



HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AND COUNTER-HEGEMONIC FEMINIST DISCOURSES FOR PEACE

MASCULINIDAD HEGEMÓNICA Y DISCURSOS CONTRAHEGEMÓNICOS FEMINISTAS POR LA PAZ

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Resumen

Este ensayo examina la relación entre ideas de masculinidad y la guerra, el militarismo y las operaciones militares para mantener la paz. La tesis principal defiende la necesidad de revisar y redefinir una postura pacifista-feminista, ya que la mejor forma de combatir las actuales guerras es abordando los prejuicios de género. Sin embargo, las/os pacifistas feministas han recibido críticas, tanto de no-pacifistas, como también de feministas-no-pacifistas, quienes las acusan de pintar una imagen esencialista de las mujeres. En este contexto, un ataque no-violento a la masculinidad hegemónica deberá difundir una educación feminista contra la violencia que no sea esencialista, no sólo en el ámbito académico, sino además ganando una mayor visibilidad a través de los medios de comunicación.

Abstract

Utilizing a pacifist feminist position, this paper looks at the relationship between ideas of masculinity and war, militarism and peacekeeping intervention. I argue that it is necessary to revise and redefine a pacifist feminist position, especially because, from this viewpoint, the current masculinist war-prone world order may best be combated by attacking its gender biases. In this context, pacifist feminists have often been challenged by non-feminists, but also by non-pacifist feminists who accuse them of drawing on essentialist notions of women as peace -makers. A non-violent attack on oppressive masculinity would need to be successful in disseminating a counter-hegemonic and non-essentialist, non-violent feminist education not just in

academia, but also through increased access of pacifist feminist perspectives in the media.

Palabras clave

Masculinidad hegemónica; guerra; paz; feminismo; Estados Unidos; Afganistán; Iraq

Key words

Hegemonic masculinity; war; peace; feminism; United States; Afghanistan; Iraq

1. Introduction

Empezando con las primeras mujeres sufragistas se ha dado un patrón histórico de organizaciones de mujeres que han defendido tanto la causa feminista como la pacifista en los Estados Unidos y en otros países del mundo. Sin embargo, estas pacifistas-feministas han recibido repetidas críticas de no-feministas y también de feministas. Según sus detractores feministas, las mujeres pacifistas refuerzan nociones esencialistas de las mujeres como maternas y pacíficas, al presentarse como "madres morales"; y perpetúan así los estereotipos de género que terminan por menoscabar la causa feminista (di Leonardo, 1985; Dietz, 1985).

Por otro lado, el movimiento feminista ha recurrido a metáforas militaristas para enmarcar y promover la lucha por la igualdad de sexo. En los años ochenta, por ejemplo, era común referirse a las luchas feministas como "las guerras de género" y "batalla de los sexos" cuando las feministas luchaban por la igualdad en la esfera pública con los hombres y desafiaban la imagen de la mujer como ser débil y necesitado de protección (Elshtain, 1985). Es más, muchas feministas (especialmente las feministas liberales) utilizaron la imagen de la "mujer guerrera" para romper con las nociones esencialistas de las diferencias de género y dar más poder a la mujer en la sociedad, puesto que a través de su inserción en el cuerpo militar, las mujeres podrían adquirir la ciudadanía plena. En definitiva, pretendían demostrar que las mujeres podían hacer lo mismo que los hombres, incluso aquello que parecía más remotamente alejado de las ideas clásicas de feminidad: la participación en guerra de combate.

Si bien feministas de diversas orientaciones reconocen las conexiones entre guerra y género y, ciertamente, han producido una literatura muy valiosa y reveladora sobre

esta cuestión, todavía existe una cierta reticencia entre las feministas contemporáneas a identificarse simultáneamente con una filosofía pacifista. En este ensayo se defiende que dicha reticencia se debe a las subyacentes diferencias epistemológicas y ontológicas respecto a la naturaleza de las diferencias de género y sexo—tal como la dicotomía entre las feministas de la "igualdad" y las feministas de la "diferencia". Estas diferencias ideológicas implican estrategias divergentes en el movimiento de liberación feminista, que afloran en el debate sobre militarismo, guerra y paz. De hecho, muchas de las que se autodefinen como mujeres pacifistas recurren con frecuencia a un tipo de imágenes y lenguaje estereotípicos, que refuerzan la idea de diferencias innatas entre hombres y mujeres con respecto al uso de la violencia, o al menos, de diferencias culturales de género que derivan de la situación social de muchas mujeres en su rol de madres. En este sentido, eco-feministas, feministas sociales y feministas culturales han sugerido que para avanzar en la lucha por la liberación de las mujeres es necesario promover simultáneamente la paz, ya que las guerras y el militarismo sirven al sistema patriarcal para afianzar y legitimar su dominación machista (Elshtain, 1985; Enloe, 2004; Erenreich, 2002; Mies and Shiva, 1993).

Este artículo defiende que para lograr destronar las ideas de masculinidad hegemónica que legitiman el sistema de la guerra es necesario actualizar y redefinir una posición (o posiciones) pacifista feminista sobre la que construir una sólida ideología contra-hegemónica al sistema hegemónico patriarcal predominante. En esta tarea, una perspectiva Gramsciana puede resultar fructífera, ya que ayudaría a elucidar cómo los discursos opresivos llegan a ser hegemónicos, especialmente la formación de "masculinidades hegemónicas" predicadas sobre la dominación y la violencia. Una contra-hegemonía pacifista y feminista puede reemplazar esa

ideología opresiva por un compromiso por la igualdad y la justicia social, a la vez que desmitifica la masculinidad hegemónica y su política internacional concomitante.

2. Objetivos

El presente trabajo utiliza la forma ensayística con el objetivo de: 1/ mostrar la necesidad de una perspectiva pacifista feminista, así como los retos a los que mujeres pacifistas se enfrentan para construir su discurso y obtener visibilidad; 2/ ofrecer una revisión y análisis de la teoría y trabajos empíricos sobre el tema de género, guerra y paz; 3/ realizar un análisis sociológico y feminista de algunos de los eventos de las actuales guerras en Afganistán e Iraq que han salido a la luz pública, como el escándalo de Abu Graib, para demostrar su relación con la masculinidad hegemónica; y 4/ realizar un análisis sociológico y feminista de movimientos feministas por la paz, como "Code Pink" y otros.

3. Metodología

Se usa la metodología ensayística realizando una revisión y comentario de otros ensayos, teorías y trabajos empíricos previos sobre el tema de feminismo, guerra y paz. Asimismo, se ofrecen ejemplos de las guerras en Afganistán y en Iraq para el análisis sociológico.

4. Contenido

4.1. Pacifist Feminism: Beyond "Moral Mothers" and "Beautiful Souls"

In August 1917, Jannette Rankin- a suffragist who became the first woman to be elected to the House of Representatives- cast the only "nay" vote in Congress to president Wilson's call for the United States to join Allies in the war against Germany. Moreover, the Montana native also added that being a woman she could not go to war and she refused to send anybody else (Johnston Conover and Sapiro, 1993). Both a pacifist and a suffragist, Rankin was the only dissenting voice in the Congress on the issue of the US incursion in both World Wars. However, voting with her conscience was not a popular stance for her to take. Indeed, Rankin was criticized both by her fellow Congressmen and by her friends in the women's movement who had warned her that opposing the war would ruin the suffrage movement. However, Rankin continued to courageously oppose war and support the peace cause throughout her life as a lobbyist for the National Consumers League, the American Wing of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and the National Council for the prevention of War. She lobbied for a constitutional amendment to outlaw war and created the Georgia Peace Society, moreover she also opposed the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Cold War (Johnston Conover, 1993).

The radical women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s also had connections to anti-war protest as it originated in earlier civil rights, student and anti-war movements. Many of the radical feminists formed their own women's group disillusioned by the patriarchal structure of these other movements. Indeed, some authors have argued that the women's and the peace movements have long linked histories and evidence of movement "spill over" (Meyer and Wittier, 1994).

According to Meyer and Whittier the form and content of the re-emerged peace movement in the 1980s clearly reflected the impact of feminism. For instance, the direct action wing drew on both traditional and feminist views of gender to frame the issue of nuclear disarmament. The Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament (WAND) and similar organizations examined militarism based on a feminist critique of patriarchy. For instance, in 1985 Helen Caldicott proposed that the nuclear arms race was the result of masculinist competitiveness that equated the nuclear missiles with the national phallus in an attempt to prove who has the bigger one (Caldicott, 1985). In the 1980s, during the nuclear age and US involvement in wars in Latin America there was also a resurgence of all-women anti-war activism, such as the Women's Pentagon Action, the Seneca Falls Peace Encampment, and the Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament (Meyer and Wittier, 1994).

There have been as well other strong women organizations around the world in which women came together strategically using their roles as "mothers" to condemn war, such as the well-known *Mujeres de la Plaza de Mayo* in Argentina (di Leonardo, 1985) or the also well known *Women in Black*—originated in Israel. However, feminists have debated whether these women's peace activism can be included under the feminist umbrella, especially because these women were mainly "políticas" who organized to fight their governments for their human rights violations but without presenting themselves as feminists; moreover, they used traditional images of women as "mothers" to make moral claims about war, a strategy to fight the injustices of their reactionary governments and possibly to shield themselves against possible retaliations (Burchianti, 2004; Guzman Bouvard, 1994).

In the ongoing Iraq war, peace activist women have also used similar gendered images and metaphors to organize protests against the war. For instance, the women-initiated group "CodePink", founded in 2002 by Human Rights Activists Medea Benjamin and Jodie Evans, is a peace and social justice movement working to end the war in Iraq and to prevent future wars. The pink color, which has traditionally been associated with things "feminine," represented in this case both a mock of and a counter argument to Bush's administration idea of a color-coded system of national security alert. This gendered metaphor seems in line with the social feminists and eco-feminists quasi-utopian argument of a "women's culture" based on principles of caring, compassion and value for community: a culture of peace. However, as one of the "codepink" intellectual leaders avers, these are values that have traditionally been associated with "femininity" in a civilization configured under a "dominator model." Other societies exist where a "partnership model" predominates (e.g. Scandinavian countries) and these societies tend to be less violent. Furthermore, Eisler (2005) argues that women have been associated with partnership values as opposed to the hegemonic masculine values, but those values are not essential or intrinsic to either sex:

This is not to say that women possess fundamentally different qualities than men. Both women and men exhibit stereotypically feminine traits, such as caring and violence, and both genders engage in so-called women's work, such as caring for a family's health and maintaining a clean environment. However, in societies adhering closely to the dominator model, these

activities are considered appropriate only for women and inappropriate for 'real men'¹.

Probably the most visible Codepink activist is Cindy Sheehan, the outspoken mother of a soldier killed in Iraq who accused the Bush administration of launching an illegal unjust war. Sheehan has been one of the most popular, most iconic figures in the anti-Iraq war movement, attracting significant attention from the mass media. She continues the tradition of outraged mothers of victims of war who become peace activists and make use of so-called "traditional" women's roles to empower themselves and be heard in a patriarchal society. Certainly, few critics of the peace cause would dare to openly discredit the motifs of a mother who has lost a son in the war. In fact, resorting to so-called "traditional" women's roles and the non-threatening appearance of femininity in their self-presentation was an extremely effective tool for the Code Pink organization. According to Kutz-Flamenbaum's ethnographic study (2007), Code Pink introduced gender in their "performance activism" to obtain public and media attention. The activists engaged deliberately in what Judith Butler calls "gender performance," combining both norm-embracing and norm-challenging gender elements. For example, they planned a Mother's Day rally requiring only pink costumes to partake in it, and offered cookies and tea as presentation props. The use of pink clothing as a form of group identification has proven very effective, as it makes participation in this group's rallies relatively simple. For Kutz, the pink color further conveys the idea that women activists can be soft and maternal (thus apparently non-threatening) while simultaneously engaging in civil disobedience and

¹ Eisler, Riane 2005. "Building a Just and Caring World: Four Cornerstones." *Stop the Next War: Effective Responses to Violence and Terrorism*. Makawao, Maui, HI: Inner Ocean Publishing: 42-46.

aggressively confronting public officials (Kutz-Flamenbaum, 2007). Milazzo (2005) classifies Code Pink women for peace as a feminist organization beyond gender equity, that strategically employs a feminine "new chic"—probably much to the dismay of other feminists—to advance socio-political change. This "feminine," thus seemingly harmless, façade has also allowed the group to infiltrate otherwise off-limits locations, like presidential nominating conventions, presidential inaugurations and even Congress. Today, there are over one hundred code pink groups today across the world formed by individuals of all ages and walks of life (Milazzo, 2005).

The position of women condemning war as mothers has been the subject of much debate among feminists, a debate that probably traces its roots to old discussions of equality and difference feminism and interpretations of the roles of women within the family. Sara Ruddick and Jean Bethke Elshtain are among the pro-family feminists who have theorized about pacifist feminism (Elshtain, 1985; Ruddick, 1983). Ruddick proposed that "maternal thinking," a way of being in the world based on the concept of "preservative love," could present a counter ideology to a male dominated culture. Moreover, maternal thinking is not unique to women, nor to mothers, as both men and women and those without children can adopt a nurturing disposition and be socialized into maternal thinking (Ruddick, 1983). For this pacifist feminist, maternal thinking would represent the antithesis of violent masculinity. While opposed to war, Ruddick believes that there is no contradiction between being a feminist and defending the right of women to participate in the military, while at the same adopting a pacifist philosophy. In fact, the incorporation of women in the military as conscripts—not volunteers—could help to "pacify the forces," as long as many of these women would help introduce maternal thinking. Moreover:

We acknowledge the existence of good causes and the necessity of some battles but claim that there are entirely or principally nonviolent ways of fighting them that are at least as effective as violence (the effectiveness of which is always exaggerated) and that these nonviolent solutions cost less morally, physically, and psychologically.²

For Jean Elshtain (1985), while most feminists agree on the gendered nature of war and militarism, the majority of them support a realist or its modified version "just war theory" posture, both of which accept war as a legitimate or justifiable political instrument. This well-known proponent of peace feminist thought has critiqued *realist feminists* and *just war theory feminists* for failing to present a challenge to the Western discourse of war and politics. According to her provocative argument, feminists must not dismiss all notions of traditional femininity, such as maternal thinking. Instead they must appropriate these images and transform them (Elshtain, 1985). Simultaneously, she also criticizes cultural feminists who assume—consciously or not—a "just war theory" position. Just war theory traces its roots to St. Augustine's Christian political thought, which argued for the justification of war in some cases using a gendered imagery that represented women as "beautiful souls" in need of protection and men as chivalric "just warriors." According to Elshtain, many cultural feminists who invoke the "female principle" as ontologically superior to masculinism continue the Augustinian tradition of the *beautiful soul*. While rejecting these romanticized images of femininity, Elshtain also accuses the feminist movement of being "matrophobic" and attempts to restructure political consciousness based upon the implications of "maternal thinking" in a new kind of feminist political thought that

² Ruddick, Sara. 1983. "Pacifying the Forces: Drafting Women in the Interests of Peace." *Signs* 8:475-476.

she calls "social feminism" (Elshtain, 1985). This position is at odds with that espoused by first wave feminists –Kate Millen, Betty Friedan, Juliet Michell, Shulamith Fireston and others—who had sought to demystify the family and motherhood in order to achieve equality with men. Indeed, the role of women in the family continues to be the subject of much controversy within the feminist movement (Dietz, 1985). Mary Dietz points out some of the pitfalls of the *maternal thinking* argument:

Women who do not venture beyond the family or participate in practices beyond mothering cannot attain an adequate understanding of the way politics determines their own lives. Nor can they –as mothers or creatures of the family—help transform a politics that stands in conflict with maternal values. The only consciousness that can serve as a basis for this transformation and so for the sort of active citizenry that Elshtain wishes to promote is a distinctly political consciousness steeped in a commitment to democratic values, participatory citizenship and egalitarianism³.

Mary Dietz and other "civic" feminist scholars advocate the peace politics of feminism but disavow its connections to motherhood and maternal thinking. In their opinion, it is feminist political consciousness rather than femaleness or mothering that makes women more pacific. Hence, both female and male feminists should be more inclined towards pacifism. Nonetheless, the fact that women are more likely to be feminists explains the gender gap on attitudes towards war (Cook and Wilcox, 1991; Dietz 1985).

³ Dietz, Mary G. 1985. "Citizenship with a Feminist Face: The Problem with Maternal Thinking." *Political Theory* 13:32-33.

Despite a relatively prolific theoretical debate on women's stance on peace and war, very few studies have set out to operationalize these concepts and empirically examine their main assumptions. Tessler and Warriner (1997) used survey data from Middle Eastern societies (Israel, Egypt, Palestine and Kuwait) to explore the associations between gender, feminism and attitudes towards war and peace. In this study, women were not more pacific than men in their attitudes toward international conflict. However, the study did show a connection between attitudes connected to gender, attitudes about war and gender and between feminism and pacifism. Furthermore, the study reveals the personal circumstances that make individuals more prone to support both peace and a compromise for equality between men and women, that is to say, a "pacifist-feminist" position. This seems to be a function of low religiosity in highly diverse conditions, of gender in countries with greater levels of inequality between the sexes, and of education in countries that are relatively politically developed and cosmopolitan (Tessler and Warriner, 1997). Johnston Conover and Sapiro (1993) also tested different hypotheses based on gender, maternalism and feminism drawing on data from the American National Election Study 1991. They found substantial evidence for the gender explanation and some evidence supporting the feminist explanation. However, little evidence supported the "mothering" hypothesis. Among women, mothers were more attentive to war than non-mothers; and among men, there were no significant differences between fathers and non-fathers. Thus, this hypothesis in its simplest form was rejected, although the authors do not rule out the possibility that mothering creates the potential for peace politics if this is accompanied with a feminist consciousness. Having a feminist consciousness is a significant predictor of fear of war, but it has little impact on supporting isolationism as opposed to war (Johnston Conover and Sapiro, 1993).

More empirical studies would be needed to contribute to existing knowledge of how gender and feminism are related to beliefs about war and peace across different societies. One possible way to further our understanding of this question would be by taking into account different types of political and feminist ideologies and then examine their relationship with attitudes toward peace and war. Furthermore, the debate around how or even whether to frame the peace movement using gender metaphors or vice-versa has not yet been resolved, though most gender scholars agree on the necessity of examining war and militarism through feminist lenses. Less controversial and more important than whether or not women are more inclined to pacifism than men is showing how war and militarism perpetuate gender oppression and other forms of social injustice, and help reinforce and legitimize hegemonic notions of masculinity predicated on violence.

4.2. Old Routes to New Horizons: Pacifist Feminist thinking on Social Justice as engaged in Postmodern and Oppression Discourses

Feminist theory has been associated with two other more inclusive theories with which it shares affinities: the analysis of social relations and postmodern philosophy (Flax, 1987). As a matter of fact, feminism took it upon itself to deconstruct sexist ideas of womanhood as well as to analyze male domination. Both feminist analyses of oppression and deconstruction are of great value in advancing pacifist feminist thought and research.

Marilyn Frye reminds us that a basic premise of feminism is that women are oppressed as *women*. From this perspective, Frye (1983) engages in the politics of defining what oppression means, and why women –as a social category– are oppressed everywhere. The renowned scholar begins her argument by looking at the etymology of the word itself. In this sense, the “press” conveys the meaning of things molded, flattened or reduced in bulk “the press of the crowd; pressed into military service; to press a pair of pants...” Moreover, Frye contends that:

The experience of oppressed people is that living of one’s life confined and shaped by forces and barriers which are not accidental or occasional and hence avoidable, but are systematically related to each other in such a way as to catch one between and among them and restrict or penalize motion in any direction. It is the experience of being caged in: all avenues in every direction are blocked or booby trapped⁴

For Frye the lives of women seen from macroscopic lenses reveal the forces and barriers that systemically conjure to determine and paralyze the lives that they live. Indeed, these barriers work to keep the local culture and economy under the control of men. Consistent with Frye’s argument Iris Marion Young has also maintained that oppression is a structural concept, which implies that oppressions are reproduced through major economic, political and cultural institutions; furthermore, for every oppressed group (by sex, gender, race, age...) there is a group that benefits from the oppression of the other. Indeed, every oppressed group experiences to a certain degree one or more of the following “faces” of oppression: exploitation,

⁴ Frye, Marilyn. 1983. *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Trumansburg, New York: Crossing Press: 4.

marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence (Young, 1990). Hence, feminist theory presents us with a sophisticated understanding of how oppression works, as well as how it operates following a similar logic for different social groups. This important insight helps us examine the causes of war as well as suggest areas of intervention in a particular postwar context, which would be geared towards implementing change for sustainable peace. In light of the theory of oppression, social scientists analyzing the postwar moment may ask the following open questions: in what forms and to what extent are women oppressed in this particular context? Who are the other oppressed groups in the society and in what ways? How are the experiences of women as an oppressed group connected to the oppression of other social groups in the society? I suggest that answering these questions would make it possible to identify some of the most pressing inequalities that need to be addressed in the intervention efforts of the postwar moment.

Inherent in the definition of oppression is the concept of a social group category, in other words, the oppressed are confined to a subordinated social status by the power of privileged groups to define them, according to a certain alleged essentialist nature. These popularly accepted definitions, inferences and interpretations are often based on body characteristics or cultural traits (Young, 1990). In this vein, we can interpret for example some of the culturally dominant definitions of sex and gender, racial and ethnic groups, and age groups, to name some of them. Thus, by questioning these often generally accepted definitions and unraveling the power dynamics embedded in their framing, it is possible to expose their arbitrary and often contradictory nature, and hence the nonsensical way of understanding differences in these static, monolithic and prejudiced terms. As it is well known, Derrida's deconstructionist work revolutionized the tradition of western metaphysical thought by explaining, among

other things, the discourse mechanisms of binary opposition that lie at the core of creating identity marginalization. Western thought utilizes binary hierarchical axiology (man/woman, written/oral, fulfilled/void, etc.) that represents a first term as the center (the one considered closest to the *phallus*) and a second term that is defined by exclusion and subordinated to the other (Derrida, 1978). Following Derrida's analysis, the combination of social group oppositions can be limitless. For example, historically, the colonial powers have defined themselves as the bearers of civilization, justifying their invasions and imposed sovereignty in terms of the supposed superiority of the values and culture they possessed over the other, more or less "barbaric" enemies. Moreover, the colonial enterprise was seen as a men's job over uncivilized people who were branded as subordinate and represented in "feminized" terms in order to humiliate and devalue their character and abilities. Walter Benjamin –himself a strong opponent of World War I for considering it an "immoral" war—also challenged the western idea of superior "civilization" by arguing that a certain sophistication in technology or cultural products derives often, and much ironically, from the privileged position that results from the oppression of other groups (Benjamin, 2004).

Feminist theory has also widely criticized dichotomous thinking; in fact, dualisms and dichotomies are inherent to war and patriarchal evils, such as dichotomies of male and female, soldier and citizen, combatant and non-combatant, etc., which are often utilized to justify just-war ideas (Peach, 1994). Moreover, militarist imagery becomes symbolic and helps construct meanings of gender, and militarist practices and institutions contribute to the construction of a gendered national identity (Cuomo, 1996). Joan Nagel avers that the culture and ideology of hegemonic masculinity is intimately interwoven with hegemonic nationalism. Not surprisingly, pacifist men are

often portrayed as effeminate and the fear of being seen as cowards prompts many men towards patriotism, nationalism or militarism; while simultaneously women are invoked in supportive, symbolic traditional roles in the nationalist propaganda (Nagel, 1998). On the other hand, dichotomous constructions of womanhood and manhood, masculinity and femininity, have also been identified as political strategies in the language and the line of thinking of pacifist women (Davy, 2001). Social feminists argue that the historical dichotomy between women's roles as mothers and men's roles as warriors stems from the fact that women's experiences construct different values than men's. For instance, the social experience of motherhood requires greater cooperation and interaction that women can use to influence international politics (Elshtain, 1985; Ruddick, 1983). However, pacifist feminists in the process of claiming a different social experience and value system for women might be perceived as trying to stereotype the roles of women in society. Indeed, feminist peace advocates have conducted their assault on war in a language that reinforced –instead of challenge—sexual difference (Kennedy, 1995).

The dialectics between militarist male domination as opposed to pacifist's feminist effort to counteract this way of thinking and of being in the world can more clearly be grasped in light of Gramsci's theory of hegemony. As it is well known, Gramsci believes in the key role that ideology and culture play in the establishment and maintenance of a political system. Hence, in order to advance towards human liberation, it would be necessary to undermine the ideological domination of the ruling elite by opposing a counter-hegemony, which is a non-violent underground conflict. In this task, *organic intellectuals* play a crucial role, because their mission is to provide authentic political education to demystify hegemonic beliefs and spread the new counter-hegemony (Gramsci, 1985). Could not pacifist feminists benefit from

emphasizing the ideological –instead of essentialist- nature of both violence and sexism and the role of pacifist feminists as organic intellectuals in promoting anti-war feminist thinking? Unfortunately, very few feminist scholars have turned to Gramscian theory in their discussions of the connectedness among gender and culture, ideology and war and militarism (Kaplan, 1996). One way in which pacifist feminist scholarship can contribute to this understanding is by analyzing how hegemonic masculinity and the war system are connected to capitalism.

Early socialists and feminists fostered international ideals that played a role in the development of the peace movements, however because their main efforts were not directed towards this cause this led to its disappearance from their agenda (Cooper, 2002). Some scholars have already noted the connections among gender, capitalism and war in the recent US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq (Afary, 2006; Davis, 2001). It is argued that Afghan and Iraqi women were used as "token" excuses to justify the moral claims of the war, that is to say, to help present these wars to the public as "just wars"; in this way, the US invasion could be presented to the public in the chivalric fashion of saving the "foreign" women in distress. However, it is well known that the situation of women in Afghanistan under the Taliban government had been ignored for years, despite much outcry by feminists and human rights groups. Indeed, the US had been complicit in this situation for its prior support of the Taliban government. As a result of the current US invasion of Afghanistan, the situation of Iraqi women is believed to be presently worse than before the war, because now they are often the victims of terrifying sexual harassment and intimidation in the streets (Afary, 2006). Skeptical of its deceitful ways, some believe that the Bush administration was more concerned with establishing ally governments in order to be able to get easy access to the natural gas and oil resources in the region than with the

welfare of Afghan women (Davis, 2001). As we now know, the premises under which the US invaded Afghanistan had no real base. There were no nuclear weapons in Iraq, no connection between Saddam's government and Al-Qaida, and Osama Bin Laden was no-where to be found in Afghanistan.

In sum, pacifist feminists can benefit enormously from engaging in deconstructive discourses and analyses of oppressive relationships in order to expose the web of gender and other injustices that lead to war. A pacifist feminist perspective will help to analyze hegemonic discourses of masculinity and war and show how far beneath the political rhetoric the real implications of war—capitalist imperialistic aims and relations of oppression—actually are. In line with pacifist thought, resorting to force would only be justifiable in order to maintain peace in some extreme situations, such as in order to prevent or stop the genocides that the US and Ally forces ignore in many poor African countries, for example, the recent genocide in Dafur -Sudan, where the US -adhering to Monroe's doctrine—has no vested interest.

4.3. Feminist Theory of Masculinity and the Connections between Violence and War

To become good soldiers, men must be trained, humiliated, and taught to obey orders automatically. They must learn to ignore their own intelligence, their natural physical reactions (such as fear) and basic emotions (such as compassion)⁵

⁵ Griffin, Susan. 2005. "The Mind Can Be a Prison or a Door." *Stop the Next War: Effective Responses to Violence and Terrorism*. Makawao, Maui, HI: Inner Ocean Publishing: 51.

Men commit most violent acts, obviously including war, and being a "man" might even be considered a risk factor for becoming an oppressor (Breines et al., 2000; Messerschmitt, 2000). However, even though one may witness the performance of an extreme form of hegemonic masculinity in the war context, this is not at all surprising given that popular culture is plagued with similar representations of "manhood," and that most frequently these images and messages are successfully conveyed through the mass media, literature, history books, and other cultural venues; that is to say, the "warrior" images are not only praised by many, but are also readily available to us all. In point of fact, it would be fair to say that despite significant gains for women on many fronts, stereotypical gender representations, and more precisely stereotypical representations of masculinity, are still very much pervasive. By contrast, very few peace activists gain such privileged status and fame, especially if they are women. For example, women such as Jane Adams and Emily Green who won the Noble Peace Prize –one of the most prestigious awards in the world- do not currently hold their deserved place and reputation in US history (Kaplan, 1996). Instead, military men make up the bulk of national heroes, or as Harriet Alonso puts it: "It is their stories children study in school, their images we see on statues, and their lives novelists and filmmakers romanticize" (Alonso, 1995).

According to Connell, there are multiple types of masculinity across periods of history, in every given society and across cultures. Without a doubt, one should not fall in the same trap of essentializing masculinity. However, different masculinities exist that define each other in relations to hierarchy and exclusion, and the hegemonic form of masculinity is not necessarily the most common. Moreover, masculinities are supported and enacted by groups, institutions and cultural forms, such as the mass media. Within this milieu of cultural representations, masculinities are actively

constructed and are likely to be heterogeneous and internally divided or contradictory (Breines et al. 2000).

Cheng (2007) points out that within the hegemonic model of masculinity, identity can only be achieved through dominance, not only of other women but also dominance between whites and blacks, young and old and so forth. In essence, this hegemonic type of masculinity is linked to other forms of oppression: sexism, homophobia, racism, ageism, among others. Further, this author argues that in order to deconstruct this form of oppressive masculine identity one would need to counteract it by offering different models, and furthermore, by making female models of identity more accessible to men. Following this same line of thinking Gullvag Holter (2000) maintains that pro-peace and pro-women attitudes go together. Because violence is many times passed on in a chain of relationships: male-to- male, male to women, adult to children, there is a tendency for men who move against power holders to feel the need to secure their power on another front, vis-à-vis women:

...Power-holders in poor countries, or in relatively disadvantaged areas, turn to authoritarian masculinistic principles combined with aggressive nationalism, like the Serbs in the war in former Yugoslavia (...) On the other hand, new patriarchal developments may be combined with renewed paternalism in religious form, as in the fundamentalism seen in some of the Islamic countries. In both cases, old institutions (e.g. arranged marriages)

are given a more modern content under the guise of 'archaization'- going back to pure ways⁶

There are a growing number of studies that utilize the concept of hegemonic masculinity and apply it to issues of war and militarism. However, Beasley (2008) points out that Connell and others have used this concept in a restricted sense, where it often signifies economic privilege and social dominance. Thus, the concept is often stripped from the connections between the national masculinity projects and international politics. Instead, Beasley proposes to rethink the concept by giving more emphasis to the political function of hegemonic masculinity in the global context.

Despite internal differences in world-view, it is widely acknowledged by feminists that wars and military regimes utilize certain notions of masculinity and femininity in their operations and modes of dominance. In her provocative study, Reardon (1985) has argued that the origin of the war system is a "dominator way of thinking" rather than masculinistic principles. In Reardon's view, masculine and feminine values possess both positive and negative dimensions that are mutually interdependent. In her view, it is only the "negative values associated with masculinity" that perpetuate oppression. Moreover, she argues that sexism and the war system have common emotional roots "based upon the primitive fear of the other" and especially "the fear of the other within ourselves" (Reardon, 1985). Despite the psychological appeal of her argument, Reardon has failed to acknowledge the multiplicity and plasticity of models of masculinity and their historical and cultural specificities. She assumes

⁶ Holter, Oystein Gullvag. 2000. "Masculinities in Context: on Peace Issues and Patriarchal Orders." *Male Roles, Masculinities and Violence*. Eds. Ingeborg Breines, Robert Connell and Ingrid Eide. UNESCO Publishing, Paris:61-84.

that this fear of the "other" is a primitive instinct, while other scholars have provided evidence that it is learned and shaped by processes of socialization (Coltrane, 2005). Thus, whether they are challenged or not, consciously or unconsciously, meanings of gender roles are learned through different cultural and social representations of masculinity and femininity from a very early age. Unfortunately, for Morgan (1994), despite all technological, social and political changes, the warrior image still remains a key symbol of masculinity. In the theater of war, combat and military hegemonic masculinity emphasizes aggressive heterosexism and homophobia as elements of group solidarities organized around violence. Moreover, strong links exist between the construction of the masculine body in the military and the understanding of the broader "body politic": "The image of the warrior will come to personify the society, and individual soldiers will be called on to identify their occupation with the core values of the nation." (Morgan, 1994)

Military service is a rite of passage for manhood and war also makes nations masculine, reinforcing a masculine national identity, a sense that the nation is strong, decisive, determined, brave, and proud. Thus, war-making becomes a "masculinizing" enterprise in the U.S. (Erenreich, 2002). Furthermore, U.S. military policies marginalize women and foster the masculinization of political life both in the U.S. and abroad. Indeed, current foreign policy in the US is masculinized and militarized because policy makers equate security with military superiority (Enloe, 2004). To be sure, what were the budgetary implications of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq in Bush's domestic political agenda? One possible answer is that the wars have justified many of the cuts in funding of welfare, education and other social programs that are aimed at helping poor women and children. In addition to fostering gender inequalities at home, wars also promote gender violence against the

so-called "enemy." The cases of the war in Bosnia and the more recent Abu- Ghraib prison scandal in Iraq will serve here to illustrate this point.

In the context of combat, the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina became, for many, the epitome of gender violence during conflict. However, different scholars have observed that rape and violence against women are not at all exceptional. Probably most striking about the war in Bosnia was the visibility and the methodic use of rape as a weapon for the purpose of ethnic cleansing. Several accounts will help illustrate how masculinity was used in the nationalist projects in Yugoslavia. First of all, in their project the nationalists alluded to a return to traditional patriarchal families, where women play several symbolic roles: the role of the patriotic woman who would regenerate the nation through her motherhood and reproductive powers; the idea that women must retain their 'femininity' while men play their role of protectors, bellicose, virile and heterosexual; the notion that women are the safeguard of purity and bloodline; and finally, the view of women as property of the husband, the father and the nation-state (Enloe, 1998; Zalewski, 1995).

Given the symbolic meanings of women and their bodies, the rage of the rape as a form of humiliation and defeat of the enemy comes as no surprise. Indeed, war leaders had been preparing their warriors for it before the war even started. Pornographic videos and literature promoting a subjective and reified position of women were increasingly more common in Yugoslavia before the war, and the propaganda used in many instances similar video-taping to promote sexual assaults against the "women of the enemy" (Enloe, 1998). Moreover, in Cynthia Enloe's opinion, rape served several purposes among the troopers. Within the male micro-culture of the war environment, rape symbolized a sort of "rite of passage," which

ought to be performed by the emotionally dependent members of these masculinized groups. Rape could also be used as a sexual reward for the fighters. And finally, in the humiliation of the enemy women, men also performed a type of victory and power. The xenophobic lines of the nationalist projects offered them a scapegoat for lack of personal success and rape was the means to execute an act of power and vengeance for their own frustrations (ibidem). In spite of the appeal of these explanations one should not assume that all men voluntarily engaged in rape, indeed the case may be that many were simply pressured to use their own bodies as a weapon. A case in point is Enloe's case study of a man who performs rape because of fear of the consequences that refusing to do so would carry for himself and his family. In fact, this Serb warrior experienced disgust, guilt and remorse while raping a woman but was unable to escape from it (Enloe, 1998).

In the present war in Iraq the media have also exposed the gendered nature of torture and violence. What was peculiar in this case was that the principal victims of such abuse were men and the violence was –I would argue—more symbolic than physical. According to Jasbir Puar (2004), neo conservatives in Washington were familiar with the notion that Arabs were particularly vulnerable to sexual humiliation. In point of fact, in the months prior to the invasion of Iraq the neo-cons read and frequently cited The Arab Mind, by Raphael Patai, a study of Arab culture and Psychology. This reading may have given Bush's administration ideas as to what would be efficient torture techniques for prisoners. In Puar's own words:

This Orientalist discourse has surfaced in relation to the violence at Abu Ghraib, as both conservatives and progressives claim that the illegal status

*of homosexual acts in Islamic law demarcates sexual torture as especially humiliating and therefore very effective from a military security perspective*⁷

The images of the torture leaked to the media portrayed men performing simulated sexual acts associated with homosexuality, such as sodomy, oral sex and sadomasochistic practices- bonding, leashing and hooding (Puar, 2004). The homophobic and racist underpinnings of such methods are not difficult to grasp. By forcing Iraqi prisoners to simulate these acts, US soldiers were sending a clear message that the insurgent Iraqis' hidden sexual taste was repressed homosexuality, in contrast to the heterosexual inclination of the Americans. As Puar maintains, these images helped reinforce homophobic feelings, as Bush's administration made homosexuality abhorrent both at home (through the anti-gay marriage campaign) and world-wide, via the distorted depictions of the alleged Abu Ghraib homosexual acts (Puar, 2004). In other words, the same concept of hegemonic masculinity linked to racism, sexism and homophobia continues to represent a key symbol of imperialism, military invasions and economic expansionism. Simultaneously, as Masters (2009) notes, the sexual violence against female detainees in Abu Ghraib, and against female U.S. soldiers remained hidden.

The singularity perhaps of this, compared to other cases of gendered military violence may need to be put in the context of the social and civil rights gains that the United States has experienced in the decades after the Civil Rights Movement of the 60s. In this new social and political environment, overt acts of racial and gender

⁷ Puar, Jasbir K. 2004. "Abu Ghraib: Arguing against Exceptionalism." *Feminist Studies* 30:522-535.

violence will not so easily go unpunished. Thus the nature of the torture against the enemy "other" often takes on a more symbolic form.

As we know, in the United States many black Americans were the victims of lynching - which also included sexual mutilation and emasculation- at the hands of white supremacists between 1880- 1930 (Puar, 2004). Given this history of racism and violence by white supremacists, it is not surprising to see that the same intimidatory and humiliating techniques used to abuse black people have also been utilized in Iraq, for example intimidation using dogs. Indeed, the legacy of racial hostility continues to be passed on from generation to generation. Therefore, it is not a surprise that the ideology behind these now more symbolic acts is very much alive and well.

One last aspect of the Abu Ghraib case, which I would like to highlight, is the gender backlash it represents with respect to the role of women in the military. The sexist and anti-feminist implications of this affair would become clear through an analysis of those portrayed to be "key players" in the scandal and how it was handled and resolved: head of prison Major General Barbara Fast and, especially, soldier Lynndie England. Soldier Lynndie England was the only female involved in the pictures of naked Iraqi prisoners. Somehow, it was suggested that her presence in the male dominated community of a military prison arose the sexual desires and sexual "perversions" of fellow soldiers and prisoners. In fact, Lynndie England was singled out by the administration -in my opinion- as the scapegoat for war prison discipline gone awry. Adding fuel to the fire, the mass media -including well-known late evening comedians such as Jay Leno's "The Tonight Show" and John Stewart's "The Daily Show with John Stewart"- made their day by poking fun at the young

woman, and thus reinforcing stereotypical ideas of women in general –and blonde women in particular- as impulsive and stupid. According to Bonnie Mann's analysis of England's case, the American woman turned into masculinized soldier in true postmodern democratic fashion was given the *phallus*, and invited to participate in the masculine aesthetic of the one who penetrates the racialized other. For Masters (2009), in addition to being a woman, what made Lyndie England an easy scapegoat was the fact that she looked like a 'butch'. In any case, the inference suggested by the administration and the media may well be that the increasing incorporation of women in the military only causes problems. As a matter of fact, one of the interesting novelties of the war in Iraq has been the visibility of women, which can be partly a result of their exponential incorporation, thanks in part to policies implemented by the Clinton administration that opened over 90,000 military jobs to women in the military (Kennedy, 1995). Still, the majority of service women are in fact the victims of sexual harassment (Morgan, 1994).

5. Conclusions

Feminists of all leanings have noted the gendered nature of military regimes and armed conflict. However, only a few have challenged militarism as a form of patriarchal dominance, and certainly an even smaller number manifests an anti-war or pacifist philosophy. Among those who do are eco-feminists who suggest that all forms of destruction and oppression are ultimately connected to an original gender subordination; therefore, in order to attack the root causes of war, it would be necessary to start by eroding gender inequalities in every society:

We see devastation of the earth and her beings by the corporate warriors as feminist concerns. It is the same masculinist mentality which would deny us our right to our own bodies and our own sexuality, and which depends on multiple systems of dominance and state power to have its way⁸.

Similarly, critical feminists observe that the liberal women's awe with the women warrior image is dangerous, especially because inherent in the military machinery is also the racism, sexism and homophobia of the wider society. Moreover, increasing women's participation in the military would not alter its essentially coercive, hierarchical and patriarchal gendered structure (D'Amico, 1998). In this context, one can argue that feminism has fought an inner struggle between empowering the image of women and rejecting gender essentialist assumptions, while simultaneously debating whether to claim a different position or a different world-view from hegemonic masculinity values and politics.

I am very aware that the debate will continue among those feminists who do not take a pacifist stance seriously. In a conference in which I participated and read the first draft of this paper, one of the conference participants suggested that even though she agreed that there is an association between gender and violence she did not think that a "non-violent flower" would solve terrorism. Clearly, she was trying to discredit either my opposition to the war in Iraq or a pacifist feminist position altogether. My answer to her was that the war not only has not solved terrorism, but it has contributed to greater terror, hate, violence and trauma.

⁸ King, Y. 1983. "The Eco-Feminist Perspective," (p. 10), in Caldecott, L. & S. Leland (Eds.), *Reclaiming the Earth: Women Speak Out for Life on Earth*, London, The Women's Press.

This paper aimed to show the urgent need to revise pervasive notions of masculinity in our society, whose pernicious effects are not restricted to situations of war, but certainly are very likely to intensify during and after armed conflict. Because war and militarism are intrinsically linked to hegemonic ideas of masculinity, it is important for feminist peace advocates to reflect on their role in the on-going struggle for the transformation of oppressive and violent responses to conflict, which cut across gender and other forms of social and economic inequalities. It is imperative to continue to demystify and deconstruct, the pervasive cultural myth, which connects violence with manhood and/or power—women may also use violent models for empowerment. Since most of the war propaganda and popular representations of masculinity are effectively disseminated and homogenized through the mass media, increasing pacifist feminist viewpoints in that medium is one of the ways of transmitting the counter-hegemonic messages. Moreover, deconstructing oppressive identities in academia is not enough, it is necessary to win what Stuart Hall calls the "war of images," by stressing non-violent alternatives for women and men to feel empowered.

As I showed earlier in this paper, peace activists have used gendered images of femininity to oppose war that equality feminists argue help reinforce stereotypical ideas about women. In the final analysis, I argue that these images and symbols always need to be examined in the larger political climate of the society in which pacifist women must operate, and the extent to which they are attempting to construct a counter-hegemonic ideology to the prevailing masculinistic form of patriarchal domination. But in the end, for pacifist women to gain more voice and credibility in this patriarchal context they need to appeal not only to those who identify as feminists, but to more women and men who may not be associated with

feminism. Indeed, a pacifist feminist perspective shows how women's issues are everybody's businesses, and that gender oppression is at the core of humanity's most dreadful and violent nightmares.

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