

■ Tekst 7

## O P I N I O N

JOANNA BOURKE

- 1 IN HISTORY, nothing is clear cut. Contradiction and  
confusion are always present in the texts we use to interpret  
the past. Nowhere is this more so than when we analyse war  
stories. Sometimes, the letters and diaries of British  
5 servicemen seem to stutter in a desperate attempt to make  
sense of the unutterable horror of their surroundings: 'I  
cannot, cannot bear this, dear wife, the cries are just awful,  
terrible, oh my,' scrawled one soldier during the Battle of the  
Somme. Then, at another point, their letters become an eager  
10 hymn to the 'joy of slaughter', the 'exhilaration' and  
'satisfaction' of destroying human life.
- 2 What is the historian to make of such tensions? With a few  
notable exceptions, military historians flinch away from  
distasteful subjects involving 'our men'. Discussing British  
15 men and women who were both victims *and* executioners is  
taboo. My own case, a female historian writing about killing  
in warfare, elicited looks of horror and, occasionally, rage  
among some of my fellow historians.
- 3 We need to be more willing to discuss such topics,  
20 however. There is no sense in being controversial for the sake  
of it (poor scholarship wrecks careers, rather than making  
them), but historians have a duty to men and women in the  
past to discuss them in a full-rounded way. Their stories may  
be contradictory, consolatory, and often fantastical, but  
25 bewilderment, hope, and fantasy are the very stuff of human  
experience.

**Prof Joanna Bourke** is the author of *An Intimate History of Killing*

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- 1p **31** ■ What is the main point made in the first paragraph?
- A At times of war people are capable of crimes too horrendous for explanation.
  - B Historians often contradict each other when analysing the past.
  - C Historians would rather ignore certain facts when analysing a war.
  - D Making sense of war entails dealing with the emotions evoked by warfare.
- 1p **32** ■ What is to be concluded about military historians from the second paragraph?
- A They are inclined to pay little attention to the role of women in warfare.
  - B They feel that writing war history is not a woman's field.
  - C They like to emphasise soldiers' heroism rather than their fears and doubts.
  - D They tend to close their eyes to the savagery of their compatriots in battle.
- 1p **33** ■ Which quotation sums up the main point made by Joanna Bourke?
- A "Contradiction and ... the past." (lines 1-3)
  - B "With a ... 'our men'." (lines 12-14)
  - C "There is ... of it" (lines 20-21)
  - D "historians have ... full-rounded way" (lines 22-23)