

Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge

Volume 4

Issue 3 *Re-Membering Anzaldúa. Human Rights, Borderlands, and the Poetics of Applied Social Theory: Engaging with Gloria Anzaldúa in Self and Global Transformations*

Article 6

6-21-2006

Cynthia Enloe Student Roundtable: “What International Feminist Activists Have Contributed to Anti-Militarist Social Theorizing”

Sarah Taylor Crockett

University of Massachusetts Boston, sarahtaylorelizabeth@yahoo.com

Amanda Bock

University of Massachusetts Boston, amanda.bock@gmail.com

Caroline Hardy-Fanta

University of Massachusetts Boston, carolinehfanta@hotmail.com

Amanda Witbeck

University of Massachusetts Boston, amanda.witbeck@uky.edu

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Recommended Citation

Crockett, Sarah Taylor; Bock, Amanda; Hardy-Fanta, Caroline; and Witbeck, Amanda (2006) "Cynthia Enloe Student Roundtable: “What International Feminist Activists Have Contributed to Anti-Militarist Social Theorizing”," *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*: Vol. 4: Iss. 3, Article 6.

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Cynthia Enloe Student Roundtable

“What International Feminist Activists Have Contributed to Anti-Militarist Social Theorizing”

Sarah Taylor Crockett • Amanda Bock • Caroline Hardy-Fanta • Amanda Witbeck

University of Massachusetts Boston

sarahtaylorlizab@yahoo.com • Amanda.bock@gmail.com
Carolinehfanta@hotmail.com • Amanda.witbeck@uky.edu

Abstract: (Sarah Taylor Crockett:) According to Cynthia Enloe, militarism is more than what is conventionally understood by the term. It is, rather, “a package of ideas” that work to inoculate us to the ideas that the world is a dangerous place, that there are naturally those who must be protected (“feminine”) and, conversely, those who must protect (“masculine”), and that every “mature” and “serious” government must have a military to secure the protection of its people. Therefore, “Whole cultures can be militarized,” she says, and “militarization can transform a family or a Congress or a school without the military ever appearing there.” It is therefore important to include militarism in discussions of human rights through the lens of “feminist curiosity.” It is a method of learning to complicate what is “natural” or “traditional” in terms of patriarchy so that knowledge can be parlayed into understanding how to challenge those concepts of “natural” and “traditional” on a larger scale. **(Amanda Bock:)** By demilitarizing something, doesn’t one acknowledge and reinforce the validity of the militarized? Perhaps such an approach is overly theoretical, but arguments that are so vehemently polarized often require further examination. More important, Enloe does not address the recent demasculinization of military structures, namely the US army and the corporate and governmental systems that sustain and promote it. **(Caroline Hardy-Fanta:)** Taking a feminist approach is undoubtedly important because if we don’t we miss looking at half of the worlds population. Caution must be taken as was the case with Western feminists, that we could be doing women a disservice by not taking into account their experience from within their culture thus misinterpreting their issues and projecting Western values onto nonwestern societies and subsequently perpetuating long standing colonial ideas and attitudes. **(Amanda Witbeck:)** I am still unclear about what it means to militarize something. Is it any employment of violence or aggressive force? Is something automatically militarized when it utilizes violence, such as self defense? Or is it organized violence? Is it any act performed in the name of national security? It seems militarism isn’t so much defined by violence as it is control. Control by occupying a place, or wielding power through limiting rights, not just by exerting violence. Enloe also stated that the foundation of militarism is built on ideas of a particular form of masculinity. Does being a feminist automatically make one anti-military?

The Third Annual Social Theory Forum, held April 5-6, 2006, at UMass Boston, was fortunate to have Cynthia Enloe as a keynote speaker, whose presentation was titled “What International Feminist Activists Have Contributed to Anti-Militarist Social Theorizing.” Enloe innovatively proposed the option, instead of submitting her own presentation for the proceedings, to have interested attending students write their reflections on her talk. Sarah Taylor Crockett (senior, American Studies major), Amanda Bock (senior, Anthropology major), Caroline Hardy-Fanta (senior, Psychology major), and Amanda Witbeck (first year, Political Science major), students of the inter-disciplinary, team-taught course entitled, “Introduction to Human Rights” at UMass-Boston submitted these pieces in consultation with Cynthia Enloe and in collaboration with course instructor, Elora Chowdhury. Cynthia Enloe is Research Professor of International Development and of Women’s Studies at Clark University. Among her most recent books are *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* and *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives*. Her newest book is *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire*. During the spring term of 2006, Enloe was serving as a Visiting Professor of Political Science and Women’s Studies at York University in Canada.

TAYLOR CROCKETT:*A New World: A Curious Feminist Reinterprets "Natural" Society*

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, Fourth Edition, militarism is "1. Glorification of the ideals of a professional military class. 2. Predominance of the armed forces in the administration or policy of the state."¹ The American Heritage Dictionary's definition of militarization is "to imbue with militarism."² Therefore, it seems reasonable to deduce that militarism occurs through open militarization (i.e. the mobilization of troops, official declarations of war, etc.).

According to Dr. Cynthia Enloe, however, militarism is more than that. In her presentation at the University of Massachusetts Boston Social Theory Forum on April 6, 2006, she defined militarism as "a package of ideas" that work to inoculate us to the ideas that, first and foremost, the world is a dangerous place, that there are naturally those who must be protected ("feminine") and, conversely, those who must protect ("masculine"), and that every "mature" and "serious" government must have a military to secure the protection of its people.³

These ideas can be relevant to individual nations, but they can also be relevant internationally, as is the case between the United States and Japan. Article Nine of the post-World War II U.S.-drafted Japanese Constitution prohibits Japan from ever again amassing an offensive military. But today, American officials try to persuade those Japanese who have come to treasure and take pride in this anti-militaristic section of their constitution that Japan can never be "taken seriously" in a militaristic global society if it doesn't get rid of this Article

Nine.⁴ This is an instance of American efforts to reverse its own earlier de-militarizing goals.

Dr. Enloe cautions, however, that militarization is not always such an overt act; rather, it is "a sneaky sort of transformative process."⁵ For example, "People who reject militarization may don a flag pin, unaware that doing so may convince those with a militarized view of the U.S. flag that their bias is universally shared..."⁶ She goes on to warn that militarization is not something that happens solely within military institutions or to people with military mentalities (like soldiers, for example, or their wives and families). "Whole cultures can be militarized,"⁷ she says, and "militarization can transform a family or a Congress or a school without the military ever appearing there."⁸ This means a school not only becomes militarized when the ROTC shows up on campus to recruit new members, but also, as Katarina Tomasevski observes, because "inculcating obedience [in school] leads to children following orders without questioning them, especially when punishment accompanies failure to do so."⁹ Such obedience in a militaristic society, then, will help to perpetuate the legitimacy of militaristic goals.

It is important to include militarism in discussions of human rights for several reasons, especially given Dr. Enloe's definition of militarism as viewed through the lens of "feminist curiosity." Employing a "feminist curiosity" entails an exploration of human rights in a specific direction, that of women's rights as human rights. It is a method of learning to complicate what is "natural" or "traditional" in terms of patriarchy so that knowledge can be parlayed into under-

⁴ Enloe, p. 272.

⁵ Enloe, p. 145.

⁶ Enloe, p. 147.

⁷ Enloe, p. 146.

⁸ Email correspondence between Dr. Enloe and myself, 27 April 2006.

⁹ Tomasevski, Katarina. *Education Denied*. New York: Zed Books, 2003. p. 62.

¹ <http://www.bartleby.com/61/40/M0294000.html>

² <http://www.bartleby.com/61/41/M0294100.html>

³ See Enloe, Cynthia. *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in the New Age of Empire*. Ewing, NJ: University of California Press, 2004. p. 219

standing how to challenge those concepts of “natural” and “traditional” on a larger scale. Curiosity, the *quest for* and *amassing of* knowledge, leads to empowerment, and if any obstacles present themselves in the path of a curious feminist, it is most likely because the possession and control of knowledge is masculine.

Today’s global world order is, by and large, a patriarchal one, and “Patriarchal societies are notable for marginalizing the feminine.”¹⁰ To effectively marginalize the feminine, it must be universally understood. As Mallika Dutt points out, the global rise of religious fundamentalism has accompanied economic globalization, and “religious fundamentalism reinforces patriarchal notions of appropriate roles for women both within the home and without.”¹¹ Those roles are overwhelmingly confined to private life, leaving the control of public life to men. Or, as Inderpal Grewal articulates in her discussion of Kirti Singh, “...the most significant obstacle to the notion of rights for women is a ‘hostile state that is not actually interested in giving them any rights,’” because “the commitment of the justice and ‘law and order’ machinery of many nation-states to women’s rights and to their freedom from oppression is not a given.”¹²

What patriarchal and militaristic societies believe they are protecting by exempting women from public life is women’s femininity. Femininity, however, is by no means exempt from militarization. Consider the recent Iraqi prisoner abuse scandals at Abu Ghraib Prison. The violent, animalistic behavior of American military forces in Abu Ghraib prison was certainly repulsive, but if one takes the time to explore the abuses be-

yond their simple perversity, numerous layers of abuse emerge with varying implications. For one thing, although some of the men and women implicated in the scandals claimed that they could have “handled the situation better with more knowledge of the Muslim way of life,”¹³ forcing prisoners to perform “gay sex” not only “constitutes the worst form of torture” by forced violation of a taboo of the Muslim faith, ultimately acknowledging that “gay sex” is taboo outside of America promotes the idea of American tolerance, and that tolerance makes Americans seem magnanimous and superior. Dogmatic ideas of homosexuality aside, however, perhaps the most offensive facet of orchestrated (forced) homosexual acts between men is that one man must become female. This offense extends to the performer of the sex act as well, however, because his actions are being scripted. In instances where it is a woman doing the instructing, as with PFC Lynndie England, a dynamic is established where white=power=male vs. non-white (Muslim)=submission=feminine (thereby further solidifying the position of the United States as global patriarch).

What is implied in feminizing the prisoners in Abu Ghraib is made more explicit in discussions of female political prisoners in Palestine or victimized Muslim women in Gujarat, India. In her article concerning female Palestinian political prisoners, Elham Bayour argues that “Although sexual abuse is designed to dehumanize and disempower women, this practice is also targeted at Palestinian men, for whom the protection and control of women are a core part of their socially constructed masculinity.”¹⁴ Therefore, punishing their women hurts Palestinian men not only because it illumi-

¹⁰ Enloe, p. 5.

¹¹ Dutt, Mallika. “Reclaiming a Human Rights Culture: Feminism of Difference and Alliance” in Ella Shohat ed. *Talking Visions*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998. pp. 226-227.

¹² Grewal, Inderpal. “Women’s Rights as Human Rights’: Feminist Practices, Global Feminism, and Human Rights Regimes in Transnationality” in *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1999. p. 340.

¹³ Puar, Jasbir K. “Abu Ghraib: Arguing Against Exceptionalism” in *Feminist Studies* 30, no. 2 (Summer 2004), p. 524.

¹⁴ Bayour, Elham. “Occupied Territories, Resisting Women: Palestinian Women Political Prisoners” in Julia Sudbury, ed. *Global Lockdown: Race Gender and the Prison Industrial Complex*. New York: Routledge, 2005. p. 207.

nates how vulnerable women are without their men to protect them, but also because it strips Palestinian men of their masculinity, feminizing them to more effectively strip them of their power. This method of control was also asserted in Gujarat, though with more overtly malicious intent. Muslim women in Gujarat were not targeted simply because doing so would emasculate their men, but also because eradication of Muslim women would ensure, eventually, eradication of the Muslim population altogether.¹⁵

Even when they are not being physically sexually assaulted, the predominant method of dealing with women who dare to challenge their subservient position in global society is to assault the female sexual personae. As Dr. Enloe related in her keynote address at UMass Boston, the handling of the Women in Black, in Belgrade, by their fellow countrymen was to hurl expletives at the silent protesting women, the three most prevalent being “traitor,” “whore” and “lesbian.” This, affirms Dr. Enloe, “indicates an inability of men to deal with politicized women outside of misogyny.”

This is not to say, however, that the only way women are militarized is by victimizing them. There is another, more subversive method of using women to support militarism, especially in the West. Most notably, women are used by making them victims even if no ostensible crime has been perpetrated against them. This is especially true in the case of “women who wear the veil” as put forth by Lila Abu-Lughod. Abu-Lughod exposes the complications that surround Western crusades to save women from the perceived oppression of the burqa, suggesting that they are driven more by “fantasies of intimacy” than by any actual need on the part of non-Western women to be saved. She declares “Projects of saving other [Muslim] women depend on and reinforce a sense of superiority by Westerners...”¹⁶ She

¹⁵ The International Initiative for Justice in Gujarat. “An Interim Report.” Dec. 19, 2002.

goes on to say “I cannot think of a single woman I know, from the poorest rural to the most educated cosmopolitan, who has ever expressed envy of U.S. women, women they tend to perceive as bereft of community...”¹⁷

Even when women may legitimately need assistance, however, Western governments obsessed with being protectors still misunderstand how best to go about it. This is especially clear in the Sudan, where Western activism has been focused almost exclusively on the practice of female “circumcision” and issues of social or economic reform have been essentially ignored. This focus is particularly important when you consider the sentiment as opposed to the expressed in the statement of a Sudanese Women’s Union representative, Nafisa Ahmed Ibrahim: “We never talked to Sudanese women about female circumcision or how to end it. We were convinced that there were more pressing problems facing women in our society.”¹⁸ Why then, we must ask ourselves, is the issue of import perceived as it is?

Perhaps the answer lies in part in the perceived successes or failures of rural credit programs in Bangladesh. According to Anne Marie Goetz and Rina Sen Gupta, since the mid-1980s efforts have been made to empower poor women in rural Bangladesh.¹⁹ In spite of the fact that such programs have been lauded by Western donors as a means of both doling out nominal assistance to the poor without actually disrupt-

¹⁶ Abu-Lughod, Lila. “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others” in *American Anthropologist* Vol. 104, No. 3, Sept. 2002. p. 789.

¹⁷ Abu-Lughod, p. 788.

¹⁸ Abusharaf, Rogaia Mustafa. “Revisiting Feminist Discourses on Infibulation: Responses from Sudanese Feminists” in Bettina Shell-Duncan and Ylva Hernlund eds. *Female “Circumcision” in Africa: Culture, Controversy and Change*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000. p. 158.

¹⁹ Goetz, Anne Marie and Rina Sen Gupta. “Who Takes the Credit? Gender, Power, and Control Over Loan Use in Rural Credit Programs in Bangladesh” in *World Development* Vol. 24, No. 1, 1996. pp. 45-63.

ing the exiting socioeconomic hierarchies as well as bringing the poor into the capitalist economy, I propose that, from the perspective of the West, this program is a threat whether it succeeds or fails. On one hand, if providing loans to women results in their access to more resources and an eventual integration into public life, then male dominance in the region is undermined, thereby threatening international militarism and patriarchy. On the other hand, however, if the program fails, as Goetz and Gupta seem to be indicating in part is happening as they document instances of men assuming control of loan funds once they are acquired by women, then women still need “saving,” though there is no obvious violence (social, physical, or otherwise) for Western governments to decry. Having funds usurped is not as easy to recognize and denounce as being subjected to “traditional” genital mutilation or being forced to wear what is perceived as an “oppressive” veil.

While it is easy to examine the militarization of women abroad, militarization at home is more difficult to recognize. Ironically, however, the militarization of women at home is much more pervasive than we can see on a global scale. This phenomenon presents itself primarily as a matter of semantics, stemming from the fact that issues that are treated as human rights issues globally are not in the United States; instead they are welfare issues (poverty), or health issues (domestic violence). This distinction itself is militarized. Cold War ideology led the U.S. to refuse to ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights “which it considered too communist,”²⁰ choosing instead to ratify only the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Effectively, this decision nullified the United States’ adherence to one half of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

²⁰ Zoelle, Diana and Jyl Josephson. “Promoting Freedom from Poverty: Political Mobilization and the Role of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union” in *Feminist Review* 82, 2006. p. 9.

only half of Americans’ rights, as accepted by the international community, are protected. This distinction manifests itself many ways.

First of all, there is the vilification of single mothers on welfare. A second influential relic of the Cold War is the nuclear family standard established in the 1950s, and by failing to conform to this standard single mothers are seen as offending American sensibility. They are audaciously suggesting that they are capable of raising children without the presence of a male breadwinner, instead portraying themselves as both caregiver *and* breadwinner. The result is that efforts to “disparage or discourage single mothers who resist the standard confines of ‘feminine’ roles...[do] help ‘fertilize’ the ground into which militarism seeds might be planted.”²¹ This “discouragement” is taken one step further in cases of incarceration, especially in the cases of female sex workers. This contradiction is notable because it punishes women for exploiting the femininity American society demands of it. By taking control of her “feminine resources,” however, women take control of the sex act away from men. Furthermore, women who turn to prostitution as a means of providing for their children are violating two rules of “good” womanhood: she is simultaneously a man and a whore.

Another contradictory application of “‘law and order’ machinery” exists in domestic violence scenarios. Because American society is skewed so far in the favor of masculine men, those men are extended privileges even in death. For example, in a patriarchal society one display of maleness is the control of a female. Therefore, if a man “puts a woman in her place” using violence, he is more often than not exonerated of any charges. If a woman, on the other hand, participates “in the lower levels on the drag trade” in order to achieve economic independence in the hopes of escaping an abu-

²¹ Email correspondence between Dr. Enloe and myself, 25 April 2006.

sive male partner, she is the one incarcerated.²² Likewise, if a woman retaliates against an abusive partner and the act results in murder, the woman shifts almost instantly and without question from “victim” to “villain.” If, on the other hand, the United States would begin to recognize a woman’s individual right to economic security or personal safety, women would likely be protected from such offenses and cease to rely on “illegal” means of securing themselves.

Above all else, after all, militarism is the privileging of a certain kind of masculinity, a prizing of aggression and combativeness. Even when it appears that women are being welcomed into public space, be it at home or abroad, it is often under the auspices of militarization. Consider the role of American women on the home front during WWII. Not only were women called on to fill the factory jobs of men fighting on the frontlines, some were also actually called in to serve. The Women’s Airforce Service Pilots, for example, “test-piloted aircraft, ferried planes and logged 60 million miles in the air²³” because it was their duty as Americans. Once the war was over, however, it was their duty to return to kitchens and take care of their men at home. G.I. Joe today maintains a prominent place in the American toy market, indoctrinating young boys into a militarized mindset, but the special edition Air Force Barbie[®] was available for a limited time only in 1990 as a nostalgic anomaly.²⁴ This discontinuity is symptomatic of a militarized society, and is not unlike the circumstances Korean women in Nike sneaker manufacturing factories found themselves in during the 1970s and 1980s.

In the 1970s, as Nike sought to gain ever more market dominance for their product, they sought an ever more “cost-effective” means of production. Their solution, then, was to turn to newly-industrializing South Korea, a nation ruled by military generals. The result of the alliance between Nike and South Korea resulted in the “highly militarized state [encouraging] young women migrants to see themselves as patriots, contributing to the nation by leaving their parents’ homes to work in factories...²⁵ The new rules now supplemented the notion of a “good” daughter as not only marriageable but able to provide her own dowry as well, which meant that women were prodded into the workforce for the first time *but only for a finite period of time*. Once women had accumulated enough money for a respectable dowry, they were expected to leave work to become wives. Conveniently, a respectable dowry was always achieved before a woman could have time to think about unionizing, striking for better pay, or the possibility of retaining her independence by forsaking marriage and remaining in the workforce indefinitely.²⁶

The plight of female workers in South Korea at the end of the twentieth century calls attention to the importance of acquiring a human rights vocabulary, especially in universities. Suffering from federal budget cuts, universities today have come to rely more and more on corporate sponsorships, whether in the form of shoe contracts for sports teams, or Pepsi’s attempts to ink lucrative deals with a number of North American universities. On many campuses students, resentful of their forced endorsement of a school soft drink, “have begun to use their status as sought-after sponsorees [sic] to retaliate against forces they considered invasive on their campuses to begin with.”²⁷ As a result students, from Ottawa’s Carleton University to Harvard to Stanford, sponsored petitions against Pepsi’s pres-

²² Sudbury, Julia. “Introduction” in Julia Sudbury, ed. *Global Lockdown: Race Gender and the Prison Industrial Complex*. New York: Routledge, 2005. p. xxiii.

²³ American Experience. “Fly Girls” Web site. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/flygirls/filmmore/index.html>. 1 May 2006.

²⁴ Barbie Collector Web site. http://www.barbiecollector.com/showcase/product.asp?type=&sub-type=&product_id=150384&series_id=150077. 3 May 2006.

²⁵ Enloe, p. 60.

²⁶ Enloe, p. 63.

ence on their campuses based on Pepsi business practices in Burma, including oppressive working conditions and an investment in a “bottling plant whose owner, Thien Tun, had publicly called for Suu Kyi’s democracy movement [elected in 1990, but prevented from taking office by the military] to be ‘ostracized and crushed’.”²⁸ After 4 years of grassroots mobilization, in 1997 Pepsi “announced its ‘total disengagement’ from Burma.”²⁹ Much in the same way the United Nations’ main power lies in its ability to make nations look bad for violating human rights, so lies the main power of students against corporations. This power could be expanded, however, if students were given the vocabulary to truly ask for specific human rights. Instead of asking simply for Pepsi to disengage from Burma, think of the good work Pepsi could have been forced into doing had the students demanded *just* working conditions in Burma. Jobs could have been saved, and reform could have been catalyzed.

Instead, student action resulting in Pepsi’s exodus from Burma did nothing to bring about an end to the militarization of the country. In fact, though the name has changed from Burma to Myanmar, the military still rules.³⁰ This course of events validates Dr. Enloe’s assertion that “we must surrender the cherished notion that when open warfare stops, militarization is reversed.”³¹ (I would like to add “political posturing” to “open warfare,” however, since often both are militarized.) The fate of demilitarization instead rests in the hands of who has power at the end of armed conflict or policy shift. Obviously, when Gener-

al Ziaul Haq came to power in Pakistan in 1979 it was by “toppling a popularly elected government” so questioning the nation’s heightened militarism seems unnecessary. What is necessary, however, to fully understand the complexities of the Pakistani Hudood Ordinance enacted the year after Gen. Zia came to power (characterized primarily by its emphasis on Zina, or adultery, laws), is a human rights education, especially one that enforces the importance of being able to determine the difference between tradition practices like wearing a burqa and legitimate human rights violations like requiring four males to witness a rape before any crime will be acknowledged. What Gen. Zia was doing was “creating new powers and punishments and labeling them Islamic.”³² The “[laws are] used mostly for revenge,”³³ but they retain some guise of legitimacy under the umbrella of Muslim faith.

Perhaps, by incorporating human rights into university education, students will have the tools to recognize such infractions instead of accepting the mask of religious tradition, and perhaps they will be empowered and inspired to make a difference. It is only by instilling curiosity, feminist or otherwise, that we will ever learn to distinguish between what is “normal,” “natural,” or “good.”

AMANDA BOCK:

On De-Militarizing Ourselves

In her discussion of militarization and gender, Cynthia Enloe asserts that anything, any structure, any person, or any group of persons can be “militarized.” The militarization of these constructs is inextricably

²⁷ Klein, Naomi. “No Logo: Taking Aim at Brand Bullies” in Lois P. Rudnick, Judith E. Smith and Rachel Lee Rubin, eds. *American Identities: An Introductory Textbook*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2006. p. 319.

²⁸ Klein, p. 320.

²⁹ Klein, p. 320.

³⁰ Wikipedia. “Myanmar.” <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burma>. 5 May 2006.

³¹ Enloe, p. 217.

³² Sarwar, Beena. “Brutality Cloaked in Tradition” in *The New York Times* Op-ed. Aug. 6, 2002.

³³ Sarwar, Beena. “Extremely Misused in *The News on Sunday*, Encore section. Oct. 12, 2003. <http://jang.com.pk/thenews/oct2003-weekly/nos-12-10-2003/dia.htm#1>.

linked to a gendered ordering with a subsystem of “protector” and “protected,” “masculine” and “feminine.” In part, this gendering is shielded and sustained by the international militarization of countries, governments, and other global entities. To demilitarize these structures, Enloe argues, is to also de-misogynize them. What about capitalism, a student inquired, can a “demilitarized” force engage with a system so inherently militarized? Sure. What about structural violence that is less overtly militarized, someone else asked, how is this relevant to such an argument? Well, that can be militarized, too. Even peace movements can be militarized. In a purely theoretical context, this observation seems interesting, and historically relevant not just in the post WWII-era that Enloe discussed, but even in a pre-capitalist world. If not human nature, the tendency to militarize ourselves has always shaped our lives.

However, her approach raises some further questions, which will be briefly addressed below. Enloe’s examination of the “demilitarized” peace efforts by women in Serbia seems problematic because it still continues to measure actions *within* a militarist framework. By demilitarizing something, doesn’t one acknowledge and reinforce the validity of the militarized? Perhaps such an approach is overly theoretical, but arguments that are so vehemently polarized often require further examination.

More important, Enloe does not address the recent demasculinization of military structures, namely the US army and the corporate and governmental systems that sustain and promote it. It is arguable that in the face of legitimate and persistent pressures from the Left in regard to the conflation of the war on terror and the actions in the Middle East, and the role of governments and corporations in these “wars”—among other factors, for, there’s a laundry list of offences that are applicable here but for which there is no room—the gendered roles of “protector” and “protected” are be-

ing subverted.

On one hand, press restrictions transform the military into an anonymous force, one whose members are not publicly celebrated or commemorated. Their actions abroad are enigmatic, rarely documented for the “protected,” and couched within a framework that blurs the maternal and paternal. On the other hand, the “protected” are never allowed the “privilege” that their role promises; made to feel “unsafe” on public transit, in airplanes, government buildings, and cities because of the “terror” component of the war, they are left to be their own “protectors” through programs like the Homeland Security project, self-surveillance, and alert systems. The government and military’s conflation of its two “wars” relies upon the symbiotic relationship between the willingness of the “protected” at home to “protect,” and the “protectors” abroad to never relay their “protective” actions to the public. Such actions confound the terms through which Enloe constructs her talk, and warrant a second look at these constructions.

CAROLINE HARDY-FANTA:

Militarism and (Western) Feminism

Cynthia Enloe presented from a feminist perspective on militarism, pointing to the importance of taking a feminist approach in order to look seriously at the lives of women and how they are shaped by and influence society.

She used the example of GI Joe toys’ popularity rising recently to a top seller, from its recession in the 1970s to highlight the rise of militarism and the growth in sales as a reflection of societal attitudes in the U.S. Enloe stated militarism is a “package of ideas,” requiring the view of the world as a dangerous place, the sense of need for a military with aggressive capability to back a “serious” government, and a social construction of the “protectors and

protected.” Key to Enloe’s point is the idea that a certain type of femininity is needed to support militarism, such as women who need to be protected, and are grateful to men for being protectors. If this point had validity, then we may see women in the role of protector, being viewed by men as less desirable partners. Feminist scholar Elham Bayour supports this idea by recounting the experience of women working for Palestinian freedom, being afraid their spouses will leave them or not being able to find a husband if imprisoned (Bayour, 204, 210). It is not so common for men in the military to worry if they will have much trouble finding a wife, or of wives leaving them because of what they do because this role is seen as desirable by women who feel a need to be protected, as they do in societies with high levels of militaristic attitudes, such as the U.S.

One critique of Enloe’s presentation was that she attributed cross-cultural attitudes towards women working in the anti-militarism movement calling them “traitor,” “whore” and “lesbian.” It is important when examining the issue of women’s roles in society to take into account long standing traditions of patriarchy, gender bias and oppression that may have existed before the state took up arms. Julia Sudbury makes clear in her discussion of feminist critique, the importance of looking at all of the socio-economic, cultural and historical forces such as capitalization, globalization and neoliberal policies, that feed into a society in which a certain type of feminism with specific roles for women are more valued versus others that are subject to punishment and imprisonment (Sudbury, xii). The roles and values vary but often women are found in subordinate roles and when women deviate from such roles they are met by resistance and sometimes hostility from both women and men. Sudbury emphasizes the effects of globalization on women. Globalization and the push toward development and modernity can disrupt the social fabric

of gender relationships including the roles of women by superimposing Eurocentric values on noneuropean cultures. This disruption can take many forms one of which discussed by Sudbury is the world wide rise of incarceration of women calling it a “local manifestation of transnational flows of people, products, capital and ideas.”

Enloe spoke of militarism as a package of ideas, but according to Sudbury, Elora Chowdhury, and Amy Den Ouden long standing ideas of colonialism including ideas of race, patriarchy, and economic structuring also contribute to the place women are expected to assume in their relative societies. It is a broad and complicated issue impacted by an incredible number of both historical and current forces so it may not be as simple as a division of the protectors and the protected, or an ideal version of femininity.

In the case of the incarceration of minority women in the US, it would appear that white men are protecting white women from minority women. So it is clear that within cultures there are variations of what roles women are expected to fill. If Enloe looked at the dynamics of this relationship, she would very likely have broadened her discussion of militarism and gender construction. It is an extremely difficult topic to discuss because we tend to like generalizations. However by over-generalizing we miss important differences that exist between societies along with the opportunity to bring them into dialogue, but if we look too closely at the particularities of cultures as distinct we miss the opportunity to make important connections.

Taking a feminist approach is undoubtedly important because if we don’t we miss looking at half of the worlds population. Caution must be taken, though, as was the case with Western feminists, that we could be doing women a disservice by not taking into account women’s experience from within their culture thus misinterpreting their issues and projecting Western values

onto nonwestern societies and subsequently perpetuating long standing colonial ideas and attitudes. So it seems important to examine the type of feminist approach we want to take when looking at the issues that impact the lives of women and all of the factors that have created that space in society.

AMANDA WITBECK:

Militarization, Violence, Masculinity

I related a lot to the beginning of Cynthia Enloe's lecture when she discussed how you never realized that certain things even needed to be explained. You just take things as they are so much simply because that is how it is, without seriously questioning why and how it has come to be that way and what implications it has on people's lives, especially women's lives. Enloe's lecture, as with many of the assigned readings, have exposed the subliminal mentality supporting seemingly 'good intended' actions.

Enloe highlighted three ideas that support militarism: the world is a dangerous place; for a government to be taken seriously it must have a strong, aggressive military; and there are those who protect and those who are protected, and those who are protected should be grateful to the protectors. The ideas that support militarism are those that support the demonizing of the 'other'; and that the 'others' threaten national security.

Mallika Dutt touches on this theme in "Reclaiming a Human Rights Culture: Feminism of Difference and Alliance." Dutt discusses how the United State depicts itself as the protector of the world, through addressing human rights violations taking place around the world and through its military bases situated throughout the world; and those countries that are being protected should be thankful. But the United States fails to recognize the same violations taking place within its own country.

While I understand the supporting

ideas of militarism, I am still unclear about what it means to militarize something. Is it any employment of violence or aggressive force? Is something automatically militarized when it utilizes violence, such as self defense? Or is it organized violence? Is it any act performed in the name of national security? It seems militarism isn't so much defined by violence as it is control. Control by occupying a place, or wielding power through limiting rights, not just by exerting violence. This makes more sense in regard to Enloe's statement that "anything can be militarized," because patriarchal control can mold most anything.

Enloe also stated that the foundation of militarism is built on ideas of a particular form of masculinity. Does being a feminist automatically make one anti-military? Perhaps not necessarily, because patriarchal forces have played prevalent roles in shaping feminism, namely Western feminism. These are the same forces that are dividing women, pitting one against the other and perpetuating civilian misogyny through militarism.

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