and was buried there. (Shirota, 2008: 62–3 – translated from the Japanese text)

How women escaped and life after the comfort station

Some women succeeded in escaping from comfort stations by themselves or with the help of others such as nationalist or communist combatants. A few testified to Japanese military men and/or civilians assisting their release.

Maria Rosa Luna Henson, the Philippines: That night, I was led downstairs, where I was brutally beaten....That was about January 1944. I remember when I regained consciousness, I was already in our hut and my mother was facing me, smiling. I hugged my mother and learned that I became sick with a very high fever....I was able to get away from the ricemill [where she was kept], which was a Japanese garrison, because I was freed by the Hukbalahap [anti-Japanese army]....They attacked the garrison after learning we were being held there due to the tip I gave

them regarding the zoning operation the Japanese soldiers were going to conduct in the barrio of Pampang. (The Executive Committee, 1993: 45)

In China, many women were released only after their family bailed them out, offering money and/or food to the Japanese troops.

> Hou Qiao Lian, China: I heard that my mother sold domestic animals, collected money from relatives and friends and offered 700 yuan in silver coins [to the Japanese troops]. Thus, my father [who was a commander of the Chinese Eighth Route Army, and was also captured and imprisoned] and I were released. (Chugokujin, 1999: 25 – translated from the Japanese text)

Most women only managed to flee comfort stations towards or after the end of the war, often left behind by the Japanese military. Some were rescued by the Allied Forces and sent back to where they were originally from, but many had to make their way home by themselves.

> Pilar Frias, The Philippines: Towards the end of 1944 or maybe 1945, the US military called on the Japanese soldiers to surrender. It was the end for them. They seemed to have moved back to their garrisons in their trucks, but they left us behind. Therefore, we had to find our way home by ourselves. I walked all the way from the military camp to my village for about a week, trying not to be found by the Japanese military. (Senso Giseisha, 1997: 112 – translated from the Japanese text)

Some women testified to the abuse they experienced by those who defeated the Japanese military and who (were supposed to) have freed them.

> Mun Pil-gi (taken to Manchuria), South Korea: The war ended during my third year at the comfort station. Suddenly, all the soldiers disappeared. Nobody came to visit us. For a while, our nights were peaceful. Then one day, Russian soldiers rushed into the building, pointing their guns straight at us. They tried to get our clothes off. Now that the Japanese had gone, the Russians were trying to rape us! (The Korean Council, 1995: 86)

Some women did not or could not go back home, and stayed where they had been taken to or moved to another place. The life story of Song Shin-do, a Korean resident in Japan, exemplifies how 'comfort women' survivors could have been displaced after the war.

> Song Shin-do (taken to China from Korea and now lives in Japan): When Japan lost the War and everything was in chaos, Mr I who was in the

Mine Unit [in the Japanese military] said, 'There is no point in you staying here. Japan lost the War, so let's get together'. ... When he asked me to marry him I thought it was a good idea and I travelled to Japan, following him with my repatriation document. However, he abandoned me at Ueno train station [in Tokyo]. ... Then, when I was hanging between life or death, I went to Miyagi Prefecture [in north Japan] and was rescued by a Korean man. ('Jyosei no Jinken' Iinkai, 1994: 130–1 – translated from the Japanese text)

Researchers and activists also met other 'comfort women' victims who had been displaced in countries such as Japan, Korea, China and Burma and listened to their life stories.[9] For example, a Chinese victim-survivor Lin Mei Jan, who Morikawa Machiko met in Burma said:

Those who came to Burma as 'comfort women' still live in Rangoon, Mawlamyine, Lashio and Taunggyi, but some have gone to the United States, Hong Kong, or Taiwan. My parents in Canton are dead, but my young siblings are still alive. I was the eldest of five children, and I sometimes feel like going back to Canton, but there is no point in going back at my age [seventy-six years old in 2000]. (Morikawa, 2000: 320–1 – translated from the Japanese text)

Even when women managed to go back home, they rarely explained to their family what had happened to them. Some could not go back to their family because of the stigma of their experience. Once their family, relatives, neighbours or friends got to know or suspect they had been 'comfort women', they were shunned or excluded from the community.

Chang Su-Wol (taken to China), North Korea: I returned to my family, but could not tell anyone of the suffering I had had to endure. I was ashamed, and would not speak out. I wished to live a normal life like every other woman, with a husband and family. But because of my shameful past, I thought I could not marry. (ICJ, 1994: 116–17)

The post-war political climate, and in particular the anti-Japanese attitude in formerly occupied countries, exacerbated the ostracism of these women. In China, they had a particularly difficult time during the Cultural Revolution, when they were criticized and punished for having had sex with the Japanese.

Chen Yabian, China: During the Cultural Revolution I was beaten and yelled at by local people. They tied up my hands and pushed me out, accusing me of 'having slept with Japanese soldiers'. How miserable I am for not having a son to look out for me ... . (Qiu et al., 2014: 133)

The experience of being sexually exploited affected the relationship between these women and their partners.

> Guo Xi Cui, China: Sometime after Japan's defeat, my husband [who was my fiancé then] came back from his work with the Eighth Routes Army, and we got married. However, before we wed, he clearly expressed that he did not wish to marry a woman who had been raped by Japanese soldiers. I could not say anything. He was extremely reluctant to marry me, but his parents explicitly instructed him to do so as I was his fiancé, as decided between the two families. I felt awful, but I was not in a position to decide, and I could only obey my parents' instruction to marry him when he agreed to marry. Even after we got married, my husband's aversion to our marriage did not change. ... He never shouted at me or beat me, but did not show any concern or affection towards me either; he, I felt, just maintained this cold indifference to me. (Chugokujin 1999: 32 – translated from the Japanese text)

Feeling dishonoured and traumatized by what had happened to them, many women did not or could not marry and stayed single or became a second wife or mistress.

> Tomasa Salinog, the Philippines: After the war, with a sewing machine that was a keepsake from my mother, I became a seamstress and raised an adopted child. Since my eyesight got bad, I now run a sari-sari store (grocery shop). When I was younger I received marriage proposals but I declined them all. Sex, so infused with the memory of violence and rape, is, for me, dirty and revolting. (WAM, 2013: 23 – translated from the Japanese text)

Due to their traumatic experiences, most of the women report serious physical and psychological problems they have suffered and are still suffering. These include infertility, gynaecological problems, sexually transmitted diseases, severe headaches, bodily pain, bodily deformity, loss of self-esteem, extreme anxiety, depression and insomnia. As bearing a child is particularly important for women in East Asian cultures, infertility further exacerbated the women's trauma.

> Kang Duk-kyung, South Korea: I become ill very easily. When I was young, I used to roll around my room with period pains. I had to have injections to relieve the throbbing. And I bled copiously. I went to herbal doctors and to a gynaecological surgery. I would even have danced naked if I could have been relieved from so much suffering. The doctors told me that the lining of my womb and my fallopian tubes were infected. My periods, which had started properly only when I was 18, stopped before

I reached 40. Since then, I have had no monthly pain, but I have been hospitalized several times with bladder infections. (The Korean Council, 1995: 176)

Zhou Xi Xiang, China: And what is more, I couldn't bear a child. For Chinese women, in particular those live in farming communities, not being able to have children is disastrous, and impacts on the honour of women. Both my husband and his family were kind to me and never blamed me [for our childlessness]. Yet, as they never raised the issue, I felt even guiltier. ... After the experiences of capture, imprisonment and rape, nothing could emotionally move me or interest me, nor could I concentrate on anything. I do not sleep well, and if I recall the incident, I cannot sleep all night. I suffer from a constant headache, feeling as if my head is being dragged around. (Chugokujin, 1999: 37 – translated from the Japanese text)

In addition to the physical and psychological scars that the women had to endure, their experiences have also made it difficult for them to develop pleasurable sexual relationships.

Juanita Jamot, The Philippines: I lived together with a person who was employed as a driver, in the year 1968, when I was 44 years old. I did not tell him about my past. Even then while having sex with him, I found that I was severely restrained and bore an aversion to sex. I had nightmares about my past experiences. My terrible past experience severely crippled my normal sex life. I have separated from my second husband. I also could not bear children and I had several miscarriages and had to be operated upon. (ICJ, 1994: 68)

Even when the women had supportive partners and families, they still suffered from various traumas. Some of these partners were very sympathetic and angry with what had happened to their wives, and joined the army for revenge or worked hard to earn money for medical treatment. This sometimes resulted in women's early widowhood and further put them in socially and economically difficult positions.

Zhou Fenying, China: When I was released my mother-in-law did not want me to return home. ... However, my husband, Jincheng, accepted me. He said, 'Fenying was kidnapped by the Japanese troops, but this was not her fault.' He brought me home despite what the villagers and my mother-in-law said. Still, he was deeply humiliated because they looked down on me. I could sense that his heart was filled with anger and hatred toward the Japanese troops. At the time Chinese forces were enlisting soldiers to fight the Japanese army in our area. Jincheng wanted to join the Chinese army, but I didn't want him to leave. ... However, he was determined to

seek revenge. One morning when I woke up I found he was gone. That was at the end of the year [1940], the Lunar Eleventh Month. I knew he went to fight against the Japanese forces. Jincheng never returned home. Years later the local government informed me that Jincheng had joined the First Regiment of the New Fourth Army (Xinsinjun). He was killed in a battle at Guxi in Tixing County in 1941. (Qiu et al., 2014: 92–3)

Various features of the system and the ways that these women were exploited, as well as the lives that these women endured and are still enduring are illustrated in these testimonial narratives. In that sense, they are rich resources of historical 'information'; many issues could only be testified to by those who witnessed and actually went through all these horrific experiences. At the same time, testimonies are more than mere historical 'information'. In order to fully acknowledge the dynamic of testimonies, it is important to consider the context in which testimonies are constructed. However this is not an easy task, and as will eventually be discussed, deciphering such information is often challenging.

5.2   Probing the historical 'truth'

As previously noted, in wartime diaries and wartime literature published mostly after the Second World War, reference to comfort stations has not been uncommon. In 1994 however, Takasaki, who examined about 30 per cent of over 5,000 wartime diaries and literatures published after the Second World War, commented that the proportion of literature that mentioned comfort stations is relatively small. The lack of reference to comfort stations or 'comfort women', could possibly be explained by the Japanese ex-soldiers' reluctance to reveal that the soldiers of the Imperial Military had sexual relations with 'comfort women' when they were supposed to be fighting the 'holy war'. This was considered to be dishonourable even after the war (Takasaki, 1994: 3). The Center for Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility also examined memoirs and the history of military units in the National Diet Library, Japan, in 1993 and 1994 (The Center, 1994a; 1994b). They found that a relatively small, but still substantial number of documents make reference to comfort stations and/or 'comfort women'.[10] These studies have illustrated that most soldiers regarded the comfort stations as ordinary brothels in Japanese-occupied areas, though some heard from the women they met that they had been deceived or forced to become 'comfort women'. Many were aware that the women were from Korea and Japanese-occupied areas, as well as from Japan. While there were some accounts that showed evidence of empathy towards the difficult lives that the women were going through and also acknowledged the sexual violence that the Japanese military inflicted, these remain in a minority. Most soldiers simply considered

'comfort women' to have been prostitutes earning money and/or romanticizing them (WAM, 2010a: 11).

In addition to diaries and wartime literature, former soldiers or employees of the Japanese military, encouraged by testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors, also started to testify to their experience of 'comfort women' and comfort stations. Many provided information anonymously through, for example, telephone hotlines set up in Tokyo and Kyoto in 1992 and in Tokyo in 2005, and a small group of former soldiers gave testimonies in public that reflected the 'comfort women' system critically. However, it has been pointed out that the number of former soldiers who have spoken publicly about Japan's atrocities surrounding 'comfort women' is relatively small. This is because many former Japanese soldiers still have a problem in understanding how they were actually the perpetrators of atrocities (Kasahara, 2000: 226; WAM, 2010a; 11). While descriptions differ slightly depending on their position in and their relation to the military, their location during the war, and their gender (though most testimonies were given by men), similar comments were made about certain issues. These include: the existence of a number of Korean 'comfort women'; medical examinations of 'comfort women'; the large number of soldiers that women had to have sex with; the kind of buildings used as comfort stations.

Divergent testimonies and the revisionist critique

While the accounts of soldiers (and civilian employees of the military) about comfort stations and the lives of 'comfort women' at times correspond to those by 'comfort women' victim-survivors, more often differences, divergences and contradictions are identified. First, while certain soldiers acknowledged that some women would have been recruited by deception and/or force, many were not interested in how these women came to comfort stations, assuming that they came from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and had been sold into prostitution (Jyugun Ianfu 110 Ban, 1992: 90–2; Kyoto 'Oshietekudasai', 1993: 223). Many therefore make reference to the payment made in comfort stations. Even when former soldiers admitted that some women might have lived under harsh conditions and were treated badly, and expressed their sympathy towards these women, they often saw these as exceptional cases, or took for granted that this was the nature of the life of prostitutes. On the other hand, victim-survivors have emphasized that they were forced to become 'comfort women' against their will, never consenting to be in comfort stations. Many highlighted their virginity or chastity, stressing that they were never paid (or were in some cases vague about any monetary exchange).

Second, while women's testimonies illustrate the brutal violence that they suffered, only a small number of former soldiers and civilian employees mentioned the violence that 'comfort women' suffered. Comments about violence are often that it was inflicted by traffickers and owners or managers

of comfort stations. Indeed, in the interview with the delegates of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Ichikawa Ichiro, who was a military policeman in Manchuria, stated that he did not believe that violence other than sexual violence towards 'comfort women' happened, and women were free to talk to each other, could go out of comfort stations and were provided with money that they could spend. Ichikawa is one of a few former soldiers who publicly spoke about the Japanese authorities' involvement in the 'comfort women' system, and the ICJ is mindful that no 'comfort women' from the comfort station about which he testified were interviewed. However, they still pointed out that what Ichikawa testified is quite different from the recurring references to violence in women's testimonies. Moreover, former soldiers often romanticized their encounters and relationships with 'comfort women'. They recalled their experiences as the only 'comfort' or 'recreation' that they could enjoy during the war, and expressed how they had identified 'comfort women' with their mothers, sisters and wives. A former soldier testified to comfort stations in Manchuria that:

> There were soldiers who regularly visited a comfort station with Korean women and were treated with *kim'chi* [Korean pickles]. I also heard that when soldiers were transferred, they were presented with farewell gifts by comfort women, I had an impression that comfort stations were amiable rather than miserable. (Jyugun Ianfu 110 Ban, 1992: 53 – translated from the Japanese text)

Third, victim-survivors often underlined how much they welcomed the opportunity to talk openly about their experience. They are keen, by their testifying, on obtaining an official apology and compensation from the Japanese government in acknowledgment of the suffering it had caused. However, more importantly, women appreciated that their cries of pain were heard, and their experience was now known to the younger generation, particularly those in Japan. On the other hand, former soldiers did not always register the suffering that the women experienced and were less concerned about the pain that they had carried for a long time. For example, a former soldier who was stationed in China and visited comfort stations with Japanese, Korean and Chinese women states that:

> I felt that these women behaved as professional prostitutes. ... Generally, they seemed to focus on earning money. ... In fact, we took advantage of this and fulfilled our sexual needs, but this is what we had to do at that time. I don't feel particularly guilty. They saw themselves as professionals, and we, too, considered them to be earning money. Therefore, I never witnessed or heard anyone who was forced against their will. So, I don't have any guilt feelings. (Kyoto 'Oshietekudasai', 1993: 138, 226 – translated from the Japanese text)

There are some, though small in number, ex-soldiers who suggested some forms of enforcement in organizing the 'comfort women' system and gave more critical accounts of the Japanese authorities' involvement. These include: Nagatomi Kouki, who worked in the secret service in the military, recalling being requested to set up comfort stations for soldiers (ICJ, 1994: 122); Ichikawa Ichiro, a former military policeman, explaining how comfort stations were controlled by the military and how he was instructed to maintain order in a comfort station (ICJ, 1994: 124–5); Kaneko Yasuji, a former soldier, being ordered to guard comfort women (VAWW-NET, 2002a: 221); Suzuki Yoshio, a soldier, and Yuasa Ken, a military doctor, testifying of military doctors in charge of examining women regularly for venereal diseases (VAWW-NET, 2002a: 224; Yanaihara, 1995: 51–2).

> In the 17th of the Showa year [1942], when I [Kaneko Yasuji] was stationed in Dongchang in Shandong region, I was ordered by the troop to guard a mobile comfort station. Therefore nine men below Second Lieutenant in rank went to the battalion headquarters with our machine guns. (VAWW-NET, 2002a: 221 – translated from the Japanese text)

These military men were often aware that the women had to 'work' under very harsh conditions, serving dozens of soldiers a day, and some knew even then that the women were forced to work against their will. However, no military men have admitted taking women under coercion, apart from Yoshida Seiji, whose account in his biography that he was involved in drafting women by force is now considered to be unreliable even by critical historians from the left (Uesugi, 1997: 207; Yoshimi, 1997a: 26–7).

Before 'comfort women' victim-survivors publicly came forward, at the meeting of the House of Councillors Budget Committee in June 1990, the Japanese government issued a statement that denied its involvement in the 'comfort women' system (Yoshimi, 2000: 34). Women's testimonies, however, led in 1993 to the Kono Statement that admitted the involvement of the Japanese military. Despite this statement, motivated by wartime literature or soldiers' views of 'comfort women', and the lack of soldiers' accounts that testified to the use of violence and coercion by the Japanese military to recruit women, ultra-nationalist critics, politicians and scholars in Japan have argued that the Japanese authorities were not directly involved. They have undermined the seriousness of the crime of the 'comfort women' system and also questioned the validity of the testimonies of 'comfort women' victims. Moreover, a popular *manga* artist and commentator, Kobayashi Yoshinori, stated in 1997 that while he feels sorry for those women who became 'comfort women' against their will, it is their parents or brokers who need to be blamed for selling them into prostitution, and not the Japanese government (Kobayashi, 1997: 41).

These politicians and critics have argued that 'comfort women' were military prostitutes who worked to earn money in war-affected areas, and see

the 'comfort women' system as an extension of licensed prostitution. They believe that generally 'the stories of the [tragic] lives of prostitutes' should not be taken seriously, as these have simply been their strategy to earn sympathy, and more customers (Hata, 1999: 177). Although these revisionists have acknowledged that some 'comfort women' lived under appalling conditions, they do not consider it problematic; as these women were sold into prostitution, they had to endure hardship until they could repay their debt. They have strongly argued that they were recruited and controlled by brokers, private entrepreneurs or brothel owners under licensed prostitution regulations. If the Japanese government had been involved at all, they have maintained, it had intervened only to protect these women and to keep order in comfort stations (Kobayashi, 1997: 80; Ahn, 1999: 27–9).

In the previous chapter, the connection between licenced prostitution and the 'comfort women' system has been highlighted to emphasize the criminality of both systems in institutionalizing the exploitation of women based on their class and race. Identifying the 'comfort women' system with licensed prostitution, ultra-nationalists argue, on the contrary, that the 'comfort women' system was also legal at the time and that criticism of the 'comfort women' system cannot, therefore, be warranted. They maintain that the involvement of the Japanese government in licensed prostitution was minimal and limited. As already argued, however, licensed prostitution was organized in the interests of the nation state, and itself is a symbol of systematic violence against women (by the nation state). Any suggestion of the connection between the 'comfort women' system and licensed prostitution needs, thus, to be made only to illuminate the accountability of the Japanese government for the 'comfort women' system and not to exempt it from its responsibility.

In trivializing the criminality of the 'comfort women' system, these revisionists depreciate women's testimonies. First, they illuminate 'inconsistencies' in the testimonies of 'comfort women' victims. Some women have given different accounts of their lives at different places and times, and these can occasionally contradict each other. Revisionist critics indicate these variations as the manipulation of testimonies (with the help of support groups) to take advantage in their legal procedures (for example, Hata, 1999). The difficulty is that many examples of inconsistency can, indeed, be found in the narratives of 'comfort women' victims, which is evident in published testimonies. For example, Kim Sun-dok from South Korea testified in the workshop in 1996 that:

> In addition, 'the volunteering of virgins' was enforced. It was made it difficult to live without sending off one of the girls over fifteen years old from a family [to provide various services] ... As many girls hid in fear of this 'virgin volunteering', the rule was changed. It was rumoured that one young woman from a family, whether she is the eldest or the youngest,

would be taken away anyway. Because my little sister was so young, I met a supervisor, feeling that it would be less damaging if I went myself rather than allow my sister to be taken. When I asked what sort of job I would be doing, this person said that it would be a temporary nursing job or sewing military uniforms; jobs related to the military. So, I made up my mind to go. It was 1937. I was seventeen years old in the Asian age. (Senso Giseisha, 1997: 40 – translated from the Japanese text)

However, in the testimonial narrative based on interviews with the Korean Council, the situation of her recruitment was as follows:

It was the middle of January or perhaps a little later, say the beginning of February 1937. I was seventeen years old. I heard girls were being recruited with promises of work in Japan. It was said that a few had been recruited not long before from P'yŏngch'on where we had lived with my uncle. I wished that at that time I had been able to go with them, but then I suddenly heard a Korean man was in the area again recruiting more girls to work in the Japanese factories. I went to P'yŏngch'on to meet him and promised him I would go to Japan to work. He gave me the time and the place of my departure and I returned home to ready myself to leave. In those days people were rather simple, and I, having had no education, didn't know anything of the world. All I knew – all I thought I knew – was that I was going to work in a factory to earn money. I never dreamed that this could involve danger. (The Korean Council, 1995: 42–3)

A further example comes from the testimony of Mardiyem from Indonesia. In her testimony, given in public in December 1995, she described the situation of her recruitment as:

[In 1942] a Japanese doctor called 'Sogenji' came from Kalimantan. According to him, he was looking for those who wanted to work at Kalimantan. And he was looking for those who worked at restaurants and theatres. The news of recruitment was not official but was rumoured among people. (Asia Forum, 1997: 13 – translated from the Japanese text)

However, as seen above, in the testimony made in July 1996, she said that:

I went there [Banjarmasin in Kalimantan/Borneo], because there was an announcement by the Japanese mayor that the Japanese recruiters had come to Yogjarkarta to look for workers. I was invited to work in the theatre. (Senso Giseisha, 1997: 123 – translated from the Japanese text)

Hata Ikuhiko, a right-inclined professor in history, has pointed out that in the case of Kim Hak-sun, a South Korean woman, the fact that Kim was

trained as a *kisaeng* (a female artist who dances and plays music to entertain customers) was not publicly revealed at first.[11] This, he suggested, is because Kim (and Kim's supporters) regarded that telling her *kisaeng* background openly would be damaging, as the work of *kisaeng* has often been understood to be closely related to that of prostitutes. In addition, the fact that she was sold (or that her mother received money for her) is rarely mentioned (Hata, 1999: 179–82). As Kim Hak-sun gave testimonies in different places, if these testimonial narratives are compared, it, indeed, becomes clear that she presented different life stories, and her testimonies can be said are in that sense inconsistent.

In *Asahi Shimbun* (1991), one of the broadsheet newspapers in Japan, it was reported that she was recruited in Pyongyang in 1939 by a local facilitator who offered her a high-earning job. She was taken from Pyongyang by train with Japanese soldiers. In Ishikawa (1993), it is explained that a Japanese policeman came with a man from the village and told Kim that if she worked as *teishintai* (girl labourer) she could earn a lot of money; she was pressed to accept the offer because it was the Emperor's order. Then she was dragged onto a Japanese truck, was taken to Pyongyang, and from there they got board on the train to China. According to Nishino (1993), Kim was adopted by Mr Kim and attended a *kisaeng* school for three years. When she was seventeen years old, her stepfather took her and another young woman, a year older than Kim, to North China to earn money. When they reached China, Kim and another woman bade her stepfather farewell. Then they were taken to a Chinese people's house by the Japanese soldiers, but were locked in a room upon arrival. Last, in the testimony published by the Korean Council, Kim said that she was fostered by a family who trained *kisaeng* based on a contract her mother had made with the family, for which her mother received 40 yen. After completing enough training, her foster father took her and another girl to China, where he was taken away as a suspected spy by Japanese soldiers while Kim and the other girl were dragged onto a truck.

Making reference to such discrepancies, revisionist critics argue that 'comfort women's' testimonies are not trustworthy, and Hata, for example, has insisted that testimonies have deliberately been altered to press the women's claim in a lawsuit against the Japanese government (Kobayashi, 1997: 177; Hata, 1999: 179–82). They attempt to identify a consistent life story, which makes sense to them, in the women's testimonies. If any accounts contradict each other or are too extraordinary to believe, they claim that the testimonies are untrustworthy and call these women 'liars'.

Second, they consider that the testimonies of 'comfort women' lack validity because of their 'dishonourable' lives after the war. As an example, Hata gives Yun Tu-ri, who testified that she was taken by a policeman and was told that she would be given a good job (The Korean Council, 1995: 186). He asserts that her testimony is unreliable, because she was an insincere

woman having made her living after the War 'from selling American dollars and goods on the black market, by dealing in opium, by buying and selling through somewhat illegal channels' (Hata, 1999: 191; The Korean Council, 1995: 192). Yun testified that, as her body was ruined, what she could only think of was earning money (The Korean Council, 1995: 192). Illegal trading could have been one of the few opportunities for her to achieve this goal. Ironically, however, Hata's argument indicated that he actually draws on her testimonies, though selectively; he embraces her account of being an illegal trader, while rejecting the other account.

Third, the revisionists have also challenged women's testimonies on the grounds that what has been testified is implausible (Uesugi, 1993: 232–3). In reading the testimony of Yi Yong-su from South Korea, which explained how she and other girls were raped by soldiers when the ship she was on board was hit by a bomb, Hata asserted that it was unlikely that soldiers would rape women one after another during a sea journey, when they were at the risk of being killed by bombs (The Korean Council, 1995: 90–1; Hata, 1999: 192). Hata and his like seem to believe that only what they regard as possible can happen in history, and that these events can be supported by evidence in official documents (Nakamura, 1993: 6; Ahn, 1999: 29). However, they are not as empirical as they claim: what they say is based on an assumption that what is unthinkable cannot be true, and that only those events on which official records exist actually happened; they merely draw selectively on official or other records to fit to their arguments. The lack of official documents or being 'unthinkable' cannot be a decisive reason to deny that certain events have happened, as has been argued in Holocaust studies. Their method is what Pierre Vidal-Naquet called 'non-ontological proof' because, as with the gas chambers, 'non-existence' was one of the attributes of coerced 'comfort women' (Vidal-Naquet, 1992: 23; Ukai, 1997: 53–5).

Finally, conservative critics have exploited the relative absence of testimonies of Japanese women and have claimed that women of any virtue would not dare to testify to their experience of having sex with a number of soldiers. They have stressed that even with the experience of mass rape, for instance, by the Soviet soldiers in Manchuria towards the end of the war, Japanese women victims mostly kept silent about this. Kobayashi argues that the lives of those in Japan who claim the need for achieving social justice are founded on the sacrifice of such women, and praises those who endured hardship but remained silent while embracing it (Kobayashi, 1997: 21). However, a claim like his does not acknowledge that this silence could have been caused by the societal prejudice against women who were victims of unwanted sex.

Counter-arguments and their problems

Not only do revisionists refute 'comfort women's' testimonies, but they also maintain that those who deserve the most sympathy are the former Japanese

soldiers who are now accused of having been rapists despite the enormous sacrifice they made. They claim that the historical 'facts' have been manipulated and the 'true' history has been distorted by feminists and left-wing activists.[12] The counter-arguments by feminists and left-wing critics about why these discrepancies happen have not always been forthcoming or effective. Even in the school textbook debate, where the desire of conservative critics to remove the commentary on 'comfort women' was once overruled, the ultra-nationalists have been regaining their popular support. Feminists or historians who support the victim-survivors have been trying hard to fight against revisionist claims, but they have not always presented strong counter-arguments to certain issues, such as the inconsistencies of women's testimonies.

One of the problems is that feminists and left-wing critics, though they strongly contest revisionist claims, have employed a similar conceptual framework to the revisionists. First, like revisionists, they pursue the true history, although unlike the revisionists, they consider women's testimonies to be the very exemplification of this true history, and the revisionists are the ones who are misrepresenting and distorting history. Second, the early feminist discussion on the 'comfort women' system (unintentionally) employed the virgin (forced)/whore (voluntary) dichotomy to highlight the coercive nature of the 'comfort women' system. Third, as discussed in Chapter 2, they, like the revisionists, essentialize 'Japanese' culture. Their version, however, by seeing it as traditionally sexually oppressive to women, looks more negative than that of the revisionists.

Challenging revisionist accusations that the claim of 'comfort women' and feminists does not correspond to historical fact, feminists and left-wing scholars and activists have argued that the revisionists' rejection of the testimonies of victim-survivors is itself an act of distorting historical fact. Some feminists maintained that these women's testimonies have opened the door to the historical 'truth' and offered the opportunity to rewrite the narrative that has overlooked gender inequality and oppression in history (Suzuki, 1997a: 73–5). However, their arguments seemed to suggest that the historical 'truth'/ 'fact', neutral, objective and transparent to anyone, is out there (Ueno, 1998: 154).[13] Some examples of such statements are as follows:

> History education is required not only to be logical, but also to be rational enough to be able to unveil the historical truth, drawing on historical facts. (Ishiyama, 1996: 70 – translated from the Japanese text)

> Those who consider [educating school children about 'comfort women'] as 'anti-Japanese' and 'self-tormenting' are themselves foolish. This is because they cannot even acknowledge historical facts and make absurd claims only to be ridiculed by the world. (Matsui, 1996: 56 – translated from the Japanese text)

With reliable testimonial records, based on what is testified, we pursue [historical] facts by critically examining them as historical records, making reference to other records, such as written documents. (Yoshimi, 1997c: 93 – translated from the Japanese text)[14]

Their [the revisionists'] aim is to erase the trace of war crimes that Japan committed, such as 'the military comfort women', 'The Nanking Massacre' and 'The Three Destructions Policy', from history. However, without confronting the historical truth and self-reflecting [our deeds] in history, we cannot expect any bright future [for Japan]. (Suzuki, 1997a: 77 – translated from the Japanese text)

As these comments demonstrate, feminist and left-wing scholars seem to have assumed there exist transparent historical 'facts'/ 'truth' and that these are distorted by the revisionists. However, what they understand as the historical 'facts'/ 'truth' slightly varies, and this has also affected how they see the testimonies of victim-survivors in relation to other types of historical records such as written documents. From the outset, a clear articulation of why their version of history should be any truer than the revisionist counterpart is missing. In addition to this, the lack of a distinct and consistent argument by feminist and left-wing critics with regard to why and in what ways testimonies can be associated with the historical 'facts'/ 'truth' seems to have been one of the reasons why they have not always been successful in challenging popular support for the revisionist claim.

Historian Yoshimi, for example, is highly aware of the importance of testimonies as certain historical 'facts' can only be revealed by those who experienced particular events. He has always emphasized the significance of listening to the voices of survivors and has challenged the title of positivist or 'document-centred scholar' given to him (Yoshimi, 1997c: 92–3; 1998: 36). However, by claiming that digging out historical 'facts' from testimonies drawing on official documents, Yoshimi's approach sounds as if it only gives a secondary role to testimonies in understanding history (Shin, 1997: 125–6; Ahn, 1999: 36). Yoshimi has worked closely with feminists over many years. However, his stronger emphasis on official documents as the source of the historical facts can be distinguished from the feminist focus on oral testimonies as an alternative source of the historical 'facts'/ 'truth' and their call for re-examining official documents through gender lenses. What differentiates the argument of Yoshimi from that of feminists such as Suzuki is that the latter considers that testimonies, and not official documents, are the key to historical 'facts'/'truth'. When Suzuki stated that 'comfort women's' life stories have penetrated the darkness of history and opened the door of the truth (Suzuki, 1997a: 73), for example, truth is simply asserted, and no specific explanation is given as to why their testimonies can lead us to the historical 'facts'/ 'truth'. In a sense, the testimonies are treated as alternative, but more authentic, historical data (Kim, H.,

1997: 95). Claiming the authenticity of women's testimonies without clear reasoning has, however, unfortunately led to the revisionist challenge that points out inconsistencies in testimonies, as examined above.

Many feminist researchers who were involved in interviewing the victim-survivors have always been aware of the complexities surrounding the testimonies. However, the strong claim of their association with the historical 'facts'/ 'truth' seems to have prevented this matter from being discussed extensively during the 1990s. Yoshimi is one of a few scholars who engaged with this issue from the early days of the discussion on the system of 'comfort women'. He openly admitted that testimonies often differ from each other, but also argued that it is necessary to establish which testimony is most accurate (Yoshimi, 1997b: 73–6; Yoshimi, 1997c: 92–3). He acknowledged that all testimonies, accurate or not, are important, and stressed the need to explore why some narratives in testimonies are inaccurate and/or modified. Nevertheless, his primary concerns seem to be not in the testimonies themselves, but in establishing the historical 'facts'. On the other hand, the feminist approach requires a more holistic approach to testimonies, and Ahn Yonson, another scholar who addressed this issue in the 1990s, argued that:

> To cope properly with oral narratives, the most important thing is to elicit unrevealed history in terms of the narrators' own views and experiences. If they omitted, exaggerated, or overestimated/understated something in their narrative story, the reasons for that should be looked for and analysed by the researcher, rather than undermining the authenticity of their testimonies and labelling those stories as unreliable or untrue. (Ahn, 1999: 93)

The reason during the 1990s that feminists and others who support 'comfort women' victim-survivors gave most readily to explain why inconsistencies in women's testimonies occur was post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). (For example, Yang, 1997; Kuwayama, 1998). Referring to Judith Herman's *Trauma and Recovery* (1992), they argued that women experience a 'fragmentation' of memory, where the memories may be very clear as segments, but lack connections to each other or a chronology. This was given as the explanation of why women cannot tell a (consistent) story of their lives (Kuwayama, 1998: 16). While PTSD could explain, to some extent, why testimonies are often incoherent, in this reasoning women are not necessarily considered as active narrators of their experience, nor is the dynamism of their testimonies fully explored (Yang, 1997: 53; Kim, H., 1997: 95).

The claim that testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors can reveal the historical 'facts'/ 'truth' has also resulted in many life stories of women being presented without much contextual information on how their experience has been remembered and was narrated. Many women recounted their

experience orally, partly because many of them were illiterate, and their life stories were recorded and edited by researchers or journalists. There are also life stories published as part of studies by researchers with detailed biographical information on these women; this information includes that obtained by researchers and not necessarily given by 'comfort women' victims themselves. Consider the case of Mardiyem from Indonesia introduced earlier, who had an aspiration to become an actress. She applied for the job, because the recruiter (a Japanese dentist and businessman) Sogenji Kango was with her childhood friend who was a singer, and asked Mardiyem to join her to work in the theatre (Kawada, 1997: 12–14). After Mardiyem became a 'comfort woman', she became pregnant. She was taken to a doctor and prescribed medicine to abort the child, which she took for a week. As it did not work, a German female doctor carried out an abortion. The doctor removed the foetus by scraping the uterus without anaesthesia, as there was a shortage of anaesthetics and appropriate instruments. The aborted foetus was still alive (Kawada, 1997: 28). These detailed stories of her life, however, are (only) reported in the study by Kawada. In the testimony Mardiyem made in 1996 in Japan, she describes the situation as follows:

> I was brought up in Yogyakarta, but was taken to a place called Banjarmasin [in Kalimantan/Borneo]. I went there because there was an announcement by the Japanese mayor that the Japanese recruiters had come to Yogjarkarta to look for workers. I was invited to work in the theatre. I travelled on a ship from Yogjarkarta to Surabaya, and then to Banjarmasin (Senso Giseisha, 1997: 123 – translated from the Japanese text).

> In 1943, at the age of fourteen, I became pregnant. When my pregnancy was known, I was summoned and forced to abort without any anaesthetics. The process was so brutal and the pain was unimaginable. My stomach was pressed hard to cause miscarriage. The child who was forced to come out was still alive. (Senso Giseisha, 1997: 125 – translated from the Japanese text)

In order to understand the 'comfort women' system and their experience fully, it is helpful to have further information on their lives, which women did not disclose or which was only given to researchers that they trusted. However, it is also hard to distinguish what was actually said by the women themselves from what was added or omitted by the researchers. For the oral testimonies to be accessible and comprehensible to the public, they need to go through the process of recording, transcribing, translating and editing. As recounting the lives of the survivors is of utmost importance, volunteers and researchers who were involved in this process often treated themselves as transparent tools that bring the women's testimonies to light. However, researchers are not mere instruments or neutral beings. While any testimonies and life stories of 'comfort women' victims, including those from

public hearings and in autobiographies, are not free from the intervention of volunteers and researchers, this issue was not widely discussed during the 1990s. For example, Maria Rosa Luna Henson's autobiography was edited, translated and initially published in Japanese with the help of Fujime, a scholar in modern Japanese history. From the postscript, it is fairly clear that Henson's autobiography is the result of a collaboration between Henson and Fujime (Fujime, 1995).

Many activists and researchers acknowledged that these victim-survivors recounted (or did not recount) their life stories through specific interactions with researchers as listeners (for example, see Kawada, 1994; Yang, 1997; Kim-Gibson, 1999). However, in view of the need to present fairly coherent life stories for lawsuits, and to claim the authenticity of women' testimonies to challenge the revisionist, this inter-subjective nature of testimonies was understated. During the 1990s in particular, it was not necessarily presented as a possible reason why women's testimonies were inconsistent. For example, journalists, researchers or other listeners to women's life stories might expect these women to fit into the ideal image of the victim – one who had been a naive virgin, taken by coercion or violence, forced to have sex with many soldiers, kept in comfort stations for a certain period, and who had lived with extreme pain and suffering since. This can prompt testimonies to be adjusted or to follow a particular life story formula (Kim-Gibson, 1999). In addition, importantly, it is suggested this prevented some women, whose experience differed from this ideal image of victim-survivor, from giving their own testimonies (Ueno, 1998: 176–7).

Feminist and left-wing critics' quest for the 'truth' of history through testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors has inadvertently deprived people in Japan of a reasonable way to engage with soldiers' testimonies, which conflicted with women's accounts, but were equally emotive. Many people in Japan have learnt about the 'comfort women' system and encountered testimonies of victim-survivors through research and events organized by feminist and left-wing scholars. Such research and events not only aimed to identify the responsibility of Japanese government, but also to reflect the responsibility of individuals. For example, Nishino Rumiko argued that while the main responsibility for war remains with the Emperor, individual soldiers cannot be completely excused for their own criminal conduct (Nishino, 1997b: 46–7). This move, while reasonable, made many people in Japan uneasy. They were reluctant to blame their own grandfathers, former soldiers or civilian military employees, for having been murderers, rapists or victimizers. They believed that their grandfathers' generation actually suffered and endured difficult lives during the Asian-Pacific War under fascism and also had to work relentlessly after the war to rebuild Japan. They were worried that supporting 'comfort women' victim-survivors could deny the lives of their grandparents and parents, but feminists and left-wing critics did not manage to offer any reasonable answer for this. One of the

reasons that the revisionist critics have been so influential in contemporary Japan is that they have exploited such feeling towards the suffering of the older generation, which feminist and left-wing activists do not always embrace. Also, as mentioned earlier, why the testimonies of victim-survivors should be seen as more reliable than those of soldiers has rarely been explained. The difficulty, as Oka Mari argues, is that the feminist compassion for 'comfort women', and revisionists' (or those who are attracted to their discourse) compassion for the Japanese soldiers are completely incompatible, but at the same time based on the shared logic of identification (Oka, 1997: 101).

Probing the truth of history in and through testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors, therefore, has raised a number of complicated issues. As Yang argues, the aim of the initial studies of survivors' testimonies to uncover the 'comfort women' system and to prove official involvement of the Japanese government employed the existing framework of truth, and this has resulted in reducing to some extent the meaning of the testimonies (Yang, 2008: 86). More extended analysis of the problem of claiming and probing truth in and through testimonies will be provided in the following chapters, drawing on the discussion of feminist methodology, Holocaust studies and post-colonial studies. It will be argued that these studies have offered a more nuanced approach to testimonies, which is successful in capturing their richness beyond the truth effect. This does not suggest that the quest for the truth of history should be abandoned. Recommendations submitted to the Japanese government in June 2014 during the 12th Asian Solidarity Conference on the Issue of Military Sexual Slavery by Japan demonstrate that the 'comfort women' victims (and supporters) demand accounting of the truth as one of the measures for reparation that the Japanese government should take. The point is that the implication of victim-survivors' testimonies should and could be understood beyond the framework of truth, and such understanding may possibly offer a more effective counter-argument against the revisionists. Before moving on to these issues, lastly, the problem of the virgin/whore dichotomy will now be discussed.

Fujime, a feminist historian in modern Japanese history, argued in 1997 that the women's (regional and global) movement to support the survivors of the 'comfort women' system unintentionally reproduced the virgin/whore divide (1997b). In challenging those revisionists who claimed that 'comfort women' were 'professional' and paid prostitutes, feminists initially have argued that 'comfort women' could not be identified with licensed prostitutes, and drew the line between 'comfort women' and 'professional prostitutes'. These feminists tried to quickly dismiss the revisionist view that 'comfort women' were licensed, and thus legally accepted prostitutes who engaged in selling sexual services.[15] Moreover, while feminists and left-wing scholars see women under both circumstances suffer from sexual slave-like conditions, some argue that (professional) licensed prostitutes experienced

less cruelty than 'comfort women'.[16] Fujime, however, found such a view problematic (Fujime, 1997b: 8). As demonstrated above, comfort stations (or rape centres) were differently organized and the experience of women was mainly determined by where and when they became 'comfort women' (Yoshimi, 1995b; Uesugi, 1997: 225–9). For example, within Japanese colonies and occupied territories, comfort stations in Chinese cities were often run privately, involving monetary exchange. On the other hand, in the remote areas of China or South East Asia, where Japan invaded and the influence and presence of the Japanese military was more prominent, payment was, in most cases, out of the question. The experience was also affected by the difference in the stage of the war. Those women who were subjected to this form of sexual exploitation later in the war suffered more severe coercion and brutality.

In feminist argument, the payment should, in principle, be of little importance. Whether these women received payment or not, or different ways that they were recruited (by violence or not) do not matter; structural inability to escape the recruitment and from the life of 'comfort women' needs to be addressed. However, the idea that girls without any previous sexual experience were forced to become 'comfort women' seemed to be more appalling to the public, including to some feminists. Consequently, the early days of the movement to support 'comfort women' victim-survivors partly developed on the assumption that virgins (not professional prostitutes) were worse off in the situation of forced sex and/or rape because they were inexperienced. However, claiming that the damage to virgins was greater than that to prostitutes simply separates 'victims', discriminating against the latter. Yamashita Yongae maintained that such an argument is problematic as it seems to suggest that rape is only a crime when the victim is a virgin and not a prostitute (Yamashita, 2001a: 94). Although the virgin/whore dichotomy should be contested, especially by feminists, it actually was unintentionally reproduced in the redress movement during the 1990s.

This difficulty has been addressed, particularly in relation to the feminist movement in South Korea, to redress the harm inflicted on 'comfort women'. The 'comfort women' issue has initially been discussed mainly in the context of national/racial issues in South Korea and the differences between Japanese military prostitutes and Korean 'comfort women' who were supposed to have been virgins were emphasized (Yamashita, 2001a; Moon, 2011). Yamashita demonstrated how this dichotomy, influenced by the male perspective, was integral to the statement issued by the Korean Council in 1993 to challenge the second report on 'comfort women' presented by the Japanese government.

> [Korean] comfort women were different from Japanese prostitutes working under the licensed prostitution system at the time, as comfort women

were sexual slaves who were forced to offer sexual service in the military by the [Japanese] state power. ... Japanese [comfort] women were, in their nature, different from sexual slave-like forced military comfort women. Japanese comfort women became comfort women under the licensed prostitution system then operated in Japan. They received payment, made contracts and were allowed to give up working as comfort women when their contracts reached full term. (Yamashita, 2001a: 90–1 – translated from the Japanese text)

Such a statement posed some difficulty as it seemingly suggested that Japanese 'comfort women' were not sexual slaves under the 'comfort women' system, because they had been prostitutes. The problem was that this dichotomy of virgin/forced vs. prostitute/voluntary was the very rhetoric that the Japanese revisionists employed (Yamashita, 2001a: 91). Yun Chung-ok, then the representative of the Korean Council, stressed the national/racial aspect of the system of the 'comfort women'. Yun claimed that the politics of the 'comfort women' issue was a matter of national/racial dignity, so that each action of a 'comfort woman' had more than one individual effect (Yamashita, 2001a: 89–90; Yi, 1998: 91–2).[17] This perspective, it was suggested, has generated tensions within the movement to support 'comfort women' victim-survivors. Feminists in South Korea aimed to redress the honour of victims/survivors and to protect national/racial dignity, and expected 'comfort women' victims to join them in this struggle. However, as survivors had their own aims and agenda, which might be different from those of feminists, their distrust in some feminist activists grew, and conflict between them developed.

  This disagreement was particularly obvious in their approach to the Asian Women's Fund. Some activists pressured women not to accept atonement money from the Fund, and criticized those who expressed their interest in accepting or actually received money. It is said that those women who accepted atonement money were not allowed to receive the provision from South Korean public donations and were barred from attending 'comfort women' support events (Yamashita, 2001a: 88–9; Yi, 1998: 91; Usuki, 1998: 66–71). Of course, it is the Japanese government, determined to implement the Asian Women's Fund, that was mainly to blame for generating such distrust and conflict within the redress movement. However, it was also indicated that part of the responsibility lay with feminists in South Korea who (initially) failed to acknowledge the issue beyond the nationalist/racial framework, and ignored the individuality of women's experience and damage (Yamashita, 2001a: 89).[18]

  This reproduction of the virgin/whore dichotomy by the 'comfort women' redress movement in the early 1990s was one of the reasons why Japanese 'comfort women' did not come forward. As they were supposed to have worked as prostitutes or to have been sold into prostitution, it was likely that they did not consider themselves as deserving victims. From the late

1990s feminists became more aware of this problem and started to challenge it. This was well illustrated in the WIWCT held in Tokyo in December 2000. For example, Fujime was appointed as a special witness to present a report on Japanese 'comfort women'. She strongly insisted that women who had been prostitutes before they became 'comfort women' were equally the victims of sexual slavery by the Japanese military, and this statement was acclaimed by many feminists (VAWW-NET, 2002a: 218–20; Kim, P., 2001; 213–14).[19] Such a move was welcome as it has made it possible for Japanese and other 'comfort women' victims who had been licensed prostitutes to come forward. However, this paradigm shift might have been too late, since no Japanese 'comfort women' came forward after the Tribunal. As it has often been suggested, Japanese 'comfort women' were more likely to be older than other Asian women, and not many Japanese 'comfort women' would have been alive in 2000. Nevertheless, scholars still emphasize that embedding the issue of Japanese 'comfort women' victims in a broader discussion on the 'comfort women' system is the key to resolving the 'comfort women' issue and challenging the gender inequality, sexism and sexual violence which still prevails in Japan (and globally) (Fujime, 2015: 28–9; Inohara et al., 2014; Yamashita, 2009).

6
Listening to Women's Voices

The testimonies of 'comfort women' victims, as examined in the previous chapter, have played a key role in re-examining how history is understood and written, and have been vital in the debate surrounding the 'comfort women' system. Feminists, in particular, have argued that the victims' testimonies have uncovered women's experience in history, which had been ignored or under-represented in official documents. Ahn also points out that victim-survivors tend to be more at ease with the oral mode of communication, as many of them have been near illiterate (Ahn, 1999: 60–2). As discussed, while it is essential to examine and rewrite history from a gendered perspective, probing historical 'facts'/'truth' and claiming that the testimonies of 'comfort women' victims can reveal them has raised many problems. We need, therefore, other ways to engage with and listen to these women's narratives. This chapter will examine how feminism has been engaging with women's narratives and how such discussion would offer the possibility of understanding testimonies beyond the discussion of historical 'facts'/'truth'.

While feminists started to focus more on women's voices, previously marginalized in academic studies as well as in the public domain, scholars in various academic disciplines also began to question power relations in studying the voices of those who were deemed to be the Other. In Holocaust studies, too, researchers were concerned with the way to listen to the testimonies of traumatic experiences. Difficulties surrounding testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors, particularly those in relation to the truth-value, are similarly addressed in these studies on listening to the voices of those who are marginalized, oppressed and/or have had traumatic experiences. Mainly through the discussion of feminist methodology and narrative studies, this chapter will explore how these studies have engaged with the question of (historical) 'facts'/'truth' in narratives.

6.1   Feminist discussions

Feminist methodology

When the second-wave feminist movement emerged in the 1970s in Europe and the United States, the slogan 'the personal is political' encouraged researchers to focus more on women's issues and experiences, and the question of 'what' to research and 'how' to conduct this research was also a central concern. Feminist movements developed in the 1970s outside the West as well, such as the Women's Liberation Movement in Japan. While it grew very much out of its own socio-political contexts, and was not an import of the Western feminist movement, it equally raised issues such as the right of women to control their own bodies, including the right to abortion and access to contraception, and women's unpaid domestic labour (Inoue and Ueno, eds., 1994: i–ii; Ueno, 1994: 2–11). The discussion on methodology and epistemology developed after they started to reflect on their research, and, particularly in the 1990s, it questioned heteronormativity and the marginalization of minority groups in their movement (Ueno, 1994: 20–2). As these studies have highly been influenced by the debates in Europe and the US, this section will look mainly at discussions of feminist methodology and epistemology developed in Europe and the US during the 1980s and 1990s.

Considering objectivity or neutrality claimed in the study of science as partial and biased, feminist researchers initially aimed to adjust this male bias and addressed the absence of women in academic disciplines. Examining the experience of women in various realms of society was regarded as crucial. In historical studies for instance, women were made the focus of inquiry and it was questioned whether women have (their own) history or not. Not only expanding the realm for research, feminists also questioned 'how' to conduct research or what counts as legitimate (feminist) knowledge. Claiming conventional research methods are biased with masculine perspectives, feminists wondered whether they should adopt a distinctive method in their research (Graham, 1983: 137).[1] In sociology, for example, quantitative research, which focuses on the collection of 'objective' social data through a 'value free form of data collection', is seen as the representation of a 'masculinist' approach to knowing. Qualitative approaches, thus, were advocated, and interviewing, in particular, became the preferred method of feminists (Maynard, 1994: 11).[2] Similarly, in history studies, in order to record women's presence and role in history, feminist historians and researchers became attracted to women's own narratives of their experiences, and have widely adopted the interview technique in their research. Such a focus on qualitative 'data' and method has a strong resonance with the weight given to women's testimonies in the 'comfort women' debates. As will be discussed below, feminist studies on research methodology developed in Europe and the US shares many concerns raised in the 'comfort

women' debates, particularly with reference to listening to (or researching) women's testimonies.

While the interview became a preferred research method of feminists, in traditional research, the interview is considered 'a mechanical instrument of data-collection', and interviewees are characterized as passive individuals and mere objects of research. Interviewers are treated as a recording machine, emotionally detached from the interviewees, with their personality ignored (Oakley, 1981: 31, 36–7). At the same time, it is interviewers who mainly control the interview process; thus the relationship between interviewers and interviewees is never equal, and from the very beginning feminist researchers have rejected this power hierarchy between researcher and researched (Oakley, 1981: 41).

Feminists also argued that asking appropriate questions to produce new 'data' on women's lives and activities, which has been a traditional historical method of inquiry, often fails to understand the richness of women's narratives (Anderson and Jack, 1991: 11–26; Gluck and Patai, 1991: 9). The eagerness of researchers to generalize can undermine their ability to listen to women's narratives of their individual experience, and feminist researchers realized, as Anderson argued, that if they want to know about their lives, they have 'to allow women to talk about their feelings as well as activities' (Anderson and Jack, 1991: 15). Exploring women's lives through their narratives thus:

> requires much more than a new set of questions to explore women's unique experiences and unique perspective; we need to refine our methods for probing more deeply by listening to the levels on which the narrator responds to the original questions. (Anderson and Jack, 1991: 17)

This exploration also recognizes the importance of non-verbal communication, such as the style of communication, tone and voices, as well as hesitation and silence (Anderson and Jack, 1991: 12, 17; Kelly, 1988: 12; Minister, 1991).

While feminists in different academic disciplines may engage with women's narratives in slightly different manners, they all at least attempt to explore how each woman understands and reflects her experience in her own words (Anderson and Jack, 1991: 23). What is more, they argue that feminist research methods should move away from one-way information gathering practice to interaction between researchers and women narrators. Narrators or interviewees thus become more than mere providers of information, and the position of researchers is subjected to investigation too. Feminists argued that researchers are not neutral in or detached from the research process and their role and practice equally needs to be examined; researchers have to listen to their own questions and responses; they should be open to questions from the interviewees, as research studies are intersubjective, with questions flowing in both directions (Minister, 1991: 36).

They became aware that differences and similarities in socio-cultural backgrounds of researchers and 'the researched' can also be a crucial factor in the interview process (Anderson and Jack, 1991: 13–14). Overall, feminists have stressed the importance of identifying their roles and locations in their research studies. For example, Stanley and Wise maintained that 'hygienic research' that has been taken for granted in scientific research, rejecting personal and emotional involvement, is in reality impossible. Moreover, the assumption of 'objective' research that the researcher can simply exist independent of the researched is misleading (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 161). Stanley and Wise as well as other feminists thus argued that the researchers cannot be removed from the research process, and that they are inevitably one of the central subjects in their research, as their being and practice very much affects what they 'find' (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 161, 228; Maynard, 1994: 16; Reay, 1996: 60).

However, whereas feminists focused less on 'data' collecting, and were more concerned about non-hierarchal and inter-subjective relations between researchers and the 'researched', their approach was not free from problems. Feminists realized that even 'women interviewing women is not an unproblematic activity' (Gluck and Patai, 1991: 9).[3] Reflecting on research conducted on women during the 1970s and the 1980s, many feminists later pointed out that they had assumed their being 'women' qualified them to better understand women's experiences, and that they had rarely critically examined their own research methodology.

Feminists have become more aware of the challenge in their research, namely understanding differences among women. They realize that hierarchical relations that they believed to have been dissolved in fact remained in their research, and that there is a possible exploitation of the marginalized (Wolf, 1996: 2, 19–20; Edwards and Ribbens, 1998: 2–3; Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 3). Even when researchers as well as the researched are considered as the subject of research, assuming that they are equal and that the divide between them can completely be resolved is risky, as this can disguise serious exploitation (Stacey, 1991: 113; Wolf, 1996: 20). In the (ethnographic) research process the researcher generally has more control, such as in deciding what to research and how research relationships and procedures should operate (Wolf, 1996: 19–21). The research process can also be very exploitative, as researchers could even benefit from the tragedy of the informant, however uneasy the researcher feels about it (Stacey, 1991: 113; Wolf, 1996: 21). The researcher, furthermore, can exercise her (his) power after the fieldwork through interpreting interviews and representing and writing up the research. No matter how much interviewees/participants are involved in reviewing, the research product is 'ultimately that of the researchers…registered in a researcher's voice' (Stacey, 1991; 114). In short, researchers are given authoritative power to transform people's lives into texts (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 113).

Feminists' longing for an egalitarian relationship may result in an over-identification of researchers with the researched and this can further conceal differences between these women that can generate unequal power relations (Reay, 1996: 57, Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 113). Even when the solidarity of female identity and over-identification as women is claimed with good intentions, this can mask inequality between women based on social divisions, such as ethnicity, race and class (Patai, 1991: 144). Over-identification became particularly problematic in the context of feminist interviews, as it normalized the experience of urban, white, middle-class, heterosexual women in the West, while discounting differences among women, and this became one of the most discussed issues in (feminist) research, particularly during the 1990s (Wolf, 1996: 2; Edwards and Ribbens, 1998; 2–3). In challenging (white) men's experience to be represented as authentic, presenting white middle-class women's experience as an alternative norm also posed various problems (Etter-Lewis, 1991: 43–4).

Feminist research, therefore, still entails the potential to reproduce the social inequalities and hierarchical relations that it aims to unveil, challenge and redress (Patai, 1991: 149). Feminists have suggested various measures to avoid exploitation and misappropriation of the researched, such as a fuller collaboration between researchers and the researched (Stacey, 1991: 114, 118) and/or deconstructing the textual process to counterbalance the textual appropriation of the researched (Opie, 1992: 57, 67). They also emphasized the importance of paying attention to the particular ways that language is used, as through the hidden feelings often found between the lines, it can further reveal complex aspects of individual lives (Etter-Lewis, 1991; 47). However, not only can these measures not guarantee to protect the 'researched' from exploitation, but also they severely limit who and what can be researched and therefore can undermine feminist interests (Stacey, 1991: 118 note 12). It should also be noted, as will be further discussed later, that some feminists argue that while it is crucial to be perceptive about differences and inequalities, the assumption that the researched are powerless and merely the victims of exploitation can be equally problematic (Wolf, 1996: 21). Feminists' initial inattention to differences among women originated from their epistemological stance that women's experience is the primary source of knowledge (Gottfried, 1996: 3; Maynard and Purvis, 1994: 6). In order to explore the issues surrounding feminist methods further therefore, feminist standpoint theory and its critique will be examined next.

Feminist standpoint theory

Despite various differences in their arguments, proponents of feminist standpoint theory in the 1980s and 1990s shared two assumptions. First, all knowledge is socially situated and, second, the standpoint of women is privileged, as their experience of oppression can offer an insight that reveals the truth (or at least a less distorted view) of social reality (Hekman, 1997: 349;

Harding, 1987b: 184). Standpoint theory stemmed from the 'proletarian standpoint' developed by Marx, Engels and Lukacs, drawing on Hegel's master and slave dialectic. They believed that 'material life' structures and constrains human perception, and those who are oppressed gain knowledge through their struggle against those who oppress them (Harding, 1987b: 185). Adapting this Marxist argument, feminists such as Nancy Hartsock claimed that reality would be perceived differently according to material situations, as material lives structure the understanding of social relations. They consider while reality perceived by the dominant group is 'partial and perverse', the perception of the oppressed is not, and exposes human relations that are 'real but concealed' (Hartsock, 1987: 159; 175). The standpoint of the oppressed, therefore, is considered 'true' and 'liberatory' (Hekman, 1997: 343). In a similar manner, women's lives that have been organized through the sexual division of labour can offer a particular and privileged view on male dominance (Hartsock, 1987: 159). Standpoint and feminist knowledge acquired is favoured, as feminists considered that their struggles against male domination would produce a truer picture of social reality (Hartsock, 1997: 372–3; Harding, 1987b: 185).

Knowledge that is 'derived from a committed feminist exploration of women's experiences of oppression' is, therefore, not an abstract perspective, but 'practically engaged achievement' (Stanley and Wise, 1990: 27). However, it has been suggested that leading feminist standpoint theorists did not always offer a clear explanation as to why women's standpoints are less distorted than those of men (Hekman, 1997: 355; Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 75). Often the assumption was that the more the group is subordinated, the clearer their vision becomes (Collins, 1991: 206–7; Grant, 1993: 93). However, Donna Haraway warned of the danger of uncritically embracing the standpoints of the subjugated, 'romanticizing' and 'appropriating' them (Haraway, 1988: 584). The location of the subjugated does not automatically provide undistorted or purer visions, but it is its critical positioning that grounds 'knowledge organized around the imagery of vision' (Haraway, 1988: 587). Such misunderstanding leads to one of the difficulties of feminist standpoint theory: it claims the constructed nature of gender, while 'epistemologically privileging women's accounts of social life' without reflecting the constructedness of women's experience (Brown, 1995: 41). As Wendy Brown identified, such a contradiction also intersects with the problem of feminists probing the 'truth' in women's accounts of their lives.

Brown argues that the experience of women is historically and culturally formed and diverse, and open to interpretation, but in feminist standpoint theory this recognition is suspended (Brown, 1995: 41). Although embracing cultural relativism, feminists have rejected judgemental relativism, upholding the idea that judgement should stem from a 'true' or 'objective' knowledge. This can be observed in Harding's claim that 'strong objectivity' can contest judgemental relativism (Hekman, 1997: 354;

Harding, 1991: 142). Standpoint feminists maintained that women's experience is privileged because it contains hidden truth. What is uncovered is 'true' as it has been hidden, waiting to be revealed, which is the function that Foucault explored in his genealogy of confession. As women's subordination has been in part realized through confining women to the private sphere, talking about their experience has a confessional aspect, where 'truth' is supposed to be revealed (Brown, 1995: 41–2; Lamb, 1999: 127–31).

Stanley and Wise, who identify flaws in Harding's arguments, are not free from the claim of 'truth'. They are critical of Harding's argument as it implies that there is a given social reality that the researcher can unveil and that 'truth' exists independently of the knower. However, they themselves do not necessarily challenge the existence of objective social reality (Stanley and Wise, 1990: 41–2; Stanley and Wise, 1993: 9, 189; Maynard, 1994: 20). They emphasize the ontological basis of knowledge and reject any 'foundational grounds for judging the *a priori* superiority of the epistemologies of the oppressed' (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 227), because what is 'truth' is judged in a particular context where knowledge is generated (Maynard, 1994: 20). It is puzzling therefore, why they argue for the existence of reality out there and its truth value as:

> [W]e are perfectly happy with the notion of fractured foundationalism, for neither we nor other academic feminists argue against the existence of a material objective reality 'out there', independent of individual constructions of it. (Stanley and Wise, 1990: 41–2)

This suggests that feminism has a complex relationship with the 'truth' as the (objective) grounds for judgement (Brown, 1995: 43). Feminists have been concerned with replacing 'truth' with politics, as this also means abandoning 'privileged and systematic knowledge' and negotiating with 'a cacophony of unequal voices clamouring for position' (Brown, 1995: 43). Whereas feminists have been critical of 'Truth' as it is embedded in masculine and Western notion and practice, they have also been ambivalent towards postmodernism; they need to seek their own grounded knowledge. Anxious about Nietzsche's analyses of truth and morality as fully embroiled with power, feminists have claimed that the knowledge based on their truth is uncorrupted because it is clear of power (Brown, 1995: 43–8). Feminists who advocated a feminist standpoint distinguished feminist standpoint theory from modern foundationalist thought, which argues that 'rational application of rules of scientific method can discover the Truth' (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 62). However, as feminist standpoint theorists have failed to fully explore alternative ways to make their knowledge claims valid, they seem to have been in need of holding on to the idea of the 'Truth' as the basis of their claim.

By grounding its authenticity in the hidden and pre-given 'truth', feminist standpoint theory creates two further, though related, problems; neglecting the diversity of women and provoking relativism. First of all, the assumption of the given and hidden truth (in women's experience) in feminist standpoint theory suggests that all women, regardless of their differences such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality or culture, share a particular women's experience. Feminists who illuminate differences among women have criticized that feminist standpoint theories do not pay much attention to differences among women and particularly neglect the voice of non-white women. Postmodern feminists similarly have challenged feminist standpoint theorists' claim as essentialism; they reject grand narratives such as 'true reality', and accuse feminist standpoint theory of calling for 'one true story' about 'the world' (Harding, 1987b: 188). Following such a critique, advocates of feminist standpoint theory have since revised and elaborated their arguments to be more responsive to differences among women.[4]

However, this emphasis on the legitimacy of varied standpoints, which stem from different experiences, can simply result in standpoints making competing and incompatible claims. This is an undesirable scenario for feminists. In the call for recognizing differences, what can actually happen is re-inscribing of the dominant voice, while just adding new perspectives to the margins without challenging it. Some feminist standpoint feminists, such as Stanley and Wise, identified this potential problem, highlighting that, in Harding's discussion, standpoints of black or lesbian feminism are subordinated to the pre-existing framework of her standpoint approach (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 190; Maynard, 1994: 20). This is to say that different standpoints are warranted only when they can contribute to the development of feminist thought. They are only given a recognized status as far as they can be useful in enriching the dominant framework itself (Harding, 1991: 253).

Sherry Gorelick presents a similar critique in her analysis of Harding's reading of the work of bell hooks. Instead of adding another woman's voice, bell hooks insists that in order to analyse the wide range of people's experience, the views of 'women of colour' have to be shifted to the centre of feminist theory and politics. Feminism defined by white feminists must not simply be modified, but overturned by the perspective from 'the margin' (Gorelick, 1996: 36). Adding different standpoints without questioning the existing framework of feminist standpoint theory itself is entangled with its faith in the modernist notion of 'truth'. Although feminist standpoint theorists are in general critical of relativism,[5] they nonetheless demonstrate, at times, problematic symptoms of relativism. They assert that different voices should be equally valued, but this gesture merely secures the dominance of white urban middle class women's voices, while other voices remain marginalized.

Feminist scholars aim to challenge the traditional white masculine mode of knowledge (production). There has been a vast, and still incessant,

accumulation of work about women and gender, but there has not been a drastic change in scholarly research practice (Etter-Lewis, 1991: 55; Letherby, 2011: 65). Focusing on women's experiences and knowing about the lives of women, as Scott suggested, does not automatically elevate the status given to activities undertaken by women (Scott, 1988: 3). Conceptual and analytical frameworks that feminist researchers have taken for granted, such as the binary oppositions of private/public, nature/culture and emotion/reason require further critical examination, as research on women's experiences could actually confirm women's given marginalized status. Paying attention to women's activities in the private sphere could reinforce the private/public divide, failing not only to challenge the binary distinction between men and women, but also to reveal the very political construction of these categories (Scott, 1988: 40–1).

Many feminists have explicitly stated that feminist standpoint theory is now obsolete, and it may be an acceptable criticism that feminist standpoint theory was also trapped in the traditional mode of thinking, stemming from the Enlightenment, that it attempted to condemn (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 74, 78, 63). However, feminist standpoint theory still presented a major challenge to male bias in scholarly disciplines and the mode of producing knowledge, and has offered both methodological and epistemological grounds to illuminate women's experiences. Clare Hemmings also suggested recently that the re-reading of feminist standpoint theory through politicized affect, and developing the idea of affective solidarity, is the way for feminist political transformation. She claims that this could bring ontology and epistemology together 'integrat[ing] an account of experience that is dynamic rather than essentializing' (Hemmings, 2012).

In general however, feminist standpoint theory has been unsuccessful in providing a convincing explanation of why women's standpoint should be considered less distorted than that of men; it needs to acknowledge traditional philosophical values such as truth it relied on, and to critically examine its own analytical framework. The problem is that this entanglement with the underpinning of modern philosophical thought is not limited to feminist standpoint theory. As Jane Flax argues, however critical feminists are of Enlightenment thought and the belief that discovering a certain truth can improve the world, they seem to be experiencing enormous difficulty in abandoning modernist values completely (Flax, 1992: 447). Even those feminists who are influenced by post-structuralism/postmodernism have been reluctant to 'abandon the entire legacy of humanism and scientific method' (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002: 97). Truth claim and the problems it engenders may be most obvious in the discussion of feminist standpoint theory, but the challenges and limitations it faces are also shared by the wider community of feminists.

6.2   The dilemma of feminist arguments in 'comfort women' debates

In the 'comfort women' debates during the 1990s, feminists who are involved in the redress movement did not necessarily explore methodological and epistemological groundings for their arguments. While they did not develop any extended discussion on methodological and epistemological matters, as seen in previous chapters, they did seem to share similar concerns with those raised in the discussion of feminist methods: the emphasis on uncovering women's experiences, and in particular those of feminist standpoint theory in claiming the truth value of women's experiences. Feminists in the redress movement have argued that as 'comfort women' victims have been oppressed for a long time, their testimonies are free from distortion, and can consequently be assumed as 'truth'. As feminist standpoint theorists have challenged the masculine mode of knowledge production and foundationalist epistemology, feminists involved in the 'comfort women' debates have also contested the traditional study of history that neglected women's experiences.

While their achievement should be acknowledged, just as feminist standpoint theorists faced various dilemmas in their inability to distance themselves from truth claim and other modern conceptual frameworks, feminists in the redress movement, too, have encountered similar issues. These challenges include: treating testimonies as new 'data' that can uncover historical facts and truth; assuming the research process to be transparent and neutral, overlooking how power operates in research; over-generalizing the experience of women by neglecting differences among them; and reinforcing the dichotomy between male as the oppressor and female as the oppressed.

Testimonies as new historical 'data' and the neutrality of research

Most feminists who interviewed victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system were aware of the sensitivity and complexity entailed in working with these women and listening to their life stories, but feminist researchers initially focused rather on unveiling historical 'facts'. This is mainly because the exploration of the 'comfort women' system originally aimed to answer the question, particularly in South Korea, of what actually had happened to those women who had been drafted to support the war effort, but had never come back after the war.[6] Ahn Byeong Jik also stated, in the Japanese translation of a collection of testimonies of Korean victim-survivors, that interviewers agreed to focus on revealing truth (Ahn: 1993: 8). While this approach has enabled readers of the testimonies of victim-survivors such as this collection to make sense of what had happened to these women, how and what they actually testified and the dynamics of their narratives became obscured. A few researchers, however, mentioned the tension between listening to women's voices on the one hand, and seeking information on

the other, whether it is to clarify or confirm an already-established historical past or to uncover hidden truth or facts of history; they suggest that interviews with the 'comfort women' victims contain more than what they actually said about things that happened to them. Kawada wrote that in witnessing the intense suffering of Bae Bong-gi, a Korean survivor who lived in Okinawa Island, she often felt she could not elaborate questions to clarify what had happened to Bae during and after her days of sexual enslavement (Kawada, 1995: 212). Similarly, Yang Ching-ja, who over several years listened to the life story of Song Shin-do, another Korean victim-survivor living in Japan, and who became Song's close friend, mentioned her sense of helplessness whenever she felt Song's sufferings, carefully hidden behind her energetic talk (Zainichi, 1997: 10).

Despite such feminist observations, narratives and testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors have often been regarded as 'crystallized' facts, as Hyun Sook Kim pointed out.

> Curiously, however, the testimonies have quickly become reified as 'information' and 'data', and they are treated as hard facts and the truth about the past – 'facts' that must be verified. (Kim, H. 1997: 95)

Kim argues that this approach to testimonies can overlook the dynamic power and politics of narrating as well as the crucial process of remembering what these testimonies entail; not only what women narrated, but also how these women came to narrate particular aspects of their lives should be paid attention to. Contextualizing testimonies by paying full attention to the situation and the process of testifying, including information about the audience/listener/interviewer is vital for a better understanding of the power of testimonies and this, as explored earlier, is what those who advocated feminist methodology emphasized. For instance, some testimonies given by these women are more detailed than others. This may be because these testimonies were provided through repeated semi-structured interviews conducted over a certain period of time, while other testimonies were given at public hearings or meetings. These contextual differences affect women's narratives, what they testify and what they do not. Ahn Yonson indicated that the meaning of women's words and narratives can only be understood through contextualizing them. In addition, the subject position of the researchers, as well as that of survivor-narrators, including their gender, nationality, ethnicity, class or profession, has a huge impact on the process of interview and testifying and thus the outcome of women's narratives. Their testimonies are the effect of the inter-subjective exchange between feminist researchers and victim-survivor women (Ahn, 1999: 98)[7].

However, with many testimonies, particularly those that have been published, contextual information and the process of inter-subjective exchange has rarely been presented.[8] This has resulted in the reader of the

testimonies simply consuming rather static texts called 'testimonies' and/ or reproducing these texts through summarizing and clarifying the central story in the testimonies. The idea that women's testimonies fundamentally present historical 'facts' and 'truth' has evoked an attitude towards the testimonies that assumes extracting truth is possible. The lack of relevant information surrounding the context of testifying and the overall absence of discussion on this matter has resulted to some extent in the overgeneralization of women's testimonies, as well as feminists' inability to offer convincing explanations of the inconsistencies found in women's testimonies.

The generalization of women's experiences

A simplistic assumption that women transnationally and transculturally share the same experience of oppression under patriarchy and by men, as discussed in Chapter 2, has been contested. However, many feminists and activists in the redress movement seem to have naively believed that with the shared experience of being women, women can understand each other and therefore can be united in support of 'comfort women' victims. Encountering the narratives of victim-survivors, the sense of sympathy towards them has often been expressed by or expected from a female audience due to a presumed common ground as women. Differences between and among female audiences and victim-survivors, thus, have been understated. On the other hand, male audiences often took their position as non-women who are completely incompatible with women. Here women were defined as homogeneously vulnerable and fixed beings, while men were considered as having a completely opposed existence to that of women. Such a perspective is well illustrated in the experience of a history teacher in Japan in teaching the 'comfort women' issue to his junior high school students. He stated:

> After reading the testimony [of a former 'comfort woman' from the Philippines whose family were killed in front of her before she was forcibly taken], a moment of silence filled the classroom. The pupils expressed how they felt…. Many were aware that this tragedy had happened to those who had been about the same age as them…. Concerning women's experience of being raped, female students seemed to better understand [its seriousness than male students]. This is because as women, they can identify with the experience of former 'comfort women'. (Otani, 1997: 66–8 – translated from the Japanese text)

In presenting such an example of sympathy towards and identification with victim-survivors by female students, a shared experience of being women and equally of having a vulnerable and penetrable female body is assumed. However, being women or possessing a 'biological' female body does not mean that women share the same experience of being women. Empathy

and compassion is important in feminist politics, and a shared identity as a woman formed though empathy has been a crucial starting point for feminists to challenge women's oppression and male political and social domination. Testimonial narratives and autobiographical accounts of the lives of victim-survivors have offered audiences/readers the opportunity to connect with them through empathy and to develop a sense of solidarity and a collective identity with them (Ahn, 1999: 63, 65–6).[9] However, empathy should not be turned into essentialist identification: imagining that all women share the same experience is alarming, as this can lead to the over-generalization of women's experiences (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 113). Each woman lives within her own specific environment and her experience as a woman could be significantly different from that of victim-survivors.

The generalization of women's experiences is particularly problematic when it neglects socio-cultural differences among women. Cultures, which are historically constructed, have different ideas about sex and gender roles, and women's cultural and national backgrounds have impacted significantly on how women's experiences and sufferings have been perceived and understood by victim-survivors themselves and by their society.[10] This is not to suggest that women from a particular cultural and national background suffered less than other women, but historically situated different sociocultural positions could bring about distinct interpretations of their experiences. For example, some women from the Philippines gained sympathy for their experience from their partners, as many Filipino men also suffered from brutal treatment by the Japanese military. On the other hand, many Korean and Chinese women were looked down on by their fellow citizens, being seen as Japanese collaborators, and Chinese victim-survivors experienced further ostracism due to the Cultural Revolution as can been seen in Chen Yabian's narrative in Chapter 5.

Similarly, the testimony of Jan Ruff-O'Herne, a Dutch woman now living in Australia, can only be understood in the context of losing her happy childhood, full of future aspirations as a European descendant in colonial Indonesia, due to the Japanese invasion;[11] and in seeking consolation and guidance, being devastated by the rejection of the church to become a nun after her experience at a comfort station (Ruff-O'Herne, 1994: 182–5). Soh also argues that in addition to such gender, racial and class socialization and the extent of sufferings they and their family experienced, their (memory of) experiences was also influenced by the way that individual survivors acknowledged heteronormativity embodied in the 'comfort women' system (2008: 179). Without considering such diversities among women's experiences women's sufferings too can simply be over-generalized.

Generalizing women's experiences and over-identifying with victim-survivors can also mask possible divergence in their goals between feminist activists and individual victim-survivors, sometimes imposing a group goal upon individual women. For example, Yun Chung-ok, a leading feminist

activist scholar in South Korea, remarked that she would spend a hundred years to achieve justice. However, when justice does not seem to come any time soon, due to the unwillingness of the Japanese government to fully commit to this issue, it is understandable that some women choose to accept whatever acknowledgement is offered by the Japanese government while they are still alive; even if it is only a letter of apology and remorse from the Japanese Prime Minister and 'remuneration/atonement money' and not a full official apology or compensation. As mentioned in Chapter 5, those women who expressed their eagerness to accept the atonement money have been excluded from the support groups. Generalizing the experience of women and overlooking differences among women can, thus, result in excluding the individual interests and concerns of victim-survivors. This also means normalizing a particular experience of being 'comfort women' and excluding other experiences that contradict it. This is why the testimonies of 'comfort women' victims who were sold into prostitution hardly emerged at the beginning of the 'comfort women' debates.

Fixing the dichotomy of men/women

A further problem is that feminist discussion could reproduce the dichotomy of men and women. While all women are considered to be potential victims of male oppression, and in particular sexual violence, all men equally are regarded as potential rapists, as male sexual desire is 'natural' and cannot be easily suppressed. Not only are women treated as a homogeneous category, but also men are juxtaposed with women. Male sexual desire is here explained as biologically given. However, as the male body and sexuality, as well as the female body and sexuality, have been constructed through various bodily disciplines organized by modern institutions, particularly nation-states, it is problematic to employ a simple binary distinction based on biology, that sees women as victims and men as victimizers.[12]

Many testimonies and documents show how strictly soldiers were controlled in their use of comfort stations, though sexual exploitation did not take place only in these relatively more organized locations. Soldiers had to wear military uniform and swords and were provided with condoms for their visits; they were required to queue outside comfort stations while waiting for their turn; they could only spend a given and very short period of time with the women. In many cases, soldiers did not have any choice of whom to have sex with and simply went to whoever they were told to. Hours for visiting comfort stations and the payment to be made were also regulated according to military rank. Soldiers were sometimes ordered to visit comfort stations before severe battles were expected. Those who were reluctant were made fun of by fellow soldiers and often were pressed to go.

It has been suggested that the tight control and the violent character of the Japanese military during the war is incomprehensible to those who live in a relatively peaceful time and world. Indeed, a former military doctor,

Dr Yuasa Ken, who was involved in human medical experimentation and the medical examination of 'comfort women', commented that the 'comfort women' system could only be understood against the rigid regulatory nature of war.[13] Comments like this have been made not to justify his involvement in atrocities during the Asia-Pacific War, but to question the feminist argument that sees the 'comfort women' system simply as an example of the universal oppression of women by men, overlooking the social context in which the 'comfort women' system was developed.

The male/female dichotomy essentializes men and women and male 'natural' sexual desires. However, sexuality is not natural, but a form of power that operates in society, particularly the modern society. The 'comfort women' system is strongly interlinked with the regulation of sexuality, which involved both men and women. It is important therefore, not to reinforce the men/women dichotomy, but to examine how this divide has been constructed and exploited to create particular forms of sexual violence. This is why examining the relationship between the regulation of sexuality and the modern military, as discussed in Chapter 4, is crucial. Indeed, while highly appreciating the impact of the WIWCT and the 'Public Hearing on Crimes Against Women in Recent Wars and Conflicts' that took place in conjunction with the Tribunal, in illuminating sexual violence that is commonly experienced by women during war and conflict, Fujime critically reflected that this simply emphasized the essentialist notion that women are always victims. She argued that sexual violence inflicted by the 'comfort women' system should be analysed as an example of the tangled relationship between militarism and sexual violence (Fujime, 2015: 54–5).

As has already been indicated, more than fifty years before the Second World War the British Empire introduced regulated prostitution, and in particular implemented it in its colonies. Moreover, similar arrangements to Japanese military comfort stations during (and after) the Second World War have been identified. When the Second World War broke out, military brothels were built in Delhi with the permission of British military officers, though these were later closed by an order from London. In Tripoli, brothels were allowed to continue their business by the British army commanders, and prostitutes were forced to have medical examinations. Some brothels were directly controlled by a Royal Army Service Corps non-commissioned officer, (Enloe, 2000: 62–3).

In the United States, the setting up of military brothels was often discussed, and the US government was said to be well aware of the existence of Japanese comfort stations, and brothels for the German and French military (Hayakawa, 1995b: 218; Tanaka, 2000a; 2000b). The US government never sanctioned direct military control of brothels and prostitutes, and in principle soldiers were prohibited from having sexual contact with prostitutes. However, in reality, in many US overseas military bases, the military was involved in controlling the sexual health of soldiers, for

example: military doctors medically examining prostitutes; designating certain brothels for the exclusive use of the military; and making condoms and disinfectant as well as designated washing and disinfecting places easily accessible for soldiers (Tanaka, 2000a). This only changed around spring 1945, when an instruction was given from the US Department of War that overseas bases should not be involved in regulating prostitution and that they had to promote the abolition of prostitution. It is suggested that such an instruction was issued as the end of the war was imminent and contact with local people increased, the Department of War was concerned about the possible tension that the military involvement in prostitution might cause with them (Tanaka, 2000a: 90–1).

The 'comfort women' system needs to be understood in the wider context of the connection between militarism and sexual regulation without losing sight of its specificity. While the sufferings of women need to be acknowledged, employing a strict male/female dichotomy, and treating women as victims of the universal oppression of men is not helpful in understanding how the 'comfort women' system is built on the intersection of exploitation based on colonialism, gender, ethnicity and class organized by militarized states.

6.3   Listening to the silence and beyond words

How to attend to voices during interviews and research has also been discussed in wide-ranging research studies beyond feminist literature, and similar concerns about the problem of probing particular information and 'accuracy' in narratives have been raised. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, some 'inconsistencies' are found in 'comfort women's' testimonies. Such discrepancies should not only be attributed to the length of time since women went through these awful experiences, but to the nature of the issue and events they have to testify to. Talking about 'sex' and 'sexuality' is still considered to be taboo and shameful in many cultures, and it is quite likely that victim-survivor women would avoid making direct reference to sex or describing precisely what their experiences were like.

The challenge in researching sensitive issues is often acknowledged by various researchers (Holland and Ramazanoglu: 1994; 136–40; Maynard and Purvis, 1994: 4). Openly discussing sexually related matters, in particular, is evaded in many cultures, and 'shame' or often 'blame' surrounding these issues cause people not to speak out (Van de Veer, 1998: 147; Plummer, 1995: 57; Refugee Women's Legal Group, 1998: 20). Shame and self-blame, which is shared by both society in general and victim-survivors of rape, is the mechanism that silences survivors, and this was indeed the case for 'comfort women' victim-survivors (Nishino, 2006: 242). Many societies have not only long discouraged survivors from openly speaking about their experience of rape, but have also stigmatized them as 'shameful' – the view that has been internalized by victim-survivors (Hastings, 2002: 1156–7).

Researchers have indeed pointed out how talking about sexual experiences has been a sensitive matter for the generation of 'comfort women' victims, and how their testimonies are the attempt to express 'the inexpressible' (Ahn, 1999; Yang, 2008: 88). To break the taboo, and for stories of sex and sexuality to come out, various social changes are required. For example, the existence of a community that is receptive to such stories is suggested as the crucial factor that affects whether people remain silent or 'come out' (Plummer, 1995: 87; Hastings, 2002: 1157).

Research on victims of sexual violence usually focuses only on the moment to break the silence for the first time, but this move between silence and speaking is not a one-time-only, permanent, and single direction move. Even after victims-survivors break the silence, they move back and forward between silence and speaking (Jennison, 1997: 167). This could be one of the reasons why narratives on sex-related matters are often changeable and inconsistent. While the act of testifying is often considered to empower the victims of rape, they have to relive the painful experience of vulnerability and the loss of dignity. At the same time, experiences of being raped are told from a very complex position, balancing between those narratives that are 'allowed' and those that are rather 'subversive' (Lamb, 1999: 128). The account of rape can be spoken of (or not spoken of) differently, as women's subject position is formed in a diverse way through speaking/not speaking in varied social settings (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 129). Moreover, as suggested in the discussion of 'comfort women' victim-survivors, they may feel difficulty in using language related to sex in describing their experience of rape. They may not only be unfamiliar with the language, but the language itself, which is chauvinistic, might also be unsuitable to articulate women's experiences (Ahn, 1999).

Yang Hyunah also points out how a victim-survivor, Ahn Bopsoon, whom she interviewed did not talk much about her experience of being raped nor used the word 'rape' to describe her experience in comfort stations. In a culture where women's sexuality is considered to be characterized by extreme passivity, expressing this passivity (or not expressing it) is the only way in which to exercise agency in sexuality (Yang, 2008: 91). Yang argues that this 'mixed silence', the synthesis of silence and verbal expression, is a narrative style often employed by victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system. She highlights how in their speech we find silence, and in the silence, we hear their unspoken story (Yang, 2008: 89). This is well illustrated in the case of Song Shin-do, a Korean resident in Japan, who remained silent about her experience that specifically related to sex and rape. Reading this silence therefore, in testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors becomes extremely vital. Yang Ching-ja writes:

> Especially when it comes to her experience of being deceived and taken to a comfort station even before she had her first period, she tried to

avoid the topic, claimed she forgot, and even got angry, pleading in the end that 'I got sick of being persistently asked questions' and 'Please don't ask any more questions, please…' Ms Song still carries unshared and inexpressible memories that she cannot get off her chest. For the past five years, I have felt this numerous times. She doesn't tell us much about her life when she wandered about the front line around Yuezhou as a 'camp follower'. When I told her about the miserable lives of 'comfort women' then described in testimonies of former soldiers, she once shouted that 'Who said that kind of things? Secrets have to remain strictly secrets'. Whenever I recall that suffering face of hers, I cannot help thinking that she has locked away memories that she still cannot face and because of those memories she is still suffering. (Zainichi, 1997: 10 – translated from the Japanese text)

Instead of filling what had been left out in the narratives of the survivors of sexual violence, women's voices (and silence) should be attended to as they are, including 'gaps and ruptures'. Even when it appears 'language breaks down' and narrative fails, this is where messages can be heard and seen (Lawless, 2001: 59). Testifying is indeed not simply an act that moves from silence to language, but is a continuous process of travelling between these terrains. Having worked extensively with Holocaust survivors, Dori Laub stressed the significance of the listener listening to silence, muteness in both silence and speech and silence hidden and present in speech (Laub, 1992a: 58).

Feminists have been uncovering 'voices' of women over decades, and stories of the (sexual) abuse of women were also among these 'recovered' voices. Sharon Lamb argues that the voices of the victims have often been refashioned by researchers, therapists or writers according to cultural norms. However, the problem is that if these stories fit the form of victimization that the society feels acceptable, these 'voices' are not necessarily challenging the dominant discourse (Lamb, 1999). This suggests that even when victim-survivors of sexual abuse seemingly find their voices, silencing of their 'real stories' always happens at the same time (Lawless, 2001: 51). The support and benefits of various social and other services are based on the division of innocent/genuine and guilty/false victims, and are provided to the former. Thus, the stories of survivors are often modified, becoming more specific and developed in order to receive this support, while their 'real stories' disappear as no one listens to them.

This pattern was also identified by Dai-sil Kim-Gibson, a film maker, in her encounter with Korean 'comfort women' victims. Listening to their life stories Kim-Gibson 'became aware that these women had learned how to adjust their stories to be more politically compelling' (Kim-Gibson, 1999: 8). She points out how a particular life story formula has been formed and women often narrate certain incidents and aspects in their life 'almost

verbatim' (Kim-Gibson, 1999: 93), being selective in what they say, or 'sometimes making things up' (Kim-Gibson, 1999: 126). Park Ok-yeon, one of the women Kim-Gibson met and interviewed told her that she was the only daughter (among three) in her family who resisted getting married and that is why she was taken as a 'comfort woman'. She described the way that she was taken as:

> I lived at home until I was nineteen. The president of our neighborhood association reported to the Japanese officials that an unmarried woman was in our house. That's me. One day a Japanese official came and told me to come with him. My father said 'no' firmly but he was insistent. He said that I would get a well paying job. There were some other girls in our village who went with me. (Kim-Gibson, 1999: 121)

In her testimony, published by the Korean Council, which was based on several lengthy meetings with her, Park explained that she married at the age of sixteen, but she left as her husband was poor and then became the second wife of Mr Kim at the age of seventeen. She gave a birth to a son, but Mr Kim was always finding fault with her and was very suspicious about her fidelity. When she was about twenty-three years old, he took the son away from her and handed her over to an employment agency (The Korean Council, 1995). Kim-Gibson eventually pointed this out to Park, saying she was a bit confused, and Park replied that:

> Well, now I understand better what we are trying to achieve, I can sort out what is important to tell, and what isn't. I didn't think my marriage added anything to our case. So in the beginning, I told the interviewers about it but now I kind of skip it. Besides, it is difficult for me to talk about my husbands…You know, when everyone is around, I become self-conscious. We are sick of hearing each other's stories. The others tell me that I should just tell a few things, not to go into a gory detail. (Kim-Gibson, 1999: 132)

Another body of research that focuses on engaging with narratives beyond their 'consistency' and 'accuracy' is identified in Holocaust studies. In listening to testimonies of the Holocaust survivors, researchers are often confronted with historians who demand to know the 'accuracy' of the testimonies. Laub gives an example from the Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies project of a woman's narrative of her experience in Auschwitz. She testified to the Auschwitz uprising: '(a)ll of a sudden…we saw four chimneys going up in flames, exploding. The flames shot into the sky, people were running. It was unbelievable' (Laub, 1992a: 59). However, later historians challenged the testimony claiming it 'was not accurate', as 'the number of chimneys was misinterpreted' (Laub, 1992a: 59). They argued

that 'historically' not all four chimneys but only one chimney exploded. 'Accuracy' is absolutely crucial for historians, as revisionists can reject anything that they consider not factual. The whole account of her testimony was discredited by historians, as her memory was deemed to be frail. However, Laub argued from a psychoanalytic point of view that:

> The woman was testifying…not to the number of the chimneys blown up, but to something else, more radical, more crucial: the reality of an unimaginable occurrence. One chimney blown up in Auschwitz was as incredible as four. The number mattered less than the fact of the occurrence. The event itself was almost inconceivable. The woman testified to an event that broke the all-compelling frame of Auschwitz, where Jewish armed revolts just did not happen, and had no place. She testified to the breakage of a framework. That was historical truth. (Laub, 1992a: 60)

The same woman also spoke of her experience in working as a commando, leaving her fellow inmates every morning and coming back in the evenings with clothes and shoes for them, and she was proud that she was able to save their lives with these supplies. Laub pointed out that she did not seem to know that she was possibly a member of the so-called 'Canada commando' – a selected group of inmates who sorted out the possessions of those who had been killed by gassing. She did not think they belonged to those who had been killed or did not question where they came from and '(t)he presents she brought back to her fellow inmates – the better, newer clothes and shoes – had for her no origin' (Laub, 1992a: 60). In challenging those historians who questioned the validity of the survivor's entire testimony as her knowledge was limited, Laub argues that they could not see how her silence was integral to the testimony; what the woman truly testified could only be surfaced and attended to by respecting the balance of what the survivor '*knew*' and '*did not*', or '*could not, know*' (Laub, 1992a: 61). Indeed, 'she was testifying not simply to empirical historical facts, but to the very secret of survival and of resistance to exterminations' (Laub, 1992a: 62). Her testimony, both her speech and silence, broke the frame of Auschwitz, which historians who focused on historical facts could not.

   With reference to silence, which is noticeable in the narratives of the survivors of sexual violence and of the Holocaust, an essential feature common to these testimonies is horrific experience, in particular that relates to pain inflicted on the body (Lawless, 2001: 16, 60). Elaine Scarry emphasized the 'unshareability' of physical pain, as it is not only inexpressible but also destroys the very language of communication; while for someone who is suffering from pain, this is about absolute certainty, for those who are hearing about the pain, it is always about casting doubt (Scarry, 1985: 4). In contrast to other 'interior states of consciousness', physical pain does not have referential objects in the external world; it is confined in the individual

body and does not reach out to the 'shareable world' (Scarry, 1985: 5). Jean Améry, a Holocaust survivor who was tortured by the SS in Breendonk concentration camp in Belgium, also well maintained the impossibility of describing the pain.

> It would be totally senseless to try and describe here the pain that was inflicted on me…. The pain was what it was. Beyond that there is nothing to say. Qualities of feeling are as incomparable as they are indescribable. They mark the limit of the capacity of language to communicate. If someone wanted to impart his physical pain, he would be forced to inflict it and thereby become a torturer himself. (Améry, 1980: 33)

Silence can and does speak of unspeakable disasters such as the Holocaust and sexual violence suffered by women. However, at the same time, the importance of silence, and also of their narratives in general, actually lies in survivors' own experience of the disaster (past), their reliving of it (present), and this conflation of their past and present, and not in revealing 'the totalizing effect of the disastrous events' (Lawless, 2001: 62). Therefore, whether as interviewers or readers, this careful consideration for silence is required in engaging with testimonial narratives of 'comfort women' victims. The process of testifying is a continuous struggle because '(t)here are never enough words or the right words, there is never enough time or the right time, and never enough listening or the right listening to articulate the story that cannot be fully captured in *thought, memory and speech*' (Laub, 1992b: 78). The survivors of catastrophic events need to be heard in order to become witnesses to their own trauma, and to be able to survive. However, the very act of telling can itself be traumatizing, when the price of speaking is not relieving but reliving. This happens particularly when the survivors' narratives are not heard or listened to. Holocaust survivors repeatedly wrote about their fear of not being listened to and their guilt that they had survived while others, better than them, never came back. Indeed, Primo Levi stressed that:

> For us to speak with the young becomes ever more difficult. We see it as a duty, and the same time as a risk: the risk of appearing anachronistic, of not being listened to. We must be listened to: above and beyond our personal experiences, we have collectively been the witnesses of a fundamental, unexpected, event, fundamental precisely because unexpected, not foreseen by anyone. (Levi, 1989: 167)

6.4   Inter-subjective listening to narratives

Testimonies and the process of testifying, thus, address more than empirical historical facts: they are highly inter-subjective, involving both the

narrator and listeners, and context-specific. Pamela Thoma highlights how, in attending the account of the life story of a Korean victim-survivor Kim Yun-sim in a conference at Georgetown University in 1996, delegates became aware that testimonial narratives are inter-subjective and 'listening is a necessary and participatory aspect of testimonial narrative' (Thoma, 2000: 35). In engaging with the testimonial narratives of 'comfort women' survivors through published or audio-visual materials, however, it is not always easy to see the process and effect of such inter-subjectivity and the specific contexts from which the testimonies emerged. If what is considered as a central narrative story line, for example, those women being unmarried virgins, who were taken against their will, raped and forced to have sex with soldiers without any payment, is given too much attention, the dynamics of narrative are often lost or buried in the process. This can be due partly to the (unacknowledged) public desire to encounter a shocking picture of atrocity and the mass media's tendency to meet such a demand. Information about the environment in which women narrated their life stories is rarely reported together with their testimonies.[14] The frequently-omitted information includes: the personal details of the interviewer, such as their gender, nationality, profession or age; which language the interview was conducted in, and whether there were any translators; how women were asked to narrate their stories, and what kind of questions, if any, women were asked to answer; whether there were any ambiguous narratives of the women. Such information is difficult to come by and while often acknowledged, the effect of inter-subjectivity on testimonies is rarely analysed extensively in discussion of the testimonies of 'comfort women' victims.

Moreover, the experiences of sexual enslavement and women's lives before and afterwards are diverse. In order to fully capture the richness of their testimonies and listen to what they have to say, their narratives need to be contextualized within their whole life history, including their present life. This is what Elaine J. Lawless calls 'a now that requires a conflation of the past and the present' (Lawless, 2001: 62). Some 'comfort women' victim-survivors may express more resentment than other women. This does not necessarily mean that they had been treated more severely than others, though such a comparison is impossible and inadequate. Instead how they lived and endured their life after their experience at comfort stations, such as whether they got married, the presence/absence of close family members, their financial situation, and whether they were stigmatized by the family or people in their community, as well as their lives before becoming 'comfort women', affect their memories, and thus their testimonies.

Kim-Gibson described how she had to control herself when a victim-survivor, Bae Jok-gan repeatedly told her that she wanted Japan to win the war. Despite all those awful experiences, Bae maintained that she still likes the Japanese and would even marry a Japanese (rather than a Korean) man

if he is a good person and can give her peace and rest in her life. Bae told Kim-Gibson in their previous meetings that her life after the war had been difficult, but it was only in their last meeting that Bae disclosed, while being filmed, that she had repeatedly been sexually molested by a monk who was her mother's lover when she was about eight years old. Kim-Gibson explains that she could not help feeling that Bae volunteered this information to alleviate her discomfort and bewilderment at listening to Bae claiming that she prefers Japanese to Korean men, so that Kim-Gibson would have a glimpse of her life still unspoken (Kim-Gibson, 1999: 97). However, in contrast to Kim-Gibson's experience, in many testimonial narratives, particularly those published, the full picture of women's lives (including their present situation) is not necessarily provided.

One of the fundamental aspects of the inter-subjectivity of testimonies is the relationship between the narrator and listener, the dynamics of which, as explored earlier, is a particular concern of feminist methodology. While discussion is limited, those feminists who interviewed victim-survivors or engage with the issue sometimes make comments on the influence of the relationship between the narrator and listener on testimony and the actual act of testifying. Japanese researchers who interviewed Chinese victim-survivors in Shanxi Province, for example, reflected on how differences between researchers and victim-survivors, not only in nationality and language but also in education and the cognitive mode, actually made the process of interviewing/testifying extremely challenging. Victim-survivors the research team met spoke in a local dialect that is hard to understand perfectly even by Chinese people in the nearby town, and were illiterate and unfamiliar with maps or other abstract signs, images and units of measurement. In addition to language barriers, researchers became aware of how their previous experience of interacting only with those who had received at least elementary school education and were literate was restricting their way of communicating with and listening to these women (Ishida, 2004: 20).

It is also reported that one of the victim-survivors from the province, Zhou Xi Xiang, initially did not say that she had been a member of the Chinese Communist Party and was active in the anti-Japanese movement when she was sexually abused. She was uncertain about revealing this information to the first Japanese people that she had met since the end of the war. She only volunteered the information about her communist membership once trust was established between her and researchers (Chugokujin, 1999: 6). This relationship between the victim-survivor and the listeners might therefore be able to explain, though only partially, why women's stories sometime change (Ueno, 1998: 177). Kim-Gibson indeed recognized that the formula of women's stories, which was mentioned above, actually changes depending on who the listeners are (Kim-Gibson, 1999: 8). Which

topics these women refer to and how they describe them are highly affected by the nationality, ethnicity, gender or age of the listener.

Such inter-subjectivity between the listener and narrator and how particular settings in which the act of testifying is undertaken can produce a particular narrative are not widely examined in the 'comfort women' debates. Some researchers, as mentioned earlier, suggest reading victim-survivors' testimonial narratives in the light of PTSD, explicitly recognizing their changing nature and inconsistency. However, this focuses on the testifying process of victim-survivors and the listener listening to them separately, without an explicit acknowledgement of the inter-subjective exchanges between the women and the listeners. Attending to these women's testimonies, the listeners often expressed their own emotional response and distress in encountering the women's sufferings, but the discussion has not been much extended to consider how this might have generated the exchange between them and women and affected the testimonies.

A number of people encounter, and have encountered, victim-survivor's testimonies by attending public hearings, watching audio-visual resources containing the women's life stories, or reading published testimonies, but most of them are not directly involved in interviewing women. In such cases, women's narratives are delivered to them through various processes of interview, translation, interpretation, editing and broadcasting/publishing. This makes it difficult to understand the dynamics of inter-subjectivity that affect testimonial narratives, though such form of testimony, however limited, still have a great impact on those who engage with them.

The translation of testimonies can sometimes cause 'misunderstandings' or loss of subtlety, as the testimonies are removed from the original context in which the narrator and listener were situated and testimonies are now directed towards a different audience. Ahn, who conducted interviews with Korean victim-survivors in Korean and shared her analysis of interviews in English, indicated the difficulty in conveying the nuances in testimonies when translation/interpretation is involved (Ahn, 1999: 76–7). Indeed, even in comparing the Japanese and English versions of testimonies of Korean 'comfort women' victims translated from the same volume of collected testimonies, some discrepancies can be identified. Below are some of these examples, showing the English translation first and then the Japanese translation which for comparison is re-translated into English.

Kim Hak-sun on her parents

(E) My mother told me she had married my father when she was 15, and they lived in Pyongyang <u>before moving to China, fed up with continual harassment from the Japanese occupation forces</u> (The Korean Council, 1995: 32).

(J) My mother told me she had married my father when she was 15, lived in Pyongyang, <u>and then fled to China together with a group of Japanese people</u> (The Korean Council, 1993: 41).

Kim Sun-dok on her coming forward to testify as a 'comfort woman'

(E) So, one day I went to a broadcasting station and told my story. They gave me the telephone number of the Council. Next day, I went to the local police station, and with the help of an officer I made a report. <u>I came home and slept soundly, making up for the troubled nights of the previous weeks</u> (The Korean Council, 1995: 49).

(J) So, one day I went to a broadcasting station and explained my situation, and they gave me the telephone number of the Council. Next day, I went to the local police station, and with their help, I reported to the Council. <u>Even after reporting, I could not sleep well for a week</u> (The Korean Council, 1993: 69).

Disparities can possibly be caused by the difficulty in language translation, but also by the complexity of cultural interpretation. As a very simple example, we can first draw on the narrative of food that women were provided with in comfort stations, a topic that repeatedly features in their testimonies. Women often testified that their food was mostly a bowl of rice and pieces of picked radish.[15] For someone who is unfamiliar with Japanese food culture, such meals without any protein can be a perfect example of the brutal treatment of 'comfort women'. However, for those who know that rice was considered precious in Japan, especially during the war, and that only two or three pieces per person of pickled radish are usually served, this meal, though far from substantial (and those women were actually often starving), can be interpreted as a minimum standard of food provision. Nakao Tomoyo, indeed, highlighted how different perceptions of rice, such as the British view that rice is humble, translated into the Japanese military feeding the prisoners of war with rice as the evidence of intentional abuse (Nakao, 1998; 1999a; 1999b).

Another example is drawn from the experience of a Korean victim-survivor, Sim Mi-ja. According to the Japanese writer Ishikawa, Sim was forcibly taken by police (and subsequently sent to a comfort station in Japan) because she embroidered morning glories around a Japanese map. If these flowers are translated/interpreted as morning glories, the reaction of the police could be seen as the expression of (unreasonable) anger because she did not embroider cherry blossoms, the Japanese national flower, and thus showed a lack of respect for them (Ishikawa, 1993: 29–31). However, if the original Korean word for morning glory was the rose of Sharon, the Korean national flower, the policemen's attitude could be read as the suppression of the Korean national movement.[16] As Antjie Krog, Nosisi Mpolweni and Kopano Ratele argue, drawing on the testimony given by Notrose Nobomvu Konile at the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1996, in addition to the ordinary challenges and errors surrounding interpretation and transcription, what they called 'cultural-transferables' such as 'cultural codes and references' that do not 'survive the interpretation process' make listening to testimonies difficult or impossible (Krog et al., 2009: 45).

In this chapter, various analyses of researching women's voices, in particular, in testimonial narratives are presented in an attempt to link narrating and listening, as the contextualization and interaction between them is vital for (the emergence of) testimonies of 'comfort women' victims and capturing their full potential. Without such awareness of narrating and listening, the feminist endeavour in listening to victim-survivors' voices can easily move back to a traditional data-finding process and fail to counter revisionist challenges. There remains, however, yet another difficulty in researching women's voices: the issue of representation. Not only does representation entail unequal power relations, but how victim-survivors and the 'comfort women' system should be represented is also one of the contested grounds between feminists in the redress movement and revisionists in Japan.

Despite the feminist quest for a less exploitative representation, it is suggested that basic power relations surrounding representation have not been changed (Wolf, 1996: 35). Nevertheless, feminists still aspire to tell a 'better story', as people's experience is not considered to be open to any kind of representation (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 118). The question, then, is what it means as a better story which is less 'distorted', and what are the criteria for a 'correct' representation, especially with regard to the 'comfort women' issue. The next chapter will explore the politics of representation, the relationship between those who represent and those represented, and the limits of representation, examining how and in what ways representation is possible and acceptable. It will consider, in particular, how and to what extent the voices of suffering can be represented in order to explore possible avenues to fully capture the dynamics of the testimonies of 'comfort women' victims.

Part 3

The Limits of Representation

7
Representation and Its Limits

7.1   The 'comfort women' issue and the question of representation

The previous chapter presented feminist discussions on the difficulties and challenges in engaging with the testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors. The main arguments revolved around the problem of seeking truth in victim-survivors' narratives and the importance of the very process of listening to them. Listening to women's narratives is a critical and reflective practice, and this also poses a question of how to ensure such reflectivity in representing the women and their voices. Due to their connection with historical facts/truth, the testimonies of 'comfort women' victims and the women themselves are expected to be represented as undistorted and realistic. The question, however, can be raised as to whether realistic representation is possible or even desirable. To put it differently, the main concern of this chapter is whether there is any desirable way that a certain topic and voices should be represented (interpreted) and whether the particular nature of the topic might limit or determine how it should be represented.

The question of representation has been very much at the centre of the discussion surrounding the 'comfort women' system. This is because, as discussed so far, the testimonies of victim-survivors have posed a fundamental question about the representation (or the lack of representation) of the 'comfort women' system and victim-survivors in history. Debates on representation concerning the 'comfort women' system have mainly taken place in three areas, two of which have been already addressed in this book: first, the authenticity of women's testimonies as historical documentation; second, the discussion on the inclusion/exclusion of the commentary on the 'comfort women' system in history textbooks; and third, cultural and media representation of the system and of victim-survivors. However, they are not completely separate areas and overlap with each other. In addition to the discussion on representation of the 'comfort women' system and voices of victim-survivors in history and history textbooks, various cultural and

media representations of the 'comfort women' system and victim-survivors emerged or have been rediscovered since the 1990s. These include paintings by victim-survivors themselves, produced as part of their therapeutic activities to engage with their experience, as not many of them know how to read and write, to express and record their experiences. As will be discussed in the final chapter, (feminist) artists such as Arima Rie, Ito Tari, Chang-Jin Lee, Song Hyun-sook, Shimada Yoshiko, Tomiyama Taeko and Yun Suk-nam created performing and visual work inspired by these women and their testimonies. Various documentary films about victim-survivors were produced, including the documentary trilogy about the women living in a communal house in South Korea, *Nanumu no Ie* (The House of Sharing) directed by Byun Young-joo, and the film *Silence Broken: Korean Comfort Women* by Kim-Gibson mentioned in Chapter 6.

Graphic novelists of various political views have published work that refers to the 'comfort women' system and victim-survivors. Heated debates broke out when Kobayashi Yoshinori, one of the leading graphic novelists, and a right-wing supporter in Japan, published *Shin Gomanism Sengen* (*The New Statement of Arrogance*) in 1997, which became a best-seller. Feminists and left critics felt that Kobayashi's work was deeply problematic, due to his denial of the existence of the 'comfort women' system that sexually exploited these women. They were also concerned about the impact of his work on the general public, as he was a well-known and popular graphic novelist in Japan.

Another major incident regarding cultural and media representation of the 'comfort women' system is that the NHK (*Nihon Hoso Kyokai*, Japanese Broadcasting Corporation) broadcast a heavily edited programme in January 2001 on the WIWCT on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery that took place in December 2000. The WIWCT, which was a people's tribunal, was organized by transnational feminists and human rights activists in Asia and supported by various international NGOs. The WIWCT was established as states had failed to fulfil their role of ensuring justice and redressing the crimes committed by the Japanese government, which sexually enslaved women, and to end wartime sexual violence (IOC, 2001). Initially, the NHK expressed its interest in making a documentary programme that covered the process of the WIWCT, and interviewed a feminist activist, Matsui Yayori, one of the convenors of the International Organizing Committee (of the Tribunal), as well as academics and critics who held views supportive of the WIWCT. However, when the programme was broadcast, the interview with the convener was completely removed, any positive comments on the WIWCT were erased and the rationale and judgment of the Tribunal were not reported at all. Instead commentaries by right-wing academics that were critical of the WIWCT were included.

A women's organization (VAWW-NET) which helped set up this Tribunal filed a lawsuit in July 2001 against the NHK and other companies involved

in producing the documentary. They claimed that the NHK did not represent the WIWCT appropriately, 'presenting its viewers with a seriously distorted and biased view of the Tribunal' and dishonoured the dignity of the survivors and violated the rights of citizens to know the truth and to have freedom of speech (VAWW-NET, 2001). Although the appeal court decided in favour of VAWW-NET, admitting the violation of trust by NHK and other firms involved in the documentary, after the appeal by the NHK, VAWW-NET lost at the Supreme Court in 2008. However, in April 2009, the Committee for the Investigation of Broadcasting Ethics in the Broadcasting Ethics and Program Improvement Organization (BPO) (an independent organization set up to deal with complaints and ethical issues surrounding broadcasting) stated that the heavy editing of the programme by the public broadcaster NHK has threatened its autonomy and betrayed the trust of the audience.

Other incidents further highlight the challenges surrounding the media and cultural representation of the 'comfort women' system and victim-survivors. Fairly recent examples include the dispute over the memorials to 'comfort women' victims erected in the US in Palisades Park, New Jersey, in 2010 and in Glendale, California, in 2013, and the cancellation of a photo exhibition by a South Korean photographer, Ahn Se-hong, at the Nikon Gallery in Tokyo in 2012. For the memorials, the Japanese government and some Japanese communities (both in Japan and in the US) requested the removal of these small memorials and statues, but this was rejected by the Mayor of Palisades Park and the US District Court in the Californian Federal Court respectively. Ahn's exhibition was cancelled by the organizers without any reasonable explanation. The exhibition went ahead after the Tokyo District Court ordered the Nikon Corporation to open the exhibition, but Ahn suffered various harassments during and after the exhibition and subsequently filed a lawsuit against Nikon in December 2012 (Oshiete Nikon, 2015). Such incidents surrounding the representation of the 'comfort women' issue can be considered, as Morris-Suzuki points out, as an example of 'the historiography of oblivion' that attempts to obliterate, rather than revise, the certain memory of history from public remembering (Morris-Suzuki, 2005: 8).

The politics of interpretation and representation – primarily how women's voices should be understood and represented – has been one of the key concerns in feminist research. Feminists became aware of (possible) discrepancies between their interpretation of women's narratives and that offered by the narrator herself (Reay, 1996; Acker et al., 1996; Borland, 1991; Kirsch, 1999). Differences between the researcher and the narrator, such as class, race, ethnicity, age and various other social aspects, can prevent the researcher from fully understanding the narrator's story; to redress this many feminist researchers have asked narrators to provide feedback on their interpretation and representation of narrators' accounts. For example, working

with women who experienced sexual violence, Liz Kelly (1988) asked the interviewees to note changes and corrections that they needed to make to transcripts of their interviews. She also conducted follow-up interviews to reflect on the interviewees' experience of participating in the project and of reading their transcripts, or to clarify issues raised in the first interviews. What takes place here is a 'joint interpretation of meaning' (Reinharz, 1979, cited in Kelly, 1988: 13) and 'a doubly-authored text' is produced (Davies 1992: 6; Ahn, 1999: 79). The practice is based on the assumption that narrators know about themselves better and that their interpretation and representation of themselves is basically correct and authentic.

Some researchers have suggested, however, that this is not always the case; there is a possibility that narrators, namely the researched, can misrepresent themselves (Lamb, 1999: 130). Moreover, due to language barriers or difficult relationships between researchers and the researched, it is not always possible for researchers to gain feedback from the researched. As it is widely understood that more serious problems of *misrepresentation* can happen when there are a huge difference between researchers and researched (Kirsch, 1999: 50), feminists have been concerned with how to avoid *misrepresenting* the researched and seeking an acceptable form of representation. They have questioned whether the nature of the research actually determines the mode of presentation; whether something inherent in the research becomes the justification for a certain representation being acceptable/unacceptable. At the same time, under the influence of postmodernism, where the single and authentic voice has been faded out, feminists have also asked whether any representation could be 'correct' or 'unbiased'. Feminists wonder, when such representation is impossible, whether researchers can represent and write about their research participants however they like.

The question of representation has been a central concern of post-structuralism/postmodernism. Such a social constructionist approach argues that there are no fixed or true meanings beyond the system of representation, and meanings that are once produced would change again through different practices of representation. However, if meanings do not precede representation and '*nothing has any meaning outside of discourse*' (Foucault, 1972, cited in Hall, 1997: 45), we might wonder whether representation has no limit and if every kind of representation is possible and acceptable.

Those who insist on the social construction of meanings, reality and truth are often countered by realists hitting the furniture and making reference to death (Edwards et al., 1995: 26). However, physical objects including the body are not pre-given but are in fact socially mediated and constructed (Shilling, 1993: 70). The body was considered, in the modernist view, a reality – natural, unified and unchangeable – that can be reached without any (linguistic) mediation. However, the body increasingly came to be understood as something located in historical, social and various other cultural contexts (Grosz, 1994: x; Gatens, 1996: 51–2; Shildrick,

1997: 14–15). The body ceases to be an organic unity and becomes highly unstable. Death, closely associated with this organic entity of the body, has been regarded as an absolute reality for a long time. Death however can also be deconstructed, differentiating between, for example, 'natural' peaceful and 'unnatural' painful death, and between murder, manslaughter, suicide and accident (Edwards et al., 1995: 36). Nevertheless, the 'politico-moral' reality that death appeals to does not make its deconstruction easy (Edwards et al., 1995: 32). This may be because death – the extinction of the living body – is often entangled with pain.

While many scholars have illuminated the socially mediated nature of human bodies, many others at the same time have also started to emphasize the materiality of the body (Connell, 1995). Particularly in the face of death and pain, scholars seem to be ambivalent about seeing the body as an entirely social construct. From a moral point of view, they appear to suggest that there is something inherent in a subject like human death that defines and limits the way it is represented.[1] Such a claim seems to be most notable in discussion of the representation of the Holocaust. In what follows, I first explore the discussion of the representation of the Holocaust, as this resonates with the 'comfort women' issue in its focus on historical truth and the limit of representation; and then how we should understand testimonies of survivors and what is the appropriate representation of the Holocaust and the victim-survivors. Through this analysis of the representation of the Holocaust, the chapter aims to illuminate the problems concerning the representation of 'comfort women' victim-survivors and to explore further an alternative way to engage with testimonies beyond searching for historical truth.

7.2   Representation of the Holocaust

The representation of the Holocaust, its acceptable form and limits, has been one of the foci of discussion in Holocaust Studies over decades. In his introduction to *Probing the Limits of Representation*, published in 1992, Saul Friedlander wrote that some claim to historical truth regarding the Holocaust is imperative, which 'suggests…that there are limits to *representation which should not be but can easily be transgressed*' (Friedlander, 1992: 3). The question that contributors to this volume face is not the Holocaust denial – gross transgression – but how to determine whether certain interpretations and representations of the event are 'incorrect', if there are any. The revisionist (non-)representation of the Holocaust, namely 'the history of oblivion' mentioned above, seems to be treated as too flawed to take it seriously here. Questions to ask, then, are first, why should the limit of representation, such as distortion and inadequacy, matter when it comes to the Holocaust and events concerning pain, suffering and death? Second, why certain modes of representation like Holocaust denial can from the outset be excluded from the discussion without any elaborated justification?

Discussions surrounding the representation of the Holocaust share some similarities with the 'comfort women' debates as both revolve around the question of historical truth. Two questions, though they are related, are posed regarding the representation of the Holocaust. The first is the question about historical facts/truth, and the second is about acceptable modes of representation. According to Hayden White, in traditional modernist history, the story told about the past – the true story of what happened (historical facts) was distinguished from the explanation or interpretation of the event. Here, the *representation* of what the historians took to be the 'real' story of certain events (historical narratives), and the logical dissertations of historians, which display their thoughts and *interpretations* of these events, are differentiated. Historical narratives described stories of real events, and the contents of these narratives were found out there rather than socially constructed. The narrative was perceived as a mere tool to convey historical facts, which are transparent, adding nothing to the real event and free from any interpretation (White, 1987: 27–30). Any problems in describing/representing the events, therefore, were seen as the problems of interpretation.

On the other hand, contemporary historians are aware that the distinction between historical facts and the interpretation of them is not so straightforward after all. Historical facts are identified through the act of interpretation, thus historians do not always come up with the same set of historical facts (Browning, 1997: 29–30). However, historians have been reluctant to give up this distinction altogether. For example, Christopher R. Browning argues that 'there are no distinct and separate categories of attestable facts on one hand and pure interpretation on the other. Rather there is a spectrum or continuum' (Browning, 1992: 32). At the same time, he also presents the idea of an 'elementary minimum' of concrete historical 'facts', through which the acceptability of interpretation (and representation) can be determined. It is this 'elementary minimum', he claims, that historians would agree to, and drawing on these historical 'facts' historians give diverse historical interpretations (Browning, 1992: 29–30). In short, this 'elementary minimum' is the limit of representation. Browning claims that 'no-one, even neo-Nazis, doubts that Adolf Hitler headed a Nazi government in Germany from 1933 to 1945 and that World War II occurred' (Browning, 1992: 32). What has been contested, he explains, is only whether millions of Jews were killed during the war through the Nazi strategy. Hitler's reign between 1933 and 1945 is, for him, an 'elementary minimum' of historical 'fact', as the Holocaust deniers and believers alike recognize it.

This existence of attestable and 'elementary minimal' concrete 'facts' has been asserted to challenge historians like White, who question the clear separation between historical 'facts' and 'interpretation' in historical narratives (Funkenstein, 1992: 68). Fearing to fall into 'anything goes' relativism, which may strengthen the revisionist denial of the Holocaust, historians have attempted to identify and uphold the limit of representation – a concrete

ground to justly and immediately reject the revisionist representation. Like Browning, who insisted on an 'elementary minimum' of historical 'facts', Perry Anderson argues that it is concrete evidence that sets absolute and exterior limits to representation. Narrative strategies are also subjected to 'a double interior limitation' set by the evidence. A particular kind of evidence disallows a certain genre of presentation (emplotment); for example, the Final Solution cannot historically be emplotted as romance or as comedy (Anderson, 1992: 64).

Anderson as well as Browning seem to attempt to present reasonable grounds to reject certain modes of re/presentation (emplotment) of the Holocaust, but why a particular mode of representation should be excluded is not much further elaborated; uncontested moral judgement is simply suggested. These authors strongly object to White's view that historical facts are themselves artefacts of narratives. However, when White's claim is looked at more carefully, he does not argue that there are no historical facts, or that any kind of representation is possible. He is also concerned about being seen as encouraging extreme relativism, and seeks criteria that can be used to rule out the revisionist (non-)representation of the Holocaust. In traditional historiography, history is considered to be the accumulation of stories experienced by people. Historians focus on uncovering these stories and retelling them in a narrative with rhetorical elaboration to make it interesting to the reader (White, 1987: ix–x). In other words, the difference between 'historical' and 'fictional' is the content of the stories, and not the difference in the form of emplotment (White, 1987: 27). In so far as the story in historical narrative is mimesis and an accurate imitation of the lived story itself, it is regarded as a truthful historical account.

The development of post-structural/postmodern theories of discourse has however shifted this clear division between historical (realistic) and fictional narratives, and has problematized the association between historical narratives and 'real' events (Friedlander, 1992: 6; Morris-Suzuki, 2001: 298). Seeing both historical and fictional narratives as 'semiological apparatus', not only has dissolved the division between realistic and fictional narratives, but has also collapsed the boundary between historical narratives (representation) and the dissertations of historians (interpretation). It is argued that, indeed, White claimed that even historical narratives cannot avoid 'a specific framework of interpretation' and there is no 'objective' external measure to claim a particular interpretation (thus also the narrative) as more genuine than another' (Friedlander, 1992: 6).

White does not however suggest that there are no historical 'facts' at all. As Martin Jay argued, while White erased the division of traditional history between stories of facts and events, and interpretation (of 'the *meanings* of these stories'), this erasure was at the expense of securing the division between facts and events, and the stories; the former are the 'prelinguistic phenomena', which are the 'content' of history, such as wars and earthquakes

(Jay, 1992: 97). As Friedlander argues, White does not question 'the exactness of historical events' (Friedlander, 1992: 6), and the 'content' of narratives – facts and events in history – remain unexamined in his argument. In short, White does not appear to doubt the existence of the concrete events and facts in history; this allows White to argue that these facts and events in history actually function as the limits of representation.[2] Here White's claim becomes contradictory.

White argues for the possibility of events emplotted in various 'competing narratives', so that it is quite possible, for example, to represent the Holocaust in comedy (White, 1992: 39). This position seems to contrast with that of Carlo Ginsburg, who in his appeal for historical objectivity and truth, argues that interpretation and representation is specified according to the 'content' of narratives (Friedlander, 1992: 8–9). However, though accepting multiple competing narratives, White also suspects that certain narratives are 'unacceptable' because of the nature of events.

> It seems to be a matter of distinguishing between a specific body of factual 'contents' and a specific 'form' of narrative and of applying the kind of rule which stipulates that a serious theme – such as mass murder or genocide – demands a noble genre – such as epic or tragedy – for its proper representation. (White, 1992: 41)

'A "comic" or "pastoral" story, with an upbeat "tone" and humorous "point of view"' should not be automatically excluded from competing narratives (White, 1992: 39), but they could in certain cases be removed from competing narratives, as distorting historical facts of, say, the Nazi regime. Why, however, the nature of certain 'facts' (that relate to the Holocaust, death or human suffering) is different from others, and why these set particular limits on representation, is not explained further. Here, the nature of 'facts', which is supposed to reject particular modes of representation, seems not innate to these 'facts' but only the result of uncritically presented moral judgement.

As pointed out by Ginzburg, this is where White faces a dilemma: repudiating the idea of a single authentic interpretation on the one hand, and (uncritically) embracing morality and seeking certain criteria to assess the validity of historical interpretations/representations on the other (Ginzburg, 1992: 92; White, 1987: 47). In his continuing quest for adequate representations, White focused on Berel Lang's argument, which draws on Roland Barthes' notion of 'intransitive writing' (White, 1992: 47–8). What intransitive writing envisages is the middle voice, neither subjective nor objective. This does not suggest that history should give up realistic representation, but that the very ideas of both history and realism, taking experiences into account, have shifted (White, 1992: 51–2). White's suggestion of intransitive writing 'expressed in the middle voice' (White, 1992: 52), however, can

also indicate the (possible) existence of the very 'pure' reason that post-modernism has tried to abandon. Moreover, 'unacceptable' representations are discussed not so much because they fall short of 'intransitive writing', but because they are judged as 'unacceptable' by naively presented moral judgement. While identifying flaws in White's request for 'the middle voice', Jay also seems to be caught in a similar problem. Instead of erasing binary oppositions, Jay suggested that the first-order narratives of victims and the second order narratives of historians should be negotiated through inter-subjective judgement of meanings. This judgement is supported by communicative reason developed by Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas (Jay, 1992: 105). However, as has been extensively argued, particularly by feminists, communicative reason is based on modern conceptual underpin-nings that are very exclusive. Judgements based on communicative reason can thus be very limited.

In short, the attempt to probe the limit of representation (of the Holocaust), not only fails to break out of modernist paradigm, but in fact reinforces its value, particularly the dichotomy of facts and interpretation – the existence of contested historical facts. This also suggests unshakeable faith in realism and enlightened reason. The faith in realism can be observed clearly in the discussion of cinematic representation of the Holocaust. Because of their supposed capacity to imitate and create the impression of reality, films have had a strong association with realism since the invention of cinema at the end of nineteenth century (Lapsley and Westlake, 2006: 156; Stam, 2000; 141). While structural/post-structural theory revealed that assumed realism was illusion and made the discussion of realism more complex, the idea of and aspiration for realism has never been discarded (Lapsley and Westlake, 2006: 156–180). As realism is still considered essential in representing the Holocaust, the role of cinematic representation has been emphasized as an appropriate (and supplementary) means of educating the public (Doneson, 1998: 144). Different types of realism are of course expected in documen-tary and fictional feature films; the demand for mimetic representation is more associated with the documentary tradition, whereas the fiction feature is more concerned with the mode or the genre of representing reality in order to make historical discussion persuasive (Nichols, 1991). Referring to historians' discussion on representation (of the Holocaust) above, realism in fictional feature film mainly therefore indicates the ways of emplotment, which should not transgress the nature of the event. However, the claim of realism is often asserted by directors of fiction films as well as those of documentaries, who 'attempt to create a mimetic correspondence between text and event' (Rothberg, 2000: 224).

Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993) for example, was described as presenting 'some of the most haunting moments in any cinematic repre-sentation of the Holocaust' (Bartov, 1996: 168). Through its adoption of the 'true' story, the use of black-and-white film, and the on-location shots,

resembling contemporary newsreel footage during the Second World War, it gives the audience the impression of 'reality', which Trinh T. Minh-ha called 'documentary effect' (Avisar, 1997: 50–2; Bartov, 1996: 171; Trinh, 1991: 40). The film was 'received as a site of (moral and political) memory and as a lesson in history' through reaching such a large number of viewers and initiating so much discussion of the Holocaust (Rothberg, 2000: 223). This suggests that the film was considered sufficiently realistic. *Schindler's List* recognizably follows Hollywood film conventions (a happy ending and a familiar plot of good and evil characters), which has been criticized by some intellectuals and survivors.[3] Generally speaking however, as long as 'popular recreations of the Holocaust are realized with maximum earnestness', they are positively received, and *Schindler's List* can be acknowledged as one such example (Doneson, 1998: 143; Bartov, 1996: 174).[4] The plot type in *Schindler's List* is, therefore, accepted as not transgressing the nature of the event.

This is in sharp contrast to the reception of Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful* (1999), which was, despite numerous awards and considerable commercial success, criticized by a number of reviewers as mispresenting, trivializing or making fun of the Holocaust.[5] Whereas *Schindler's List* identifies actual places and was shot on location, Benigni's concentration camp is not in any specified location such as Auschwitz or Birkenau, but in a totally invented place.[6] However, critics were not so much troubled by the 'invention' in *Life is Beautiful* – some of which can also be identified in *Schindler's List* – but more by the comical nature of the film, as in most films on the Shoah laughter is not simply absent, but just unthinkable (Gilman, 2000: 286). In other words, if the central narrative strategy of a film is humour, it fails to be recognized as an acceptable representation of the Holocaust. The laughter in *Life is Beautiful* is only accepted in relation to heroic achievement, for example, the rescue of Giosué, the child, from the concentration camp by Guido, his father. As Sander L. Gilman argues 'Benigni's laughter is proof that whatever else will happen the promise of the film, the rescue of the child, must take place. Our expectations are fulfilled, and we feel good about our laughter (Gilman, 2000: 304).

This indicates that laughter is allowed in Holocaust films only in very specific circumstances; the uneasiness with laughter remains, but the laughter in *Life is Beautiful* is not forbidden because it has the happy ending of the child's survival and reunion with his mother, which is achieved by his father's heroic acts. However, humour in this film should also be valued as the way to potentially enhance our understanding of the Holocaust. Laughter is not only caused by or directed at Guido's gags, but at what can be considered as the rupture between his gags and the severity of the actual situation in the concentration camp. The laughter is also evoked by the audience realizing their sentimental, but unconscious, expectation that the protagonist in a film will escape from disastrous events, though in the real world this is rarely the case.

In the film there is a scene in the concentration camp where the Nazi doctor, Dr Lessing, whom Guido had known since his days of working as a waiter in a hotel, carefully and with an extremely serious face whispers to Guido that they need to talk. The audience expects that the doctor will assist Guido to escape. However, far from proposing a rescue, the doctor asks Guido for his help in solving a riddle as he had done before, because this riddle has been causing him many sleepless nights. This is where the audience laughs, but the laugher is two-fold. First, we laugh at the doctor's obliviousness and unresponsiveness to Guido's situation, but then also laugh at ourselves realizing our unconscious and naive sentimentality/humanism in expecting the protagonist to be saved. Laughter evoked by Dr Lessing's ignorance has shifted and returned as a different laughter now directed towards the audience themselves, who initially were judgemental of the doctor as 'ignorant'. Guido is killed towards the end of the film, not at all in a heroic death, but in an almost random shooting. The laughter preceding his death makes the audience confront 'the reality'. In an extreme environment, such as that in concentration camps, people were constantly killed and died, no matter how important they were to others, and people tend to forget this in (fiction) films.

This kind of contemplation can hardly be achieved by watching *Schindler's List*. In this film many Jews are executed, but almost none of them are recognisable or important in the film. There are quite a few instances when the lives of 'Schindler's Jews' are at risk, but the saviour – often Oskar Schindler himself – always comes in time (Viano, 1999: 61).[7] If laughter in *Life is Beautiful* encourages such a profound reflection on naive humanism (more specifically Hollywood-style humanism) or 'misplaced sentimentality' in representing the Holocaust (LaCapra, 1998: 142), it seems inadequate to argue that comedy is unsuitable to represent the Holocaust. The greater the laughter, the more irony is accumulated towards the end of the film. Here again, we come back to the question of whether the particular nature of the event would restrict particular modes of representation. As the example of *Life is Beautiful* demonstrates, comedy can, indeed, represent the Final Solution. Some survivors have even suggested that love-romance is not an impossible option for representing the Holocaust (Doneson, 1998: 143).[8] Dominick LaCapra has also defended a controversial comic book representation of the Holocaust, namely Art Spiegleman's *Maus*, that '(d)espite, or perhaps because of, its sustained level of metaphor or allegory, is soberly exact, committedly ironic, and insistently exact in its approach to the most difficult questions.'[9] Morris-Suzuki also has argued that, despite facing various dilemmas of representation, *Maus* managed to reconstruct the visual 'images of the past that would otherwise be lost' and inscribe them on our memories (Morris-Suzuki, 2005: 159–64). There is no reason to deny a similar judgement to *Life is Beautiful*; here realism as the limit of Holocaust representation seems to fall apart.

If there is nothing intrinsic to events that can determine the way they should be represented, we wonder whether realistic presentation is still desirable or even possible. As stated above, it is often considered that documentary film can offer a more real and truthful representation than feature fiction. The quest for realistic representations of the Holocaust is often therefore directed to documentary film.[10] Images shown in documentary films are valued for their capacity to present non-verbal signs, for example, bodily movements or silences. Documentaries about past events claim their authenticity and objectivity through the use of film materials, such as newsreel, from the period in question. However, if the conditions under which they were originally filmed is considered, their 'objectivity' may be questioned. Referring to contemporary film materials used in Holocaust documentaries, Omer Bartov highlights how using Nazi documentary films as well as those by the liberators can be problematic as they present 'the victims as horribly emaciated, only quasi-human creatures' (Bartov, 1996: 172).

In discussing the representation of the September 11 attack, referring to Alejandro Gonzalez Iñarritu's work in the collection of short films titled *11'09''01* (2002),[11] Andrew Hill (2008), too, emphasizes how the director denies the spectacularity of the attack (such as the planes hitting the Twin Towers). He argues that such a catastrophic event cannot be represented through a realist approach. This is why Claude Lanzmann, for example, avoids film material shot during and after the war in his film *Shoah*. Instead, he uses testimonies, particularly those of survivors, to construct a new genre of representation (Bartov, 1996: 172). The film has been recognized as a masterpiece of documentary on the Holocaust by critics and has come to be seen as somewhat sacred or canonical (Avisar, 1997: 40; Bartov, 1996: 172; Rothberg, 2000: 224–5).[12] Therefore, as LaCapra says, the discussion surrounding *Shoah* has a tendency to 'ritualize the film' and makes viewing it 'a ceremonial event', where any criticism becomes disrespectful and meaningless (LaCapra, 1998: 95).

It is this act of filming survivors testifying that adds the sense of authenticity to the film. Testimonies of survivors enable the film to distance itself from 'fictional' narratives or biased documentary materials (Bartov, 1996: 172). Testimonies in the film that take an audio-visual format have a different, perhaps stronger, effect on the audience than testimonies in printed media have on their readers. This can be considered a further strength of documentary films. The boundary between textual (written) and oral is hard to establish, and Derridean redefinitions of text have further undermined the difference between writing and speech (Salazar, 1991: 105, note 24). However, some scholars have illuminated the novelty of 'orality' (including silence) over writings (Beverley, 1992: 95; Thoma, 2000: 36). Bodily expressions and silences are not easy to present in printed media, and even when they are presented there is always a paradox, as 'writers must destroy silence in order to represent it' (Clendinnen, 1999: 199).

As for testimonies in films, by contrast, the audience can witness the process whereby 'memory' is displayed or even constructed through body, voice and silence. This seemingly reassures the audience about the power of 'realism' in cinematic representation, and they assume the representation of victims is 'truthful' or 'authentic', which is often missing in written forms of representations of the Holocaust. As it consists entirely of testimonies, Lanzmann's *Shoah* is canonized among other documentaries of the Holocaust. However, some critics have come to question the authenticity of its representation of the Holocaust. For example, it is quite possible to identify heterogeneity, instead of a single authentic voice (of victim-survivors), inherent in the film through the encounter with 'the multiplicity of language' used (or existing) in the film (Felman, 1992: 211; Rothberg, 2000: 232). Moreover, it came to be understood that documentary films are not a neutral record of history, but in fact are highly influenced by 'the nature of the documentary material' as well as 'selection, editing, presentation, and commentary' (Bartov, 1996: 171). As Lanzmann commented, *Shoah* itself is not a historical document or historically authentic (Felman, 1992: 205; Rothberg, 2000: 232).

The strong presence of testimonies in the film, however, makes the audience believe that they are 'witnessing' the actual process of testifying, and thus 'witnessing' events as experienced by survivors (Felman, 1992: 207). Felman, distinguishing *Shoah* from other preceding documentary films, argues that it attempts 'to witness from inside' the Holocaust (Felman, 1992: 228). Importantly however, it is almost impossible to testify from inside as those who were inside did not survive and '*the inside has no voice*' (Felman, 1992: 231). Felman maintains that the aim of *Shoah* is to '*make the silence speak from within*' and further argues that the testimony of the witness can be recovered through the voice of the witness, for example, the singing voice of Srebnik, one of the survivors Lanzmann interviewed (Felman, 1992: 276–7). The body and the face of the returning witness covers the dead bodies that are absent from the film, just as the witness's voice – the song in this context – covers the silence. Felman claims that the witness's voice makes the audience of the film not only ready to hear, but also responsible for listening.

While this film is, as Felman argues, unprecedented in its attempt to capture the voice of witnesses, its problematic aspect should not be overlooked. Lanzmann, or the film, at times uses witnesses and their voices to arouse empathy or other emotional reactions from the audience. As Lanzmann 'needed to suffer in making the film', he demands that the audience also go through a similar experience, and to achieve this he requires the witnesses to be 'retraumatized and to relive the past' until the witnesses break down (LaCapra, 1998: 123). Watching these processes may help the audience to understand the impossibility of answering the sort of questions that Lanzmann has raised and to understand that there is no 'why' in the

Holocaust (Clendinnen, 1999: 201). Nonetheless, it often appears as if all the voices in the film are only the background music to Lanzmann's own voice; however 'realistic' the representation may seem, voices of witnesses are in fact dissected and reorganized by Lanzmann, and in some sense exploited.

Similar tendencies can be observed in *The Last Days* (1998) directed by James Moll and produced by Steven Spielberg, which revolves around the experiences of Hungarian Holocaust survivors towards the last days of the Second World War. Although this documentary is made out of lengthy images of five survivors recounting their experiences, segments of their testimonies seem to have been introduced here and there in order to construct a consistent and comprehensive story of the last days of the Second World War in Hungary. Here the voices are not heard as their own, but heard to generate a coherent story of history.

Feminists have argued that by assuming the male experience was the universal Holocaust experience, Lanzmann's *Shoah* ignores gendered experience. For example, Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer criticize that while the film portrays the emergence of differences and the subjective experiences of the victims to illustrate the Nazi machinery of destruction, it concurrently negates the different (gendered) experiences of the victims themselves (Hirsch and Spitzer, 1993: 5, 10). The realism of *Shoah* has thus been achieved by excluding certain gendered experiences of the Holocaust.

7.3   Is representation beyond exploitation and epistemic violence possible?

The discussion of representations of the Holocaust provides an insight into issues surrounding the representation the 'comfort women' system and victim-survivors. Feminists and other activists in the redress movement, like historians who research into the Holocaust, consider that there are limits in representation and also believe that realistic representation is possible and desirable. Despite the influence of postmodernism/post-structuralism on the discussion of representation, feminist desire for historical study/writing to mirror historical facts/truth is still strong. Like *Shoah*, documentary films about 'comfort women' victim-survivors have often been taken as a realistic and true representation of these women. Visiting Korean victim-survivors in their shared house over several years, South Korean film director Byun Young-joo made a series of documentary films about these women: *The Murmuring (Nanumu no Ie I /Nazen Moksori 1)* (1995); *Habitual Sadness (Nanumu no Ie II /Nazen Moksori 2)* (1997); and *My Own Breathing* (1999). The audience often remarked after watching these films that they felt that they were given opportunity to glimpse the real and true lives of these women.[13]

Groups that organized the screening of Byun's films in Japan were often the same groups of people who had acclaimed *Shoah* and arranged its screening.

Here, we can observe a shared attitude towards testimonies, seeing these films as the evidence of the achievement and success of realism. However, the director Byun Young-joo herself stresses that:

> *Halmoni*s [Grandmas] have very strong characters. So, I am very amused when I hear someone say that 'I saw the true everyday lives of *halmonis*'. I am not sure whether their personas in these films are their true selves or not. They are what *halmonis* wanted to show (to the world). Maybe. What I do not know is whether they are genuine selves or not (Pandora, 1998: 8 – translated from the Japanese text).

> For example, when it comes to growing vegetables and ploughing the ground, in the film these women presented themselves as if they did everything by themselves and were proudly filmed as such. However, most of the labour was done by our filming crews. How on earth would you think that such old ladies are capable of engaging in hard labour in the fields? (Pandora, 1998: 7 – translated from the Japanese text)

This example demonstrates that the documentary film is not a mimetic representation of 'reality' out there. What people feel to be 'real' and the record of 'reality' out there (both images and sounds) differ. Trinh T. Minh-ha indeed illuminated the complexity of 'reality', which is 'more fabulous, more maddening, more strangely manipulative than fiction' and the problem of cinematic attempts to pursue the 'unmediated "access" to reality' (Trinh, 1991: 40). This suggests that the claim that there is an attestable truth/fact that can and should be represented in a realistic and 'undistorted' manner is questionable. In the previous section, in relation to this claim, the question was explored as to why realism is required and/or desirable to represent issues such as the Holocaust and the 'comfort women' system; and why true or false, or acceptable or unacceptable representation can easily be determined. The question that needs to be asked next is if realism, as transparent representation of 'reality' out there, is neither possible nor desirable, how can voices of these victim-survivors (or those who have been marginalized) be represented in a respectful and acceptable manner that does not involve exploitation or manipulation.

To engage with this second question, I will now turn to the discussions on representation and subjectivity developed under the influence of post-colonial studies. In considering this question, Byun Young-joo's remark is illuminating:

> So, what I wanted to say is that *halmonis* [grandmothers] seemed relaxed and true to their selves on the screen so far, but they were not filmed without pretence. Rather, they acted in a particular way to convey some messages to the audience. (Pandora, 1998: 8 – translated from the Japanese text)

Said's work on Orientalism has raised many important questions, including whether self-representation by the Other can actually be a more truthful representation of them. As was discussed in previous chapters, the Other may end up writing about themselves from an internalized colonial perspective, and this suggests that the self-representation of the Other is not intrinsically more reliable or authentic. As noted earlier, issues surrounding representing the Other were more complex than Said initially argued, and this has been one of the central discussions for those who engage with questions in post-colonial and racialized social and political contexts as can be seen in bell hooks (1990: 72).

The work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has particularly been concerned, not only with the power involved in the process of representation, but also with the subjectivity of those being represented. Her analysis of the subaltern in particular resonates with my concerns with the representation of 'comfort women' victims and their agency. Power that operates in representation, that is to say, 'who speaks for whom', has always been the fundamental question in her writings. For Spivak, this issue is also presented as a tension between 'First World' feminists and 'Third World' women (Spivak, 1988a: 135–6). Her discontent with 'First World' feminists patronizing 'Third World' women, and the former speaking for the latter while creating the homogenous Other, is shared by Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991) and Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989). They argued that 'First World' feminists show an interest in 'Third World' women, only because the latter, the Other, who are different from the former, can help the former know themselves better. This homogenous Other is, thus, constituted in the shadow of the 'First World' women as the Self (Spivak, 1988b: 280). While the effort to unveil the lives of silenced 'Third World' women is welcome, there is always the possibility of 'First World' feminists depriving 'Third World' women even of their own voices; the subaltern women, there, remain as mute as ever (Spivak, 1988b: 295).

In her polemical essay, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' and in interviews and other writings following this essay, Spivak presented an extensive discussion on the 'Native Informant', subaltern, and subaltern subjectivity and representation.[14] She illustrates how even the most radical Western critics such as Foucault and Deleuze have claimed that the Other can become the S/subject, believing in the possibility of self-representation by the Other (Loomba, 1998: 233; Spivak, 1988b: 283). However, Spivak questions whether, under the international division of labour and within the circuit of the epistemic violence of colonial law and education, it is possible for the subaltern to speak, represent themselves and become subject (Spivak, 1988b: 283, 307–8).

Spivak gives an example of a young woman, Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri, who committed suicide in North Calcutta in 1926. Knowing that her death would be interpreted as a result of illicit love and pregnancy, Bhuvaneswari hanged herself while menstruating. Her involvement in a group for Indian

Independence was not revealed until a decade later. She chose to kill herself as she could not face the task of political assassination, but still wanted to present herself as trustworthy. Through her suicidal act, she rewrote the social text of *sati*-suicide, in which both the imperialist and colonial elite prevented the female subaltern subjects from emerging (Spivak, 1988b: 302–3, 306). In *sati*-suicide, the widow's self-immolation on her dead husband's pyre is allowed – a 'subjective' choice of being 'object' of *one* husband – but this is prohibited when she is menstruating. Bhuvaneswari acted within the given patriarchal framework, presenting her as a (potential) good wife, but also challenged it by killing herself while menstruating. She tried to speak by turning her very body into a text.

While the account of the fighting mother has been well documented and remembered through the male discourse of the independence movement, Spivak argues that the voice of the subaltern woman such as Bhuvaneswari cannot be heard or read (Spivak, 1988b: 308). What matters here is not the absence of the subaltern's attempt to speak, but the 'failure of communication' (Spivak, 1999: 308). She could not be heard even by female members of her family or friends, as Bhuvaneswari was considered unruly compared to her sisters who had full and great lives, and her suicide had to be attributed to illicit love (Spivak, 1999: 307–8). Spivak later emphasized in an interview that when she says that the subaltern cannot speak, this does not mean that the subaltern cannot talk. They can talk but for them to speak, their speech has to be heard, and this does not often or always happen; for the speech act to be completed, both speaking and hearing are needed (Spivak, 1996c: 289; 292). The supposed 'listeners', however, are often unaware of the power and violence entailed in representation, and that 'speaking' is structurally entangled with domination and oppression. This is why even when 'First World' feminists, who genuinely attempt to listen to the voices of the subaltern, often end up either speaking themselves 'on behalf of' the subaltern and/or essentializing or commodifying the Other (Trinh, 1989 and Chow, 1993 cited in Ota, 2000: 13).

If the subaltern cannot speak because of the failure of communication, and their voices are never heard by the 'First World' intellectuals, should the prospects of subaltern agency also be negated? Even if the subalterns cannot actually speak that does not imply they cannot talk. The point is that they do talk and attempt to speak, but are not heard. While the issue of the agency of the subaltern is not explored explicitly in Spivak's argument, concluding that she rejects the idea of the subaltern's agency may be too hasty. She indeed stresses that the subalterns do talk, and comments on continuous subaltern insurgency (Spivak, 1996a: 291). Nevertheless, her focus on the listener's inability to listen to the subaltern's speech may obscure the issue of the subaltern's agency. She does not say that the female subaltern subjects do not have agency, but claims that because their speech cannot be heard they cannot form (S/)subjectivity. In the earlier case of *sati*-suicide, between

'patriarchal subject-formation and imperialist object-constitution', the free will or agency of women is manipulated and eroded (Spivak, 1999: 235). This suggests that the prospect of agency does not 'guarantee the self-proximity of the subject', who is capable of speaking (Spivak, 1993: 267). At the same time, even if the subaltern's speech cannot be recovered or represented, it does not inevitably mean the negation of the subaltern agency. Agency and subject do not always converge.

In considering the relationship between representation and the possibility of subaltern agency, it is helpful to look at the discussion surrounding the (auto)biography of Rigoberta Menchú, a Quiché-speaking Indian woman in Guatemala.[15] Her biographical text was published in 1983 and translated into English a year later as *I…Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. It is the narrative of herself, her family, her community, their customs and cultural practice, the pain of the people, and their mode of resistance (Yúdice, 1996: 57; Zimmerman, 1996: 111; Sommer, 1996: 136). It has been widely suggested, however, that the original volume edited by Paris-trained Venezuelan anthropologist Elizabeth Burgos-Debray and the English edition exhibit the problematic appropriation, commodification and consumption of the testimony of Menchú (Thoma, 2000: 51–2, note 21; Carr, 1994: 156–63; Salazar, 1991: 98–9; Sommer, 1991: 52; Zimmerman, 1996: 111, 114). The most problematic example of appropriation may be that the book was originally published listing Elisabeth Burgos-Debray as the only author (Canby, 1999). As suggested in the previous chapter, these are key problems identified in feminist methodology. Even the simple task of textualization (transcribing) of oral narrative can lose dynamic and performative aspects of dialogue as:

> [T]he punctuation and silences of speech are gone; the events in the life of the narrator often follow a chronological pattern, partly induced by the questions the ethnographer poses; it is edited, translated, and, finally, given a title. (Salazar, 1991: 98)

Claudia Salazar argued that Burgos-Debray's *I…Rigoberta Menchú* is no exception and that the introduction written by Burgos-Debray indeed exposes how Menchú's way of talking is transformed by processes of mediation, such as transcribing, editing and translating (Salazar, 1991: 99).

> I soon reached the decision to give the manuscript the form of a monologue. …I therefore decided to delete all my questions. …I have to admit that this decision made my task more difficult, as I had to insert linking passages if the manuscript was to read like a monologue, like one continuous narrative. I then divided it into chapters organized around the themes I had already identified. I followed my original chronological outline, even though our conversations had not done so, so as to make

the text more accessible to the reader. ... Once the manuscript was in its final form, I was able to cut a number of points that are repeated in more than one chapter. ... I also decided to correct the gender mistakes which inevitably occur when someone had just learned to speak a foreign language. (Burgos-Debray and Menchú, 1984: xx–xxi)

The market that consumes otherness determines what Menchú's narrative should look like, and the title of the English edition clearly demonstrates this. The literal translation of the Spanish title is *My name is Rigoberta Menchú and this is how my consciousness was born* (Salazar, 1991: 96). However, the English title *I ... Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala* provides an exotic image of Menchú while locating the reader at a safe distance (Salazar, 1991: 99; Beverley, 1996: 267). The relation between Burgos-Debray and Menchú can be viewed as hierarchical, which was not dissimilar to the master and slave dialectic (Beverley, 1992: 99). However, the production of testimony is a collaborative work and the control of representation is exercised not in one, but both ways (Beverley, 1992: 100). While how and whether Menchú is commodified and/or exploited is still a vital question to be asked, how she appropriates the researcher and the audience (of the 'First World') for her own aim is an even more crucial matter here (Beverley, 1996: 272).

In a sense, Menchú is speaking strategically, taking advantage of the interviewer (and editor) so that her story can reach and have influence on a broader international audience (Beverley, 1992: 100). Menchú plays an active role in giving testimony; being aware of the power relation between the ('First World') intellectual and the 'natives', she employs strategic speech and silence to counter the quest of the intellectual (Salazar, 1991: 101; Sommer, 1991: 52). Both what she testifies and where she remains silent are her strategic resistance, which enables her to construct the subject as actively involved in Guatemalan politics (Ota, 2000: 15). Doris Sommer argues that Menchú's secrets, namely refusal to talk, are doubly strategic as they are calculated 'not to cut short our curiosity, but to incite it, so that we feel the frustration' (Sommer, 1996: 134).

Reading Menchú's testimony as her own political strategy also helps to challenge David Stoll (1999). Stoll, an anthropologist in the US, examined Menchú's narratives and claimed that some of her accounts are untrue (Canby, 1999: 5:1; Beverley, 1996: 275).[16] The authenticity of Menchú's testimony seemed to fall apart when Stoll argued, drawing on his own interviews, that Menchú's narrative on the death of her younger brother Petrocinio is 'a literary invention' (Beverley, 1996: 275). Stoll, Beverley pointed out, did not claim that Menchú made everything up, but emphasized that 'the inaccuracies, omissions, or misrepresentations in her account' made her an unreliable representative of her community (Beverley, 1999: 73). Stoll, thus, only allows Menchú the role of a passive witness, and not the active power to negotiate the representativeness of the narrative. This confines Menchú to

the classical 'Native Informant' position in anthropology, a mere source of information to ethnographers. Indeed, what she testifies was not only about her own experience, but also the experiences of those whom she speaks about and for, and she claims that these narratives are the path to make her own story a collective account (Beverley, 1992: 97; Sommer, 1991: 65). Nevertheless, she narrates as 'I', rejecting the 'plural subject' of 'we' to avoid totalizing her community and to refuse the reader the ability to project intimate identification (Sommer, 1996: 146).

As Beverley states, what the testimony achieves here is 'the powerful textual affirmation of the speaking subject' (Beverley, 1992: 96). The subject is formed in a collective mode, yet not submerged in the collective (Beverley, 1992: 97, Sommer, 1991: 65). Through giving testimony, which is the public event, Menchú could establish her identity in relation to the collective, as a member of her (Indian) community, differentiating her (and her community) from those of the readers. This is not to suggest that her individual self disappears in the collective, but rather, her subjectivity is formed and affirmed through the interaction with the collective. This process of subject-formation of the speaker, Menchú, is made possible through the opening of 'a discursive' space (Salazar, 1991: 104). Through testifying, performing the role that was expected of her, and representing her voice in a particular matter, Menchú willingly answers the call of the subject (interpellation). Only then does she gain recognition and become the (subaltern) subject, which enables her to make conversation and exercise the power of negotiation.

This suggests that testimonies, where particular voices are represented, are a space in which the agency of the subaltern (the narrator) can be recognized. Listening to testimonies is, then, not simply a matter of examining them in the light of truth or falsehood. Testimonies – the representation of the voice (of the Other) – should not only be seen as the practice of belittling and exploiting those who testify by assigning them the role of the Other. Such a narrow understanding of testimonies overlooks subaltern agency in them, and fails to hear their voices at all (Ota, 2000: 17–21).

The question of how to listen to testimonies has been repeatedly raised with reference to the testimonies of the Holocaust. As noted earlier, a female survivor of the Auschwitz concentration camp testifies that at the time of an uprising in the camp, four chimneys had blown up, instead of one as historians insist. The presentation of internees' astonishment at the occurrence of the uprising is far more important than the 'factual' number of chimneys (Laub, 1992a: 60).[17] Beverley refers to this argument in responding to Stoll's claim that Menchú's testimony is unreliable and illuminates how 'Testimonio is both an art and a strategy of subaltern memory' (Beverley, 1999: 79). Testimonies, the representation of particular voices, therefore, should be understood as a space where a complex process of subject-formation takes place.

7.4 Testimonies as a site of subject-formation

In looking at testimonies as the site of subject-formation, I draw on the theory of interpellation introduced by Louis Althusser. In order for individuals to become subjects and recognized, Althusser argued, they have to be 'hailed' by and subjected to ideologies. For Althusser, ideology is not a mere belief system, or something that legitimates the power of the dominant social group or class, nor can it be reduced to 'false consciousness' (Eagleton, 1991: 18). Ideology is an essential part of the reproduction of social relations of 'real' and 'imaginary' through both force and institutional practices. Subjects are recruited into a subject-position through ideology in a system of representation (Barrett, 1991: 83–4; Woodward, 1997: 42–3).

In Althusser's view, for the individual to come into being, s/he needs to be addressed (Butler, 1997a: 5). One turns around and answers to the voice of calling, ideology, and accepts the name by which s/he is hailed, and the social subject is discursively produced (Butler, 1997b: 5, 106). Here, recognition is a function of ideology (Barrett, 1991: 101). Subordination to an authoritative voice takes place through language. To become subjects, therefore, means to be made into linguistic beings. However, this does not suggest interpellation only occurs with 'verbal conduct', as it can happen without such verbal address (Butler, 1997a: 27). Butler argues that Althusser's theory of interpellation requires some revision, as the action of a voice, *sovereign* power, which is based on the idea of divine voice, is given too much focus. In fact, the discourse that constitutes the subject need not take the form of voice at all (Butler, 1997a: 32). This is where Foucault's discussion of discourse is helpful; the theory of interpellation became the foundation for Foucault's later discussion on the discursive production of the subject. Unlike Althusser, however, Foucault rejected the singular and sovereign action of the power and discourse in constituting the subject (Barrett, 1991: 123–4; Butler, 1997b: 5).

Butler argues that interpellation, in Althusser's theory, can only be achieved if there is some readiness, a willingness to turn around, in the one being addressed (Butler, 1997a: 32; 1997b: 111). Althusser, yet, gives no explanation why the individual should always turn around; and seems to assume that individuals are always prepared to answer the call (Butler, 1997b: 5). Butler suggests, by contrast, that subjectification can always be initiated without an individual answering or turning around. When the individual is referred to, for example, in a third-person conversation, or even when s/he indeed protests at the name s/he is being called, interpellation still takes place (Butler, 1997a: 33). In Butler's reading, Althusser's theory of interpellation denies the subject the possibility to subvert, as the subject is only constituted in given ideologies.

What I would argue, instead, is that although subjectification is initiated by the call and has effect within ideologies, subjects are not simply

constructed according to such hailing, nor can the process of subject-formation ever fully be completed. In other words, subjects are not determined by a discourse, but remain open for resignification, and are active participants in the process of interpellation. Subjects are constructed by being called by certain names, but subverting these original names is possible, as individuals are not simply waiting passively to be assigned their names. They might (and this is particularly pertinent to the context of 'comfort women' victims) have started to talk before they are being called, but only when the utterance of the individual meets the call of the addresser could they become the subject, and be recognized. Here, active voicing of individuals is crucial, though we may not have noticed these voices, until they are heard, and only those voices which meet a certain ideology can be heard.

Drawing on Spivak's discussion of the subaltern's speaking, we can argue that the possibility of becoming a subject is foreclosed to most subalterns; they are not yet 'hailed' so are not heard and do not become discursive beings. The claim for the speaking subaltern is, however, different from asserting the existence of a subaltern 'agency'. The agency can be understood as 'some stable existence prior to the cultural field that is negotiated', and it is 'figured as the capacity for reflexive mediation, that remains intact regardless of its cultural embeddedness' (Butler, 1990: 142–3). The issue is that, as Butler reiterates, no agency would be acknowledged prior to subject-formation; the voices of individual agency are identified and recognized retrospectively after subjects are formed, and when resignification takes place.

> To be constituted by language is to be produced within a given network of power/discourse which is open to resignification, redeployment, subversive citation from within, and interruption and inadvertent convergences with other such networks. 'Agency' is to be found precisely at such junctures where discourse is renewed. (Butler, 1995b: 135)

The voice of hailing is not always that of the authentic or authoritative Subject like the God as Althusser suggests. A subject (subject A) can hail another subject (subject B), and subject A precedes subject B, having been hailed at a different time and place. However, the call for subject B, for example, does not originate from subject A itself, but only by subject A being called (Butler, 1997a: 30). Interpellation needs to be dissociated from a single voice or speaker, as it has no clear origin or end. Given this, the answer to the initial call can not only prompt the subject-formation of the individual who is called and answered, but can also become a call for interpellation. This answer/call initiates its own subjectification, while possibly transforming itself, and at the same time can address other individuals to become subjects. Subjects are not fixed and are continuously transformed, as one is never exhausted in a single identity (Hall, 1992).

The further important aspect of interpellation is that even though there is a voice to call, this does not guarantee the formation of a subject. Interpellation can fail, as the 'performative effort of naming can only *attempt* to bring its addressee into being: there is always the risk of a certain *misrecognition*' (Butler, 1997b: 95). The calling that misses the mark and fails to form the subject intended, is one dynamic aspect of interpellation. Because of the interaction and dynamics of interpellation (calling, being called, answering, calling), subjects are always imperfect and individuals cannot be exhausted. Here, in continuous formation and reformation of the subject, the moment of subversion emerges. If the process of subject-formation is one-way, as it has been regarded, there is no place for agency or opportunity for subversion, as subjects are only determined along (given) ideologies. Because of this interaction of voices in interpellation and the involvement of agency, however, the prospect of subversion becomes promising (Butler, 1997a: 4, 25).

Drawing on this discussion on the theory of interpellation, we can consider testimonies as the very space where the agency of the narrators emerges and become visible. Testimonies can be the moment and space for the formation and subversion of subjects, and such a view goes beyond discussion of the truth value of testimonies, or exploitation of the narrator by the listener through the process of representation. The reason why some issues such as the Holocaust and the 'comfort women' system, but also the September 11 attacks, particularly appeal for historical truth/facts and realistic representation may need further examination. Nevertheless, the argument in this chapter has aimed to present that true and transparent representation is impossible, and that the very effort to (truly) represent the (voice of) the Other can provide continuous grounds for the exploitation of and (epistemic) violence towards the Other. In this context, offering the opportunity for the Other to speak – but only as the Other – or seeking authentic narratives of the Other, potentially has a damaging effect on them. This effect of representation calls for critical reflection, but, at the same time, the Other themselves would strategically make use of this process of representation. Therefore, while it is necessary to expose the violence and unequal power operative in the process of representation, it is also vital to explore the possibility of the emergence of the agency of the Other (subaltern agency) in this process.

Subalterns (the Other) form their subjectivity through the given ideology by a call, and can only obtain their recognition through this subject-formation; the possibility of subversion of the subject is foreclosed. Nevertheless, individuals sometimes even hold on to injurious terms as these still provide them with 'some form of social and discursive existence' (Butler, 1997a: 26). This is because such a socially and discursively constructed existence of the subject is the precondition of agency, which remains a prospect for appropriating or subverting the given ideology (Butler, 1995a: 46; 1997a: 38).

Testimonies of 'comfort women' victims can also be understood as an attempt to constitute themselves as subjects, where agency (the possibility of subversion) emerges. In the next chapter, I look at the testimonies of 'comfort women' victims in the light of theories of subject-formation, considering their agency and prospects for subversion.

8
Women's Agency: From Social Stigma to Survivor-Activists

8.1 Moving away from social stigma and shame

As was argued in previous chapters, engaging with testimonies mainly with the truth-value is not only ineffective in countering revisionist arguments, but can also overlook the richness of testimonies. Engaging with and reading testimonial narratives instead requires complex inter-subjective and discursive analysis, and one suggested way forward is to examine testimonial narratives as the process and the site of subject-formation. Testimony is not an autonomous or fixed entity that provides historical information that can be evaluated against historical truth. Testimony is, instead, a fluid inter-subjective formation and is itself the site of subject-formation. One key argument here is that the voices of 'comfort women' victim-survivors could not be heard until their subjectivities had been formed in accordance with dominant ideologies. This draws on the insights of Spivak and Butler, and helps in understanding the otherwise puzzling fact that the voices of 'comfort women' victims only 'emerged' in the public domain in the 1990s. The voices were there, though they were not heard at that time (Takahashi and Iwasaki, 1997: 155), and the long presence of their voices was only acknowledged retrospectively after their suffering voices reached receptive ears.

Indeed, testimonial narratives often illustrate how, even before the 1990s, some women attempted to speak about their experience, but their efforts met with little success. A Korean victim-survivor, Hwang Kum-ju, told Kim-Gibson that she tried to report their experience after the Treaty on Basic Relations between Korea and Japan was signed in 1965. As delivering a petition to the Presidential office was impossible, Hwang approached Mrs Park, then the First Lady, when Mrs Park was visiting her home town to see her parents and to celebrate the Buddha's birthday. However, after listening to Hwang's brief talk about her and other women's experiences of sexual slavery, Mrs Park turned pale and urged Hwang never to tell this story to anyone. Mrs Park also remarked that what happened during the war and under Japanese

colonialism is now something of the past, and it should not be mentioned again as Korea had to move forward now (Kim-Gibson, 1999: 20–1).

Ban Zhongyi, a Chinese film director resident in Japan, also presents a story of Yuan Zhulin, whom he had repeatedly visited and met with since 1996. After the war, in the early 1950s, Yuan encountered by chance in her neighbourhood Zhang Xiuying, who had given her a false promise of employment and had sent her to a comfort station. She screamed and asked people around her to seize Zhang as she was a wicked person, but no one took her seriously, assuming she was mentally disturbed. Being frustrated, she went to a local branch of the public safety office nearby and explained the situation. At the branch, her experience in the comfort station was asked about in detail and recorded. Yuan expected that Zhang would be arrested, but nothing happened. Instead, she felt that her neighbours had got to know her experience in the comfort station. Her neighbours did not consider her a victim of the Japanese military's 'comfort women' system, but started to insult her as a Japanese military prostitute and treated her as a criminal (Ban, 2011: 274).[1]

During the 1970s, as mentioned before, sensational and journalistic reports on 'comfort women' were made in Japan, with reference to Japanese atrocities during the Asia-Pacific War. Already, towards the end of the war, the Allied Forces were fully aware of the existence of 'comfort women' and interrogated these women when they captured them (Oh, 2001: 13). In rare cases in war tribunals after the Second World War, charges were also brought for sexual violence committed by the Japanese military, although no testimonies of victims were heard.[2] None of these instances was successful in bringing out women's own voices nor in assisting them to regain their dignity and recover from traumatic experiences. The women's voices have only been seriously taken up and listened to from the 1990s, when the political climate and social norms surrounding 'comfort women' victims changed. These changes were triggered by various factors, including the end of military dictatorship in South Korea in the late 1980s, and the influence of feminist movements at a global level, which emerged from the 1970s onwards (Oh, 2001: 14).

The development and maturing of feminism has enabled transnational and global collaboration among feminists, which raised awareness of women's human rights in international institutions such as the United Nations. This feminist movement was also successful in addressing sexual violence during conflicts as a war crime at the international level, challenging a long-held view that rape during war is simply an accidental and unfortunate incident (Stetz, 2001: 92; Charlesworth and Chinkin, 2000). These political and social transformations enabled 'comfort women' victims to occupy a new subject position as victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system. However, it was only through testimonies as the speech act that they could become the (subaltern) subject. In order to be heard, they had

to construct their subjectivities in relation to the prevailing ideology. As argued throughout this book, many 'comfort women' victims indeed appropriated the prevalent ideology of chastity and the virgin/whore dichotomy, and constituted themselves as victims who were deprived of their virginity (Nishino et al., 2001: 21–2).

On leaving the comfort stations, most women tried to bury their past experience. They felt extremely ashamed of what had happened to them, but also somehow believed that they were in part responsible for the hardship that they experienced. For example, Song Shin-do, a Korean resident in Japan, condemned herself for having run away from the marriage her mother had arranged. She attributes the reason that she eventually became trapped in sexual slavery to this 'rebellious' act (YosonNet, 1995: 14; Kawada, 1995: 178). Kim Yun-sim, a Korean victim-survivor, too, thinks that she brought about her own fate to become a sex slave and to have the difficult life that followed as she had not followed her father's instruction not to go out and was taken by the Japanese when she was playing outside (Kim, Yun-sim, 2000: 90). Maria Rosa Luna Henson, a Filipina woman, deeply regretted not running away when she was caught. Henson was stopped by the Japanese soldiers at a checkpoint while delivering food and guns to guerrillas with her comrades. The soldiers could not find the guns and released her comrades, but she was forced to stay and was taken to a comfort station. After she was rescued by members of the resistance, she repeatedly blamed herself for not having tried to run away (Henson, 1995: 119).

As seen in Chapter 4, many women suffered various extreme hardships after their experience of sexual enslavement. However, not only do women blame themselves for what happened to them, but many also express how they carried (and still carry) guilt for the way they live; having caused enormous pain and suffering to their family and/or not being able to be honest with them about their experience of sexual slavery. Ch'oe Myong-sun (pseudonym), a Korean woman, blames herself for ruining the life of her son. After her return to Korea from a comfort station, she married twice and had five children. She was sent away by her first husband when she was pregnant, being accused of infecting him with syphilis. She remarried after the first baby, a son, was born, but her second husband's family treated her badly as she married their son after having a child with another man. Despite his lack of education beyond the primary school, her first son became a successful businessman and she lived with him for a while. However, in his forties he suddenly developed a mental illness, which was possibly caused by a prenatal syphilis infection. Rather than condemning those who inflicted suffering on her during the war, she felt she was responsible for ruining his life as well as her own (The Korean Council, 1995: 168–76). Huang Qiu-yue (pseudonym) from Taiwan felt guilty that she had to lie about her experience in a comfort station to her parents. Kang Duk-kyung from South Korea, who was a Christian, never went to church after the war as she thought her

remaining life was too short to confess all her deadly sins and to be forgiven (Kim, Yong-hi, 1997: 151).

These examples of self-blame and guilt suggest that victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system did not initially have a language to speak about their experience of victimization; they were regarded and also considered themselves social outcasts or socially disreputable. The call that those women who were sexually enslaved during the war should not be ashamed of their experience and should not blame themselves for what happened to them and the lives that they had to choose, was therefore the very moment of their subject-formation. However, self-blame and guilt is not something that can be wiped out immediately and completely.

Feminists started to claim the responsibility of the Japanese government for causing these women enormous suffering, and encouraged victim-survivors to come forward and to face up to their past with courage. Under this change in social climate that embraced these women as victim-survivors and not as social outcasts, they began to constitute a subject position as victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system. In the early 1990s, Kim Yun-sim from South Korea noticed an appeal on television, in the newspaper and on a local council notice board for 'comfort women' victims to come forward. This initially troubled her as she was worried that people around her might guess her past and also she would have to relive her painful experience. However, continuous appeals, as well as her sister's encouragement, eventually led her to come forward (Kim, Yun-sim, 2000: 102–3).

Mun Pil-gi, also from South Korea, recounted how she saw a poster calling for 'comfort women' victims to come forward and also heard other women's testimonies on television, and this made her register as a 'comfort woman' victim. Similarly, Maria Rosa Luna Henson was very shocked to hear a woman on the radio on 30 June 1992 speaking about those women who were raped and were under sexual slavery during the Second World War. She claimed that she could never forget those words: 'Please do not be ashamed of yourself. Having been sexually enslaved is not your fault. It is the Japanese military that bears responsibility. Please stand up and fight for your rights.' (Henson, 1995: 168 – translated from the Japanese text). Although Henson was initially worried about revealing her painful past and the possibility of her children abandoning her if they knew about her experience, she decided to come forward; that means, she answered the call of hailing. Since the death of her mother, the only one who knew about her ordeal, whenever Henson felt overwhelmed by her past experience, she wrote on a piece of paper that 'the Japanese Imperial military raped me…. they queued to rape me' and then crumpled it and threw it away (Henson, 1995: 163).[3] Making contact with the Task Force on Filipina Comfort Women (TFFCW) enabled her to speak out about her experience to other people for the first time. Her voice and the voices of other victim-survivors were, thus, heard for the first time. With the development of feminist movements in

Asia since the 1970s, concern about the exploitation of women by the state, colonialism, and capitalism grew, and those 'comfort women' victims slowly began to be considered the victims of such multiple exploitations.

With their utterances now heard, 'comfort women' victims became subjects and could be recognized as victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system (not stigmatized as prostitutes under the Japanese licensed prostitution system); becoming the subject of victim-survivors was part of the process through which they could recover their dignity. As has been pointed out in the previous chapter, the very act of testifying to their experiences, regardless of what is considered to be 'inconsistency' or 'inaccuracy' in their accounts, also proved indispensable to the women's subject-formation. Moreover, as Butler suggests, such subjectivity as 'comfort women' victims is formed not just through the answers of these women to the hailing. Subject-formation can be initiated by relatives and friends of these women starting to recognize them as victims of the 'comfort women' system. Many testimonies of these victim-survivors demonstrate that they came forward after their friends and relatives persuaded them to register as 'comfort women' victims.

> My cousin's wife, who lives in Songnam to the south of Seoul, reported to the Korean Council on my behalf. (Park Ok-yeon, The Korean Council, 1995: 167)

> My sister, having witnessed me living with bitterness and anger, suggested that I should come forward (as a 'comfort woman'), as I may be able to avenge myself on Japan. (Kim, Yun-sim, 2000: 102 – translated from the Japanese text)

Quite a few 'comfort women' victims expressed relief at their sufferings finally being listened to.

> There is no single healthy part in my body. I hurt everywhere. There was a time when I suffered severe insomnia. But since I have now poured out my life story to you I feel much more easy. I will be able to sleep and eat much better. (Mun Ok-chu, The Korean Council, 1995: 114)

> It is extremely hard to speak about experiences of suffering during the war, but by off-loading the burden like a mountain from my shoulders, and taking out thorns from my wounded heart, I felt my strength and dignity, which I had lost many years ago, has been recovered. (Maria Rosa Luna Henson, Henson, 1995: 172 – translated from the Japanese text)

> To release my pent-up resentment, I reported to the Council in June 1992. I hesitated a lot, but I feel so relieved to pour out the things that have been piled up in my heart for so many years. (Mun Pil-gi, The Korean Council, 1995: 87)

However, these women had to recount their experiences repeatedly in order for their stories to be listened to by a wider audience and to gain social and political recognition. This meant that they had to relive their painful experiences again and again. Kim Hak-sun from South Korea, who was the first woman to come forward to testify, was called to speak in various places. She claims that recalling her memories was a very painful experience (The Korean Council, 1995: 40). Wan Aihua from China often fainted when she had to give testimonies, as she did at the WIWCT in 2000, as testifying brought back awful memories of the abuse and torture (VAWW-NET, 2002a: 114). Kim Sun-dok, who lived in the House of Sharing in South Korea with other women reports:

> Before I registered myself (as a 'comfort woman'), I could somehow manage to live by forgetting (about the past painful experience). ... However, after I came forward, I often gave testimonies, started to meet with other former 'comfort women', and painted pictures (about my experience). This all made me remember the past, and it was painful; things kept coming back to my head every night, which drove me mad. I could not sleep for nights ... I often screamed at night; others were woken up wondering what on earth had been happening. [Kim Sun-dok commenting on her paintings] (The House of Sharing, 2000 – translated from the Japanese text)

8.2   How society has failed and is failing to hear

Shame and regret in becoming publicly known as 'comfort women' victims could be intensified by the negative and hostile attitude the women received from others. Wan Aihua, who collapsed at the WIWCT, explained to the audience when she visited Japan in 1996 that since she gave her testimony for the first time in Japan in 1992, she had been treated badly by her neighbours and relatives. As the term 'comfort women' often has the connotation of Japanese collaborators, people around Wan Aihua started to look down on her (Senso Giseisha, 1997: 37). Maria Luna Rosa Henson also suffered from heartless words that neighbours spat at her and she at times regretted coming forward (Henson, 1995: 178–9). Kim Bok-dong's elder sister objected to her coming forward as a 'comfort woman' victim, and she cut all contact with Kim since she was registered as a 'comfort woman' victim (WAM, 2010b: 154).

   These calls of hate and rejection, however, particularly those made to insult and humiliate victim-survivors, such as calling them 'prostitutes', and the claim that the Japanese government is not responsible for the 'comfort women' system, can paradoxically enact a call to constitute the subjectivity of 'comfort women' survivor-activists. Many women refused to be called 'comfort women', due to its implied association with prostitution. These

hate calls, therefore, have not been very successful in constituting the kind of subject they hailed, namely, those prostitutes who knowingly 'worked' under Japanese licensed prostitution, and became 'comfort women'; they instead have triggered the formation of an unanticipated subject as survivor-activists of sexual slavery. For example, Yi Ok-pun testifies that she came forward as a 'comfort woman' victim as she felt that the Japanese government was lying by claiming that the government or the military were not involved in the 'comfort women' system (The Korean Council, 1995: 103).

As has repeatedly been pointed out, 'comfort women' victims did not suddenly start to speak about their experiences in the 1990s. As was suggested in the cases of Hwang Kum-ju, Maria Luna Rosa Henson and Kang Duk-kyung, some women had been uttering their cries, but these were not heard. This is exactly the situation that Spivak referred to, of the subaltern not being able to speak (or unable to be heard), and the case of Song Shin-do, a Korean resident in Japan, can be presented here to highlight this point further.[4]

Over several years Song was taken to various places in China, while she was kept as a 'comfort woman'. When the war ended, a Japanese soldier, Oda (pseudonym), with whom Song Shin-do had become acquainted at a comfort station, asked her to marry him and to go to Japan with him. So she married him and headed for Japan. When they arrived in Japan, however, Oda went back to his hometown by himself, simply abandoning her to look after herself. A couple of times Song made great efforts to travel to his hometown to see him and attempted to persuade him to come back to her. In spite of this he did not change his mind, nor even felt sorry for her spitting out that she could survive sexually serving American soldiers. On the way back from one of these visits, completely shattered and with no hope, Song jumped from a train to try and kill herself. Despite her intention, she was rescued and was eventually introduced to a Korean man called Mr Ha in Miyagi Prefecture (in the north of Japan). Ha was almost twenty years senior to her, and Song lived with him until his death in 1981.

While they lived together, both Song and Ha worked hard, mainly as day labourers, but their lives were in 'extreme poverty' (Zainichi, 1997: 93). Their situation worsened when Ha became unable to earn a wage as a labourer because of his ill-health. Until 1965, Korean nationals living in Japan were excluded from the national health insurance system; when Ha started to suffer from health problems, he could not get any medical treatment (Zainichi, 1997: 10, 95, 97). As they could not cope with their difficult financial situation any longer, they applied for social benefits, *Seikatsu hogo* (low-income benefits), in the 1970s. Far from being caring and sympathetic to them, the staff at the local welfare office and neighbours insulted Song, making derogatory comments that they were not entitled to receive the benefit and should go back to Korea (Zainichi, 1997: 98). Unable to stand the abusive behaviour of the staff at the local welfare

unit and also of a local council assembly member called Hirayama, who harassed her and insisted she should go back to Korea, Song lost her temper and shouted; 'Stop making a fuss! I worked in the battle zone. I fought for this country. You have no right to complain about me!' (Zainichi, 1997: 102; YosonNet, 1995: 54). She had never told anyone openly about her past as a 'comfort woman' (Zainichi, 1997:102). However, as she had to register at the local office as a *hikiagesha* (a repatriated person) from the battlefield in China when she came to Japan in order to receive her food ration, everyone around her knew (or suspected) that she had been a 'comfort woman'. Many former soldiers who went to the war knew about comfort stations, and as Song, a Korean woman, had returned from the battlefield, people often gossiped insensitively that she had been a 'comfort woman' (Zainichi, 1997: 101–2).

Her anger and frustration was something that could have been common among many Koreans in Japan who had been forced to serve the Japanese Empire and the Emperor as Japanese citizens through military service and forced labour. Their 'contribution' towards the Japanese Empire, and the exploitation that they suffered during the war and under Japanese colonial rule, has often been ignored and not acknowledged officially, let alone compensated by the Japanese government after the war. Their voices and sufferings were unheard in post-war Japan for decades under a systematic discrimination against *Zainichi* Koreans (Korean residents in Japan). As the Japanese government stripped Japanese citizenship from people of Korean origin after the war, Song and Ha were not entitled to receive pensions such as *Hikiagesha Kyufukin* (repatriate pension) or *Kokumin Nenkin* (national pension) from the Japanese government either (Zainichi, 1997: 93–6).

During the time she was sexually enslaved, Song was repeatedly told and persuaded to serve for her country, that is, the Japanese Empire (*Okuninotame*) (Zainichi, 1997: 10). With this experience and the belief that she had served Japan, she struggled to understand why she could not receive any pension, such as the pensions for those who had been repatriated from Japanese colonies or occupied territories, for Japanese soldiers, or for elderly people. People in her local community in Japan were aware that she was leading a harsh life and that she was once a 'comfort woman', but they failed to hear her voice of suffering as a 'comfort woman' victim. Not only was her body sexually exploited, but also her 'service' to the Japanese Empire as a colonial subject was ignored and erased, and this intensified her anguish. It was only in 1992, when the issue of 'comfort women' began to be discussed widely that Song's voice was heard for the first time by receptive ears. Song became known to feminist and citizen groups who were exploring the 'comfort women' system through the telephone hotline set up in 1992 to collect information on 'comfort women'. An anonymous caller informed them about Song living in Miyagi, suggesting someone should visit her (Zainichi, 1997: 5).

Though it would be an overstatement to claim a fundamental shift in patriarchal ideology, the 1990s was the time when the problematic issue of women's sexual exploitation by capitalism, colonialism and nation-states and in war and conflicts started to be discussed widely in Asia and globally. Such a social and political climate enabled a new call of interpellation, which finally met with Song's cries of suffering. By being recognized and in turn acknowledging herself as a victim of the 'comfort women' system, who had suffered sexual exploitation at the hands of the Japanese military, she obtained a fuller understanding of the source of her suffering: patriarchy, the history and legacy of the colonization of Korea, and persisting discrimination against Korean residents in Japan. Song subsequently filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government in April 1993, with the help of feminists and citizen groups. At the thirteenth oral proceedings of her court case in March 1997, one of her lawyers explained in detail about the legal and social structure of the discrimination she had suffered after the war. Listening to this explanation, it is reported that Song commented excitedly; 'I knew that I had been discriminated against, but I did not know why. Today, however, everything has become clearer. Nobody ever explained it to me in such a comprehensible way' (Zainishi, 1997: 10 – translated from the Japanese text).

Song filed a lawsuit as she was frustrated that her claims for the recognition of her 'contribution' to Japan and recompense had been neglected. She claimed that if her neighbours and the local government staff had been more sympathetic to her, and had not criticized her for receiving a low-income benefit, she would not have filed this lawsuit (YosonNet, 1995: 56). Her claim for an official apology from the Japanese government was rejected by the Tokyo District Court (1 October, 1999), the Tokyo High Court (30 November, 2000) and the Supreme Court of Japan (28 March, 2003).[5] However, having gained recognition and subjectivity as a victim-survivor of sexual slavery through her legal battles and activism, she successfully opened up the space to challenge the Japanese government to acknowledge its responsibility and to offer an apology to those who had suffered during the war (Zainichi 1997: 105–6.) Such a subjectivity, nevertheless, always faces hostility and negation, which attempts to refute her subjectivity (for example, calling her a 'prostitute') or to hail other subjectivities (such as Japanese citizens as victims of war), and which would make it impossible for her to speak out.

After bringing her case to the court, continuous criticisms were directed at Song, for suing the Japanese government that had been providing her with a low-income benefit, or for continuing the court case that had already been rejected by the District Court (Kawada, 2000). Yang (2013) also comments that while Song fought against the Japanese government for ten years and gained recognition and subjectivity with an active agency, this process has not been a one-way progress. She had to struggle endlessly against the

negative voices denying her agency. Even those members who have closely supported her during and after the lawsuit, remark that this journey, while it was a fruitful learning process for both parties, was very challenging as it was extremely difficult to establish trust, as Song was too traumatized beyond others' comprehension (Zainichi, 2007).

Song's cry of pain took decades to be heard. A further complex example is the case of Bae Bong-gi, a Korean woman resident in Okinawa. While the work of Senda and others on 'comfort women' appeared in newspapers, magazines and journals in the 1970s, these were more or less sensational revelations of this shocking system, and did not urge 'comfort women' victims to come forward. Among those researching 'comfort women' was, however, Yamatani, a film director who looked for Korean 'comfort women' in the late 1970s to make a documentary film. He finally managed to track down a 'comfort woman' and met Bae Bong-gi and filmed her. The film was released as *Okinawan Halmoni (An Old Lady in Okinawa): The Testimony of a Comfort Woman* (1979).[6]

When Yamatani met Bae, he expected her to cry and scream in front of the camera, and curse the Japanese military for exploiting her as a sex slave. Contrary to his expectation she said to him during the course of filming that; 'When in the mountains of Tokashiki Island of Okinawa with the Japanese Army being pursued by the US Army, I thought that it would be good if Japan won, that Japan would win.' This took him by surprise. Yamatani was even hoping she would comment on the war responsibility of the Emperor Showa (Yamatani, 1995: 33). He envisaged that such a scene would be a fitting climax of his film, and to film such an emotive scene he had looked for Korean victim-survivors for two years. Yamatani explained that it was only after Bae's lonely death in 1991 that he could gradually manage to put together the meaning of her remark above. After her death he heard from those who were close to Bae that she might have distrusted her fellow Koreans, which could have been the result of her unfortunate and unhappy life in Korea before she was subjected to years of sexual enslavement.[7]

This film was a huge success, and through this film Bae was largely recognized as a 'comfort woman' victim. However, it can be argued that in this case, the call failed to constitute the subject it expected: a post-colonial subject that fiercely criticizes the Japanese government for exploiting her. At the same time, the film failed to hear her voice; there was no social and political awareness, then, that could offer the way to fully understand and embrace Bae's suffering and her complex remarks.

Despite the film's popularity, the story of only one other woman, No Su-bok, a Korean women living in Thailand, was reported in the Korean mass media and a Japanese newspaper during the 1980s (Kim, Mun-suk, 1992; Soh, 2008: 166–7), which further suggests that the subjectivity of 'comfort women' victims was not yet fully recognized in a wider social and political context. Another film produced in the 1970s, *Karayuki-san, The*

Making of a Prostitute (1973) by Imamura Shohei, about a Japanese woman, Zendo Kikuyo, who served as a military prostitute for the Japanese military, also failed to encourage other women to come forward as 'comfort women' (victims). This may be partly because the majority of attempts to raise the 'comfort women' issue during the 1970s and the 80s were focused primarily on uncovering Japanese atrocities during the war and colonization and not on recovering the dignity of and/or compensating the women (Wada and Nishino, 1998: 7, Usuki, 1998: 51).

8.3   The inscription of victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system

Victim-survivors did indeed eventually become subjects, with their voices heard and recognized as 'comfort women' victims. However, one of the problems with this subjectivity formation is that it can obstruct, though does not preclude, women (individuals) from being constituted as other kinds of subject. They are often seen and defined only as 'comfort women' victims, different from other women of their generations and culture; with other forms of subjectivities, such as workers, mothers or grandmothers rarely acknowledged.

   Victim-survivors have often been referred to as 'grandmothers' in (South) Korea, the Philippines and Taiwan as a way of respectfully addressing those who are of the older generation with some intimacy. Observing this practice in South Korea, however, Soh highlights how this fictive kin term can also mark social inequality in South Korea. Yun Chung-ok or Lee Hyo-chae, who were founding representatives of the Korean Council, and are contemporaries of the 'comfort women' victims, are usually referred to as professor or teacher and are never referred to as grandma (*halmoni*), The prefix *halmoni* is considered insulting to women with high social status (Soh, 2008: 72, 75). The women's existence is as if it were only justified by their experience of being 'comfort women', and other aspects of their lives are ignored. Kim-Gibson argues that:

> Most oral accounts in print of the former military comfort women are primarily summaries of interviews conducted by scholars or journalists with a focus on their years as comfort women. If those women told stories beyond 'that period,' that information was not included in the majority of the oral histories. It is as if their existence is justified solely by the horrendous years they suffered; nothing before or after that seems to matter. Saddest of all, the women themselves are convinced of that. (Kim-Gibson, 1999: 9)

Moreover, as repeatedly commented, often women are only recognized as 'comfort women' victims if they were virgins (or chaste if married) and

forcibly recruited by the Japanese authority, but not if they were licensed prostitutes similarly entrapped in a systematic exploitation of and violence against women. Any multiplicities and differences in subjectivities and identities are submerged or unacknowledged. It is suggested that one of the great achievements of the film *Habitual Sadness* by Byun Young-joo, is that it offered the audience a chance to acknowledge that the life, identities and personal characters of these *halmonis* (grandmothers) is more complex than the audience imagine. These women do not exist simply as 'comfort women' victims – the image that the audience imposes on them (Taniguchi, 1998: 18). Whether those women the audience encounter in the film are 'truthful' or not is less important here; what matters is that the film offers the space for the audience to imagine an intricate picture of the victim-survivors.

In the process of interpellation – being called and answering to the call – women became subjects as 'comfort women' victims, which can exclude other subject positions of these women. However, it does not always simply 'assign' these women the position of 'comfort women' victims and exclude other possibilities. 'Comfort women' victims are also involved in forming their subject position and performing their subjectivity. In an interview for her film *Habitual Sadness*, Byun explained that the one of the reasons for the stylistic difference between her first (*The Murmuring*) and this second film is that the *halmonis* are very much concerned with their image in the film and how they are perceived. After the first film, they came to realize that they are actually very charming and started to use such a personal influence to appeal to the audience, so that they are not regarded only as miserable victims of sexual violence (Pandora, 1998: 6–9). The film is a form of the representation of testimonial narrative, and in here they wish to be seen as people who are energetic and hard-working and indeed acted accordingly (Pandora, 1998: 26). Byun also pointed out, on the other hand, that when *halmonis* made their appearance at more public events or places, for example giving testimonies at public meetings and/or to journalists, they hoped to look dismal, and therefore behaved as such (Pandora, 1998: 9).

Such a performative aspect of their testimonial narratives can be identified in a number of scenes in Byun's films. Park Du-ri, one of the victim-survivors, who lived in The House of Sharing, stated in an interview filmed in *The Murumuring:*

> What's the use in living like this? I want to die. There is no reason to live. I want to die … . I don't want money, clothes or anything. I think it would be nice to die. I am in bad health and I don't need anything, so I think it would be best for me to die. (Pandora, 1996: 49)

However, behind this seemingly negative attitude towards life, her strength and love of life shines. At the end of this film she improvises love

songs, celebrating the joy of life (Pandora, 1996: 28–9).[8] She also cares about her daughter and grandchild, and clearly has a lot of aspiration for her life (Hyejin, 1998). Yet, Hyejin, a monk, who acted as a manager in The House of Sharing for several years, noticed that whenever she met reporters she postured, smoking a cigarette with a grave and melancholic expression on her face as if she were carrying the weight of the world on her shoulders. Reporters, who seemed to have seen this image before through other media reports, often asked her to pose for their pictures (Hyeijin, 1998: 80).

   'Comfort women' victims perform the role of sad victims, but also resist being seen only as miserable. Byun maintained that victim-survivors felt that the Japanese government offered only 'atonement money' and not an apology or full compensation, because it considered them impoverished and in need of money so would receive whatever money was offered. Therefore, these women thought, if they show themselves to be full of life and materially fulfilled, the Japanese government will withdraw the 'atonement money' and seriously focus on apologizing to them. In the film, they try hard to show they are not in need (of money) ('Nanumu no Ie' wo Kyoto de Miru Kai, 1997: 10–11). This example should not be understood as 'comfort women' victims simply pretending to be someone who they are not. 'Comfort women' victims-survivors have complicated characters; not simply having the role of victim imposed on them, these women are actively involved in appropriating complex subjectivities in their everyday activism. This is where the agency of 'comfort women' victim-surivors is evident.

8.4   The power of dominant ideologies and women's inter-subjectivities

If we follow the discussion of Althusser and Butler strictly, subjects can only be constituted in accordance with given ideologies. The most noticeable example of this is 'comfort women' victims being constituted in line with the patriarchal dichotomy of virgin/whore. Many 'comfort women' victims came forward in the 1990s within a major, though not dominant, ideological shift, which no longer sees victims of sexual violence as a cause of shame, but instead considers the perpetrators as responsible for women's suffering. In recounting their horrifying experiences, many 'comfort women' victims emphasized how they felt angry and devastated by the way that they lost their virginity.

> I felt I am nothing. This is because I thought I became a 'dishonourable woman', as I was raped. Losing my virginity meant that I lost the most precious thing that I could give to my future husband. (Maria Rosa Luna Henson, Henson, 1995: 98 – translated from the Japanese text)

...I want them [the Japanese] to compensate us for the sacrifices we were forced to make when we were virgins. They took us completely under their control, but now they are making feeble excuses about the recruitment of comfort women, and they say that we volunteered. (Yi Yong-nyo, The Korean Council, 1995: 150[9])

Their virginity was illuminated to differentiate them from prostitutes (under licensed prostitution), who are considered to sell sex readily for money, and such an emphasis was frequently placed and grew stronger in the late 1990s.

In Korea, the idea of chastity is so important that you can sacrifice your life for it. [The Japanese military] took hundreds, thousands of these women who strongly hoped to be chaste. (Kim Sun-dok, Senso Giseisha, 1997: 44 – translated from the Japanese text[10])

I sometimes hear very strange remarks. These are comments by Japanese politicians. They claim that women became 'comfort women' voluntarily to earn money. ... In Korea, when it was far more conservative [than now], it is unthinkable that young women would sell sex for money. (Chung Seo-un, Senso Giseisha, 1997: 55 – translated from the Japanese text)

Such narratives might be presented to defy the series of comments made by Japanese conservative (right-wing) politicians in 1996 that 'comfort women' were prostitutes under state licensed prostitution; they earned money by selling sex and thus there were no 'comfort women' who were forcibly recruited (Uesugi, 1997: 200). The claim that these women were virgins taken against their will by force and were not prostitutes then became the centre of the argument.

We should be called 'Forced military comfort women'. The reason I am giving testimony now is that I am one of those victims of being forcibly drafted. We did not follow the Japanese military willingly, but were forcibly taken. (Yi Yong-su, Senso Giseisha, 1997: 69 – translated from the Japanese text)

I want (the Japanese government) to make it clear that (they) forcibly drafted us. (Kim Eun-rye, Senso Giseisha, 1997: 49 – translated from the Japanese text)

Revisionists have argued that 'coercion' in the 'comfort women' system is only applicable to the mode of recruitment, that is to say, only when women were violently and forcibly drafted by the Japanese authorities, were they 'coerced'. On the contrary, feminists and historians in the redress movement have argued that 'coerced' or 'forcible' in this context does not only

refer to cases where women were taken by force by the Japanese authorities. Examining twenty-one cases of recruitment in Korea, Chung Chin Sung pointed out that among four methods of recruitment – by violence, false promises of employment, abduction, and human traffic – the most common were false promises of employment (thirteen cases compared to four cases by violence). However, she argued that since the women taken by deception were, like those who were drafted by violence or abduction, forced to serve soldiers once they were at comfort stations, their cases too can be considered to constitute coercive recruitment (Chung, 1995: 20).[11]

Yet, however we broaden the meaning of the term, the allegation of 'coercion' implies that some cases were non-coercive or voluntary, which potentially strengthens the virgin/whore dichotomy. Only those women who claim to have been virgins (or chaste) and were forcibly drafted and became 'comfort women' were mainly constituted as subjects in the discourse on 'comfort women' during the 1990s. This reproduced the patriarchal paradigm of virgin/whore, which has made it difficult for a long time for other types of 'comfort women' victims to come forward. Soh points out how 'Forcibly Dragged Away Korean Military Comfort Women' was only dropped from the title of the publication of testimonial narratives of victim-survivors edited by the Korean Council in 2004 (Soh, 2008: 103).[12] Indeed, such 'paradigmatic' narratives not only obstructed the emergence of diverse subjects of 'comfort women' victim-survivors, but have also generated what Soh called 'thespian truth' and 'thespian testimonials'. Like Kim-Gibson, Soh argued that testimonial narratives of some victim-survivors have changed, often dramatized and exaggerated, over the years to fit to 'the paradigmatic story of forcible recruitment by the Japanese military' (Soh, 2008: 101).

How subjects are indeed constituted in accordance with prevailing ideology can already be observed in *Karayuki-san, The Making of a Prostitute* (1973), the film by Imamura Shohei mentioned above. As suggested earlier, the film failed to hail the subject of 'comfort women' victims, but presented another kind of subject-formation. Imamura chose as the focus of the film Zendo Kikuyo (who was resident in Malaysia) from around twenty former *Karayuki-sans*, who 'worked' as military prostitutes during the war in South-East Asia. The film suggested in the beginning that she became a *Karayuki-san* due to her family's financial problems. At this point Imamura did not take seriously the claim made by other *Karayuki-sans* he met that they had been tricked and forced to go abroad to work as *Karayuki-sans*, concluding that they left Japan wanting to escape their harsh family financial situations.[13]

Instead of focusing on the injustice of women's sexual exploitation, knowing during the course of the film production that Zendo was from the *Buraku* (outcast) background, Imamura concentrated on hailing and acknowledging *Karayuki-san* as an emancipated *Burakumin*, confronting the discrimination against the outcast class in Japan. Having lived a harsh life both during and after the war, Zendo answered the film-maker's call,

coming to understand that her sufferings had been the result of system-atic discrimination against *Burakumin*. The film was made in the 1970s, when social and political movements to challenge an oppressive political and social system were active, though they revolved around patriarchal ideas and did not necessarily see gender-specific oppression. It is in this context that Zendo Kikyuyo's subjectivity is formed through the narrative of discrimination against *Burakumin*, not through the narrative of women's oppression and exploitation. Her sufferings were, therefore, not connected to the suffering of other 'comfort women' victims in Asia.[14]

Testimonial narratives of Kim Hak-sun, the first woman to testify in the 1990s, also suggest that subjectivity is constituted through prevailing ideolo-gies. In her (first) testimonial narrative presented to the Japanese audience on 9 December 1991, she said that she was born in Jilin, Manchuria, because her family had to flee Korea after her father joined the 1 March Declaration of Independence in 1919. In Jilin, he continued to assist those who supported Korean independence, but was shot and killed by the Japanese when Kim was only 100 days old (cited in Ishikawa, 1993: 9–10). However, her published testimonial narratives, based on interviews by The Korean Council and by The Group to Investigate Japanese War Responsibility, which supported her lawsuit, do not refer to her father having been involved in the independence movement. For example, in one of these testimonial narratives she said that:

> My mother gave birth to me in 1924, and she told me that my father died before I was three months old: what caused his death I cannot say for sure. (The Korean Council, 1993: 32)

When she came forward, and in particular when she gave testimonies in front of a wider audience in Japan, her subject position had to be not only a 'comfort woman' victim, but also of a member of a family that had joined the independence movement. (Korean) nationalist ideology rooted in the anti-colonial movement was more influential and widely accepted than the transnational feminist movement to support victims of 'comfort women' at the beginning of the 1990s.

Jan Ruff-O'Herne is the most well-known non-Asian woman who came forward to testify to her experience of sexual enslavement, though she strongly objects to the term 'comfort women'. Her testimonial narratives, again, show her subject-formation, which is different from that of Asian 'comfort women' victim-survivors. Her subjectivity as a victim-survivor of the 'comfort women' system is also influenced by her coming from a Dutch family living in Dutch East India and brought up in the Catholic faith. Ashamed of her experience – the similar feeling that has repeatedly been expressed by Korean or other Asian women – she only came forward after feeling encouraged by watching Korean victim-survivors testifying on television. However, unlike Asian 'comfort women' victims, her subjectivity

is formed in the context of Eurocentric colonial discourse. Her family's happy lives in Java (her own dignity) were taken away forever, not only by the Japanese occupation and being interned at a prison camp for three and a half years, but also by the Indonesian independence movement, which emerged after the War.[15]

> The war was over but for us women in Kramat Camp, Batavia, more terror still lay ahead. In the months following the Japanese surrender, the Indonesian independence movement waged war against the Dutch. The Indonesians did not want to return to Dutch rule and, spurred on by the Japanese anti-Dutch propaganda, they turned against us with violence. (Ruff-O'Herne, 1994: 185)

She also emphasized that she had clearly stated at the comfort station that she was being kept there against her will and that this was in itself a violation of human rights (The Executive Committee, 1993: 63). Asian 'comfort women' victims often expressed their experiences as shame, particularly in relation to their families and their honour, and as deep-seated resentment at not being able to have children. Ruff-O'Herne, while expressing the sense of shame, also stressed human rights, which are more individually based (The Executive Committee, 1993: 67). Norma Field points out that the testimonial narratives of Ruff-O'Herne are articulated in the Enlightenment mode of thinking, and she constituted her subjectivity in line with these modern enlightened subjects (Field and Takahashi, 2001: 211). This is also reflected in the way she stressed her subjectivity, describing how she always put up a fight before anyone raped her.

> Always, each and every time, I tried to fight them off. To me it would have been a mortal sin not to fight. Never once did any Japanese rape me without a violent struggle. (Ruff-O'Herne, 1994: 138–9)

Moreover, her faith in God not only helped her survive the experience, but also, she stated, enabled her to forgive the Japanese (but not to forget what had happened to her.)

Although the subjects that make up 'comfort women' victims are interpellated through a variety of ideologies in specific political and social contexts, the answers of 'comfort women' victims to such calling could act as a call to other 'comfort women'. Many 'comfort women' victims stated that they decided to come forward after listening to Kim Hak-sun or Maria Rosa Luna Henson or other victim-survivors speak on television or radio.

> All through the early part of 1992 I had been moved to tears each time I saw the plight of the Korean 'comfort women' on television. I watched them with pain in my heart as they were sobbing for justice. All I wanted

to do was to put my arms around them and hug them. I should be with them, were my thoughts. ... And suddenly, I felt that the story I had carried for all these years, in my heart, could now be told. The courage of those Korean women gave me courage. At long last it could be told. (Jan Ruff-O'Herne, Ruff-O'Herne, 1994: 197)

In 1993, I saw Lola Rosa [Maria Rosa Luna Henson] on television. Lola Rosa was the first Filipina 'comfort woman' to come forward. Seeing her bravely come forward, I also could pluck up enough courage myself [to come forward]. (Remedios Valencia, Senso Giseisha, 1997: 96 – translated from the Japanese text)[16]

As mentioned briefly above, even when calls to hail subjects are injurious, they can form subjects; however, interpellated subjects encompass the possibility of forming an alternative subjectivity, challenging the original call, which attempts to negate their subjectivity and make them silent. As already seen, for Yi Ok-pun from South Korea, it was the Japanese government's refusal to recognize 'comfort women' as victims that ironically made her come forward (The Korean Council, 1995: 103). For Kang Duk-kyung too, it was not Kim Hak-sun's testimony but rather the Japanese government's denial, that led her to testify.

The comfort women issue kept coming out [after Kim Hak-sun testified]. And I thought to myself, I experienced that; I was there. But I felt embarrassed bringing up these things now. I felt very mixed. Then I heard what the Japanese were doing. I found out they were denying what had really happened. Hearing this, I could not remain silent since I am a witness to all that happened. That's when I first approached the TV station. (Kang Duk-kyung, Pandora, 1996: 47)

All these cases suggest that subjects are constituted with an interaction with other subjects. In addition to this, the answer/call of victim-survivors can be the interpellating call not only for other 'comfort women' victim-survivors, but also for a wider spectrum of people. Oka suggests that the film director Byun Young-joo was the one who answered women's calls, and subsequently recorded the women's lives. However, her subject position as a film director could only be formed by answering the call of victim-survivors. This is because, although it was initially Byun's idea to film them, it was women's requests to record their lives that realized the film (Oka, 2000: 258–60).

8.5   Beyond exploitation: women exercising their agency

It is sometimes pointed out that the testimonies of 'comfort women' survivors are 'hijacked' by different 'isms'.[17] Subjects are interpellated by dominant, yet

diverse, ideologies, and testimonial narratives are, indeed, the location where different ideologies interplay. Therefore, to some extent, 'comfort women' victims as subjects and their testimonial narratives cannot operate, from the beginning, without to some extent being compliant with these ideologies. This compliance, however, has the risk of exploiting 'comfort women' victims through (unconscious) commodification of the women and their testimonial narratives 'becoming a spectacle', not only by journalists seeking sensationalism, but also by 'good-will' feminists and human rights activists (Thoma, 2000: 36; Soh, 2008). In reflecting her experience of working with a victim-survivor, South Korean feminist Kang Chung-suk, who extensively interviewed victim-survivors, illuminates the problem the researchers could cause. She argues that in their attempt to record the suffering of victim-survivors in order to achieve justice, even researchers still run the risk of violating these women's human rights (WAM, 2010b: 205–6).

It is frequently suggested that repeated interviews became a source of distress to the women. In presenting the biographical narrative of a Korean 'comfort woman' victim, Yun Sun-man, the ICJ report indicated how continuous interviews became the cause of distress, particularly when she could not see what these interviews could achieve for her. The women are also frustrated that the reason for the interview is not always given to them (ICJ, 1994: 81). Since the opening in August 1998 of the Japanese Military 'comfort women' Historical Museum in South Korea next to the House of Sharing, organizations supporting victim-survivors campaigned for publicity and urged people to visit there and meet with 'comfort women' in person. Many Japanese (tourists) as well as Koreans visited both the Museum and the House of Sharing. However, as Kang Sun-ae expressed, for some 'comfort women' victims, constant contact with the Japanese people is unbearable, even though visitors to the Museum and the House of Sharing are those who are most willing to know about the injustice committed to these women by the Japanese military, and have no intention of insulting them (Toomey, 2001).

Researching survivor-victims in Shanxi province, China, Ban Zhongyi, a film director and writer, also learnt about Hou Dong'e, possibly one of the first survivors who talked about her experience after the encouragement of a local school teacher Zhang Shuangbing and his wife around 1982 (Qiu, 2014: 168; Ban, 2011). Ban described how the attempt by citizen and activist groups to invite Hou to Japan in December 1992 so that her testimonial narratives could be shared with a wider (Japanese) audience, has actually resulted in the deterioration of her health. Hou was prepared to leave for Japan, but in the end she had to abandon the trip. A Chinese woman involved in an organisation that deals with war compensation matters was to accompany Hou to Japan and she came to Hou's village to pick her up. However, when one of Hou's granddaughters found out about the trip, she insisted, though she never had a regular contact with Hou, Hou cannot go

to Japan without Hou's family member accompanying her. As the time was pressing and there was no time to apply for a visa for the granddaughter to visit Japan nor any compromise could be agreed, the woman from the organisation eventually went back on her own, leaving Hou behind. This seems to have been caused by activists not being fully informed of her life and personal circumstances. This devastated Hou physically as well as mentally. She had attempted suicide a few times by 1992, but was persuaded to keep going until she filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government and won. Having been unable to go to Japan and with the absence of support for her possible lawsuit, Hou, who Ban thinks lost any hope in her life, died the following year (Ban, 2011).

Claiming to support 'comfort women' victims, various groups also took advantage of victim-survivors in their own political campaign. The documentary *Where's Grandma Zheng's Homeland?* (1999), directed by Ban, portrays Zheng Shunyi, a Korean victim-survivor, who was left in China after the war and married and lived there but dreamt of seeing her homeland once again.[18] In the film, we see that she managed to return to South Korea in 1997 with the help of the director Ban and a support group in South Korea. She knew there was a possibility of dying in South Korea, because she was suffering from lung cancer and heart disease. But with all her children, grandchildren, and other family members living in China, she was determined to go back there, even if it was only her remains after her death.

Even when her illness worsened however, the support group did not take her wish seriously and prevented her from returning to China (it is possible that she might already have been too weak to travel anyway.) When she died, the support group also refused to return her remains to China, despite her family's repeated request that they should send them back. The representative of the support group claimed that as she had finally come back to her homeland (i.e. South Korea) as she had wished, her remains and soul should rest in peace in Korea. He emphasized that Korea was where she belonged. In other words only South Korea could restore her dignity, as its subject, at last. The support group seems to focus too much on nationalistic discourse, claiming Zheng Shunyi as a '**Korean** comfort woman' victim and neglecting her other identities and aspects of her life. After repeated requests from her family, her remains finally went back to China in 1999. As this suggests, hijacking of 'comfort women' victims and their testimonies often results in ignoring their own wishes, and can even increase the suffering they experience. The problem seems to arise partly because women's experiences are treated not as something individual or personal, but as a collective national memory.[19]

Although such unintentional and/or hidden exploitation of 'comfort women' victims should not be overlooked, if 'comfort women' are seen only as victims of such commodification and exploitation, this can end in further insulting victim-survivors as this denies their agency. Becoming a subject is

the very process whereby women themselves gain a voice. However limited the voice these subjects can initially have – because they are constituted by pre-given ideologies – being interpellated is the path that opens up further possibilities of constituting different subjectivities, perhaps more outspoken and subversive.

The subject of 'comfort women' victims is in no way stable. As the women who lived in The House of Sharing demonstrated, they insist that they should be recognized as the victims of the 'comfort women' system by the Japanese military. However, they also resisted simply being pitied as helpless victims and behaved in a way that would lead to recognition as resilient and hardworking women, who also know how to enjoy life. Yun Mee-hyang, the representative of the Korean Council, argued how not only being recognized as victims of the 'comfort women' system by feminists and citizen groups, but also the constant denials by the Japanese government of its responsibility made these women determined survivor-activists. Through attending and visiting various places as 'comfort women' victims, they gradually began to comprehend that there are always systems in society that exploit and discriminate against certain groups of people and make them suffer, and became human-rights activists themselves (Yun, 2011). Quite a few 'comfort women' victim-survivors who initially wished to differentiate themselves from 'volunteered comfort women' or 'prostitutes' have subsequently come to believe that these 'prostitutes' were just as much the victims of social exclusion and oppression as they were (Comité de soutien pur la projection du film *Murmures*, 2000: 18).

Moreover, many South Korean 'comfort women' victims realized that the nation-state that they identify with and they take for granted as the basis of their identity, particularly in challenging the Japanese government and Japanese nationalists, can actually perpetrate violence against non-nationals. Byun Young-joo referred to an example of a victim-survivor who visited Vietnam with her, and learnt about the massacre of villagers by Korean soldiers during the Vietnam War.

> Her knowledge of the Vietnam War was very limited, assuming that 'Korea fought in Vietnam to achieve justice, because they fought against the threat of Communism.' However, such understanding started to crumble. She was bewildered because her own nation-state is not only the victim but is also the victimizer. (Comité de soutien pur la projection du film *Murmures*, 2000: 18 – translated from the Japanese text)

After listening to one of the two survivors of the village, the woman asked if the survivor could organize protest activities in front of the Korean Embassy in Vietnam, as she, as a 'comfort woman' victim, had been participating in the Wednesday demonstration organized in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul. Yun Mee-hyang, who supported survivor-victims over many years,

also mentions how they started to visit the women who work around the US military base and encouraged them to speak out if they experienced injustice (Yun, 2011: 137). Yang Ching-ja also describes how at the last lawsuit report meeting after the Japanese government turned down her claim in 2003, Song Shin-do stated that although she might have lost the lawsuit, her spirit is not defeated and she stressed the importance of Yang and members of the support group in continuing to speak for peace (Yang, 2007). Song has become therefore, a human-rights and peace activist who, while campaigning for world peace so that no one should suffer as she did, revealed the atrocities that had been ignored for a long time. In March 2012, on International Women's Day, two victim-survivors from South Korea, Kim Bok-dong and Kil Won-ok announced that should they receive any formal compensation from the Japanese government in the future, they would donate all the money to support activities to help other women who continue to suffer from sexual violence in conflicts. In order to respond to their wishes the Korean Council established The *Nabi* [butterfly] Fund to collect donations from the public, and Kim became the first person to contribute to the fund (AJWRC, 2012).

In this chapter, it is argued that the testimonies of 'comfort women' victim-survivors should not simply be read in the light of 'truth' or 'falsity' but should rather be seen as the moment of, and space for, their subject-formation. It is also crucial to understand that this is not an autonomous or self-contained process, but an inter-subjective process. Although subjectivities are constituted only in accordance with given ideologies, they also offer the possibility of subverting dominant ideologies. The examples of transformation to survivor-activists presented above indicate that the construction of subjectivity of 'comfort women' victims through their testimonies can provide the opportunity to challenge and overturn socially prevalent ideologies, such as the virgin/whore dichotomy, the stereotype of helpless victims, or nationalism. Moreover, in positioning themselves together with other socially disadvantaged groups such as victims of sex-work and a broader group of war victims, victim-survivors could situate themselves in a shared historical narrative of oppression. It is in this dual possibility of subverting dominant ideology and establishing the historical context for the existence of 'comfort women' victims, that the richness of testimonies lies.

9
Bearing Witness to Unshareable Pain

9.1   A crossroads of history

This book does not aim to draw a fuller or more detailed picture of the 'comfort women' system with newly acquired 'information' through interviews with victim-survivors or archival research. My focus has rather been on various questions and dilemmas that have been raised through the discussion surrounding the 'comfort women' system. This is similar to the approach that Rekishi kenkyukai and Nihonshi kenkyukai (2014) recently suggested: the importance of not only examining what the 'comfort women' system is, but also exploring the implication that the 'comfort women' system and the debates that surround it can have for wider political debates and academic studies. By the late 1990s, the 'comfort women' system had become a fairly well-known topic even outside Asia, having been taken up at the UN human-rights bodies and at conferences for more than a few years. However, apart from those experts in human-rights-related issues and Japanese social and cultural history, knowledge about the 'comfort women' debates was still fairly limited in the UK and even in academia in general. This was considerably different from the situation in, say, the US, where strong communities of Asian-Americans and scholars in East Asian studies immediately took up the issue and explored and discussed it within various academic and social contexts.

Genuine concern about and compassion towards the victim-survivors and their suffering was expressed by researchers (often engaging with gender-related topics) based in the UK, wherever I made reference to the 'comfort women' debates as my research topic in the late 1990s. However, there was something disconcerting about the way that this issue was framed – being confined as an Asian problem and about the past. This was exemplified by remarks such as; 'Yes, I heard about the 'comfort women' system, it's about those women from *Korea* isn't it?' or 'What barbaric conduct took place *then* in *Asia* (or in *Japan*)'. While the distinctiveness of the exploitation by the system, such as that mentioned in Chapter 4, should be acknowledged, these

remarks also made me think that defining the 'comfort women' system only as a past and Asian matter, or attributing its cause to Japan's long tradition of licensed prostitution is very problematic.

However, treating the system merely as one example of the universal oppression of women, did not seem promising either. Obviously, universalizing the crime of the 'comfort women' system could be risky as this could be used to evade the responsibility of the Japanese government, as the Osaka Mayor Hashimoto's later comment, referred to in Chapter 1, clearly exemplified. In addition, the 'racial' and colonial aspect of exploitation had been fairly clear since the sufferings of these women began to be widely reported, and universalization would understate this aspect. The 'comfort women' issue from the beginning therefore posed a complicated challenge: there is a need to contextualize the system in broader historical, social and political contexts, challenging cultural essentialism, while not exonerating Japan from its responsibility. While uncovering these complexities, this book probes a constructive way to comprehend the 'comfort women' system, clearly stressing Japan's responsibilities during war and colonialism.

The second half of the 1990s was also the time when nationalism and the revisionist movement to undermine victim-survivors' voices of suffering started to grow strong in Japan. This has been active since and was further strengthened after Abe became Prime Minister for the second time in 2012. I profoundly disagree with the nationalist and revisionist discourse, believing that it needs to be challenged, and I have always had deep respect for the many feminists and activists in Japan who have made enormous efforts continuously to counter-argue this discourse. At the same time, various personal encounters during the late 1990s also made me aware of how and why particular nationalist perspectives can be reproduced and how the attempt to engage with matters in Asia can potentially incite nationalistic (as well as cultural imperialist) discourses. This included meeting with a woman in Japan whose family member was involved in the 'comfort women' system, though only in a limited capacity, and working with many fellow students in the UK who were studying diverse topics related to Asia.

I was introduced to this woman through a mutual acquaintance, being only told that she was concerned with the way the discussion surrounding 'comfort women' had been evolving. Encountering her, after asking for a meeting for my research, I gradually discovered that I did not share her view of the 'comfort women' system. I did not openly agree with what she said, but did not object or challenge her either; I felt that having an argument with her might be inappropriate, partly because I had approached her to ask her view on this issue. However, what struck me more than this uneasiness about the divergence in (political) perspective was that I could clearly see where her perception was coming from and her genuine concern about the Japanese politics, society and people.

On a theoretical level, it is possible to argue that here the concern and care for 'Japanese people' was directed only to a very narrowly defined and exclusive category of 'Japanese people' at the expense of, say, ethnic minorities in Japan, let alone victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system. However, considering individuals are all situated in a particular social and political position, with varied experiences, it was not so hard to apprehend how she arrived at a specific view of the 'comfort women' issue.

Later, I also met with other people (from Japan), both in Japan and the UK, who had a similar perspective to hers: they might not hear the plea of 'comfort women' victims, but they were not heartless monsters; indeed, they were more concerned about Japanese politics and society than many other people in Japan, who assume talking about politics is waste of time or unnecessary. In some ways they were very much emotionally invested in the issue. I started to realize that the struggle between feminists and redress activists, and revisionists is very complex because of these emotional aspects featured in the discussion on the 'comfort women' system. In analysing Yushukan, a (nationalist) war museum adjoining the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, where Japanese war dead are worshipped, Sakamoto Rumi illuminates how the emotion and affect of the viewers is exploited in creating the public memory of war. At the same time, she also argues that this appropriation of affect is not limited to the nationalist or patriotic discourse of history; in other sites and contexts of memory of war (in Japan) different economies of affect could be found (Sakamoto, 2015: 21). The role of emotion and affect in developing a collective/public memory (of war) will be explored later in this chapter.

Feminists feel compassion for victim-survivors, while the revisionists focus on the Japanese war dead, whose deaths, they claim, are ignored or tainted because of the allegation of the aggressive war and war atrocities. It is not because people are indifferent, but because the issue is emotionally charged, that some people in Japan, and not a small number, are attracted to the revisionist discourse. The problem is that such affect and compassions are, as suggested in Chapter 5, drawing on Oka's claim, merely incompatible. Similarly, talking over the 'comfort women' issue with other Asian students in the UK, who have been exploring society and culture in Asia and negotiating between cultural imperialism, nationalism and cultural essentialism, also illuminated how avoiding the evocation of nationalism is challenging. At the same time, it also demonstrated how nationalisms are heterogeneous concepts and practices. Each nationalism entails distinctive problems, but is presented and perceived differently in international settings as either healthy or pathological.

The 1990s was the decade when 'comfort women' survivor-victims obtained wide recognition nationally, regionally (in Asia) and internationally. And yet, the 'comfort women' system and the existence of 'comfort women' were not always hidden during the previous fifty years. As already

mentioned above, the Allied Forces were fully aware of the extensive development of the 'comfort women' system by the Japanese Imperial Military during the Second World War (Yoshimi, ed. 1992; Choi, 1997: vi; Oh, 2001: 13). Indeed, in the Batavia Trial in 1948, thirteen Japanese soldiers were prosecuted for forcing Dutch women into prostitution in Sumaran in Java Island (Yoshimi, 1995b; Chung, 1997: 233).

In April 2007, the Center for Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility in Japan released the documents that were presented at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (Tokyo Tribunal) as evidence of sexual slavery (which was then recognized as 'forced prostitution'). These documents not only included the above case of the sexual slavery of European women in Sumaran, but also of local women in Indonesia and East Timor, as well as in Vietnam and China (The Center, 2007a; 2007b). Yet the Allied Forces did not pay much attention to Japanese war crimes against Asian people, let alone to the sexual slavery of Asian women during and after the war (Choi, 1997: vi; Chung, 1997: 232). Nor was the 'comfort women' system seen as problematic in Japan; while in many post-war literatures on the war, including reflective accounts of soldiers' experiences, 'comfort women' and comfort stations were often referred to, generally this was regarded as something not to be discussed in detail publicly and/or women were considered to have chosen to work in comfort stations. Furthermore, even in those countries from which a number of 'comfort women' victims came, the issue was hardly raised until the 1990s.

Indeed, the root of the prolonged post-war climate of ignoring the suffering of these women who were sexually enslaved, particularly those from Asia, and a socio-political framework that collectively silences victim-survivors was embedded during the post-war War Trials. Rape was actually prosecuted in the Tokyo Tribunal, and included in the crimes listed in the Tokyo Indictment, and rape charges were tried as 'war crimes' (Utsumi, 2000: 70); this was different from the Nuremberg Trial, which did not bring up rape charges (Shiba, 2000: 48; Henry, 2011: 264). In particular, the evidence of mass rapes of Chinese women in Nanjing was presented, including various witness accounts. While the Tokyo Tribunal played a significant role in marking rape as a crime, it was not considered 'a crime against humanity' and was simply prosecuted as a 'war crime' (Utsumi, 2000: 94).

Nicola Henry explains how in the Tokyo Tribunal, whose main focus was to prosecute 'crimes against peace', rape did not fit in with the dominant political discourse. Thus, even when rape was tried, it was not as a crime on its own, but together with other war crimes committed. This attitude, as well as the lack of attention to cases of the sexual enslavement of Asian women in the Tokyo Trial, created the 'hierarchies of both victims and rapes' (Henry, 2011: 264) and trivialized women's experiences and their voices. No victim-survivors of rape and sexual slavery were called as witnesses (Henry, 2011: 267).

Here, not only was a distinction made between 'excusable' rape (the rapes by the Russians and Allied troops) and 'barbarous' rape, thus chargeable (the rapes of Chinese women in Nanjing by the Japanese military), but also the sexual enslavement of 'comfort women' mostly from Asia was not prosecuted. A certain collective memory of silence on sexual violence against women during war was, therefore, produced at the international level during the Trial and has been maintained for decades (Henry, 2013). This would explain to some extent why the debate over the 'comfort women' system is intricate; such silence has actually been used as an implicit excuse for the Japanese government not accepting its responsibility for the sexual violence that it committed during the war, whether it was mass rapes in Nanjing or the 'comfort women' system (Henry, 2011: 280). The post-war political environment, particularly the US-Japan military and political alliance, allowed this to happen.

Similarly, Choi Chungmoo pointed out that this silence on sexual violence, particularly that against Asian women, and the suppression of a colonial past in Asia was caused by misleading ideas of Western humanism. 'Humanity' (then) did not embrace Asian people, let alone Asian women (Choi, 1997: vi). The victimization of women was not addressed in or by Asian countries either. This is because the experiences were mostly of those socially marginalized in terms of class, education and age, and as a consequence they had not been taken seriously at all (Hein, 1999: 349).

Awareness that the 'comfort women' system was a violation of human rights, and that sexual violence against women (during the war) was a 'crime against humanity' only developed when broader discussions took place on women's rights, socio-economic inequalities, racism and colonialism. The mounting acknowledgement by feminists of gender violence (in Asia) since the 1970s, including sex trafficking and sex tourism due to global economic inequalities, helped the reconceptualization of rape and sexual violence. This in part enabled victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system to speak out about their experiences (Hein, 1999: 348–9). Looking at the 'comfort women' system through the framework of the violation of human rights not only highlighted how women's experiences have been overlooked in male-centred representations of the Second World War and Japanese imperialism, but also how Asian experience had been ignored in the Western discourse of the Second World War (Yang, 1997: 67).

Such a shift in perception of sexual violence during conflicts as a 'crime against humanity' and the emergence of testimonies of 'comfort women' victims prompted and was further fuelled by the revelation of acts of sexual violence committed during conflicts in the 1990s, such as in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda (Higashizawa, 2000: 288). In the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) during the 1990s, sexual violence, including rape and sexual slavery, was prosecuted (Askin, 2001: 6). The

Furundzja case in ICTY was the first case that prosecuted rape and sexual assault as the single charge (Charlesworth and Chinkin, 2000, cited in Campbell, 2004: 150). Victim-survivors of rape also appeared as witnesses for the first time in these tribunals (Henry, 2011: 281).

By 2010, the Japanese Supreme Court had turned down all appeals of ten lawsuits filed by 'comfort women' victims. The Japanese Supreme Court's decision to close the door for war reparation claims should be criticized, and the position is considered by many (international) legal experts as not sustainable in the changing international legal order (Abe, 2013; Dolgopol, 2013). These court decisions were far from ordering the Japanese government to provide full compensation to the women who suffered severely from the Japanese atrocities. During the course of a series of lawsuits, however, in eight out of ten cases, particularly with lower court judgements, fact-finding investigations were carried out and the damages suffered by these women were acknowledged. These include: the involvement of the Japanese military; the severity of the damage, the impact (of sexual enslavement) on later lives; severe PTSD that the women are experiencing; and the anguish that the women are still suffering today (Tsubokawa, 2007a; 2007b). Even, therefore, in the legal system in Japan, there has been some recognition (though extremely limited) of the damage that women suffered and are suffering.

Since the early 1990s, the South Korean as well as the Japanese governments have maintained the position that, by the 1965 agreement between the two countries, wartime claims were resolved. In August 2011, nevertheless, the South Korean Constitutional Court ruled that the failure of the South Korean government to seek a way for Japan to compensate 'comfort women' victims was unconstitutional and this opened an opportunity for 'comfort women' victims to demand compensation for their sufferings (Totsuka, 2013; Kim, Mikyoung, 2014). This is some further, albeit small, progress made in the redress movement.

While the compensation of victim-survivors has not yet been achieved, there has been some success with the continuing effort of numerous activists globally in raising this issue. These include wider recognition in the international community of the suffering of victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system, increased awareness of violence against women as a human-rights issue, and the promotion of the roles of women in peace-building (Dolgopol, 2013). Despite all these great achievements, as well as some progress made within national legal systems, both Ustinia Dolgopol and Henry illuminate the political nature of legal procedures and the limitation of law; even with the improved international legal framework, rape and other sexual violence against women has been tried only when it was politically important, such as in relation to ethnic aspects of conflicts or aggressive war, as achieving justice for victims on the basis of 'crimes against humanity' is not the priority (Dolgopol, 2013; Henry, 2011). This continued silence on rape during conflicts in the international legal framework can

further marginalize women's experience. This suggests that the 'comfort women' redress movement needs to seek a way to diversify the measures for redress.

In the early discussion of the 'comfort women' system, the system was often understood to reflect Japanese uniqueness (Zatlin, 2001), but there was also a strong awareness that war crimes, including wartime sexual violence against women, is not unique to Japan (Oh, 2001: 3–4). As Choi maintained, the 'comfort women' issue is not simply 'a matter of a wartime use of women, or an event from the past, nor is it a matter just between Japan and other Asian countries' (Choi, 1997: vi). Victim-survivors' continuing sufferings have clearly demonstrated how they perceive their experience not as something that belongs to the past, but actually of the present. Accounts of Japanese uniqueness, or confining the issue to the past, or treating it as an essentially Asian problem, reflected a widespread desire to isolate the events and cultures that were seen to be generating the crime; by seeing the Japanese (men) as 'monstrous', it became possible for those who speak about the issue to distance themselves from the crime, and to preserve their own innocence (Stetz and Oh, 2001a: xv). Arguing against the cultural uniqueness of the 'comfort women' system and locating the system instead in the broader context of the history of modernity and colonialism is, therefore, important in exploring these problematic distancing mechanisms that can reproduce and reinforce a hierarchical Self/Other relationship; it is indeed not intended to trivialize the 'comfort women' issue nor simply to claim that the universality of the oppression of women exempts the Japanese government from its responsibility.

The now internationally accepted term and concept of 'sexual slavery', and understanding the 'comfort women' system as an example of such sexual enslavement, helps to remove the system from the cultural essentialist argument and to contextualize it as an issue within the framework of women's human rights. Examining the UK and US newspapers, Hayashi suggests that in the Western media the term 'sexual slavery' has, indeed, been increasingly used to refer to the 'comfort women' system and to address this issue through the perspective of universal (women's) human rights (Hayashi, 2014: 30).

Such an approach could entail the analysis of (sexual) violation against women through the exploration of the structural and intersectional exploitation of women based on gender, class, race and ethnicity, and colonialism. However, the concepts of 'Women's Human Rights Regime' and global 'gender justice' still potentially present a problem that is linked to colonialism and racism. Yoneyama has repeatedly emphasized the danger highlighted by various feminists that such a human-rights regime and the discourse of 'gender justice' masks uneven and asymmetrical ways that the examples of violence against women have attracted attention. Scholars such as Leti Volpp and Inderpal Grewal have demonstrated how violence against

Muslim women or those in 'developing' countries has been focused on to make justification for military interventions, while gender violence in, say, the US, such as the Christian far right's violence towards sexual minorities and women who claim reproductive rights, has been almost ignored (Yoneyama, 2008: 243; Yoneyama, 2010: 664). As Yoneyama suggests, what is required is a more critical analysis of gender oppression through an intersectional approach, moving away from simply identifying cases of gender violence and oppression as male oppression of women and thus dichotomizing gender categories of men and women (Yoneyama, 2008: 242).

Applying such an approach to the examination of the 'comfort women' system, situating it in a context of modernity and colonial exploitation, also offers the opportunity to re-examine the idea of a biological male sexual drive and to challenge a simplistic binary gender opposition. It has often been suggested that one of the reasons for developing the 'comfort women' system was to prevent rape in the battlefields or occupied areas, the presumption being that the male sexual drive is natural and cannot be controlled (Yoshimi and Hayashi, 1995: 9–10). While rape during conflict has been widespread thorough history, it has been considered something unfortunate but simply unavoidable: the destiny of war. However, many critics have argued that the biological explanation is not only an ungrounded myth, but also has been used as the justification to exploit women's sexuality.[1] Suzuki also emphasizes that although soldiers apparently took advantage of 'comfort women' for the purpose of sexual pleasure, their own sexuality, like that of 'comfort women', was similarly controlled by the state. This is well represented in the rules and regulations issued by the military on the use of comfort stations (Suzuki, 1992: 36–7; 1997a: 118–19).[2] This of course is not to suggest that the experiences of control of 'comfort women' victims were the same as those of soldiers.

Scholars such as Hasegawa Hiroko, indeed, argued that rape under conditions of armed conflict is not an expression of male sexual drive, and that such an account has resulted in the 'comfort women' system being unquestioned, treating it as a 'necessary evil' (Hasegawa, 1998: 287–8). Rape under conditions of armed conflict needs to be understood not as the release of the natural individual male sexual drive, but as a 'ritualistic' (collective) practice; this is strongly connected with what the female body signifies during peacetime – the role of women's bodies in biological, cultural and social reproduction that needs to be controlled, but is more explicitly expressed during conflicts. Feminists have argued that rape has been carried out, particularly in recent armed conflicts, as a political strategy such as: insult or aggression towards the men of the enemy; the means of military strategy or propaganda; destruction of the reproductivity of the enemy community; as ethnic cleansing and genocide (Hasegawa, 1998; Yuval-Davis, 1997). There has been a growing understanding that rape during conflicts is not an isolated or unfortunate incidence (of failing to control male sexual

aggression), but is actually a symbolic part of battle (Yang, 1997: 67), or used as a weapon of war (Askin, 2001: 29). Rape (during armed conflicts) is indeed political (Stetz, 2001: 93–4). Sexual violence during war, therefore, should be understood as the exercise of violence to maintain militarized hegemonic masculinity, which subordinates women and femininity as well as inferior masculinities. It is the continuum of (sexual) violence during peacetime, as wartime sexual violence appropriates the symbolic meanings and values embodied and represented both in female and male bodies. Recognizing rape during war in these terms helps the understanding of wartime sexual violence, including the construction of the 'comfort women' system not as something extraordinary that happens only in conflicts. At the same time it can highlight a specific mechanism through which sexual violence occurs. Indeed, studies of the 'comfort women' system have, increasingly, started to explore sexual violence during conflict as part of the continuum of everyday life and not as an anomalous or extraordinary incident, and how sexual violence during conflict is strongly linked with various gender oppressive social practices in peacetime (Rekishi kenkyukai and Nihonshi kenkyukai, ed., 2014; Osa and Daimon, 2014: vi, x).

As demonstrated in Chapter 4, the regulation of, and the politics around, sexuality is not something unique to Japan, but is one of the key characteristics of modernity; the sexuality of both women and men has been controlled in modern Japan, though women were more prone to be subjected to violence, intersecting with other social divisions such as class and race. This sexual control and regulation was maintained by a variety of social institutions, including modern licensed prostitution and the family system. It became intensified during the course of colonial expansion and deepening militarization in Japan, and developed into the construction of the 'comfort women' system, where colonized and socio-economically disadvantaged women were mostly exploited.

9.2   Listening to women's voices and silence

While linking the 'comfort women' system with modern licensed prostitution and colonialism is helpful in examining the specific mechanism of gender and racial exploitation that victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system suffered, simply focusing on such a mechanism could result in a marginalization of 'comfort women' victims themselves. Such an 'institutional explanation' obscures the actual experience of the women (Yang, 1997: 58–9). This is particularly so when victim-survivors clearly reject their association with licensed prostitutes. Moreover, claiming that the sexuality of both men and women was controlled risks erasing gender inequality and the oppression that women are more likely to be subjected to. As Stetz and Oh, drawing on Cynthia Enloe, argue, it is not enough to identify the abuses of women and explain why these happen, we need to look at what

the experience of abuses means to women (Stetz and Oh, 2001a: xv). This is why the testimonies of victim-survivors are important, and, as I have argued, one of the unique and important aspects of the 'comfort women' issue is these women's voices.

When I was exploring the 'comfort women' issue in the late 1990s in the UK, the question I was repeatedly asked was whether I had conducted or was planning to conduct interviews with 'comfort women' victims. In considering the possibility of interviewing the women, soldiers and other people who were directly or indirectly involved in the 'comfort women' system, I contacted a few people after attending meetings and a court hearing in Japan. However, after listening to talks about the 'comfort women' system, having a few meetings, and reading published testimonial narratives, I began to speculate about both the worth and the problem of my conducting interviews. In this regard, my limited language skills were an obvious barrier as I do not speak any of the Asian victim-survivors' native languages, and I did not feel that having a translator to ask about their private and painful experience was appropriate. Not only is the topic of a sensitive nature, but also many women had been already interviewed by researchers and journalists from Japan as well as from their own countries. As noted above, some of them had already started to feel disillusioned as nothing had changed despite their having spoken about their painful past. I could have chosen to focus on victim-survivors who speak English or Japanese, but this would have limited the access to a specific group of women. Besides, as I was not part of a particular activist group, the idea of finding women to talk to me only for the purpose of my research troubled me, as I did not think that I could bridge them and any immediate redress activities.

Another incident that made me ponder about conducting extensive interviews was my experience of an interview/meeting with a former military man, who was one of a few men who conscientiously talk about the Japanese military's involvement in the 'comfort women' system in public. During our talk, I noticed that what he said to me was quite different from what he had said elsewhere, and I gradually realized one of the challenges of conducting interviews and working on narratives. In his testimonial narrative that I had previously read, he said that he had visited comfort stations himself, but to me, he maintained that he had never visited them, and this made me question what we mean by historical facts and the truth of these narratives. At the same time, I became aware of the importance of the processes whereby testimonies are produced. Recalling his memory of war, comfort stations and 'comfort women' during our conversation, he repeatedly remarked that he felt it was not honourable to talk about the issue of sex with a woman of the younger generation. Although it was not a great concern to me that what he said during our meeting was different from what I had read or heard in a public meeting, I wondered whether our differences in generation and gender led to the construction of a particular testimony. With

such a consideration and experience, rather than conducting interviews, I decided to look at a collection of published testimonial narratives of victim-survivors (and military men) to consider the dynamics of testimonies – how testimonial narratives are produced, circulated and perceived and how this could impact on the 'comfort women' debates.

As has been discussed, in the debate surrounding the 'comfort women' system, testimonies are crucial, and have rightly been regarded as a rich resource with which to challenge the dominant and accepted discourse of history. Testimonies of 'comfort women' victims have, in fact, questioned the meanings of official historical writing (Kim, H., 1997: 76). However, in an attempt to reconstruct a full story of the 'comfort women' system and an alternative discourse of history drawing on testimonies, the narratives of the women were at times treated as information or data, and were given a 'truth-value' (Thoma, 2000:36).

Rewriting history from the perspective of women – making gender visible in history itself – is an essential endeavour, and transnational feminism and activism has successfully marked the experience of victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system in history (Dolgopol, 2013: 3). In the beginning of the discussion on the 'comfort women' system, however, in drawing on women's narratives, victim-survivors were not always the central figures, and sometimes became the mere informants whose narratives of their experience were only considered to serve this newly written history (Yang, 1997: 53; Kim, H., 1997: 95). Testimonial narratives of these women, however, should be approached more carefully (Kim, H., 1997), and this book has aimed to explore the subtlety as well as the dynamics of such testimonial narratives.

Testimonies are not only one-way communication and they entail a particular socio-political framework. As many feminists have pointed out, listening to them is essential and has also a participatory aspect (Thoma, 2000: 35; Kim-Gibson, 1999: 269). The testimonies of 'comfort women' victims, according to Field, require 'both victims and apologizers' (Field, 1997: 34). Testimonies and apologies are linked in a dialogical and recip-rocal process, and through exchanging their past experience and memory the present is constructed (Field, 1997: 36). By telling their stories in such exchanges and being listened to, victim-survivors could reconstruct 'both the private and public memory of the past' (Kim, H., 1997: 96), and in this process also reconstitute their own selves. The very act of narrating the story of their experience can offer women the opportunity to articulate a new sense of self in a narrative that encompasses meanings and structure, with reference to both past and future (Lawless, 2001: 7). As Lawless argues, narratives construct and are constructed by the subject (Lawless, 2001: 17). By urging the listener to listen to their testimonies, the 'comfort women' victims could assert a 'subjectivity' that has been denied to them for a long time. And it is this potential of testimonies that has been emphasized in this book.

There is, as noted, always a danger of 'comfort women' victims being exploited or their testimonies or themselves being commodified, particularly in the context of the Japanese government's prolonged refusal to compensate these women (Field, 1997: 26–7). Since testimonies, both audio-visual and printed, have to go through numerous editorial processes, the chances of victim-survivors being appropriated are not small (Thoma, 2000: 40). Various approaches have been adopted by feminists in an attempt to avoid such appropriation. For example, Thoma suggested that the (process of the production of) testimony of Kim Yun-sim at the George University in 1997 was less exploitative and commodified. Kim herself narrated her own experience with the translator sitting beside her, thus, Thoma argues, Kim's voice was no longer disembodied, and the audience could witness the relational and inter-subjective aspects of the testimony. Yet here too, the danger of spectacle remained (Thoma, 2000: 36).

Although many collections of the testimonial narratives of victim-survivors have been (translated and) published in Japan, collections of the testimonies of Korean victim-survivors published by the Women's Active Museum (WAM) in Japan in 2006 and 2010 particularly encourage the reader to engage with the individual experience and suffering of these women (WAM, 2006b; 2010b). Rejecting the relegation of women and their experience to mere representatives of the damage and suffering caused by the 'comfort women' system, and the burial of their individual experience in the totality of the injury, these collections focus on women's lives not only during the time of sexual enslavement, but before and after this experience, with some comments and notes presented by those who interviewed the women.

The majority of the testimonial narratives originally organized by the Korean Council (and translated by WAM, such as above) clearly demonstrate the individuality of suffering as well as the dynamic and subjective nature of testimonies. Testimonials have a strong collective character, and speaking as a collective is important as a way of gaining political recognition and developing a particular collective memory, as Menchú's testimonial narrative clearly demonstrated. Women can, however, be deprived of their own individuality in this process (Thoma, 2000: 37–8). Feminists therefore have urged that the possible tension between political (collective) aims and that the individual women's interests in the 'comfort women' issue should be acknowledged.

Victim-survivors testified repeatedly that their ordeal did not end even when the sexual torture ended; the harm of sexual slavery continued and is still continuing. The post-war never truly arrived for these women. Many could not go back to their homes, or even if they did, they suffered as, not being able to tell of their experiences, they had to lie to their family. Or they were ostracized or ignored by their family or in their community, who suspected what had happened to them. Women were physically and

psychologically scarred, and agonized about the consequences of infertility and other gynaecological problems. They suffered from physical pain and disabilities as well as strong anxiety and other psychological consequences of trauma. Many women lived in extreme poverty. In the WIWCT, it was noted how victim-survivors were suffering from severe PTSD and how their PTSD worsened over their years of hardship and the lack of acknowledgement of their suffering after the war. One of the achievements of the redress movement is that the wider and international community listens to women's still-continuing cry of pain and acknowledges the ongoing harm to victim-survivors and the PTSD that they are suffering from.

In the international criminal justice system, as briefly mentioned above, after being ignored for a long time, victim-survivors of rape gave testimonies for the first time in the ICTY during the 1990s, and the PTSD that the women suffered was acknowledged and indeed sometimes used to explain the inconsistency of women's testimonies. While this recognition of the enormity of the harm that women experienced by sexual violence is valuable, some feminists have also argued that the PTSD could be used against the victim-survivors and their testimony in the existing legal framework. The Furundzija case in the ICTY prosecuted rape and sexual assault as the single charge for the first time, but at the same time in this case the defence used the PTSD to bring into question the reliability of the memory and thus the testimonies of witnesses (victim-survivors of rape and sexual assault). In domestic legal proceedings such as in the UK or the US, the evidence of PTSD is usually introduced to support tort plaintiffs or criminal complaints. PTSD is used to demonstrate the damage done to the plaintiffs and/or to explain why their testimonies are not consistent (Campbell, 2002: 150). As can be seen in the judgement of the WIWCT in 2001, PTSD itself was considered as the evidence of injury and the reason for any incoherence of women's testimonies. It is argued that inconsistency (due to PTSD) does not indicate that victim-survivors did not experience sexual violence (IOC, 2001: 88–9).

However, the defence in the Furundzija case argued that because of the PTSD that one of the witnesses was allegedly suffering from, her testimony (memory) was not reliable (Campbell, 2002: 162). While the Trial Chamber did not solve the question of how the PTSD or psychological state would impact on the reliability of memory, and claimed that the diagnosis of PTSD does not necessarily make the witness unreliable, it still suggested that there is some relevance of the psychological state of the witness to their reliability (Campbell, 2002: 164). Kirsten Campbell highlights how, through 'the notions of credibility, reliability and corroboration', the trial judged whether the memory of a particular event is 'a legal fact' (Campbell, 2002: 169). This does not indicate that the judgment denied a particular 'reality' of the event or representation of 'truth'. Rather this suggested how the trial constructed a particular gendered legal memory as evidence, and while

the Chamber used 'the concepts of *accuracy*, *truthfulness*, *evidence*, and *fact*' to assess the veracity of memory, these are themselves constituted during and constitutive of the Trial process (Campbell, 2002: 169). As 'inconsistency does not necessarily mean inaccuracy' (Furundzija transcript cited in Campbell, 2002: 163), however, what is required for justice to be achieved is the different concepts of fact and truthfulness that are constituted as evidence.

In addition to this Furundzija case, Henry also draws on the Foča case in the ICTY, in which PTSD was equally used against the witness. Such a case illuminates the importance of the participation of victim-survivors in the trial for (achieving) justice and 'the redemptive potential of storytelling' (Henry, 2009: 124), but also demonstrates how international war crimes tribunals can deny the agency of victims (Henry, 2009: 118). She argues, as noted above, how the law and legal framework itself could actually alienate victims: such as the language, which only focuses on facts (the actions of perpetrators) rather than the emotions of victims; fragmenting testimonies by controlling and interrupting story-telling through various procedures; and the hostile cross-examination process (Henry, 2009: 125).

The challenge is how the 'truth' of the victim's experience can be recognized and acknowledged in this process (Henry, 2009: 128). As the trauma of being raped at the age of sixteen was too painful, one witness, for example, could not initially disclose the incident of her first rape to investigators. Instead of considering this silence as the sign of trauma or the pain that she was suffering, the defence actually used this silence as '"evidence" of the victim's lack of reliability and credibility' (Henry, 2010: 1105). At the same time, in contrast to the Furundzija case, the defence also argued that the witnesses and their testimonies are not credible as they did not show any sign of traumatic disorders; thus 'they could not have been raped' (Henry, 2010: 1110). This example well illuminates how trauma is not used to offer an understanding of women's experiences of wartime sexual violence or to listen to their voices (and silence), but rather *as a way to undermine and undervalue women's testimonies*' (Henry, 2010: 1111). This, thus, negates the subjectivity and subversiveness of victim-survivors. As Soh asserts, to be able to listen to the truth of victim-survivors, we might need different types of truth, such as applied by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission; 'factual or forensic truth', 'personal and narrative truth', 'social truth' and 'healing and restorative truth' (Soh, 2008: 98; Moon, 2008: 108).

While such constraints are mainly caused by the specificity of the legal framework, its procedures and discourses, such an analysis of the relationship between trauma and (the reliability of) testimony also raises concerns about how we can listen to narratives of victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system who are suffering from trauma. In addition to inconsistencies suggested in victim-survivors testimonies, researchers were puzzled by

the attachment and affection that some victim-survivors expressed towards individual Japanese soldiers, even when they and their fellow soldiers had sexually abused them severely (Soh, 2008; Kim-Gibson, 1999).

This attachment and bond too have often been explained by their trauma, such as in the Stockholm Syndrome and traumatic bonding (Kim-Gibson, 1999; Lee, 2008; Yang, 1997). In her interviews with Korean victim-survivors, Kim-Gibson often became confused and had to deal with her emotional turmoil whenever women, after all they had suffered, expressed tenderness towards the Japanese or recalled with fond memories a particular Japanese individual. Later however, she came to terms with these incidents as a typical example of the Stockholm Syndrome, where the emotional bonding of victims with the victimizers is formed as the victim's (unconscious) strategy of survival (Kim-Gibson: 1999: 9).

Such an explanation highlights the severity of the damage that victim-survivors suffered through their experience of sexual enslavement. At the same time, however, these 'private memories of genuine affection and personal compassion toward individual Japanese soldiers' of victim-survivors (Soh, 2008: 181) are crucial in considering their subjectivities in remembering and testifying. As the discussion in Chapter 6 surrounding Bae Jok-gan, who was one of the women to express to Kim-Gibson her affection towards a Japanese soldier, Ishikawa, shows, this exhibition of compassion towards Ishikawa may be an example of what Yang called 'mixed silence', where we find silence in their speech, and their untold story in their silence (Yang, 2008: 89). This brings us back to the importance of listening to women's narratives and their voices. Victim-survivors came forward and testified to their ordeal to break away from the 'cartel of silence': the layers of silence about the injuries suffered by victim-survivors forced on them by the intersection of social and political structures of silence, such as the silence of the international community, the Japanese and Korean governments, patriarchal society and communities and families (Yang, 2008: 69–70). Encountering their testimonies, listeners are responsible for accepting the plea of victim-survivors to remember and record their painful experience, at the same time recognizing the pain that is entailed in speaking, and their wishes to revert to silence to escape from such pain. One might illustrate this with Kang Duk-kyung's comments in the film *The Murmuring* that she wishes to disappear into the remote mountains, so that she can remain silent like a girl in one of her paintings, who was reborn as a bird and flew away alone (Jennison, 1997: 166–7).

9.3   Bearing witness and remembering the pain

Through numerous activities, feminists and the redress movement have responded to the plea of victim-survivors to record and remember their experience. These activities include: discussions at international, national,

and community levels; holding the WIWCT; organizing meetings to listen to the life stories of victim-survivors; and supporting their lawsuits. At the same time, visual and artistic means have been employed widely by artists and victim-survivor activists as a way for victim-survivors to tell their life stories and express their emotion, as well as to respond to their voices and to remember their lives. Films mentioned above made by Ban, Byun and Kim-Gibson during the 1990s, as well as those that portray the lives of Song Shin-do (Zainichi, 1993; Ahn, 2008), Jan Ruff-O'Herne (Lander, 1994), victim-survivors in the Shanxi region in China (Ban, 2007) and the series of short films produced by Video Juku, a group in Japan, are some of the examples of such an attempt.[3]

Photographers such as Soon Mi-yu (Schellstede and Soon, 2000), Jan Banning (Banning and Janssen, 2010) and Ahn Se-hong have taken series of portraits of victim-survivors. Ahn in particular has published his photographs in magazines since the 1990s, and since 2003 has organized a sequence of exhibitions on Korean victim-survivors who live in China.[4] Inspired by the lives and testimonies of victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system, (feminist) artists such as Arima Rie (*Lola Machine – Monologue*, 2008; *Requiem for Torn Flowers*, 2010), Chungmi Kim (*Comfort Women*, 2004), and Ito Tari (*I Will Not Forget You*, 2005; *One Response*, 2009; *One Response – for Bae Bong-gi and Countless Other Women*, 2013) created theatre and performance art works to capture the pain that women suffered. At the same time, these pieces of work force the audience to think about how we can listen to their pain and remember it. For example, Ito's work *I Will Not Forget You* (2005) has a scene of handshaking with the audience towards the end of the performance. Ito, explaining this part of the performance, illustrates how such 'impolite' handshaking (which begins with a grip, then suddenly is released) symbolizes the reconciliation that victim-survivors (in particular, Kim Sun-dok and Kang Duk-kyung, whose paintings were an integral part of the performance) hoped for but never came. Through the gesture of the failed handshake, she aimed to create the imaginary experience of what it would feel like for our hope of regaining respect and dignity, having been denied (by the Japanese government) repeatedly over many years (Ito, 2013).

Other feminist (visual) artists such as Mona Higuchi, Chang-Jin Lee, Song Hyun-sook, Shimada Yoshiko, Tomiyama Taeko and Yun Suk-nam, while using different forms, styles and media, similarly attempt to seek ways to remember these women's lives and painful experience. These artists not only focus on the voices of victim-survivors, but also illuminate their silence to urge the audience to remember both their voices and silence, marking them both in history. In exploring how they can represent women's lives and their painful experience, they are concerned about the politics of spectacularity as well, since graphic visual representation of their lives of sexual enslavement can further force victim-survivors to

be confined in the past agonizing experience. Moving away from spectacle, these feminists probe the form that can embrace the experience of torture, confinement and pain as well as offering a space for individual reflection and empathy. This was exemplified by Higuchi's *Bamboo Echoes* (1996); three-dimensional grids made from bamboo poles with gold-leaf squares hanging from the structures (Medvedow, 2001: 215; Higuchi, 2015).

Similarly, in her series of works on war and women in the 1990s, including the experience of 'comfort women' victims, Shimada Yoshiko avoided exposing and exhibiting the awful daily lives of Korean sexual slaves in comfort stations. In her work, which was described as 'the struggle against forgetting and the will to remember' (Kasahara, 1996, cited in Yoshimura, 1998: 21 – translated from the Japanese text), she refuses to allow the audience (particularly the Japanese audience) to see these women with the gaze of pity (Hagiwara, 1996: 261) and/or turn them into an erotic spectacularity (Stetz and Oh, 2001b: 202). She questions the positionality of the viewers (particularly the Japanese audience) and the significance of silence. Some of her work, such as *Comfort Women*, *Women of Conformity* (1994), presents images of victim-survivors whose mouths are covered by white patches, which contain texts from their testimonies. These images are juxtaposed with images of Japanese mothers (Hagiwara, 1996: 261). In *Look at me/ Look at you* (1995) a wedding dress with a Japanese apron and a white, torn Korean dress with red strips face each other, with a magic-mirror in between. From the side of the wedding dress, you can only see the reflection of your image without noticing the Korean dress behind the screen; from the side of the Korean dress, what you see is the only wedding dress (Figure 9.1). In *Becoming a Statue of a Japanese Comfort Woman* (2012), inspired by a statue of a Korean sex slave erected in 2011 in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, Shimada disguised herself as a statue of a Japanese 'comfort women' and sat with her mouth gagged in front of the Japanese Embassy in London (Figure 9.2) as well as in front of the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo (which commemorates the Japanese war dead) and the Japanese Parliament. This performance could be understood as a protest against the selective memory of the war erasing the sufferings of 'comfort women' victims, which is supported by the Japanese government, as well as against the social and structural injustice that forced many Japanese 'comfort women' victims to remain silent.

Tomiyama Taeko took up the issue of 'comfort women' and the suffering caused by the legacy of Japanese imperialism as the subject of her artistic expression as early as the 1970s. For instance, *The Night of the Festival of Garungan from Memories of the Sea* (1988) made those lost lives and the plight of the survivors visible through dark nights, skeletons and skulls, and headless nudes of women (Hidane Kobo, 2015). Instead of turning women's sufferings into a spectacle and allowing the audience to distance themselves

Figure 9.1   Shimada, Yoshiko (1995) Look at me/Look at you © Ota Fine Arts/Shimada Yoshiko

Figure 9.2   Shimada, Yoshiko (2012) Becoming a Statue of a Japanese Comfort Woman © Shimada Yoshiko

from such sufferings and to escape into a safer space of aesthetics, her paintings, it is argued, force the audience to consider how to take responsibility for what happened to these victims (Stetz and Oh, 2001b 208). Works such as *13 Brushstrokes on Korean Slippers* (2005) by Song Hyun-sook, and *Beauty of Light, Weight of Life* (1996) in the House of Sharing near Seoul in South Korea and *999* (1997) by Yun Suk-nam also aim to indict widespread gender discrimination and violence, while endeavouring to remember and to be responsive to the injuries suffered by 'comfort women' victim-survivors. While Chang-jin Lee's *Comfort Women Wanted* project (from 2008) is another attempt to bring light to and remember the lives of 'comfort women' victims, the project instead appropriates spectacularity through the use of ad-like billboards and posters to increase awareness of this form of sexual violence (Lee, 2015).

Gestures to record and remember the lives and experiences of 'comfort women' victims can also be observed in the memorials and museums about Japanese military sexual slavery. While memorials in Palisades Park, New Jersey, built in 2010 and in Glendale, California, in 2013 have already been mentioned in Chapter 7, the most famous memorial to victims of Japanese military slavery is probably *Comfort Women Peace Monument* in Seoul. This is a statute of a young girl sitting on a chair next to an empty chair, which symbolizes those victims who passed away or could not come forward, and was erected in December 2011 in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul; it was raised to mark the 1000th Wednesday Demonstration by victim-survivors and other activists (starting in January 1992), demanding that the Japanese government resolve this issue.

Artists Kim Seo-gyeong, and Kim Un-seong chose a realistic figure of a girl with 'innocence and serenity', suppressing the feeling of rage and sorrow that would be more likely to be associated with the fate of 'comfort women' victim-survivors (Morris-Suzuki, 2013: 3). They, as well as victim-survivors and other activists, consider this a symbol and aspiration for peace. The Japanese government, however, repeatedly requested that the memorial be removed, seeing it as an anti-Japanese gesture. With the urge to document and remember the history of the suffering of 'comfort women' victims, feminists and activists worked tirelessly to establish museums of Japanese military sexual slavery in various Asian countries. After the opening of the History Museum next to the House of Sharing in 1998, the Women's Active Museum (2005) in Tokyo and the War and Women's Human Rights Museum in Seoul (2012) were opened. Currently initiatives to establish a museum in Taipei, Taiwan, and Daegu, Korea, are also developing.

9.4   Encountering the unshareable pain

The debate surrounding the 'comfort women' system makes us think about how we can engage with the victim-survivors as well as with the issue itself.

Those who listen to testimonies and also try to participate in the discussion or the redress movement are asked, one way or another, to question their positionalities as well as the reason for their commitment (Yoneyama, 2008). The simplest question to begin with, using myself as an example, is why do 'I' choose to explore the issue of 'comfort women' victims? Is it because 'I' am a woman and from Japan? Or is it more to do with (feminist) compassion than with identification based on given social identities and categories? If so, on what basis was this compassion made possible and is justifiable? Encountering and being exposed to the discourse on the 'comfort women' system, we are all being questioned about who we are and where we speak from. The concern about positionalities has been considered for some time as the issue of identities. As examined above, various identities, whether they are gendered, national or generational, are often mobilized to explain and justify why people can/cannot or should/should not feel responsible for the sufferings of the 'comfort women' victims. The revisionist in Japan seems to accept and reproduce fixed and exclusive categories of identities, such as a national identity, which is also exclusive, entailing a seemingly unquestioned responsibility of the members of the group (to honour their community). Moreover, different or multiple identities appear to be incompatible or at least they are hierarchical; for example national identity is always given priority over gender identity by them.

Under the influence of postmodernism/post-structuralism/post-colonialism, identity claims by feminists and other activists and scholars are no longer straightforward, as an attempt has been made to avoid essentializing identities. However, identification based on the pre-given social divisions never goes away, and has always been difficult to resist. Ueno referred to the comment made by the film director Kim-Gibson, who stated that she laughed and cried with the 'comfort women' victims during her research into their experience, claiming that the violence that these women suffered is the violence inflicted on her own body. Ueno argues that Kim-Gibson, a Korean-American, identified with these women on the basis of a shared (and given) ethnic identity as a Korean (Ueno, 1998: 191).

The history of 'comfort women' has attracted the attention of Asian-American women, who have helped to make the issue more widely known in the US (and Canada). Those Asian-American women who now reside in the US do not regard the story of 'comfort women' victims as only relevant in East Asia, but see it as part of their own past. Given that many of their families suffered from colonialism and racial discrimination both before and after they arrived in the US, it is understandable that these Asian-Americans (Korean-Americans) are particularly interested in and sympathetic to 'comfort women' victim-survivors. Such remembrance of 'comfort women' victims is often positively accepted as the expression of 'a sense of belonging to a shared imaginative community of ethnicity and gender with the comfort women.' (Hein, 1999: 358). While such a sense of shared history

and culture was an encouraging drive to raise the 'comfort women' issue in the US, it also poses the danger of essentializing identities by ignoring the difference between, say, those women who are the Korean descendants of US citizens and those who are in Korea (Kang, 2003).

Acknowledging this danger, it has become increasingly popular to claim the connection between victim-survivors and those who are involved in the debate on the 'comfort women' issue on the basis of compassion and emotion, though this claim can still be made drawing on pre-fixed social identities. This compassion is often invoked in relation to the body and the experiences of pain. While the political issues and debates have often been influenced by 'emotion', traditionally, the study of politics has dissociated itself from the discussion of 'emotion'. Emotion, considered to be in the sphere of the private, has long been disregarded as the basis of a legitimate political claim, and any emotional or assumed 'non-' rational claim in politics has been undermined. However, as Berlant (1997) argues, there has recently been a growing trend where 'emotion' has been central to our interpretation of 'political'; the political, now, becomes private (that is to say, emotionally grounded).

Many contemporary political contestations are not simply about disputes over economic and political interests, borders and territories, ideologies, human rights or violence and physical destruction, but also about fear and emotional attachment and how this creates particular political discourses and actions. This tendency has been prominent since the 1990s, as the idea of belonging and national borders became unsettled and the question of history and memory was raised due to the end of the Cold War, the intensification of globalization and the fast-changing economic and political structure. Given this situation, the question of attachment, affect and emotion has become vital to the study of society and politics.

While the issue surrounding 'comfort women' victims has triggered heated debate since they started to testify about their ordeals in early 1990s, as has been explained, this issue has not yet seen any adequate political reparation. In their struggle, demanding that their painful experience be politically and socially recognized and claiming an official apology and compensation from the Japanese government, these survivors have been supported by many feminists and diverse citizens transnationally and globally. This is mainly because the testimonies of these women about their ordeals and courage 'moved' many people; that is to say the emotional involvement has been one of the significant aspects of the redress movement. This has resulted in the women gaining 'citizenship' within the local, national, regional and international political contexts.

At the same time, it was not simply the testimonies that emotionally touched the public, it was the experience and narrative of pain that mostly affected the listeners, as they considered that they could feel and share this pain, namely, they became affectively attached. While unquestioned

identification with such pain can sometimes be problematic, how to under-stand or share such pain, or even to realize that pain is not shareable is fundamental to the discussion of 'comfort women'. This is also because feeling, emotion and pain are similarly employed in the revisionist argu-ments, mentioned earlier, that have been trying to refute these women's testimonies of their experience.

The revisionist arguments should be seriously challenged, and feminists as well as left-wing historians in Japan have been making enormous efforts to present counter-arguments in support of 'comfort women' victims. However, a not insignificant proportion of society in Japan has been attracted to the revi-sionist discourse. Often revisionist discourses have been contested (by femi-nists and left-wing historians) as unreasonable and uncompassionate to the survivors. This 'unreasonableness' and indifference to the survivors is however formed by and forms the feeling towards Japanese soldiers and the emotional and affective attachment to the sense of community that they believe they belong to. In that sense therefore, their discourse also heavily involves emotion, feeling and pain, namely affect, though these are different kinds of affect than those that feminists claim to share with 'comfort women' victim-survivors. The discussion of the 'comfort women' system should, therefore, be contextualized in the wider contemporary issues of politics and the history and memory of war, which is very much affective and emotionally charged.

Scarry suggests that the appeal to the body as realness and certainty (and to the emotional connection to bodily pain) can grow stronger in times of social crisis (Scarry, 1985: 14). However, compassion should not be ascribed to pain or feelings based on given categories. It is not because 'I' or 'we' are women that we feel compassion towards 'comfort women' victims who are also women. Nor because 'I/we' are Japanese that I/we feel responsibility for the damage that the Japanese military inflicted on other Asian nationals. These two identities (gender and nationality) are undoubtedly an influence in the 'comfort women' issue and can trigger compassion, but grounding compassion on given and essentialized identities is problematic.

It is risky to start from existing social divisions as a basis for compassion, and this is one of the reasons why the debate on the 'comfort women' issue became so complicated. However hard they may try to avoid this, many speak from a given location of 'Western', 'Japanese', 'Korean', 'Chinese' or 'Filipina', woman or man, and young or old, and see this as providing the possible basis for a shared pain. This categorization gestures towards respon-sibility, but can also have the effect of distancing oneself from the issue.

The claim of compassion often runs a risk of reproducing essentialist divisions. In contemporary society there is an attempt to gain recognition through what has been termed 'wounded attachment'; the belief that the experience of pain and hurt provides a greater epistemological authority (Skeggs, 2000). Because such compassion is claimed on the basis of the pain, which is supposed to be commonly experienced by all human beings, the

identification formed through this compassion is rarely questioned. Such compassion, however, can not only reproduce existing social divisions, but also 'confirms the state and its law as the core sites of personhood' and the hierarchical relationship (Berlant, 2000: 33). Commenting on Brown's analysis, Berlant argues how by linking minority identity with a wound leads to 'the wound becoming fetishized as evidence of identity' instead of something to be challenged and overcome (Berlant, 2000: 33–4).

As Oka argues, compassion should not be based on essentialist identification. The listener's compassion for the speaker's pain can only be realized by the listener acknowledging that she/he cannot share that pain. It is in this suffering the non-shareability of the pain that compassion can be generated. Compassion is not to understand or identify with someone's pain but to accept that we never can comprehend another's pain, and to feel pain for this (Oka, 2000: 226–30). Understanding that we cannot share pain and that each individual experiences a different pain, but still seeking compassion on the grounds that others do indeed have pain, seems to be the appropriate way to deal with the 'comfort women' issue. Embracing the uncomfortable emotional feeling and engaging with this feeling is what Hemmings called 'feminist affective solidarity', to which we can aspire for political transformation (Hemmings, 2012).

The 'comfort women' issue is a question not of the past, but of the present. It therefore includes various issues that have contemporary implications, such as 'modern Japan, gender and sexuality, race and racism, the international order, and modern civilization itself' (Hein, 1999: 338). In addition, as discussed in Chapter 3, drawing on the examples of the Holocaust, racism and colonial violence, evil deeds are not something abnormal, outside our modern ordinary life, but are fully embedded in everyday normality. This is why growing numbers of scholars have begun to emphasize the connection between the lives of the ordinary (peacetime) and the extraordinary (war) to explain how the 'comfort women' system was developed and maintained. Such an attempt suggests that the harm that the 'comfort women' system caused should be construed as a problem of the present that needs to be attended to as a worldwide issue (Rekishi kenkyukai and Nihonshi kenkyukai, ed., 2014). We need to realize, then, as Primo Levi remarked, how evil is not exterior to our lives, and that we also have to reflect on how we are complicit in allowing evil deeds, such as extreme violence, to be committed.

> More often and more insistently as that time recedes, we are asked by the young who our 'torturers' were, of what cloth were they made. The term torturers alludes to our ex-guardians, the SS, and is in my opinion inappropriate: it brings to mind twisted individuals, ill-born sadists, afflicted by an original flaw. Instead, they were made of our same cloth, they were average human beings, averagely intelligent, averagely wicked: save for exceptions, they were not monsters, they had our faces... (Levi, 1989: 169)

Evil is not external; it does not appear only in the pre-modern or the Other. The evil are not monsters, they are ordinary people who have our faces. Keeping this in our mind, we have to make continuing efforts to listen to the voices of 'comfort women' victim-survivors even when it is uncomfortable, as we know their cries are thrown at 'us' who all bear some responsibility for their sufferings.

As Igeta Midori, referring to Oka, points out, witnessing the tortuous process of testifying may make us very uneasy, and it is right to be concerned about the fact that we might come to understand victim-survivors' pain only because they go through an agonizing process whenever they testify; voyeurism and spectacularity is present, which can further appropriate these women. If these victim-survivors choose to testify, however, in spite of such anguish, to challenge the 'cartel of silence', the audience is forced to listen and become responsible for receiving their message (Igeta, 2010). As Krog, Mpolweni and Ratele struggled to understand the narrative of 'There was this goat' made by Mrs Konile during the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, we need to make a serious attempt to listen to the narratives of victim-survivors through their individuality (Krog et al., 2009). Mrs Konile lost her only son because of the racist Apartheid regime in South Africa. However, her injury was not only caused by racism, but also by an extreme poverty that she had to suffer through both the racist social structure and the loss of her son. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission did not hear her voice. Even when bearing witness is impossible, however, we should not give up our effort to listen (Henry, 2010).

This could be considered a political gesture in seeking 'historical truthfulness' (Morris-Suzuki, 2001; 2005). As explored in Chapter 7 and throughout the book, it is no longer possible to make a claim for historical truth. In accepting the impossibility of presenting the past in a complete and correct manner and accepting the existence of competing narratives of the past, Morris-Suzuki argues that what is required is to engage with 'historical truthfulness' that is 'an open-ended and evolving relationship with past events and people' (Morris-Suzuki, 2005: 27). Through entering dialogue with people with different experience of the past, listening to diverse voices, and retelling these stories, we can acknowledge the complexity of the reality and constantly redefine our position and relationship to the past. As Morris-Suzuki claims, this search for 'historical truthfulness' would enable us, in part, to challenge the historical narrative of oblivion through assessing the multiplicity of memories and the openness to critical reflection in given narratives of the past (Morris-Suzuki, 2001: 304; 2005: 30). And this move would be one of the ways to seriously consider the issue of (war) responsibility.

Notes

1 A Question of History

1. In this book, Chinese, Japanese and Korean names are presented family names first, followed by given names.
2. Despite his government's attempt to minimize its responsibility for Asian victims of the war, he denied the speculation that his government would revise the Kono Statement in his statement on 14 March 2014 (*Asahi Shimbun*, 2014a).
3. As will be explained later, the value of Yoshida's memoir as the evidence of forced recruitment of women by Japanese authorities has long been questioned by historians, including feminist and left-wing historians. They have argued, nonetheless, that even though Yoshida's memoir is deemed to be historically unreliable, other evidence can show the forced and slave-like nature of the 'comfort women' system. See Note 15.
4. For example, see Prime Minister Abe's comment in September 2014 (*Asahi Shimbun*, 2014d). The Japanese government also officially requested that the 1996 *Coomaraswamy Report*, which acknowledged the legal responsibility of the Japanese government, be revised accordingly (*Asahi Shimbun*, 2014e).
5. The term 'comfort women' itself is one of the foci of discussion of this issue. Many women reject the title of 'comfort women', as this implies that they volunteered to provide 'sexual service', although, they argue, this was not the case. These victims/survivors and those who support them request the term 'sexual slavery' to be used, in order to differentiate those 'comfort women' who were forced to have sex with soldiers from voluntary military prostitutes. However, while we should respect these women's rejection of the name, as will be discussed later, the distinction between those who were 'forced' and 'not forced' is problematic. Therefore, and to mark the historical specificity of this system, I will continue to employ the term 'comfort women' in this book. However, I use the term with quotation marks out of respect for their discontent, and try to avoid referring to an individual woman as a 'comfort woman'. Indeed, Soh (2008) discusses the dynamism and complexity of naming the women and how this naming frames the 'comfort women' issue for a particular political objective.
6. Senda started to write on the 'comfort women' in journals from the 1960s onwards (Oh, 2001:15).
7. These studies and other literature on 'comfort women' before the 1990s will be discussed later in this chapter more in detail.
8. There is still huge disagreement between feminist activists, left-wing historians and international communities on the one hand and the Japanese government on the other hand, as to how central the Japanese government was in organizing the system. The Japanese government admitted its involvement, but always stressed that it only played secondary roles in the operation of the system, such as ensuring the security in comfort stations, or helping private businesses to set up comfort stations. The major discrepancy lies in the differing understanding of the involvement of Japanese authorities in 'recruiting' and the meaning of coercion. The Japanese government and right-wing politicians and critics argue that

as no document proves that coercion was used by the Japanese authority to take women, the 'comfort women' system does not pose any problem. Feminists and left-wing scholars maintain that whether coercion was used in recruitment is of secondary importance, but how women were drafted, imprisoned and forced to have sex with soldiers is the central problem of the system.

9. The last atonement money was given out in May 2002 and the Asian Women's Fund dissolved at the end of March 2007 with the completion of its projects in Indonesia (AWF, 2007).

10. Here, violence against women is divided into three categories: (1) violence in the family, (2) violence in the community, and (3) violence by the State; the 'comfort women' issue is referred to in (3).

11. For example, UN (1995b).

12. In October 2013, Japanese newspapers reported that in 2012, the Noda government of Japan was about to make an agreement with the South Korean government under the President Yee Myung Bak considering an official apology and humanitarian support to these women. However, the dissolution of the Lower Parliament and the subsequent government change after the 2012 General Election cancelled this political negotiation (Hakoda, 2013a; 2013b).

13. For example, *Japanese Prisoner of War Interrogation Report,* No.49 (01/10/1945) by United States Office of War Information, Psychological Warfare Team Attached to US Army Forces India-Burma Theater, *Psychological Warfare Interrogation Bulletin,* No. 2 (11/30/1944) by South-East Asia Translation and Interrogation Center, and *Interrogation Report* by the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section. All translated into Japanese and published in Yoshimi (ed.) (1992).

14. Howard (1995: 7).

15. In his memoir, he testified that he was involved in forced 'recruitment' of the women in Jeju Island in Korea. Not only the revisionists, but also feminist and left-wing critics later concluded that Yoshida's testimony cannot be used as the evidence of coerced 'recruitment' of Korean 'comfort women'. However, they also maintain that this does not mean that there was no forced recruitment in Korea (Yoshimi, 1997a: 26–7).

16. The findings of research were published in *Quarterly Journal: The Report on War Responsibility* (*Kikan Senso Sekinin*) and were presented as a report, which was submitted to the relevant UN bodies, such as the UN Human Rights Committee in 1994. This was eventually published as *Collaborative Research: Japanese Military Comfort Women* (*Kyodo Kenkyu: Nihongun Ianfu*) in 1995 (Yoshimi and Hayashi, eds., 1995: iii; The Center, 2014).

17. A few examples of these published in the early 1990s in Japan include: The Korean Council *et al.* (1993), which presents testimonies of nineteen women originally published in Korean; The Executive Committee (1993) is based on testimonies made in the public hearing that took place in Tokyo in 1992, and ICJ (1994) presents testimonies of 'comfort women' victims and former soldiers that the International Commission of Jurists met during its mission in 1993. Two edited books Kyoto 'Oshietekudasai' (1993) and Jyugun Ianfu 110 Ban (1992) provide soldiers' accounts of 'comfort women'.

18. See Chapter 5, Note 10.

19. Discussion concerning school history textbooks will be presented in more detail later in this chapter.

20. Critics who made such comments include: Fujioka Nobukatsu, a professor at Tokyo University; Nishio Kanji, a scholar in German literature; Hata Ikuhiko, a

retired professor in military history in Japan; and Kobayashi Yoshinori, a popular graphic novelist.

21. In these textbooks, the 'comfort women' system is not mentioned at all. The sale of the general market version of these textbooks and other publications of these authors was said to have been very successful, and copies of these books were piled high in major bookstores when I was in Japan in April 2000. Tohan Bestseller Archive 2001 shows that one of the mass market textbooks published by the Japan Society for History Textbook Reform ranked in the 16th position overall, and 7th in the non-fiction section. The history and citizenship textbooks written by the group were approved in 2001 to be used in the following academic year. However, in 2002, only around 0.04 per cent of all junior high school students were actually using this history book in their classrooms. (Uesugi: 2002: 2).

22. Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21 provides detailed information on which history and citizenship studies textbooks each local educational authority adopts (Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21, 2014).

23. *Japan Society for Textbook Reform* (2014).

24. For example, see Ienaga (ed.) (1996).

25. Despite its name, the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan is a conservative party that often shows ultra-nationalist characteristics.

26. The name originates from Nishijima Tateo, a journalist, calling the discussion started in 1995 between Kato Norihiro and Takahashi Tetsuya 'the debate on historical subjects' (Nishijima, 1997).

27. Some of these examples include: Matsuo (1997: 4), Nishino (1997a: 72), Matsui, Yoshiko (1997:2) Ogoshi and Takahashi (1997: 133), Takahashi (1998a: 52–3).

28. A similar comment is made by Prescila Bartonico (Senso Giseisha, 1997: 103).

29. Four from North Korea, eleven from South Korea, and one from Japan.

30. Both testimonies are from North Korea.

31. In the English translation it states a red-hot iron bar instead of wood (The Korean Council, *et al.*, 1995: 85).

32. In commenting on a similar testimony from North Korea, Yoshimi also questions the authenticity of such a testimonial narrative making reference to multiple beheadings as this is not realistic or possible (Yoshimi, 1997b: 73).

33. She also dismisses the claim that Japanese are uniquely a dangerous people Chang (1997: 220).

34. Also see Entenmann (1998) and Inokuchi and Nozaki (1999) for similar comments.

35. For example, Honda Katsuichi had written on atrocities of the Japanese military in China throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and Fujiwara Akira published *Nanking no Nihongun (The Japanese Army in Nanking)* in 1990 (Yoshida, 1999: 258).

2 The Struggle Against Ultra-Nationalism and the Entrapment of Orientalism

1. Similarly, Ikeda Eriko argues that Japan has a long history of (regulated) prostitution dating back to the twelfth century, where men are allowed to pay for prostitutes (Ikeda, 2000: 132–3).

2. She uses the term sexual 'ideology' to mean the system that was imposed by the state or society to exploit and oppress women. I will refer to the idea of ideology following Althusser later in this book, and he uses the term quite differently from how it is employed by Ogoshi; I will use the term 'norm', when possible, for Ogoshi's work to avoid confusion.

3. See also Ogoshi, Minamoto and Yamashita (1990), Ogoshi and Minamoto (1994). In these examples of their work, how the development of Buddhism in Japan would have been influenced by social and economic changes is not much discussed.
4. Also see Obinata (1992), Hayakawa (1998) and Fujino (2001).
5. See also Ogoshi (1996: 202).
6. However, she also make reference to women who became victimizers (Ogoshi, 2000b: 296).
7. However, she also points out the impact of specific gender relations introduced during modernization in Japan as the source of women's oppression. For example, see Ogoshi (1996; 1997b).
8. See, for example, Kobayashi (1997) and Hata (1999).
9. For example, recently Kawada (2014) stated that, apart from Japan, it was only Nazi Germany that had an extended system of military comfort stations. It is explained that comfort stations were developed by the Japanese military because the government lacked the resource to send soldiers back for regular holidays, and comfort stations were considered the most economic and efficient alternative. However, that fact that the Allied Forces in Asia and Africa also had military prostitution, which they controlled to a limited extent, albeit not directly, is not mentioned. At the same time, however, during the past decade studies that provide comparative analysis between the 'comfort women' system and state and military licensed prostitution in other countries have become more noticeable (Tanaka, 2008; Nagahara, 2014)
10. See also Note 9.
11. Ikeda also argues that the system of state-regulated prostitution started in the seventeenth century.
12. Kim a Korean-Japanese feminist, who was another leading feminist to help with the organisation of the Tribunal and worked closely with Matsui, however, disagrees with Yun's comment (Kim, P., 2008).
13. It has been reported how Japanese residents in the US (recent migrants to the US from Japan) have been under the influence of Japanese ultra-nationalism; see Koyama (2014a; 2014b).

3 Modernity, Evil and Violence

1. Some of the more recent discussion include Takahashi (2010).
2. Shibata Toshiko points out that 'Enlightened rationality' is also revived in Arendt's discussion (1997: 253).

4 The Origin of the 'Comfort Women' System

1. However, as will be mentioned later, the relation between race and sexuality was not so explicit in Foucault's published work.
2. Though some genital examination of soldiers was performed prior to the 1864 CD Acts, it became ineffective as the officers were reluctant to inflict such a 'humiliating' operation on other men (Enloe, 2000: 56).
3. The towns ultimately covered were Portsmouth, Plymouth, Woolwich, Chatham, Sheerness, Aldershot, Colchester, Shorncliffe, the Curragh, Cork, Queenstown (1864), Windsor (1866), Canterbury, Dover, Gravesend, Maidstone, Winchester and Southampton (1869) (Hyam, 1991: 63).

4. Levine also explains that the indigenous men and women too became mistrustful of the British after 1857 (Levine, 1994: 584).

5. Levine argues that it was not only the sexuality of (native) prostitutes that was controlled and regulated, but also that of black British soldiers (1998: 109).

6. Order of Liberating Prostitutes (1872) and Regulation on Prostitution Control (1900) are the examples that include the provision of ostensible freedom to leave the job (Fujime, 1998: 90–1).

7. While Garon acknowledges that the Muromachi Shogunate formally accepted prostitution as a trade and started to levy tax on it, he also distinguishes the modern system developed after the Meiji Restoration from indigenous practices of prostitution (Garon, 1997: 90).

8. While the presence of outcasts had been acknowledged for a long time, it was the Tokugawa government that classified them officially at the bottom of the class hierarchy. They were discriminated against in their place of residence, profession, marriage, and all other aspects of life. In 1871, under the Meiji government, they were 'liberated' and integrated into the commoners' class, and were supposed to be treated equally with other commoners. However, the discrimination continued and still exists today.

9. Hayakawa explains that in the middle of the Edo Era some contracts of fixed-term service (*nenkibokosei*), such as those that bound prostitutes, developed into slave-like arrangements, and this partly became the source of criticism of prostitution during the Meiji Restoration (Hayakawa, 1998: 189–90).

10. However, Obinata suggests that more general political reform of the time was behind the issue of the Ordinance and Fujino also supports this argument (Obinata, 1992: 282; Fujino, 2001: 11).

11. Entertaining women were those who received special training in singing, musical instruments and dancing and entertained customers at dinners and drinking sessions. They were considered different from prostitutes, though sometimes they offered sexual services as well.

5 Reading the Testimonies

1. Lives recounted in many testimonies are often a combination of the two.

2. For example, when the 'atonement money' was provided, the Philippine government was responsible for officially identifying 'comfort women' victims. They defined 'comfort women' victims as those who were kept imprisoned in one place for a certain period of time, excluding victims of mass rape. This view was also reflected in the Indictment and claim for reparation prepared by the delegate for the WIWCT in Tokyo, as victims of the 'comfort women' system (sexual slavery) and mass rape were distinguished. However, both groups of women have equally been treated as victims of wartime sexual violence in the Philippines and supported by various organizations (WAM: 2013: 48; WIWCT, 2000a).

3. It is, of course, quite possible that these are the questions that victim-survivors were repeatedly asked to answer.

4. This is also suggested in The Executive Committee (1993: 31) and WIWCT (2000a: 21.4).

5. Mass rapes in Mapanique only became widely known after a local person contacted a radio station in 1996 after listening to an interview with one of the 'comfort women' (Okano, 2000: 271).

6. Her testimony also appears in the Indictment by Indonesian Delegates of Women's International War Crimes Tribunal, but the narrative is slightly different (WIWCT, 2000b: 8–9).

7. Among twelve known former 'comfort women', only Rosalind Saw came out as a 'comfort woman' publicly (WIWCT, 2000c). Her testimony here is reported by Mary Chin from the Malaysia Women's Action Society.

8. In traditional East Asian cultures, babies were considered to be a year old when they were born. Therefore, when they were taken, Korean, Chinese and Taiwanese women could have been one or two years younger than the age that they claimed.

9. Some of these examples include: Kawada listening to Bae Bong-gi, a Korean resident in Japan who lived in Okinawa in Japan (Kawada, 1994), and Morikawa, mentioned here.

10. For example, in the first archival research, after consulting 2,000 out of 10,000 memoirs and journals in the library collection, they found that comfort stations and/or 'comfort women' were mentioned in 133 war memoirs and diaries (The Center, 1994a: 58). They also conducted the third archival research study in 2009 and consulted about 2,000 out of 4,000 war diaries and memoirs published after 1994. About 500 of them make reference to 'comfort women' and comfort stations (The Center, 2009: 55).

11. Her testimony published by the Korean Council clearly states this point (The Korean Council, 1995: 33).

12. The discussion of Hata Ikuhiko and Kobayashi Yoshinori has been mainly focused on here, partly because they have been influential figures in the Japanese mass media; Hata, a former civil servant turned history professor, and Kobayashi, a popular *manga* artist who publishes a best-selling series entitled *(Shin) Gomanism Sengen (The New Statement of Arrogance)*. Moreover, they engage with documents and testimonies in fair detail, though often in a problematic manner, and raise important issues, such as the contradictions in women's testimonies, which were not widely discussed by the supporters of 'comfort women'.

13. Yang (1997) also highlights the obsession with the truth in the discussion of 'comfort women' in South Korea.

14. Yoshimi also criticizes the revisionists for distorting historical facts (Yoshimi, 1997d: 53).

15. For example, see Kawada (1995: 6).

16. For example, see Yoshimi (1996: 22–3).

17. Similar comments are made in Yamashita (1996) and Kim, P. (1998; 2001).

18. However, some feminist scholars and activists argued that criticism by certain Japanese academics and activists that the redress movement in South Korea had been influenced by nationalism not respecting individual women, cannot be warranted. For example, Kim, P. (2008) and Yun (2013) emphasize how South Korean feminists in the redress movement, in association with the Korean Council, have offered support to victim-survivors at an individual level over many years, while they pressed the Korean government to develop a legal framework to provide social welfare to these women. They maintain that it was (Japanese) activists who supported the Asian Women's Fund that planted mistrust between feminists and victim-survivors, by providing misleading information to victim-survivors.

19. Kim also indicated, however, that their coming from a respectable family and having been virgins was often stressed in women's testimonies during the Tribunal, and that hardly any licensed prostitutes came forward as 'comfort women' even in countries where Japanese licensed prostitution had been introduced, before and during the war (Kim, P., 2001).

6   Listening to Women's Voices

1. Following Sandra Harding, 'method' is used here to refer to three aspects of research: 'method', 'methodology', and 'epistemology' (Harding, 1987a: 2).
2. While feminist research studies have given emphasis to qualitative research methods, feminists also became aware that the polarization of qualitative vs quantitative actually results in reinforcing the gender binarism they aim to challenge. Instead of probing a single and concrete feminist method, feminists are now more concerned with developing research methodology incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research: see Graham (1983: 136); Maynard (1994: 11–14); Kelly et al., (1992), Wolf (1996: 25). Most feminists have turned away from a search for a single feminist methodology: see Gottfried (1996: 3); Stanley and Wise (1993: 188).
3. A similar point is raised in Finch (1984) and Wolf (1996).
4. For example, in later work, Hartsock stressed the importance of difference and heterogeneity in understanding social change (Hartsock, 1996; Hekman, 1997: 350). For further discussions, see *Signs,* vol. 22, no. 2 (1997).
5. For example, Patricia Hill Collins rejects the idea that all visions are equal (relative), and both Harding and Hartsock are critical towards postmodernism (relativism) as it results in absolute relativism, or is helpless in bringing about social changes (Hekman, 1997: 352–4).
6. Yun Chung-ok repeatedly commented that she started to investigate the issue as she wondered for a long time why her school friends who were drafted never came back; for example Scene 26, in the film *Murmuring* and in an interview (Yun and Ogoshi, 1998: 36–7).
7. However, Dori Laub also suggested in his discussion of listening to the Holocaust testimonies that without too much knowledge (about contextual information) listeners can better engage with what the survivor has to say and can understand both 'the survivor's truth' and 'historical truth' with a completely new perspective (Laub, 1992a: 61–2).
8. Two volumes of collections of testimonial narratives of Korean victim-survivors were published in Japan 2006 and 2010, based on the translation of interviews of women conducted by the Korean Council. They are different from other collections of testimonies in a sense that they provide some background information on the process of interview and commentaries on the lives of these women by interviewees/researchers. Editors also emphasize that the aim of these collections is to engage with individual stories of 'comfort women' victim-survivors (rather than reducing these testimonies as mere examples of victimization) (WAM, 2006b; 2010b).
9. Many feminists have argued that the emotion of researchers such as empathy and compassion as well as anger is vital in expanding their insight into realities of women (who experienced sexual violence) (Stanko, 1997: 79; Ahn, 1999: 80). Recently, affect has been given a particular attention as central to feminist politics; see Hemmings (2012) and Pedwell and Whitehead (2012).

10. Also, although experiences of sexual enslavement as 'comfort women' are diverse, as suggested in the previous chapters, women from similar cultural and national backgrounds often went through comparable experiences.
11. Kurasawa Aiko points this out in the commentary on the Japanese translation of Ruff-O'Herne's autobiography (Kurasawa, 1999: 217–18). A similar issue is raised in Schaffer and Smith (2004: 145).
12. Ahn argues that this claim of male natural sexual desire has indeed been used to legitimize sexual oppression of women and the construction of comfort stations (Ahn, 1999: 177).
13. Comments made during my interview with Dr Yuasa Ken in July 1997.
14. See Note 8.
15. For example, Yi Ok-pun and Yi Sun-ok in The Korean Council (1995: 99, 119).
16. According to an accompanying booklet to the film *Habitual Sadness (Nanumu no Ie II /Najen Moksori 2),* she was sent to the police station because she was suspected of having an anti-Japanese attitude (Pandora, 1998: 5).

7 Representation and Its Limits

1. Indeed, pain and suffering have increasingly been considered as the basis of epistemic authority (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 129; Skeggs, 2000: 29). This has further developed into the body of study on affect, in particular in feminism (Pedwell and Whitehead, 2012).
2. He still seemed to hold this view when he gave masterclass lectures in February 2012 at Birkbeck, University of London.
3. Recall the scene in which Jewish women are sent to Auschwitz by mistake, where they are ushered into a shower room. Contrary to the audience's anticipation, it turns out that this shower spray is not gas but water and these women narrowly escape execution. In the following sequences, their children also manage to flee from being left behind in Auschwitz, saved by Oskar Schindler by a hair's breadth. However, in most cases, such things did not actually happen (Bartov, 1996: 171). Furthermore, survivors such as Primo Levi repeatedly wrote that the hardest fact to accept in the concentration camp was that the persecutors were ordinary men, not evil (Levi, 1989: 167–9). Also, see Todorov (1996: 121–40).
4. It is claimed that Spielberg declared his film as a document (Avisar, 1997: 49). This can be interpreted as his commitment to some form of realism.
5. This is a story of a family of Italian Jew Guido, Italian gentile wife Dora, and their son Giosué, who were deported to a concentration camp, where Guido explains to Giosué that they are playing a (survival) game to win a tank. For example, see Wooton (1998) (in particular, the fourth question to Benigni from the audience), French (1999), Romney (1999) and Cartwright (1999). On the negative reception in the US and beyond, see Viano (1999: 47–53) and Gilman (2000: 293–4).
6. In his reply to a question in the interview, Wootton (1998).
7. Also, see Note 3.
8. Art Spiegelman's *Maus* develops around the story not only of the survival of his father, but also the relationship between his father and the mother during and after the war.
9. LaCapra (1998: 142). However, it is worth noting that LaCapra is not necessarily accepting laughter in general in representing the Holocaust; see also pp.174–6.
10. See Spielberg's comment Note 4.

11. The film is dominated by a black screen which is occasionally interrupted by images of figures falling from the Twin Towers and also shows a short footage of the World Trade Centre collapsing.

12. Examples of such canonization include; Clendinnen (1999: 176–80); Felman's discussion on *Shoah*, Felman (1992: 204–83); Anton Kaes' (1992) appraisal of *Shoah* in contrast to Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's *Hitler – a Film from Germany*. Also, in Japan, *Shoah* is highly appreciated by intellectuals and rarely comes in for criticism. See Ukai and Takahashi (1995) and *Gendai Shiso, Special Issue: Shoah*, 23 (7) (1995).

13. Byun Young-joo, a female film director from South Korea, started to film the lives of Korean victim-survivors living in a shared house in Seoul in 1994, after she regularly visited them over a year. She came to know about 'comfort women' after she met a woman working as a prostitute to pay for her mother's medical problems, which had been caused by her experiences of having been a 'comfort woman' victim. Her first film *The Murmuring (Nanumu no Ie I / Nazen Moksori 1)* (1995) shows these women's decision to come forward to testify to their experiences, and their standing protest in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul every Wednesday, demanding an official apology from the Japanese government. It also portrays their lives in the House of Sharing (*Nanumu no Ie*). Since the first film, the House of Sharing had moved to a suburb of Seoul, and one of the women, Kang Duk-kyung, was diagnosed with cancer. *Habitual Sadness* was filmed on Kang's request to record her until her approaching death and shows how women managed themselves in their new accommodation, coping with the fear of losing Kang. *My Own Breathing* is the last of the series, consisting of interviews with victim-survivors both in and outside *the* House of Sharing.

14. See Spivak (1988b; 1993; 1996a; 1996b; 1996c; and 1999).

15. It is often pointed out that Rigoberta Menchú is an example of the (practice of) subaltern agency. See Ota (2000), Spivak (1996c: 292), Salazar (1991), Sommer (1991), Beverly (1992), Kaplan (1992), Carr (1994).

16. Note the similarity between Stoll's argument and those of the revisionists in Japan that attempt to refute testimonies of 'comfort women' victims.

17. LaCapra also mentions this episode and claims that it is when testimonies offer other than purely 'documentary knowledge' that they become more important. However, he also admits historians have not figured out 'an acceptable way of "using" testimonies' (LaCapra, 2001: 87, 110).

8 Women's Agency: From Social Stigma to Survivor-Activists

1. Also note the example of Song Shin-do, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

2. See Chapter 9.

3. In addition to other women who attempted to talk about their experience mentioned earlier in the chapter, women such as Kang Duk-kyung (The Korean Council, 1995: 184) and Anastasia Cortes (ICJ, 1994: 77) also said that they had written down their experience before the campaign to redress victim-survivors of the 'comfort women' system started.

4. These details about her biography can be found in her testimonies in Nishino (1993), 'Jyosei no Jinken' Iinkai (1994), YosonNet (1995), Zainichi (1997; 2007), Appendix in WIWCT (2000d) and WAM (2006b).

5. In the first stage at the Tokyo District Court, the injuries that she suffered over seven years of her experience of sexual slavery were recognized, and in the Tokyo High Court, the Japanese state's responsibility for violating international law was also partly recognized.

6. An article that Bae Bong-gi, a former military 'comfort woman', was granted a special permission to stay in Japan appeared in the newspapers in October 1975 (Kawada, 1994: 11).

7. However, Kawada explained how Bae acquired a close relationship with a Korean-Japanese Kim Hyun-ok towards the end of her life (Kawada, 1994: 299–300).

8. This point is also raised in Noda (2000: 3–4). Park also sings similar improvised songs in *Habitual Sadness*.

9. The last part of the second sentence here reads in the Japanese translation: 'they say that civilians recruited women on their own initiative' (implying no involvement of the Japanese government); The Korean Council (1993: 240).

10. As discussed in Chapter 5, in her testimonial narrative published by the Korean Council, this point is not stressed (1995: 41–9).

11. This broad definition of 'coercion' was also maintained in the indictment prepared by Korea at the WIWCT in December (WIWCT 2000d: 13, no. 23). This broader definition of 'coercion' is what is currently supported by feminists, other activists and historians in the redress movement, including in Japan.

12. Soh also describes the initial bewilderment of the researchers who listened to the life story of Kil Won-ok, whose testimonial narrative was subsequently included in the volume published in 2004. Kil, who was a trained *kisaeng*, was sold to brothels and went to comfort stations in China to make money (Soh, 2008: 103). Since her testimony was published, she actively participated in the redress movement, travelling globally, including the visit to the European Parliament to testify at the Public Hearing, and to European countries. WAM (2010b), a collection of testimonial narratives of Korean victim-survivors, subsequently included the Japanese translation of her narrative. I attended one of these meetings organized in London by Amnesty International in 2007, but her complex life story did/does not seem to appear in more widely available materials in the public domain.

13. NFT (1998).

14. Fujime points out, however, that in the Hiroshima branch of The *Buraku* Liberation League that helped Zendo move back to Japan in 1973 and supported her integration into life in Japan until her death three years later, her ordeal was clearly recognized not only as the result of the discrimination against *Burakumin*, but also against women (2015: 105).

15. Norma Field noticed in the WIWCT that Ruff-O'Herne testified that Batavia was like utopia before the Japanese invasion, and pointed out that her testimonies can illuminate how the complex history of colonialization intersects with the 'comfort women' system and the debate surrounding it (Field and Takahashi, 2001: 211).

16. Juanita Jamot and Gertrude Balisalisa also mentioned the similar impact that Henson's testimony had on them (ICJ, 1994: 68, 75).

17. The comment was made by Michael Allen at the Korean Studies Conference, SOAS, 7 April 2001.

18. Zheng Shunyi is her Chinese name, and her Korean name is Jung Su-jae.

19. Although she highly respects the individuality of each woman she met, Kim-Gibson also states in her film that, because she feels the power of the women's narratives as 'a common experience', it became unimportant for her to track exactly who said what (Kim-Gibson, 1999: 10).

9   Bearing Witness to Unshareable Pain

1. See for example, see Ahn (1999: 44); Yang (1997: 52); Stetz (2001: 93).
2. Also, see Chapters 4 and 5.
3. However, many of these films are produced in Japan and are mainly targeted at a Japanese (and other Asian) audience.
4. See Chapter 7 for how his exhibition in Japan in 2012 was suddenly cancelled by the organizer.

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50 Years of Silence (1994) directed by Ned Lander

Gai Shanxi and Her Sisters (2007) directed by Ban Zhongyi

Habitual Sadness (Nanumu no Ie II /Nazen Moksori 2) (1997) directed by Byun Young-joo

Hitoridemo Yarutteba: Zainichi no motoianfu, Song Shin-do san no Shogen (1993) directed by Zainichi no "'Ianfu"' Saiban wo Sasaeru Kai

Karayuki-san, The Making of a Prostitute (1973) directed by Imamura Shohei

The Last Days (1998) directed by James Moll, Los Angeles: Universal Studios

Life is Beautiful (1999) directed by Roberto Benigni, Los Angeles: Disney

The Murmuring (Nanumu no Ie I /Nazen Moksori 1) (1995) directed by Byun Young-joo

My Own Breathing (1999) directed by Byun Young-joo

Okinawan Halmoni (An Old Lady in Okinawa): The Testimony of a Comfort Woman (1979) directed by Yamatani Tetsuo

Orenokokoro wa Maketeinai (2007) directed by Ahn H. R.

Schindler's List (1993) directed by Steven Spielberg, Los Angeles: Universal Studios

Shoah (1989) directed by Claude Lanzmann

Silence Broken: Korean Comfort Women (2000) directed by Dai-sil Kim-Gibson

Where's Grandma Zheng's Homeland? (1999), directed by Ban Zhongyi

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