

BATTLES IN THE GENDER WAR: THEORIES OF  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND GENDER AND  
THE REALITIES OF WOMEN IN WAR

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BATTLES IN THE GENDER WAR:  
THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND GENDER  
AND THE REALITIES OF WOMEN IN WAR

by

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## ABSTRACT

Informed by the notion that international relations in its present configuration is androcentric and narrowly construed, this thesis examines gender critiques of international relations and ways in which international relations theory has precluded an analysis of gender. Through the examination of the works of various scholars writing on the topic of gender and international relations, the ways in which women have been excluded from both international relations theory and practice are elucidated. By challenging the hegemonic discipline on the basis that it neither adequately nor accurately understands, explains or predicts international relations, various points of entry into critiques of the discipline are raised. The point of critique examined in this thesis is the issue of women and war. The first chapter examines gender critiques and some of the central themes within the sub-field of gender and international relations, concluding that the study of gender contributes at least partially to the understanding of international relations. Further, the chapter examines the ways in which gender and international relations theory have broadened conceptions of the discipline and problematized inscribed gender roles. The second chapter continues the examination of gender roles by examining theories of women in the non-traditional role of soldier or warrior, in addition to examining theories of patriarchy and militarism. It is argued that many of the arguments against women in the military, which maintain that women never have been and are incapable of becoming effective soldiers, are rooted in outdated and illogical gender constructs. To buttress this assertion, chapter three examines several examples of women's involvement in wars, from the American civil war up to the Persian Gulf war. Further, it is argued that the focus on the theoretical debate surrounding women in the military has obfuscated more important issues facing enlisted women, including sexual harassment, physical assault and rape; recent examples of these occurrences from the United States and Canada are provided. The fourth and final chapter concludes by problematizing the inscribed gender roles which are implicitly assumed within the discipline of international relations and which function as a barrier to women's active and meaningful involvement in the military. It is argued that this can only be redressed by taking gender seriously as an elucidating variable in international relations.

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## **Introduction**

In examining gender, international relations and militarism, this thesis attempts what is often viewed as the unattainable: a meaningful analysis of both theory and practice in regards to the complex and subtle interconnections between international relations theory, women and war. International relations theory, as a sub-field of political science, is a body of work that has evolved from the early writings of ancient Greek philosophers, to the endeavors of post-modern political theorists. Within its scope, international relations examines interactions between states in the many forms that those interactions may entail including international organizations, regimes, political economy, conflicts, disputes and wars. International relations seeks to understand, explain and predict interactions between states and to this end, necessarily involves an analysis of the factors which affect these interactions. Traditionally, the main factors considered in the analysis of interactions between states have been power and interest; these factors of analysis have been prescribed by the dominant mode of thought in the twentieth century, political realism. Realism has helped theorize and focus upon those factors which explain the motivations of states. In doing so, however, realism has narrowed the scope of international relations, and limited an examination of other factors which may motivate states to act, including history, culture, ethnicity, socialization and gender. The most salient of these other factors, certainly for the purposes of this discussion, is gender.

Scholars have argued that international relations is one of the most patriarchal and gender-blind forms of political analysis. This is due, in part, to the fact that there is no space for an analysis of gender within international relations theory as a result of its parameters. International relations has defined itself in terms of states, power and interest and has defined (or rather, assumed) those categories to be both objective and inclusive. From the very first theories of international relations, however, international relations

have been a solely male pursuit and both the theorization of and the participation in international relations has been an enterprise in which only men have been allowed participation. Much of international relations theory was written at a time when women's equality was unheard of and the public/private dichotomy, in which women were relegated to lives in the private sphere of home and domestic duties while men were relegated to the public sphere of work and politics, prevailed. Further, "classics" of political theory (including but not limited to writers like Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau) upon which international relations theory was based, were written at a time when women were not even autonomous human beings, but rather were seen as the property of their fathers or husbands. As a result, questions of gender difference were never addressed and this exclusion was reinforced as theory evolved without ever mentioning how women's changing roles in societies may affect relations between states.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s a group of feminist scholars began addressing the androcentric bias in international relations and examining how questions of gender may contribute towards a more adequate and accurate understanding of relations between states. V. Spike Peterson notes:

The assumption of men's (more specifically, elite men's) experience as representative of *human* experience emerged as a systemic bias of codified knowledge and cultural ideologies. Deconstructing the errors of androcentric scholarship revealed- and continues to reveal- patterned distortion of truth claims about "social reality."

These scholars worked from the assumption that gender was not the only elucidating factor in understanding international relations, but that it did indeed have a place in the equation. Feminist scholars began to address this exclusion by seeking points of entry in which to begin a discussion about the androcentric bias within international relations, and the ways in which that androcentric bias may have precluded both an analysis of gender



and women's analysis. Several scholars began their investigation by examining realism, as the dominant mode of thought in international relations. Others examined the nature of security, sovereignty and notions of citizenship. All of these areas were (and are) fitting points of entry as they are some of the topics found within the vast body of work written on the subject of international relations. The point of entry of this thesis is the topic of women and war, both the theorization and practice of which has been largely undiscussed within mainstream international relations.

The topic of women and war and women's role in militarization, is one which involves an analysis of gender, militarization within the Western world, patriarchal structure and gender relations between states. Women's roles in the military are seen primarily as domestic ones, yet this status only holds true if women remain in their own country and is not the case for career soldiers who are constantly relocated to the sites of conflict. By examining the roles that women have had both as scholars theorizing on war and militarism and as soldiers in the military and the roles they have assumed during wars, it becomes clear that women are not simply passive observers who are unaffected by militarism and war.

Gender and international relations scholars seek to expand the scope of what is considered to be international relations and argue that women affect relations between states by their presence on base camps, their status as the wives of diplomats, in their roles as exported domestic workers and by their relationship to militarism. Though traditional accounts of international relations limit their focus to states, power and interest, gender and international relations scholars argue they are only seeing the half of the equation that fails to take into account gendered analysis, and ignores the ways in which women affect the international system.

We seek politics *not disembodied* but situated in historical and cultural contingency, recognizing dimensions of power

(politics) in asymmetrical social relations and various cultural forms, and acknowledging the complex and sometimes contradictory interaction of systems of power. We seek a politics *not disembodied* but situated in material processes...what is required is *not* simply the addition of women to masculine abstractions but a transformation in our understanding of politics, power and political identities (Peterson, 55).

Perhaps what is most important in what Peterson discusses is the notion of transformation that is entailed with gendered analysis. Beyond simply an "add women and stir" approach is the notion that by taking gender seriously as a unit of analysis and by addressing ways in which women have been omitted from "formal" relations between states, a different view of international relations will emerge.

In the first chapter, this thesis will review the arguments for realism within international relations and then present the alternative arguments offered by the gender and international relations material. The gender and international relations material presents a broader scope for the discipline and encourages analysis of subject area excluded by traditional IR theory. The gendered discourse will be explored as the basis for opening up a discussion of women in the military. In the second chapter, a critical review of theories on women, war and militarism will be presented, focussing on traditional gender narratives in war. The third chapter will examine women's participation in militaries and a sampling of their involvement in war and combat. In addition, the third chapter will also explore gender conflicts within Western militaries and the consequences of those conflicts for women. It will be argued that the focus on theories of gender and war have obfuscated the problems facing women who have confronted the patriarchal structure of the military to become career soldiers.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Beyond Exclusivity: International Relations Theory and the Challenge of Gender Analysis**

In the introduction to her book Feminist Theory And International Relations In A Postmodern Era, Christine Sylvester makes the point that feminism is to international relations as elephants are to aesthetics: a relationship of impossibility. One may even wonder what, if anything, feminism or the study of gender has to do with the study of international relations. To this question there is no easy answer, and in fact it would be much easier to simply say that though gender is an important variable it is not important to the study of international relations. Nonetheless, the easy answers are not always the right answers. I say this in introduction to a field of work that is often ignored if not dismissed, derided or aggressively attacked. The field to which I am referring is the study of gender within the larger area of international relations scholarship.

The study of gender has only recently come to be regarded as an emerging body of literature in the discipline. Unlike Realism or Liberalism, the study of gender does not purport to be a grand theory of international relations that understands, predicts and explains the actions of states (among other international actors). Rather, the body of work focuses on ways in which the discipline, via the social construction of gender, has excluded the ideas, opinions and even mere presence of women. This exclusion, it is argued, functions to the detriment of the discipline as well as the international society to which the theories of international relations purport to apply. The study of gender within international relations at the very least contributes to the adequacy and accuracy of the theory, but further has the potential to contribute a richer conceptualization of the relations between states and other international actors. Unlike class or race, there are only two categories of gender; all human beings in the world are either biologically male or female and socially constructed to become men or women. As John Stuart Mill noted, it is evil, violent, and wrong to deny political participation to half the human race; sadly, international relations theory does just that. Though inclusivity can perhaps be seen as

the primary purpose for the examination of gender within international relations theory, the literature in the field reaches far beyond exclusivity. Arguably any theory of international relations that does not take gender into account cannot adequately or accurately understand, explain and predict international relations. Through an examination of gender critiques and some of the central themes within the sub-field of gender and international relations, it will be demonstrated that the study of gender does indeed contribute to our understanding of international relations. Before entering into a discussion of the gender critiques of international relations, it first seems necessary to examine the field of international relations scholarship that will be referred to as “traditional” or “conventional”<sup>1</sup> and some of the work of selected “major authors” within the field.

As Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff note in their anthology Contending Approaches to International Relations the field and scope of international relations is “appallingly vast and complex,” (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1981). What began as a discipline that was narrowly focused on states and how states interact, has now grown into a discipline which examines not only the interactions of states, but the international institutions governing the behaviour of states, foreign policy, diplomacy and development initiatives of states and international regimes. Further, critical challenges to the discipline maintain that the field of international relations remains narrow and exclusionary. International relations historically began with a focus on security and sovereign states, and is rooted theoretically in the realist/idealist debate. The debate over methods centered on (and arguably is still focused on) scientific and classical methods. More recently, international relations scholarship has broadened its scope to include analysis on regimes and institutions as well as systems theory, game theory and decision making theory.

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<sup>1</sup> The work referred to as “traditional or conventional” is differentiated here from feminist work and work that incorporates or is aware of gender discourse.

The first theories of international relations can be dated back to late 5th century B.C., with the writings of Thucydides. Other work now viewed as foundational international relations scholarship are the writings of Thomas Aquinas (Of War, 1265), Niccolò Machiavelli (The Prince, 1513), Hugo Grotius (The Law of War and Peace, 1625), as well as the work of some philosophers, including Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jaques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant. The work of these authors largely provide the foundation for modern international relations theory. Perhaps the two most influential modern writers, however, are Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz, pioneers of modern realism. This is significant in that realism has remained the dominant ideology of international relations and has been largely responsible for its limited view and narrow focus (namely states, power and interest).<sup>2</sup>

### **Gender and International Relations Theory**

International relations has been defined by one scholar as “one of the most gender-blind, indeed crudely patriarchal of all the institutionalized forms of contemporary social and political analysis,” (Walker; 1992). Critics (feminist and otherwise) have argued that international relations tends to overvalue (1) a distanced and disinterested attitude toward its subjects, (2) the perspectives of the powerful, and (3) the specific means it uses to close scholarly debate (Murphy, 1996). In contrast, emerging literature from a gendered perspective emphasizes the importance of allowing greater connections to the subjects under observation, engaging the perspectives of the disadvantaged and avoiding closure by encouraging debate (Murphy, 1996). Seemingly, the study of gender and feminist critiques are important to the theorizing of International Relations because no theory can

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<sup>2</sup> The two seminal works of realism are widely considered to be Morgenthau's Power among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace (1948) and Waltz's Theory of International Politics. An in-depth examination of the work of Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz could be a thesis topic alone, and for the purposes of brevity has been omitted here.

adequately or accurately describe, understand or predict if it only applies to and embodies the experiences of one half the population. Further, it could be argued that a feminist critique of international relations can lead to a more richly conceived understanding of international relations that is less androcentric in its view and as a result, develops a more accurate understanding of the international system. As V. Spike Peterson points out, the feminist critique in international relations is in many ways parallel to the post-positivist critique. Within the feminist critiques of science, where androcentrism has been identified as a target of rigorous critique, “essentialized” gender difference has been located at the core of positivism and objectivism (Peterson:1992a, 197) . She argues that the ‘sovereign rational subject’, as analyzed in realist theories of international relations, privileged in positivist accounts is a fiction premised on elite male experience and masculinity (Peterson:1992a, 197). Whether used to illustrate the example of objective knower or autonomous political agent, the notion of sovereign man is epistemologically and politically gender exclusive.

Further, it can be argued that international relations are not adequately addressed by androcentric accounts that render women and gender relations invisible (Peterson:1992a, 197). Clearly, effects relating to gender or inequalities emerging from the social construct of gender are pertinent in many areas of international relations. These include (though are by no means limited to) local, national and international women’s movements, the position of women in contemporary social movements, shifting divisions of labour worldwide as women increase their participation in wage labour, the global feminization of poverty, gendered economic development in newly industrialized and developing countries and the small but steady increases in women’s participation in formal politics (Peterson:1992a, 197). Peterson maintains that:

While the influence of gender in world affairs is not new, systemic data and shifting gender boundaries expose the

pervasiveness of gender structuring and suggest the salience of gender sensitive analyses. It is no longer adequate, and was never accurate, to treat gender as irrelevant to our knowledge of world politics (Peterson: 1992a, 1997).

Gender invisibility, and a seeming absence of women altogether, within international relations emerges from a gender selectivity imposed by who the primary actors are (statesmen and scholars), what the discipline purports to study (largely power, war and international politics) and how the discipline's topics are studied (realism, neorealism, pluralism, and structuralism). To benefit from feminist critiques international relations would require not only an acknowledgment of the discipline's androcentrism but an examination of how international processes have gender specific consequences (for example, the gender critiques of economic development policies in developing countries which have been found to have a more negative impact on women than on men, who largely benefit from current development programs in place<sup>3</sup>) and how gendered categories and orientations and their effects shape world politics. Presently, the scholarship on gender and international relations is marginalized, if not largely ignored, by mainstream theorists and academics arguably to the detriment of a richer and more accurate understanding of international relations. As previously mentioned, our understanding of international relations depends upon our definitions, objectives and methodology. At this point it would seem beneficial to examine contemporary definitions of international relations.

Arriving at a comprehensive, inclusive, mutually agreed upon definition of international relations, would more than likely be an impossibility. As Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff note, the subject area of international relations is "appallingly vast and complex" (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1). Nonetheless, for the purposes of this

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<sup>3</sup> See Cohen: 1994 for a more thorough examination of the gendered implications of structural adjustment.



discussion, a conventional definition of international relations will be adopted: international relations can be defined as the study of political relationships between and among international actors. Certainly, there are both more broad and more narrow definitions depending on who is defining the discipline and for what purpose the definition is being created. Arguably, the way in which we define international relations determines the findings of our scholarship. This is a key to understanding the theorists examining gender within international relations. Though definitions of gender may also vary, gender can be defined as the ideological and material relation between men and women, the most pertinent feature of which is a socially constructed inequality between men and women (Whitworth, 265). Further, a gender role can be seen as an archetypal model of how humans understand their place in the world intellectually, socially and politically (Grant, 8).

In defining the study of gender in international relations, we make a fundamental distinction between gender in international relations and women in politics. The former examines and explores the ways in which the international system is gendered and looks at the ways in which masculinized and feminized identities have informed the academic discourse of international relations. Further, it questions the partial view of reality that this gender blind view (which fallaciously purports to be gender neutral) describes, predicts and explains. An examination of women in politics differs in its scope and approach as it largely focuses on the presence of women in formal politics and the systemic (and other) barriers which restrict women's participation in politics. Further, women in politics differs from gender in international relations in that the latter focuses on international systems and processes, rather than on domestic politics and traces the roots of gender exclusion back to the origins of western philosophical traditions.

Until recently, gender bias has remained largely unquestioned throughout Western political and philosophical tradition and in international relations theory. The result is that gender often appears to be both an unimportant and irrelevant question.

In the aggregate, Rebecca Grant notes:

Gender bias exists in international relations for a variety of reasons and has thrived on the flaws of the Western tradition. However, the bottom line is that the gender factor resurrects a debilitating choice between what is private and moral, and what is public and can be legitimized in the national interest. The study of international relations theory has attempted to produce explanations of public, international action without fully confronting the precarious structure of thought that separates domestic politics from international action... Women appear to have no role in a discussion of how the international context operates-the topic that is the final objective of major theories of international relations. Men, states and wars were the bases of theory, not women (Grant, 21).

With this statement, Grant touches on several key issues, most importantly the failure of international relations theory to confront the structures of thought and the consequences of the Western philosophical tradition which has produced the conceptions of gender; these conceptions (and misconceptions of gender) have led to a bias and further, to the exclusion of women in international relations.

Though the emerging body of gender and international relations work is largely informed by feminist ideology, there are varied theoretical methods and different feminist perspectives contained within the gender in international relations material. In examining the major authors and central themes contained within this work, both obvious and subtle differences in the ideological information of the theorists becomes apparent. The first academic scholarship emerging from the study of gender and international relations appeared in 1988 and 1989. The initial debates were carried out in Millennium: A Journal of International Studies, a publication of the London School of Economics. One

of the first works and one of the most informative and influential books written on the discipline is Cynthia Enloe's Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics. Enloe's book is useful not for its theoretical or empirical arguments but in that it broadens conceptions of traditional ways of viewing power and its role in international politics. Enloe argues that in the same way that the personal is political, the personal is international. Traditional gender narratives which are pervasive in society and international relations have played a crucial role in perpetuating outdated and illogical patriarchal notions of womanhood. The types of gender narratives to which I am referring, include, though are not limited to, the notion that women are feeling rather than thinking, a woman's place is in the home, and that a woman's primary function and the one to which all women are best suited is to bear and raise children. These notions (and other similar notions not listed here) are rarely so explicitly articulated, but are pervasive globally. Many have argued that Western society no longer regards the role of women this way. Nonetheless, one need only look as far as the United States to see the rise of the New Right, which poses a profound threat to the freedom and formal equality of women.

It is precisely these notions which have relegated women to subordinate status in Western society and all over the world. This secondary status has been the foundation for women's roles in society, industry, government and politics to be overlooked, diminished or dismissed as unimportant to the "real" and important substance of international relations: states, interest and power. As Enloe notes:

International politics has relied not only on the manipulation of femininity's meanings but on the manipulation of masculinity. Ideas about adventure, civilization, progress, risk, trust and security are all legitimized by certain kinds of masculine values and behaviour which makes them so potent in relations between governments (Enloe, 199-200).

Enloe's work is pathbreaking in the field, but it is only of limited use. Though she broadens conceptions of power and international politics and expands conventional interpretations of international relations to include the existence and contributions of women, Enloe's analysis only goes so far in providing direction to the discipline. Though Enloe has served as a founding mother, of sorts, to many other academics working within the area, her analysis is only a good starting point and leaves many questions unanswered if not unaddressed. Perhaps most notably, Enloe offers little insight into the element of theory in gender and international relations.

Given that realism has maintained its status as the dominant force in international relations theory and practice, realism and the critique of realism has also been a main theme within gender and international relations work. More specifically, many authors have chosen to look at how realism affects and is affected by an analysis of gender. Realism can be defined as a political theory guided by the assumptions that the international system is anarchic; that states are the dominant actors in international relations and that states and their actions are guided by "interest defined as power," (Morgenthau, 5). Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff note that realism is "conservative, empirical, prudent, suspicious of idealistic principles and respectful of the lessons of history," (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 5).

In "Gender in the Inter-Paradigm Debate," Sandra Whitworth examines realism and critiques, among other things, realist conceptions of power. Whitworth begins her argument by pointing out that "there is little in realism that seems conducive to theorizing about gender," (Whitworth, 267). With this in mind, she critiques realism through looking at the "classical" realist theory of Hans Morgenthau and the neo-realist contributions of regimes theory, which suggests, according to Whitworth, an epistemological space through which an analysis of gender could occur (Whitworth, 267).

Ultimately, the conclusion reached is that the ontological commitment to states possessed by both realism and regime theory ultimately precludes gender analysis (Whitworth, 268).

A second critique of realism was published in *Alternatives*, in 1991. Entitled "The Radical Future of Realism: Feminist Subversions of IR Theory," Anne Sisson Runyan and V. Spike Peterson's thesis focuses on realism's narrow conception of international politics:

We suggest that the "radical future" of realism lies in the articulation of alternate accounts of "reality," which realism- as it is presently constituted- is unable to see and which lead to the narrowness and impoverishment of its own concepts and practices. Although also partial, such alternative accounts from feminist perspectives, nevertheless, provide richer, more complex, and far more open-ended avenues for examining the social, economic, and political fabric of international politics (Runyan and Peterson, 67-68).

Here, Peterson and Runyan point out that because realism's limits are narrow, it has been unable to provide a full understanding of international politics, in social, economic and political terms. Implicit in their critique is also the notion that as it currently exists, realism fails to reflect in a gender balanced manner the real events of international relations. Further, they have argued against classic realism (which, as previously mentioned, is concerned primarily with power and the interests of states as international actors) in favour of an alternative account which would be cognizant of more variables in the theoretical hypothesis that is international relations.

Another important element for Peterson and Runyan's critique of realism is the notion that realism creates and perpetuates dichotomies (gender and otherwise,) which limit what realism is able to understand, predict and explain, and also, by definition, which preclude the inclusion of women. In the explanations of international relations that realism provides, assumptions are made about the ways in which the world are divided: strong-weak, rich-poor, peace-war, and man-woman (Runyan and Peterson, 70). It is

argued that these dichotomies have led to realist notions and understanding of power, security and sovereignty and are patriarchal in character; in this way, realist discourse is viewed as patriarchal and reproduces its informative masculinist bias in both theory and practice (Runyan and Peterson, 70). In addition:

...realism, as a form of re-presentation and representation, not only does not represent women in either its ranks or its content, but also is incapable, as a patriarchal discourse, of doing anything but re-presenting "woman."....As a result, women, in all their diversity, are neither presented as political actors nor represented in international politics by realism. In short, women are both outside of and overlooked by realism's patriarchal and, thus, myopic field of vision (Runyan and Peterson, 71).

Clearly, women are at the margins of international relations as actors which could be conclusively illustrated by a quick survey of the gender composition of the world's leaders or UN delegates. But more importantly is the assertion that neither women nor the construction of gender, gender roles and archetypes or gender dichotomies are acknowledged (let alone examined or explored) in theory or in practice. On the surface, gender has nothing to do with realism. In its applications, realism applies to and has consequences for both men and women; nonetheless, realism has been informed solely by men and evolved from masculinist notions of humanity. J. Ann Tickner notes that realists claim objective, universally valid theory in spite of the fact that their assumptions are dependent on characteristics that have come to be associated with masculinity. In this way, "the individual, the state and the international system are profoundly gendered and constructed in terms of the "idealized or hegemonic masculinity," (Tickner, 29). Further, realism's goal of an objective, rational science of international relations is based on models borrowed from economics and the natural sciences. However, the positivist conception of reality that this form of model building implicitly entails is contested on the basis of its androcentrism and the coercive, hierarchical and conformist pattern that it

imposes on scientific inquiry. Feminist theory suggests that knowledge is socially constructed, historically contingent and that claims of objectivity and neutral uses of language must be questioned (Tickner, 36). Realism, in its present configuration, needs to be challenged; gender is a necessary place to begin that challenge.

As a part of the challenge to realism, gender and IR scholars have also examined, and been critical of, the notion of security. Realists (including, but not limited to, Waltz and Morgenthau) have argued that in the absence of an effective international government which governs the behaviour of states, states must be responsible for their own security. This almost inevitably leads to a resulting security dilemma, caused by the arming of states in preparation for their defense (Tickner, 31). Gender and IR scholars have argued that this focus on states monopolizes our understanding of security and precludes an understanding of other forms of political involvement, namely those forms of political involvement which may be sub-national and community based (Peterson: 1992, 31). Whereas traditional models of security have focused exclusively on military security, the notion of *common security* takes into account political, economic and ecological facets of security and also considers the security of individuals within the state (Tickner, 22). The realist notion of security is focused on protecting the state from outside threats of violence and has consequently obfuscated the violence within the state (Tickner, 133). This obfuscation has had particularly detrimental consequences for women who have endured "historically interacting systems of domination (patriarchy, state making, instrumentalism, capitalism) [which] engender structural violence (Peterson:1992, 56).

In examining how various authors deal with the task of critiquing realism, the problem of incorporation becomes apparent. One of the primary goals of the study of gender in international relations must be to seek ways of incorporating gender into the existing theories. Nonetheless, this becomes a difficult if not impossible task when the

nature of the material under examination ontologically precludes the incorporation of gender in its analysis. The literature in this area differs in its approach to the problem of incorporation and tends to divide around those who attempt to formulate a gender balanced theory within the existing material and those who believe there must be a radical (at the root) reformulation of international relations theory. Whitworth and Tickner, for example, attempt to work within classic definitions of realism to formulate a more inclusive (of gender, among other things) theory of international relations. Nonetheless, it is worth considering that "women cannot simply be integrated into a sphere when the definition of that sphere implies their exclusion," (Runyan and Peterson, 95). Other authors, such as Peterson and Sylvester take a more revolutionary stance and offer alternative ways of considering international relations, that differ quite markedly from traditional international relations theory. Arguably, neither method clearly distinguishes itself as the better model for incorporating gender into the study of international relations.

Clearly theorizing gender within the context of international relations is a complex and difficult task. Further compounding the existing difficulty of this task is the fact that there are, at present, no gender theories of international relations. The growing body of work in this area has been largely untheoretical and focused on an examination of the unacknowledged androcentrism inherent in existing theories of international relations and ways in which false notions of gender could be critiqued and/or deconstructed. There are many different and yet equally valid ways of approaching the study of gender and international relations, and many different standpoint theories that need to be taken into account to arrive at a coherent and inclusive theory of international relations. In this way, it would seem that a postmodern approach within a critical theoretical framework would be useful in incorporating the study of gender and international relations.



Postmodernism is a term that inspires many negative connotations due to its reputation for total deconstruction of “Truth” and a dismissal of Western philosophy and the collective body of knowledge it has generated. As David Harvey notes:

In challenging all consensual standards of truth and justice, of ethics, and meaning, and in pursuing the dissolution of all narratives and meta-theories into a diffuse universe of language games, deconstructionism end[s] up, in spite of the best intentions of its more radical practitioners, by reducing knowledge and meaning to a rubble of signifiers...prepar[ing] the ground for the re-emergence of a charismatic politics and even more simplistic propositions than those which were deconstructed (Harvey, 350).

Harvey sees, as many other critics of postmodernism do, a threat to knowledge that the deconstructive element of postmodernism advocates. Postmodernism can be seen as a school of thought which emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s and was defined by a negation of grand theories and “Truth,” and a “disappearance of the idea of progress within rationality and freedom,” (Berman, 1993). Further, postmodernism advocates “playing” with the conventions of language and an emphasis on language as meaning rather than mere semantics. Finally, postmodernism holds that generalizations are invalid and that differences (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation) are individual and cannot be generalized. Though these statements about postmodernism are not untrue they do not fully represent the many different views that postmodernism incorporates and accepts as valid. Certainly there are many grounds on which postmodernism can be criticized; nonetheless, for the purposes for studying gender bias in international relations, a postmodernist approach is valid in that views that have been rejected by the canons of international relations theory as unimportant to the “real” issues of states, power and interest, can be examined, explored and incorporated to arrive at a more accurate understanding of the international system. Postmodernist feminist theorizing enables transformative understandings by reference to the metatheoretical underpinnings of

positivist and realist discourse and by deconstructing exclusionary boundaries of gender construct (Runyan and Peterson, 97).

As previously mentioned, theorizing gender within the context of international relations is a complex and difficult task. As Christine Sylvester notes, "there are founding fathers of realism but no recognized founding mothers gazing down at us from the Mount Rushmore of sacralized progenitors. There is rationality but only unitary understandings of what it means and who exhibits it," (Sylvester, 7). The value of feminist international relations theorizing lies in its attempts to deinstitutionalize the conventionally accepted understanding of states, sovereignty and the international system (Runyan and Peterson, 97). Western philosophical traditions and the constructions (gender and otherwise) generated by them are gendered; they emerge from masculinist experience as it is constructed within patriarchy. In this way, constructions of rationality are not neutral but inextricably bound to historically particular experience. I have argued from a postmodernist feminist view not to create one alternative way to view international relations but to offer a way of seeing multiple alternatives to traditional interpretations of states, power and interest as the only variables of note in international relations. Incorporating different accounts of reality in any theory of international relations, can only serve to make the theory more accurate in its ability to understand, predict and explain international actions. A first step in acknowledging our limited view is in problematizing inscribed masculinity and femininity as natural, uncontested and depoliticized. For the purposes of this discussion, an examination of the women and war literature seems a fitting place to begin.

Within the body of literature examining women and war (and the military) there is an interesting dichotomy between scholars who accept inscribed gender roles as natural, necessary and/or convenient and scholars who have problematized prescribed gender

roles as inadequate and inaccurate representations of male and female existence. After centuries of female subordination, women in the Western world have attained formal equality in most realms of life, including military service. Nonetheless, women lack substantive equality and are barred from certain types of military service, most notably combat, which prevent them from ascending the ranks to command positions. Critics of women in the military have argued that the military is a masculine domain whereas proponents argue that women's equality is threatened by barring them from meaningful involvement in all spheres of life. In chapter two, the theoretical debates surrounding the issue of women in war and the military will be examined.

**Chapter Two:**  
**Theories of women in war and the military**

In the past three years the topic of women in the military became front page news, as Shannon Faulkner battled for her constitutional right to pursue an education at the Citadel, a prestigious and publicly funded military academy in South Carolina. Her battle began in 1993 when she won her equal protection lawsuit against the Citadel which she filed after the traditionally all-male school had rescinded Faulkner's provisional acceptance on the basis of her gender.<sup>4</sup> The lawsuit raised the issue of whether or not women belonged in all-male institutions like the Citadel and the arguments extended to the issue of whether women had a place in the military itself. Though Faulkner won her battle through the courts, she eventually lost the war against the Citadel. Citing the constant harassment, derision, emotional and psychological abuse and even physical assault as reasons for her decision, Shannon Faulkner withdrew from the Citadel on August 18th, 1995, eighteen months after having gained admission (Brinson. 1996).

The Faulkner case renewed the issue of women in the military in the popular media and initiated discussions about women's roles within the military itself. The discussion of these issues was part of the continuing discussions surrounding the issues of gender and the military, many of which have existed since the second wave of feminism and becomes salient whenever there is a challenge to traditional notions of where women "fit in" within the armed forces. This can be seen in the Faulkner case, but was also raised when women took part in combat roles in the Persian Gulf war. Critics argue that women do not "belong" in the military, which is seen as inherently male domain, and if they have a role to play at all in the armed forces it must be a non-combat position, such as nurse or secretary (Mitchell, 1989). This chapter will examine the historical evolution of gendered power structures of the military, the theoretical arguments for and against

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<sup>4</sup> The gender discriminatory policy of the Citadel seemed especially blatant in light of the fact that the U.S. federal service academies had been co-ed for some time. In Canada the Royal Military College has been co-ed for over two decades.

women in the military, the supposed link between women and peace, examples of women's involvement in peace movements, , the gender narratives of war and the effects of the gender disparity.

It has been argued that the ontological structure of the military is, in itself, patriarchal and androcentric in nature.

A common assumption has made the armed forces almost immune to feminist investigation. That assumption is that the military, even more than other patriarchal institutions, is a *male* preserve, run by men and for men according to masculine ideas and relying solely on *man* power (Enloe, 7).

Conventional thinking surrounding militarism and the military as an institution can be traced back to ancient Greece, where the notion of state loyalty through military service originated. From ancient Greece to modern times, women have always had some role to play in militarism. Whether preserving the “nurturing homefront,” caring for the sick and injured on the battlefields or taking part in the actual combat, women are not unaffected by war and the military. Fighting wars and the military as an institution have been traditionally viewed as fundamentally male enterprises. History is replete with images of mothers who “sacrifice” their sons to war, wives who lose their husbands and children who lose their fathers to the ravages of war. Nonetheless, these portrayals are androcentric and recount only the male half of the story. There are myths of women warriors (e.g. the Amazons, Joan of Arc) but these tales are exceptions to the male dominance of war history.

Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori  
mors et fugacem persequitur virum,  
nec parcat imbellis inventae  
poplitibus timidove tergo.

As the poem "*Pro Patria Mori*" by Horace (Odes, Book 3, Poem 2) articulates, dying for one's state was seen as the most honorable and loyal act that one could commit for one's country. As women were virtually regarded as the chattels of their fathers or husbands and relegated solely to the private sphere of life, it would have been unfathomable for a woman to be in the army or defend her state. The only valuable roles that women served in ancient Greece were as mothers, in order to produce sons that could defend (and die) for their state. Women, then were the life-givers, while men were life-takers. This dichotomy became naturalized as the proper and natural order of life, and served as the foundation for modern civil society. Military service for women did not become a reality until several hundred years later.

The archetypal role of the masculinized warrior/hero, has arguably been central to the conceptualization of politics and war for the past 2500 years (Harstock, 283). Myths of these warrior/heroes have become narrative and have been responsible in part for creating notions of citizenship as male experience. The military barracks of Sparta in ancient Greece are representative of an extreme form of male community, in which military capacity, civic personality and masculinity were all coterminous (Harstock, 283). Though women were physically excluded from this community, they shaped the theoretical constructions of the institution in mythic and symbolic form. Women, or more accurately "female forces," were considered to be a threat. Machiavelli's conception of Fortuna, for example, is that of a goddess, who possesses extraordinary power to make a man a prince or to destroy him. In this way, Fortuna (fortune) is seen as a woman which, to be mastered, must be conquered by force. Machiavelli and his contemporaries theorized that the collapse of the Roman Empire was due to the breakdown of warrior/hero virtue, and that "the only solution to the problems of disorder presented by fortuna was a reassertion of manliness," (Harstock, 284). Perhaps most

significant among the changes from the Greek city states to the Roman empire were those affecting the understanding of political community. The distinctions between political (public) life and social (private) life became more deeply entrenched as well as allocated on the basis of gender.

In Women and War, Jean Bethke Elshtain argues that historically the masculine ethos has been transformed into the narrative of the “just warrior” while the feminine ethos has been transformed into the narrative of a “beautiful soul” (Elshtain, 1987). These images represent a collective embodiment of the ways in which society has portrayed men and women. Whereas men are seen as inherently violent, women are seen as inherently non-violent and passive. Whereas the “just warrior” is responsible for fighting to protect his country, family, way of life (or any number of other reasons used to justify the waging of wars,) the “beautiful soul” represents purity and innocence. Elshtain takes the “beautiful soul” articulation, from Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and uses the image as a metaphor for the historical role of women in matters of public sphere relations between states and matters of war/violence.

These archetypes embody certain powerful, received notions about the roles men and women have, and should, play in time of war. There are variations on the basic theme...but the images continue to operate both as deep background and as explicit justification in war and peace augmentation (Elshtain, 1982: 341).

Further, Elshtain goes on to note that women have never been uniformly or exclusively cast as society’s Beautiful Souls but rather they have “served as the collective projection of a pure, rarefied, self-sacrificing, otherworldly and pacific Other.” In this way femininity is constructed in opposition to masculinity, creating a false gender dichotomy between the sexes. Whereas the masculine ethos demands strength, force and aggressiveness from men, the feminine ethos demands that women be gentle, peaceful



and passive. These characteristics have existed seemingly since the dawn of time and have served as a powerful reinforcement of patriarchy and androcentrism in society.

As part of the construction of femininity, women have been “naturally” linked to peace movements and life-giving in opposition to the male fixation on war and the mass homicide that results from war. There is a great deal of theoretical material which examines the supposed link between feminism and pacifism. In the same way that many authors believe the military to be masculine domain, there are many writers who argue (in different ways) that women are more inclined to be inherently pacifistic or that there is an indisputable link between women and peace movements (Afshar, 1987; Cooper, Munich and Squire, 1989; Elshtain, 1987; Elshtain and Tobias, 1990; Gingras, 1995; Marshall, Ogden and Florence, 1987; Reardon, 1985.) The argument is essentially a biologically determinist one in which some unknown genetic and/or biological factors cause women to be inherently peaceful. Implicit in this argument are social constructivist notions of femininity, in which gender narratives strictly define what women are and should continue to be. The idea that women are inherently more drawn to peace is coterminous with the notion that women are nurturers and life-givers, whereas men are nurtured and are life-takers. Though substantial empirical evidence exists which documents women’s peace movements, there is no evidence that suggests with any authority that there is any biological or genetic reason for these occurrences. What has been documented, however, is the leading role that women have had in initiating peace movements and mobilizing popular support from both women and men for the cause of peace.

Holding pacifist views and supporting peace movements seems to reinforce existing and prevalent cultural stereotypes of women. Women are seen as the embodiment of the values of peace and it has been questioned how she who generates life could contribute to the precipitation of death (Russo, 51.) This argument is further

supported by the leading roles women have taken in peace protests. Though organized protest efforts of women did not begin until after the first wave of feminism (generally acknowledged to have begun in the West around the turn of the century), Twentieth century examples of women's peace movements included the formation of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Women's Democratic World Federation, the Women for Peace movement in Europe, the Voice of Women For Peace in Canada, the Women's Pentagon Action Committee in the United States and the Greenham Common and Seneca peace encampments (Scott, 25. Reardon, 61. As, 357). Not only was it argued that "mothers" have a special responsibility and power to oppose combat, but it was also generally viewed that women were simply "naturally" non-violent (Gilbert, 220). Other women (most prominently, Virginia Woolf) held devout pacifist views not on the basis that it was natural for women to have an intrinsic affinity to peace, but rather on the basis that war was simply wrong, immoral and an inappropriate way for educated people to settle their differences. She wrote:

Pacifism is enforced upon women because they are not allowed to offer their services to the army. The daughters of educated men should refuse to join with their brothers working for war or peace, but should instead found a Society of Outsiders based on the principle that as a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman, my country is the whole world.(Woolf, 109).

What is interesting to note about many of the women's peace movements which emerged in the twentieth century is the notion that women are inherently peaceful or that they have more of a stake in peace than men do, is implicit and rarely explored. In a rare explication of feminine values, Betty Reardon notes:

Feminine values which nurture life and acknowledge the need for transcending competition and violence, are needed to guide policy formation to avoid or abolish war. Increased presence of women socialized to hold such values

can have an ameliorating effect on the problems of war and violence (Reardon, 4).

Reardon goes on to articulate her argument that both sexism and the war system are exacerbated and perpetuated by patriarchy, and that ultimately it is patriarchy that will keep us from peace. Her argument, like the arguments of other organized movements for peace, is aimed more broadly on themes of social justice and equality, which are seen as part of the same problem, stemming from patriarchy in society. The twentieth century has been witness to a massive militarization, and the military culture that pervades our society, it is argued, is patriarchal and masculinized in both form and function.

When comparing the image of the warrior/hero from ancient Greece in the barracks community to the image of a modern-day soldier in the military, it is almost startling to note that very little has changed. The image or construction of the modern warrior/hero, the soldier, is still portrayed as an ultra-masculine role, which necessitates the soldier not only be a man, but also a very "masculine" man in all senses of the term.

Militarism manifests the excesses of those characteristics generally referred to as "machismo" a term that originally connoted the strength, bravery and responsibility necessary to fulfill male social functions. Militarist concepts and values are upheld by patriarchy, the structures and practices of which have been embodied in the state, forming the basic paradigm for the nation-state system. Thus there is in all aspects of that system an inevitable sexist bias that is especially acute in matters related to security...(Reardon, 15).

The sexist bias to which Reardon refers is a subtle and implicit pattern of behaviors which can be traced back not only to civic traditions of ancient Greece, but also to the social construction of gender in modern society. Even as small children, boys are conditioned to be aggressive and to use violence to obtain their desired means and girls are conditioned to fear violence and to be passive. Whereas men are taught to suppress their fear or to channel it into aggression, fear in women is channeled into submission.

Arguably, these elements of social conditioning have been used to maintain and reinforce patriarchal authoritarianism (Reardon, 38-9). From birth, both men and women are trained to perform different functions in society on the basis of their gender (As, 358). Men and women are also conditioned to have differing views on war which is exacerbated by the different relationships to military acts of destruction to territories and their different relationship to military forces (As, 355). The size of a country's military forces, as well as the funding a force will receive is largely determined by politics and the current government. Politics remains an essentially masculine enterprise in that the overwhelming majority of elected and appointed politicians are men. As a result of this masculine dominance, politics are conducted by men and conform to an implicit masculine standard. As in warfare, success in politics is "viewed as evidence of masculinity and requires its own degree of ferocity," (Reardon, 33).

In attempt to theorize her view of the connection between women and peace, author Sara Ruddick articulates a "feminist peace politics," stating its threefold aim as formenting suspicion of organized violence, disclosing hidden violences, and inventing the strategies and ideals of non-violence (Ruddick, 109). Like Reardon, Ruddick also discusses the complex and subtle interconnections between war and masculinity, examining both the masculine ethos as demonstrated within military hierarchies and how that masculinity translates into overt misogyny during war.

[The] conception of masculinity is expressed in a lower register in boot camp training rituals, soldiers' chants and songs, graffiti on bombs and guns, tough talk by generals, metaphors of strategists, and the gestures, bonding and "boyish" boasts of soldiers returning from battles and bombing raids. Criminally this masculinity is expressed in actual acts of rape, sexual assault and torture (Ruddick, 110).

In highlighting the atrocities of war that result from this hegemonic and toxic masculinity, the ugliness of war is revealed in human terms as opposed to militaristic terms like "collateral damage," which obscure and dehumanize violence in war. Ruddick argues that by drawing attention to the arrogant, homophobic and misogynist attitudes of soldiers, antimilitarist feminists expose one variant of masculinity (Ruddick, 111). Further, by stressing the socially constructed nature of this variant of masculinity, antimilitarist feminists facilitate the rejection of this particular gender norm (Ruddick, 112).

Perhaps the greatest strength of the literature examining the interconnectivity of women and peace/pacifism is that it centres itself on women's experiences and exists without trying to work within male frameworks (as opposed to trying to integrate itself into male discourse on peace research). Nonetheless, it can be critiqued on that same basis, for failing to present itself in any practical or useful way (for the purposes of precipitating the changes it advocates). Further, the corpus of work is based on certain values which are deemed to be distinctively male or female and yet arguably, there is no genetic or biological evidence to support the argument that men are intrinsically predisposed to violence. Though the male hormone testosterone has been linked to an increase in aggression, violence and combat are learned behaviors and, like most other characteristics of that nebulous entity known as gender, are socially constructed. The women and peace/pacifism literature provides an alternative school of thought, in that it aims towards demilitarized society, a notion which would seem quite radical (indeed, quite preposterous) to current heads of state and contemporary policy advisors. Nonetheless, in their various arguments pertaining to women's unique stake in peace, authors employ prevalent gender narratives in society almost uncritically. The notion, for example, that women are nurturing life-givers as opposed to men, who are seen as

inherently violent (or, at the very least, inherently aggressive) emerge out of gender stereotypes which feminism has largely sought to redress. In spite of the demonstrated links between women and peace, and the feminist articulations of the ways in which militarization has endangered all human life, war continues to ravage countless civilians and militaries exist in virtually all countries of the world. This being the case, it could be argued that if militarization is going to exist whether we like it or not, is it prudent for women to abstain from having a voice within military structures and prevent themselves from access to the opportunities (financial and professional) that militaries can provide?

Nonetheless, as demonstrated in gendered narratives during war, history and tradition plays a substantial role in the ways we look at the assignation of gender roles in war. War narrative is defined as the telling and re-telling of the events of the war, which not only keep the memory of the war alive, but also re-create the events in ways that may or may not be realistic. Modern war narrative most commonly occurs in films, where they also have the greatest impact on Western culture and society. Seemingly as a result of women's exclusion from the creation of war and war narrative, their roles have been predominantly passive or reactive in both (Huston, 271. Gubar:1987). The most common roles that women are assigned are passive ones: pretext for war (such as Helen of Troy), booty for the aggressors (as evidenced through the use of rape as a tactic in war, most prolifically and viciously witnessed in the war between the Croatians and Serbians in the former Yugoslavia)<sup>5</sup>, recompense for the allies, a "valuable" that needs to be defended (seen in war propaganda featuring frightened women clutching their babies)<sup>6</sup>, a "value" in itself, incarnating peace and virtue, a warrior's rest (as wife), a warriors' recreation (as prostitute or campfollower), exported entertainment for homesick troops<sup>7</sup> and finally, as

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 2

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 3

casualties (Huston, 274). The reactive roles assigned to women include: sympathetic nurses (Florence Nightingale), seductive spies (Mata Hari), supportive cheerleaders (the yellow ribbon phenomenon during the Persian Gulf War), mothers (producing sons as eventual cannon fodder), wistful wives (keeping the homefires burning, until the hero returns), treacherous tramps (sleeping with the enemy)<sup>8</sup> and cooperative citizens who make everyday sacrifices for the war, workers in munitions factories or support the war in other productive ways (Huston, 276). Though some of these narratives seem perhaps exaggerated or rare it is because these roles are narrative (as opposed to fact) and may have been largely exaggerated through the process of telling and retelling the narrative. All of the above listed roles, however, can be illustrated by any number of examples documented by historians and glorified by authors, artists and filmmakers.

The image of "Rosie the Riveter," for example, illustrates the reactive role of the munitions worker doing her part on the homefront but also serves to illustrate the way Rosie was "sold" as being capable of doing a man's work while still maintaining her femininity. Female workers doing riveting or other non-traditionally feminine jobs wore uniforms like men, but unlike men were still expected to look pretty, and were always portrayed in propaganda in full make-up, with styled hair and manicured nails. Propaganda films shown both in Britain and North America portrayed the work as being not unlike domestic labour. Operating a metal press was portrayed as similar to cutting out cookies and filing rough metal edges of newly assembled airplane wings, was likened to filing a woman's nails. This is significant in the way that women were encouraged to perform traditionally male jobs, but were expected to maintain their femininity as well. Thus, the business of war could be executed with gender narratives and hierarchies firmly in place. The naturalized gendered structure of home and work returned to order after the

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix 4

war when most women left their jobs willingly to resume their occupations as wives and mothers. Women who wanted to keep their jobs were either laid off or fired outright in order to open up jobs for returning hero/warriors (Higgonet:1987).

The gender narratives listed above create a false dichotomy between the roles that men and women assume during war. This dichotomy reinforces masculine dominance over women (patriarchy) and places them in a position of disempowerment and passivity or, at best, in a reactive role. Arguably, however, the "gendered order" of war creates a dichotomy in which there are only two roles, that of Protector and Protected. In this dichotomy all men are past, present or future Protectors, whereas women are the Protected. Though the state uses force (which it deems to be legitimate) and offers protection through its use, only men are allowed to use that force (Stiehm, 367). Through the state, men are taught to be combatants and follow state orders on when, where and how and against whom they are to exercise violence. Many countries are run by military regimes and even in countries that are run by civilian governments, the military often represents the largest budgetary item (Stiehm, 373). This being the case, it is significantly patriarchal to exclude half the population from the right to exercise government sanctioned violence and places them in an inferior position (at least in terms of equal rights) to the other half of the population. Women, however, are placed in this position by being the designated non-combatants in modern nation states (Elshtain, 181). As non-combatants, women are the Protected, forced to rely on men for protection from attack (ironically, attack by other men). The category of the protected includes the young and the old from both genders, the highly valued "superprotectors" (like the head of state and his cabinet), the despised (homosexuals), the mistrusted (communists in the United States) and women, who seem to be highly valued, despised and mistrusted (Stiehm, 369). Though both men and women have a role to fill in this dichotomy,



...the relationship between the Protector and Protected is always asymmetric. One has access to force, one does not. One has dependents, one is dependent...It is men who are the protectors and it is men who are the threat. It is also men who make the rules about the exercise of legitimate force, and it is they who exact support, honor and reward from those they protect, (Stiehm, 374).

In light of these considerations, it would seem that not only does the state sanction legitimate uses of force, but also reinforces patriarchy and male dominance over women in doing so. This places women in a position of disempowerment and by some standards, in an inferior position to men.

Discourse surrounding the issue of women and militarism began to emerge around the same time, not coincidentally, as the second wave of feminism in the early 1960s. In the first wave of feminism (in the first two decades of the twentieth century) women acknowledged their subservient position to men and felt that universal suffrage would make them equal citizens. But by the 1960s, a period of tremendous social and political change, women began to see that simply having the vote was not enough to make them equal citizens. The second wave of feminism marked an era in which women began to fight for equality in all areas of life. Natural and biological reasons for women's exclusion in numerous areas (business, the sciences, sports) were contested and seemed to be the result of social constructions, rather than innate abilities. Further, the very notion of femininity itself was deconstructed and viewed as a means of women's oppression. Women's struggle for equality extended to all areas, and eventually attention turned to the military as one of the last bastions of privileged and elite male experience. The literature in the area remained largely theoretical in that time as there were few women in the military, and even fewer fighting for their right to take part in active combat. There was also a resurgence of peace movements (particularly in the United States and Canada) in the 1960s, largely in opposition to the Vietnam war. In the decades that followed the

Vietnam war, however, the corpus of feminist theory was greatly advanced and more women were entering the military not as military wives, but as enlisted soldiers. It did not take long for women to realize that the military was not exactly an equal opportunity employer. As more women suffered discrimination in the military, more literature emerged on inequality within the military. In proposing a possible solution to the inequities that pervade the military and the war system itself it has been argued:

If war is simply politics by other means, and politics has been constructed out of and constituted by masculine fears of and hostility towards the female...then two options are open to those who wish to see women as equal participants in the political community: either the nature of the political community must change, or some women must become warriors (Harstock, 285).

Arguably, the nature of the "political community" is a nebulous entity that cannot easily be changed. In that the current system of militarization in most industrialized countries is still guided by the hero/warrior narratives of ancient Greece, and views women's "natural" place in those passive and reactive roles as outlined above. If that is the case, then it would seem necessary for some women to become warriors if anything is to change. Nonetheless, with a combat exclusion in place in the militaries of most industrialized countries (Canada and the Scandinavian countries being the notable exceptions), women have about as much substantive equality within the military as they do outside of it. Few women, however, join the military for its equalizing aspect, but rather, for the opportunities it provides, especially for disadvantaged groups in society.

For many people (men and women) joining the military provides them with a job, a place to live, education and if they should want it, a secure lifelong career. Women's entry into the military has furthered the perception of the military as a career not unlike any other, but with equal pay for men and women and the possibility of advancement, the job is made more attractive (Addis, 24). This has been suggested as one of the reasons

that there has been an increase in the number of women joining the forces. Proponents of women in the military argue that the military offers unparalleled opportunities for women in terms of job training and advancement (Addis, Enloe), whereas critics argue that these are poor reasons for joining the military and that women are "using" the system to the detriment of the force (Hooker, Mitchell).

If a country supports the principle of fundamental equality for women (as the laws of most, if not all countries in the West indicate) then seemingly that alone would be enough of a reason to allow women full and equal access to the benefits and costs involved with joining the armed forces. That is not to say that countries should force women into mandatory service, but the small percentage of women interested in making military service a career should be allowed to pursue their goals with equal opportunity under the law. Equality, above all else should be the mandate for ameliorating gender disparity within the armed forces. Critics, however, argue that equality and the "feminist agenda," has obscured the real problems involved with women in the military. The most prolific critic on this issue is Brian Mitchell, author of [Weak Link: The Feminization of the American Military](#). The arguments made by Mitchell provide a litany of reasons that he feels conclusively illustrate that women's involvement in the American Military has been to its detriment.

Mitchell defines women's role in society as "passive and dependent," and it is clear from his arguments, that this is the way he intends it to stay. Demonstrating a vehemently sexist and misogynist attitude towards women and an ignorance in matters of human biology and social conditioning, Mitchell goes on to articulate why he feels that women's involvement in the military is a travesty and why this grievous error must be immediately corrected. He begins with the statement that women make poor soldiers and possess only eighty percent the overall strength of men (Mitchell, 163). Further, he states

that women are a burden to the force because they suffer from more illnesses and require more medical attention due to P.M.S. (Pre-Menstrual Syndrome), and pregnancy (Mitchell, 164). Pregnancy, Mitchell argues, is also the leading cause of women's attrition rates which he is careful to point out are much higher than the attrition rate of men.

Since the introduction of women into the forces, incidents of sexual harassment, assault and rape have increased, as have what Mitchell deems to be "problems" of pregnancy, single parents and dual service couples. He notes:

The problems of pregnancy, single parents, and dual service couples were made possible largely by the erosion of the age-old ban on fraternization between the ranks. To be sure, the American military has been moving toward greater egalitarianism for some time, but nothing has done more to cheapen rank and diminish respect for authority than cute little female lieutenants and privates (Mitchell, 176).

Not only does Mitchell, insult female servicewomen with his generalized characterization of them as "cute," and "little," but he seems to blame the women for problems that can only be caused by both men and women. In a previous variation on the same theme of fraternization, Mitchell also notes:

Four years after the marriage of the All-Volunteer Force to the Equal Rights Amendment, the honeymoon was over and the debilitating effects of integration had begun to show. Social and sexual relationships between male and female service members defied bans on fraternization between the ranks. Marriages between service members were on the rise. Incidents of sexual assault soared. For the first time ever, commanders and supervisors throughout the services were confronting problems with sexual harassment, dating, pregnancy, single parenthood, in-service couples, and joint domicile. Most had never served with women and were just beginning to wonder about the vastly different art of managing women. Their knowledge and experience as leaders of men were of little use (Mitchell, 93).

Instead of viewing these "debilitating effects of integration" as a clear failure in leadership of the American armed forces, Mitchell takes a "blame the victim" approach in his assessment of the facts. His criticisms of women's involvement in the military might have been more lucid, had Mitchell chosen to see beyond his blinding hatred of feminism and his longing to return to the "good old days" when militaries were masculine domains. Instead he concentrates his efforts on how things were better when women were not an integral part of the armed forces, and has all the success in proving his argument that one might have in trying to unscramble an egg.

Another problem with Mitchell's criticisms is that he fails to fully explain the concepts and variables he analyses. He argues that women lack the killer instinct, yet how he defines and measures "killer instinct," is never fully stated or explored. Further to this point, he claims that women inhibit male bonding and possess natural "charm" which is intoxicating to men, and distracts them from their duties (Mitchell, 191). Mitchell claims that all women possess this charm to some extent, and that all men are affected by this charm to some extent. This claim is unsubstantiated, unexplained, undefined and without accompanying supporting evidence. In a similarly vague point, Mitchell argues that women do not feel the same attraction and attachment to military service that men feel and are "...less aware of world affairs, [and] less interested in military history," (Mitchell, 7). Mitchell makes this assertion without reference to other sources or any supporting evidence, as if the mere statement was fact in itself. Many scholars (feminist and otherwise) have challenged the stereotypes and generalizations that Mitchell so freely quotes as uncontested and depoliticized fact<sup>9</sup>. Perhaps Mitchell's criticisms would have seemed less suspicious had he offered any concrete evidence for his opinions on women

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<sup>9</sup> Judith Butler, Cynthia Enloe, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Michel Foucault, Sandra Harding, and Spike Peterson (to name a few) are all authors who have contested the gender stereotypes that Mitchell freely quotes as uncontested fact. For an interesting discussion of the work of many authors who have challenged dichotomous (traditional) modes of thinking surrounding gender see Di Leonardo and Lancaster:1996.

in the military. As presented however, Mitchell's arguments though passionately felt, can be dismissed as the angry ramblings of a poorly grounded, misogynistic writer, with little regard for respected research and methodological techniques.

Other writers who have argued against women's roles in the military and in combat, include Phyllis Schlafly, James G. Bruen Jr., Richard D. Hooker Jr., Jean Yarbrough, Elaine Donnelly, and Mary E. Hunt. These authors have presented a range of arguments from the notion that neither men nor women should engage in combat as a solution to conflict, to the notion that the military is a masculine enterprise which women only hinder. Schlafly, an ultra-conservative American activist and proponent of "traditional family values," and "traditional roles for men and women," argues that pregnancy and motherhood are not compatible with military service (Schlafly, 101). Further, she notes that until the military "comes to grips," with the pregnancy and motherhood questions, it is "ridiculous" even to discuss the issue of women in combat. For Schlafly, it seems to be a more important issue to remind readers of women's family obligations, which to her mind, should always come first. Further, she argues that women's entrance into institutions like Virginia Military Institute has caused the school to lower its standard and implement a quota system that favours women (Schlafly, 102). Schlafly also states her belief that the controversy in the United States over the proposal to repeal to combat exclusion law, is the result of a radical feminist plot to transform traditional society into a gender neutral society. She even goes as far as to outline the three step plan scenario she claims the radical feminists have devised in order to achieve their aims (Schlafly, 104). Her claims, however, are unsubstantiated by any "radical feminist" authors and Schlafly gives no indication where she attained the information on this three step plan.

Authors James Bruen and Richard Hooker argue not for the exclusion of women in the military altogether, but rather for mere exclusion from combat. Citing examples of women's past "failures" [sic] in battle, Bruen and Hooker develop their respective arguments around the notion that equality for women does not justify placing them in combat, and that they should be concentrating on "more important" tasks such as bearing and raising children. Though their arguments are explicitly focused on why the authors feel that combat is inappropriate for women, their arguments imply that women belong at home raising children, demonstrating their bias against women in the military. As with the work of Mitchell and Schlafly, there is a distinct anti-feminist element to the work of Bruen and Hooker. Author Mary Hunt claims to have support for the feminist goal of equality in all areas of society, but feels women are simply not qualified enough to justify their inclusion on the basis of equal access (Hunt, 97). Many of the arguments of the authors listed above rely on the claim that women are simply not as strong, aggressive and "naturally" inclined towards military service as are men, and also argue, to varying degrees, that women's place in society has always been and should continue to be the bearing and raising of children.

Further, in the wake of the Tailhook and Aberdeen Proving Grounds scandals (which will be more fully discussed in the next chapter), non-academic critics from all walks of life have taken to criticising and blaming women for the problems in the military which have surfaced. Nowhere is this more evident than on the internet, where the backlash against women in the military is perhaps most evident and most prolific. Servicemen<sup>10</sup> and civilian military enthusiasts have written in many different internet forums of what they perceive to be the detrimental presence of women in the Armed

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<sup>10</sup> The term "servicemen," is used intentionally here, to denote male members of the American military who have condemned women's involvement in the military. In my substantial internet research on this topic I did not find any contributions from servicewomen who condemned women's involvement in the military, or blamed female service personnel for the events at Tailhook '91 or the Aberdeen Proving Grounds.

forces. The arguments take many different forms, but usually begin by disputing positive portrayals of women's experiences, and then blaming feminism for compromising military readiness (Kammer:1994, Maginnis: 1995, Sampley:1996, Silverberg:1996).<sup>11</sup>

Generally, the arguments against women in the military are less substantiated and grounded in evidence than the arguments in favour of women's involvement in the military. Opponents' arguments seem to derive from a seeming desire to preserve the status quo, where as proponents seem to provide logical, coherent and comprehensive arguments for their stances. Most of the arguments, discussions and theory focus either on the connections between peace and femininity (and women's roles in peace movements) or about how women's primary role in society should be as wives and mothers, which would preclude an equal role (to that of men) in military service. In spite of the sheer quantity of this material, several scholars have chosen to examine the ontological structure of the military as masculine, and have come to the realization, that this structure will not change without the deconstruction of the warrior/hero image in the modern military and the inclusion of women (as more than simply nurses or secretaries) in the military. Convincing arguments for women in the military have shown that women have been playing combat roles in the military since the American Revolution and had even held command positions of militaries throughout history.<sup>12</sup> Though accounts of women in combat, or other frontline positions, have been the historical exception to the rule, they illustrate that women are not only capable of military service, but can be an asset to the force.

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<sup>11</sup> It is significant to note that the vast majority of these internet "posts" take place on or through the websites of professional soldier's organizations (the Tailhook Association and the U.S. Veterans Association, for example) or on the websites of "New Right" and neoconservative organizations (such as the Family Research Council).

<sup>12</sup> For detailed historical accounts of these women see Antonia Fraser's The Warrior Queens (1989) and John P. Dever and Maria Dever's Women and The Military:Over 100 Notable Contributors . Historic to Contemporary (1995).



In the next chapter we will examine the historical and modern roles that women play (and have played) in the military. All over the world there are women in militaries and women in varying stages of combat. What these examples will attempt to illustrate is that in spite of the theoretical arguments against women in the military, women have shown themselves to be capable soldiers. Further, it will be argued that society's focus on whether or not women should be there, has obfuscated the fact that they are there. By not addressing the issue of gender relations in the military, problems of sexual harassment, assault and rape have proliferated.

**Chapter Three:**  
**The Reality of Women in War and Women in the**  
**Military**

During the American invasion of Panama December of 1989, an incident occurred which challenged much traditional opposition to women in combat roles. Army Captain Linda Bray who was the commanding officer of the 988th Military Police Company led her platoon into a three-hour firefight in order to gain control of a kennel for attack dogs, which resulted in the death of three Panamanian soldiers (Enloe:1994, 98). The incident was widely publicized and Bray received praise for doing "an outstanding job," in "an important military operation," (Bruen, 82). The incident, however, received quite a different spin from opponents to women's combat roles in the military. Critics argued that the operation was minor and that Bray was not even present during the fighting. These comments contradicted military records, and were related more to the overwhelming backlash faced by women soldiers in the media and even within the Army itself. As a result of a similar variety of backlash, women's involvement in armed struggles have largely remained untold, and are rarely reflected in mainstream historical analysis. In spite of this exclusion, women scholars, academics and historians have uncovered evidence tracing women's involvement in combat to the American Revolution. Most of the earliest available data focuses on American women's involvement, but emerging data reflects a female combat presence in countries all over the world. This chapter will examine accounts of women's military service in the American Revolution, World Wars one and two, and the Persian Gulf War. Further, it will be argued that the focus on the theoretical debate surrounding women in the military has obfuscated the real issues affecting the hundreds of thousands of enlisted women. These issues include sexual harassment, physical assault and rape and have prevented women from enjoying full and equal participation in the military.

In ancient mythology, the earliest tales of women warriors involve the society of Amazons. The Amazons were thought to be a group of savage and barbaric women who

were nomadic and traveled around what is now Eastern Europe. Legend has it that the Amazons were so committed to their roles as warriors that they cut off their right breasts, to minimize interference with the use of their bows (Enloe, 117). Though tales of Amazons have emerged in twelfth, sixteenth and eighteenth centuries and are often dismissed by critics as being entirely fictional, archeologists have discovered evidence of armed women in European excavations of ancient ruins that are consistent with the descriptions of Amazons (Rustad,7). Though specific details of whether or not they cut off their breasts or allowed men into their camps remains unclear the prevailing notion is that Amazons did indeed exist. A second ancient/mythical example of women warriors is found in Norse mythology about an elite female auxiliary fighting force known as the Valkyries. In an interestingly gendered twist, it was thought that the Valkyries remained immortal and invulnerable in the midst of combat as long as they obeyed the orders of Odin and remained virgins. It was also thought that the Valkyries had goddess powers and when they bestowed a kiss on a dead male warrior, he ascended immediately into heaven (Rustad, 8). Unlike the Amazons, however, the Valkyries (as well as Pallas Athena) were strictly mythical and were goddess images in classical literature.

Within the substantial body of literature on women in the military, several authors have examined ways in which women have participated in war and combat and ways in which women continue to participate in the military. Until the Persian Gulf War, cases of women's participation in active combat were strictly viewed as anomalies and were usually not in the context of a state sanctioned conflict. However, evidence exists which would indicate that women have had a role in actual combat long before the Gulf War. Historian Linda De Pauw estimates that over 20,000 women served in the American War for Independence from 1775-1783. Unlike camp followers these "women of the army" were subject to the rules and regulations of the army and were also subject to the army's

disciplinary code (De Pauw, 1980). These women included the wives of high ranking officials, but largely were employed in support units to the medical corps and artillery units. Though they cooked, cleaned and did washing and mending, they did so only for themselves and were not required to do so for other men. If they chose to perform such tasks it was usually on a contract basis, and were paid extra (out of the soldiers' own pockets) for services rendered (De Pauw, 213).

A second group of women in the army, was a group of women who served as combatants. Due to the generally unreliable nature of the American revolutionary war data that De Pauw points out, it remains unclear as to the exact number of women that fought. Further, many women who did enlist, did so under a male pseudonym, thus making it impossible to accurately account for the number of women who fought. Records from that period indicate that some women soldiers, although they dressed in men's uniforms, made no attempts to conceal their gender and served with an army that was in desperate need of "manpower" [sic]. Other women, who did attempt to conceal their gender, were dishonorably discharged from the army once their deception had been discovered (De Pauw, 218). No explanations were found as to the army's seemingly contradictory policy in allowing some women to fight while discharging others. Though it was against regulations to recruit women into the male branches of the army, the rest of the army's policy on women's services remains unclear.

De Pauw also notes women's participation in other combat situations, particularly in militia units in certain battles of the American revolution, as well as frontier combat against Native Americans. Citing anecdotal accounts of women who have been recorded as performing heroic acts in battle, De Pauw illustrates numerous different ways in which women have historically participated in combat, in decidedly unsterotypically "feminine" ways. It is important to keep in mind, however, that these are American

examples of women who have taken part in armed conflicts before the twentieth century. when it was seen as particularly improper for women to do so.

Women in the former Soviet Union had a substantial role to play in World War II. It has been argued that the severe labour shortage was the precipitating factor which led to the participation of over one million Russian women who served with the Red Army and assumed front line duties (Saywell, 150). Though women all over the western world mobilized for the war in ways they had never done before (most prominently assuming wartime jobs in munitions factories, performing traditional male jobs such as welding and operating heavy machinery,) no other group of women made such an active contribution to their country's defence through military service (Erickson:1990, Myles:1981, Saywell:1985, Verges:1991). By 1940, women comprised 41 percent of the industrial workforce and 52 percent of the total workforce on the homefront as well as virtually assuming all responsibility for medical services (Erickson, 51). On the front lines, women comprised 41 percent of all doctors, 43 percent of all field surgeons, 43 percent of all medical assistants and 100 percent of all nurses. The role of frontline nurse was greater than the role of nurses in peace time and also much more dangerous due to the proximity to the carnage of hand-to-hand combat. As a result of this proximity to danger and enemy lines the number of deaths of female medics serving in the rifle battalions were only second to the fighting troops themselves (Erickson, 62).

One of the most important contributions made by Russian women was in the air force, where three all-female fighter squadrons were formed and carried out some of the most dangerous and successful sorties against the Germans. The female battalions were formed and trained by Marina Raskova, an instructor with the Central Flying Club of Osoaviakhim and fighter pilot in World Wars I and II, who was made a Hero of the Soviet Union (the highest military honor in the Soviet Union) for her record breaking

long-distance flight across the Soviet Union (Saywell, 150). In 1941, the paucity of the Soviet air force, prompted Marina to solicit young girls with a background in aviation to train as fighter pilots. The response was overwhelming and led to the formation of the three women's battalions: the 586th Fighter Regiment (flying Yak 1s), the 587th Bomber Regiment (flying PE-2s) and the 588th Night Bomber Regiment (flying PO-2s) (Myles, 277).

The Night Bomber regiment alone flew over 24,000 sorties and developed a reputation for their efficacy and even earned the nickname "Night Witches," from the opposing German forces (Saywell, 156). In 1944, the Russians finally defeated German troops in Byelorussia, ending the lengthy German occupation there. This victory was largely due to the women's Night Bomber and Fighter regiments, and serves as one of many examples in which Soviet women in their capacity as combatants made an active and direct contribution to the war effort (Saywell, 154). By the end of World War II, over 30 female fighter pilots had attained the coveted "Hero of the Soviet Union" medal, many of whom were awarded the medal posthumously after being killed in battle.

The case of Soviet women in combat is a rare example of women taking part in active combat in a state sanctioned capacity in a state sanctioned conflict. As already discussed, women are usually relegated to either passive or reactive roles in war such as nurse or munitions factory worker. Nonetheless, it would seem that women have seen greater involvement in active combat and defense of their homelands, when participating in a non-state sanctioned war or participating in a state sanctioned war, but in a non-state sanctioned capacity. Perhaps the best example of this can be seen in cases of guerrilla warfare in Latin America, particularly in Nicaragua.

Stemming from the need to involve as many people as possible in the continuing struggle against the Contras, the Sandinista Popular Army (EPS) was comprised of 30%

female combatants (Deighton et al., 50). Encouraged by the government to become involved, women were included in all aspects of the revolution and filled the ranks of guerrilla/guerrillera troops in the mountains of Nicaragua and also held key leadership positions in the FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front). Women's roles in the Army, however, did not begin as anything more than occasional support staff and when the conflict against the Contras initially began, women had no role in combat (Collinson, 160). As the level of warfare intensified and it became clear that more help was needed, women were gradually encouraged to sign up with the militia for training. Women who wanted to assume a greater role in the Army were often dissuaded by their husbands or families who felt that joining the Army was an inappropriate role for women. Nicaraguan gender relations have long been dominated by machismo and its traditional family structure is both patriarchal and brittle (Lancaster, 16). Further, the prevailing machismo attitudes reinforced to women that their foremost responsibilities were as wives and mothers and that active service in the Army would be to the detriment of a woman's domestic duties (Collinson, 161). It was only with the escalation of violence and an education campaign carried out by the Nicaraguan Women's Association (AMNLAE) that men's attitudes towards traditional conceptions of gender roles gradually softened. The majority of women involved in the struggle against the Contras contributed through service in the Militias. The Militias provided basic military training, usually once a week. This involved marching, fitness exercises and the handling of weapons (Deighton et al., 58). Women's Reserve Battalions were also formed, but only after a lengthy battle between the Army and the AMNLAE. The Army originally requested support from the AMNLAE, asking for a group of women to be sent to the front not as soldiers but to cook for the troops. Mobilizing popular support for their position and supporting their argument with ample evidence of women's competence in combat, the AMNLAE



succeeded in getting the government to change their policy and eventually organized specific Reservist training for women (Deighton et al., 57). In the main branch of the Army during the Sandinista government (1979-1990), the numbers of women involved fluctuated according to need, but had been as high as 25%. By 1982, women comprised six percent of all officers, including three women with the highest rank in the army, Guerrilla Commander (Deighton et al., 54). This feat is unparalleled in any other military force to date.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps the most recent example of women's contributions to combat can be seen in the American deployment of over 40,000 women in the Persian Gulf war of 1990/1991. With the minor exception of the American invasion of Panama in 1989, the Persian Gulf War marked the first time a Western military force has employed a large scale deployment of women in more than auxiliary roles (such as nurses, cooks or secretaries). Female American soldiers played an integral and important role in the war, carrying out their duties as airplane and helicopter pilots, mechanics, truck drivers and heavy machinery operators. They loaded laser-guided bombs on F-117 Stealths and launched and directed Patriot missiles (Holm, 445). None of the above mentioned duties and occupations can be considered traditionally female activities, and illustrated that women could make an active contribution to a country's war effort, despite protestations by critics that they are simply not physically able or mentally suited to this line of work. In assessment of women's performance in the war, American Defense Secretary Dick Cheney was quoted as saying "Women have made a major contribution to this war, we could not have won without them," and American Coalition commander General Norman

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<sup>13</sup> In the literature on women in Nicaragua, women's important non-military roles in the revolution are stressed more than their contributions to the military and combat, despite women's formidable contributions in this area. Many of the women who have shared their experiences with researchers are reluctant to discuss their combat involvement, preferring instead to focus on the contributions of women through community organizing and their work in production. For detailed accounts of these vast and varied contributions see Angel and Macintosh:1987, Espinoza:1983, Heyck:1990, Randall:1981, Randal:1992, Randall:1994, Ridd and Calloway:1987 and Saint-Germaine:1993.

Schwarzkopf said that American Military women had performed "Magnificently," (Holm, 470). By all accounts, American military women had proven themselves to be competent soldiers. Though the media focused on the new "gender factor," that had emerged with so many women involved, the women themselves as well as the commanders found there to be too much focus on the women soldiers as women and not enough on women as soldiers. When asked by a CNN reporter how she felt as a woman doing a job normally done by men in combat, Major Marie T. Rossi replied "I think if you talk to the women...in the military we see ourselves as soldiers...we don't really see it as man versus woman...What I am doing is no greater or less than the man who is flying next to me or in back of me," (Holm, 438). Rossi was killed in the line of duty just a few days after the interview and was one of only two women killed.

Women's performance in the Persian Gulf War proved that any concerns expressed about women being the "weak link" in the American military were unfounded and sparked debate in the United States about the previously existing combat exclusion for women. The Department of Defense acknowledged that one of the few problems in the war was confusion and "instances of misunderstanding," regarding applications of the combat exclusion law (Holm, 471). In principle, the combat exclusion law was designed to limit women's exposure to direct combat, but because of women's active role, lines became blurred between what was considered direct and what was considered to be indirect combat (Enloe:1994, 101). Certainly women flying helicopters through combat zones were very much at risk for attack but the distinction between defensive fire and offensive fire is minute. Numerous examples of women who inadvertently found themselves in combat yet maintained their competence as soldiers led to challenges to the combat exclusion laws and policies. Many authors, both civilian and military, have argued that womens' performance in combat in the Vietnam war, the invasion of Panama

and the Persian Gulf War should have irrevocably proven their effectiveness in combat (Dever and Dever, 13)<sup>14</sup>. As of this point, however, the combat exclusion law for American women soldiers has yet to be repealed.

In light of the examples of women in combat listed above, it seems absurd that writers, activists, scholars and journalists should still be focused on the debate over whether women belong in the military and what, if any, their combat role should be. Nonetheless, these arguments persist in the pages of mainstream American magazines like *Time*, as well as in scholarly journals, academic books and more recently have proliferated on the internet. The absurdity of these debates is further exacerbated by the sheer numeric growth in the number of women soldiers all over the Western world. Though women comprise a relatively small percentage of all militaries, their total numbers range in the hundreds of thousands. It is also significant to note that the numbers of women who have pursued a career in the military has risen dramatically in the latter half of the twentieth century. In a quantitative study on the economic consequences of being a female soldier, Elisabetta Addis came up with some interesting statistics on female soldiers.

Out of 146 countries polled, the armed forces of only 16 countries allowed women to serve, with even fewer allowing women in combat (Addis, 7)<sup>15</sup>. The total number of soldiers combined from the polled countries is 25,381,960 and of that number 456,840 of those soldiers are women. Of those women soldiers, 60 per cent are employed by NATO forces (Addis, 10). The largest concentration of female soldiers is in the armed forces of the United States, with 216,000. The second highest concentration is in the armed forces of China, with 136,000 female soldiers. The remaining fourteen countries have

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<sup>14</sup> See also, Addis:1994, Barkalow:1990, DePauw:1990, Enloe:1994, Holm:1992, Stiehm:1989.

<sup>15</sup> The countries that allow women to serve are Australia, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, China, Greek Cyprus, Denmark, France, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States.

considerably fewer female soldiers ranging from the third highest concentration 27,000 (Sweden) and 90 (Ireland). Canada ranks fifth, with 7,700 female soldiers. These numbers may seem insignificant in that women constitute less than two per cent of the total number of soldiers. Nonetheless, they illustrate that for almost half a million women, the notion of women in the military is a reality, making the abstract ideological debate of whether women belong in the military practically irrelevant.

Mere inclusion, however, cannot be equated with equality. For many of the women soldiers around the world systemic inequality, exclusionary policies and even derision and harassment are a daily occurrence. In a study by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), entitled "Women in NATO," it was found that all member countries had passed legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender, and with the exception of Italy the legislation applied within the armed forces (Addis, 14). Further, thirteen of the fifteen countries had stated armed force initiatives to expand the role of women in the military (Addis, 14). In most cases, there was basic training for both male and female officers and only in Spain was basic training different for male and female recruits (Addis, 15). Despite this element of formal equality within the military, substantive inequality still persists. The case of Shannon Faulkner and the Citadel illustrates the "boys club" character and gender exclusive nature of military institutions.

The patriarchal and often misogynist structure of the military and the gendered hierarchy which exists, applies to the Canadian, American and most Western European armies and is arguably an ontological feature of any modern military structure. Through the rise in feminist thought, however, traditional interpretations of what is "natural," may be challenged and in fact, has been challenged by feminist scholars and women themselves who have fought vehemently for acceptance within the patriarchal structure of the military. When women began to demand a more active role in the military as a result

of the second wave of feminism in the 1970s, the military was forced to re-examine the role of women that had traditionally held. Though women were granted formal equality within the armed forces, they were by no means accepted by their male counterparts. The substantive gender inequality that still exists within the military has sparked debate about the role of women in the military as well as the nature of militarism itself. Cynthia Enloe argues that militaries have relied upon the service of women in the armed forces but only in a traditionally gendered capacity. In this way, armies rely on women to 'act like women', which entails caring, nurturing, cleaning wounds and mending broken bones and spirits of male soldiers (Enloe:1983, 212). She argues that the female presence makes the military or even the battlefield tolerable for men, but only if women are there in a servile, subordinate and marginalized capacity (Enloe:1983, 214). As soldiers, however, women "essentially threaten the discipline and male-to-male bonding that are assumed to be critical guarantors of rapid mobilization (Enloe:1983, 216)." This, in part, has been a critical argument against the increased role of women as soldiers and also perhaps the central argument against women in combat.

In her autobiography, Captain Carol Barkalow articulates the many problems she faced in her military career on her way to becoming commander of a transportation unit of the American Army (Barkalow:1990). She discusses the problems of discrimination that women soldiers face, but reaches the final conclusion that with hard work women can succeed. Barkalow's account offers valuable insight into a woman's experience in the armed forces but is, nonetheless, one of the few accounts from a woman who has reached a command position. There are many other accounts of women who suffered discrimination, harassment and even physical and sexual assault at the hand of their male counterparts, and who eventually left the armed forces as a direct result of these abuses. Further, some women who remain in the armed forces but have suffered discrimination

and abuse, are so afraid of telling about their experiences they do so anonymously, for fear of repercussions by their officers or peers (Stiehm:1989).

One very particular variety of discrimination and abuse is suffered by those women who are or who are suspected to be lesbian. Beginning as early as women have been enlisted members of the armed forces, persecution of lesbians and lesbian "witch hunts," have been a central concern for many women soldiers. It is estimated that between 20 and 35 percent of women in the armed forces are homosexual, a substantially higher proportion than the estimated 10 to 12 percent in the civilian world (Shilts, 415). With the exception of the Netherlands which has a policy of full inclusion for all male and female homosexual soldiers, most Western militaries have either written and official or unwritten and unofficial policies prohibiting homosexuality and homosexual behaviour in the military. American policy on this issue has been particularly strict and its enforcement has been particularly vigorous. Department of Defense records indicate that the Pentagon spends approximately forty million dollars each year expelling 1500 gays and lesbians from the armed forces (Browning:1993).

Enforcement of anti-gay and lesbian policies reached a peak in the mid-1980s with the railroading and entrapment tactics employed by the Office of Special Investigations. Investigators would attempt to infiltrate particular organizations in which they felt that they would be able to discover lesbians and then coerce them into giving up the names of other lesbians. Sports teams were heavily targeted under the false assumption that women who played sports were more likely to be lesbian or at the very least would be able to identify lesbians on the team for the purposes of compiling "the list." Knowledge that "the list," was being compiled often led to fear and mistrust among women soldiers who were afraid that even being friends with other women could be

construed by the Office of Special Investigations as lesbian activity (Barkalow:1990, Shilts:1993).

The case of Air Force Lieutenant Joann Newak illustrates the degree to which lesbians were targeted and consequently persecuted for their sexual orientation. Newak's name was first given to the Office of Special Investigations by a security policeman by the name of Donna Ryan, who had been arrested for drunk driving. In attempt to redeem herself, Ryan offered the names of women she met who she suspected were lesbian. Lieutenant Joanne Newak then became the object of intense scrutinization as a result of her officer status. The Office of Special Investigations then sent Ryan out to gather more evidence on Newak by using her previous acquaintanceship. When Newak invited Ryan to a party at Newak's house, Ryan used the opportunity to gather evidence of Newak's lesbianism. Ryan learned that Newak was in a relationship with a senior airman named Lynne Peelman. Also during the party Ryan took a pill from Newak's dresser which Newak said was an amphetamine but was later proved to be an over-the-counter diet pill. Finally, Ryan reported that she had witnessed marijuana being smoked at the party and that she had seen Joanne pass the joint. The Air Force used this information to try to get Newak to resign, telling her that at the very least she would receive a bad-conduct discharge but at the very most they would press charges. Newak argued that her civil rights had been violated and refused to resign. She was later tried and convicted in an Air Force court martial of a total of eleven felonies including possession and transfer of a narcotic (for passing the joint), three counts of sodomy (with Lynne Peelman, her girlfriend who had testified against her), and conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. Newak was sentenced to seven years of hard labour in a military prison and her subsequent appeal on the basis that her right to counsel had been violated and that no

civilian would be tried, let alone convicted, of Newak's "crimes" was denied (Shilts, 393-420).

In describing her experiences at West Point military academy Captain Carol Barkalow states that women at West Point are under far greater suspicion for homosexual behaviour than are the men. She states:

The men at West Point don't suspect homosexuality among themselves the way they suspect lesbianism among women. Women at the academy, I found, don't really care as much about homosexuality existing among the cadets. The males, of course, are adamant about it, but they're particularly adamant when it comes to females. Vigilante groups go on hunts and accuse women. Cadets pass stories through the rumor mill, which spread like wildfire, though they're usually hyperbolized renditions of events that have been misconstrued. But these accusations really crush a lot of women...Just to be associated with such a rumour, though, is not a good thing. It breeds suspicion in people's minds and closes doors...Friendships and professional liaisons may be adversely affected. People become less open. Even if people are merely friendly with a homosexual, they are discouraged from continuing the association (Barkalow, 135).

The targeting of women that Barkalow talks about is arguably another way to discourage women from seeking careers in the Armed Forces and further emphasizes the notion that women who are interested in becoming soldiers must be, in some way, deviant. Further, women who are suspected of lesbianism not only experience investigative harassment but are subject to sexual harassment from male soldiers. When rumors began to circulate that Ruth Voor was being investigated, she began to go out on dates with male soldiers to dissuade her accusers. One of the men she dated attempted to rape her saying that she would "really like it," once she had sex with him. Her physical strength as a Marine allowed her to fight him off, but she knew she couldn't report the attempted rape or the investigators would use it as proof of her homosexuality (Shilts, 421). Most of the "witch



hunts" against lesbians tapered off around the late 1980s. American President Bill Clinton was elected in 1992 and included in his platform was his promise to end the ban on homosexuals in the military. Once elected, however, Clinton bowed to pressure from anti-gay lobby groups and instead proposed a policy of "don't ask, don't tell," in which soldiers may in fact be homosexual, as long as they remain silent about it. This policy has been criticised, both by homophobic factions within the American military and civilian populations (Luddy:1993), as well as by gay and lesbian groups who argue that their civil rights are being violated (Browning:1993). Discrimination and harassment of lesbians in the military still exists, but public humiliation and prosecution has seemingly taken a back seat to other, more heterosexual, issues of sexism and misogyny.

Recent reports of sexual harassment, assault and rape in the American and Canadian militaries, which only came to the attention of the North American public after intense media scrutinization, illustrate well the reality for women in the Armed Forces. The problem of sexual harassment of women in the military (in this case the Navy) first came to prominence in 1991 with the publicising of "The Tailhook Scandal," which occurred at the Annual Symposium of the Tailhook Association, an association for Naval carrier personnel and Naval aviators.<sup>16</sup> Long before 1991, the year in which the events of the convention became public, the convention was known for raucous parties and featured excessive alcoholic consumption and lewd behaviour as its main attraction. The conference featured professional symposium and work-related seminars and was funded and authorized in part by the Navy, who contributed approximately \$400,000 for the

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<sup>16</sup> The information cited about Tailhook '91 is from The Tailhook Report, which is the report of the official inquiry into the events of Tailhook '91. The report was compiled by the task force of the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of the Inspector General. The task force consisted of 40 investigators who, in total, completed interviews with over 2900 people of the estimated 4000 conference attendees. The report offers the most thorough account of Tailhook '91 and is well documented and substantiated. I could find no independent accounts which disputed or contradicted the official report, but consulted countless newspaper and magazine articles which were consistent with the Department of Defense's official report of events and are listed in the bibliography.

purposes of transporting "Tailhookers" to and from the event. In spite of the professional opportunities presented, only half of the conference delegates registered for the seminars and even fewer actually attended the events.

According to the Tailhook Report, the report of the official inquiry into the events of Tailhook '91 by the United States Navy, 83 women were assaulted during the three days of the conference, resulting in charges against 117 officers for indecent assault, indecent exposure, conduct unbecoming an officer and failure to act in a proper leadership capacity. The number of assaults occurring at Tailhook are startlingly high, yet what is perhaps even more startling is the fact that by many attendees' accounts Tailhook '91 was "tame" in comparison to previous years. In this way, it would seem that the Tailhook Scandal of 1991 became scandalous as a result of the events of the conference becoming public knowledge.<sup>17</sup> Lieutenant Paula Coughlin was the first Navy officer to publicly reveal the allegations of her assault, after the Navy failed to take sufficient action on her complaint. Coughlin's assault occurred almost immediately after she entered the third floor hallway of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, the site where the vast majority of assaults occurred. As she began to walk down the hallway someone yelled "Admiral's Aide!," at which point she was grabbed on the buttocks with such force that she was lifted into the air. She was then pushed into a crowd of men who began collectively assaulting her by grabbing at, pinching and groping various parts of her anatomy and ripping off her clothes. One man put his hand inside of her bra and began fondling her breasts at which point she bit him forcibly on the forearm in attempt to make him stop. As this was happening, a man moved in behind her, lifted up her skirt and began removing her underwear as she screamed at bystanders to help her and kicked out

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<sup>17</sup> It is interesting to note that the events that took place at the Tailhook convention in 1991 were not initially reported in the mainstream American news magazines Time and Newsweek. By 1993, the magazines were referring to the incident as the infamous "Tailhook Scandal," in spite of the fact that they hadn't covered the story when it first surfaced.

at her attackers. This assault occurred in a crowded hallway consisting of 200-300 Naval officers, Marine officers and Naval aviators, comprising what is known as "The Gauntlet." Accounts of numerous victims of assaults in The Gauntlet describe how the men would give the appearance that they were simply standing around, drinking and singing songs and then when they would attempt to walk down the hallway, the men would begin the grabbing, pinching and groping of the women's bodies. There are also accounts of women who were forced to walk The Gauntlet and were blocked by men at both ends when they tried to escape. Other means of assaulting women included "sharking," the act of men coming up behind women and biting them in the buttocks and "zapping" the act of members of different squadrons who would place a squadron-identifying sticker on a woman's buttock, breast or genital area to denote ownership.<sup>18</sup>

The above noted actions are indicative of the hostile climate created for women attendees of the conference but remain only a select few of the many examples of inappropriate, lewd and lascivious conduct of the male attendees of the conference. Further, the presence of exotic dancers and sex workers hired to "work" the hospitality suites (where the partying and assaults occurred) made it more difficult for female officers to be treated as officers as opposed to being subjected to the same treatment as the women who were paid to provide sexual services. As one officer noted, there was no differentiation made between groupies (civilians who attended the party), prostitutes and officers in the area designated as The Gauntlet. This treatment is indicative of the kind of behaviour women faced during Tailhook but also raises questions about patriarchal and misogynist notions seemingly held by male officers within the Navy. During the parties that occurred several male officers were seen sporting t-shirts that read "HE MAN WOMEN HATER'S CLUB," and on the back read "WOMEN ARE PROPERTY." Some

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<sup>18</sup> Assaults listed are taken from The Tailhook Report: The Official Inquiry into the Events of Tailhook '91.

officers were also seen wearing pins stating "NOT IN MY SQUADRON," which referred to the officers policy on women in naval aviation and was a parody on the Navy's slogan expressing the prohibition of sexual harassment "Not in My Navy." Aside from the assault, harassment and rape of female officers, few other acts could so clearly indicate a sexist and misogynist attitude towards women in the Navy. The Navy, however, is not the only area of the American armed forces which has been under scrutiny for their treatment of female personnel.

More recently at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in the United States widespread reports of sexual harassment, assault and rape have led to the largest inquiry in American military history. When the Army began receiving numerous complaints from female recruits at the Aberdeen Proving Ground, it became clear that the complaints were more than simply a couple of isolated incidents. The investigation initially resulted in rape, assault and sexual harassment charges against three of its officers, with investigations still continuing on 17 others. Public outrage surfaced again, and frequent comparisons were made between events that occurred at Aberdeen and the Tailhook Scandal. In an attempt at damage control for what was quickly becoming a public relations disaster, the Army made the decision to set up a confidential and toll free hotline on which current or former soldiers and recruits could call in and lodge complaints about any gender-based discrimination or abuse. Response to the hotline exceeded anything the Army could have imagined, logging almost 4000 calls within a week of its inception, with complaints reporting problems dating back to World War II (Gleick, 32). Though approximately one in ten calls were "crank," over 500 were deemed to be serious enough to be referred to the Army Criminal Investigation Command; of the 500 calls, 101 were related to incidents of abuse suffered at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds. Though the general perception of these events is that they were isolated events that occurred within the respectable (sic) confines

of the military, they indicate a pattern of behaviour which is at the very least discriminatory to women and at the most a catalogue of gender crimes systemically perpetrated against women.

The American military is certainly not the only force to have suffered from knowledge of sexual harassment, assault and rape in the media. In late 1996 and early 1997, the Canadian media attained information regarding the treatment of an officer candidate by the name of Sandra Perron who was beaten and left tied to a post (while barefoot) in the snow for two hours during a training exercise in 1992. The exercise was designed to prepare officer candidates for the possibility of becoming a prisoner of war, but there was evidence that Perron was treated differently and routinely asked to perform more difficult tasks than were the men (Fisher, 22). In spite of her treatment, Perron went on to become the first Canadian woman to become an infantry officer, and commanded an anti-mortar unit in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia. Though she has now left the military to become a management consultant, Perron was held in high regard by her superiors and succeeded in spite of the higher standards demanded of her (Fisher, 22).

In her assessment of the recent events at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Barbara Ehrenreich notes:

Some forms of abuse- like sexual harassment- have been defined by the law as criminal. But the soldier who turns on his comrades with savage intent commits a far graver category of crime. Whether he shoots them in the back or assaults their bodies with his own, he's confusing his fellow soldiers with the foe- and the word for this is treason. When a woman can't trust her drill sergeant, neither can the American people (Ehrenreich, 87).

Ehrenreich's point is well made. The debate about the military and women's role within it, however, remains far from over. The American military, the largest and most powerful military in the West, has failed to take a leadership role in setting progressive policy for

its women soldiers, in spite of the fact that American women in the Persian Gulf War achieved more than was even expected of them. Instead, countries like Canada, Sweden and the Netherlands have been the leaders, setting forth a policy of inclusion and reducing barriers to women's promotion, such as the combat exclusion. Women have been allowed to make great inroads into militaries all over the Western world, but what remains clear is that they have much further to go before systemic barriers are removed and true substantive equality is achieved.

**Chapter Four:**  
**Some Conclusions on the Interconnectivity of Gender,**  
**International Relations,**  
**War and the Military**

Former Lieutenant Paula Coughlin, the first military woman to formally charge male combat pilots with sexual harassment in the wake of the 1991 Tailhook convention, was eventually compensated for her ordeal. In 1995 she was awarded \$5 million dollars in punitive damages in her suit against the Las Vegas Hilton for failing to provide adequate security during the convention. Further, she was awarded \$1.7 million dollars in compensatory damages by a federal court and she settled with the Tailhook Association for an undisclosed amount of money. Coughlin was quoted as saying "I think justice was served," (Corbin, 1). While the trials of Tailhook are over, the trials for the ten Army soldiers charged with sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault and rape at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds are just beginning. On April 7, 1997, Army Staff Sgt. Delmar Simpson, the first of the twelve soldiers to be tried, pleaded guilty to eleven counts of unlawful sexual intercourse with female trainees, but pleaded innocent to the charges of eight counts of rape. In total, Simpson is charged with 94 various specifications of sexual misconduct, including twenty one counts of rape (Reuters, April 7, 1997). Three of the privates testifying against Simpson said they feared him because of his rank and one of the women testified that Simpson had threatened to kill her if she told anyone (Reuters, April 17, 1997).

Though the American military has had a sexual harassment policy in place since 1980, enforcement of that policy has always been a problem (Stiehm, 206). In a study that was done with 1988 Department of Defense data, 73 percent of women polled reported having been sexually harassed within the last twelve months (Firestone and Harris, 39). This study (which was done before three years prior to Tailhook) indicated that sexual harassment was extraordinarily pervasive in the military, yet very little was done to ameliorate the problem. Then, the Tailhook scandal occurred, once again raising the issue of sexual harassment (and sexual assault). Nonetheless, sexual harassment was



never seriously dealt with after the Tailhook scandal. First, the Navy tried to cover it up, but after Paula Coughlin went to the media, the Navy was forced by public pressure into an investigation. The investigation was thorough, yet no plan for the future was created and no pro-active action was taken in the military (as a whole) to address the problem of sexual harassment and the underlying causes. Perhaps if any of these things had happened, the events discovered at Aberdeen might never have taken place. But instead of acknowledging the failure of the American military to ensure equal treatment for their female soldiers, the soldiers themselves have been blamed for "causing" the problems currently under examination.

The military used to be the last bastion of merit-based advancement for minority groups in society. During World War II black community leaders petitioned President Roosevelt for the right to enter combat units and fight for their country (Armor, 9). Military units were racially segregated and combat units were closed to blacks early in the war. Gradually, however, black men became an integral part of the American military and became "overrepresented," in that the ratio of blacks in the military compared to the ratio of blacks in society is much higher. The military seemed more appealing to many black men in that there was less discrimination in the military than in society, and there was more opportunity for advancement. Further, the military provided educational opportunities that disadvantaged black youths would not have been able to afford otherwise. The integration of black men into the military was so successful that in the Persian Gulf War, black community leaders were criticising the military for the overrepresentation of black males, arguing that they were being used as "cannon fodder" for the American military (Armor, 9).

If the debate about black men in the military is about equity of burden, then the debate about women in the military is about equity of opportunity. Women have never

been fully integrated into modern military forces and though their participation is allowed, it is not encouraged. Through discriminatory policies (i.e. combat exclusions), differing treatment and sexual harassment, assault and rape by their fellow soldiers and officers, women are actually dissuaded from pursuing careers in the armed forces. At the heart of the matter of women in the military, however, is a discussion regarding women who enter into a patriarchal, male dominated, hierarchical structure in which they are a small minority, if not a token group. In a 1990 study, the Women's Research and Education Institute reported that substantial obstacles will persist to gender equality as long as women continue to constitute small minorities in non-traditional employment contexts (Rosen et al, 459). Further, the study notes that a token presence of women does little to alter existing stereotypes and decreases the likelihood of the successful performance of the women involved (Rosen et al, 459). This situation is not unlike that of female leaders in the international system, or even feminist scholars within the academic discipline of international relations. In all of these situations women are confronted with marginalization, discrimination and the constant pursuit of equality within systems that are fundamentally, if not ontologically, unequal.

A study using 1993 the United States Department of Defense data indicated that the percentage of women in the military has risen to 11.8 percent, up substantially from 1.6 percent in 1973 and 8.5 percent in 1980 (Rosen et al, 537). U.S. Department of Defence directives have expanded opportunities for women, including the opening of 7000 more spaces for women in the Army in forward-support battallions, engineering, military intelligence, chemical companies, maneuver brigade headquarters and military police companies (Rosen et al, 538). Advances are being made, yet critics still persist on both sides of the debate, some arguing that the military has not done enough to achieve equality and others arguing that they have done too much and have compromised military

readiness. In a recent article in The New Republic, author Stephanie Gutmann lists many of the ways that female soldiers have been criticised for not being able to meet male standards and even discusses the resentment towards the female soldiers for what is perceived as "special treatment." Gutmann notes that what the Army calls "dual standards," (different standards for men and women) are actually lower standards that women are required to meet in terms of both strength and physical fitness (Gutmann, 19).<sup>19</sup> These differing standards, it is argued, lead male personnel to resent female personnel for what is perceived to be preferential treatment. In an unrelated study, 34 percent of male soldiers polled felt that "women in the unit do not carry their own weight in getting work done," and only 25 percent agreed that "female soldiers try as hard as males," (Rosen et al, 545). Of the women polled, however, 69 percent agreed that "female soldiers try as hard as males," and only 9 percent agreed that "women in the unit do not carry their own weight in getting work done," while 72 percent disagreed with the statement (Rosen et al, 545).

Judith Stiehm, however, argues that the military has never been serious about making women accepted, effective participants in the military and has failed to implement policies which would increase women's role within the military even without repealing the combat exclusion. In her substantial body of academic work, Stiehm has been an active and outspoken critic of the United States Military's policies on female enlistees as well as on contemporary militarization. Perhaps more than any other writer in this area, Stiehm takes a personal commitment to gender equality and non-violence and channels that commitment into an intensely critical analysis of the treatment of women in the American military. Built on arguments that violence is masculinized and that patriarchal world order perpetuates violence, Stiehm locates patriarchy as a critical source

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<sup>19</sup> The example of these "lower standards" that Gutmann uses is that in the Marines, fitness for women is tested with a flexed arm hang instead of pull-ups, half the number of sit-ups and a slower run.

of both violence and inequitable treatment of women who "fight" for the state (albeit in their various "non-combat" roles). In one of her first books on the subject, she writes that "if women insist upon sharing the military, they must remember that they are asking for radical change..."(Stiehm:1981, 297). Stiehm herself, it could be argued, is equally radical in her approach to women in the military, particularly in the area of citizen responsibility. She argues that civilians have a more active role to play in war, rather than simply existing as passive victims or bystanders to war. Further, she argues that civilian thinking should be informed and that they consider their responsibilities. She writes:

I hope that civilians will weigh their responsibilities attending to the conduct of war- their responsibilities to their own military but also their responsibilities to their counterparts, those on the other side, particularly civilians. I hope, finally, that the conditions for mutual trust between civilians and their military will soon be understood and put in place (Stiehm:1996, 292).

Her ideas about civilian responsibility in war typify Stiehm's innovation and transcendence of outmoded gendered thinking on women and the military. Theoretically radical yet practical in her approach to the implementation of change, Stiehm put forth nine steps for change in the American military that could demonstrate a commitment to gender disparity. Stiehm's suggestions include creating incentives for enlistment and reenlistment by ensuring day care and joint-spouse assignments (Stiehm:1989, 236). Further, she argues that promotion criteria could be revised to accommodate specialized careers, equipment could be redesigned for easier use and that the military could explore the possibility of creating all-female units (Stiehm:1989, 237). Stiehm also argues that the problem of dealing with pregnancies of personnel is not unique to the military and that a general solution is required from which the military should not be exempt (Stiehm:1989, 237). Finally, she argues that the military could give more attention to understanding female morale-building and to understanding what welds women and men

into a cohesive team (Stiehm:1989, 237). The possible solutions suggested by Stiehm place the onus on the military to problem-solve, and are differentiated from the pervasive "blame the victim" approach, employed by many of the authors who are critical (if not resentful) of women's increasing presence in the military.

For the American military (and most other Western military forces) the discrimination against its female members can only be ameliorated by taking gender seriously and addressing the problems of female enlistees with policy initiatives and a commitment to enforcing those new policy initiatives. Taking gender seriously could have profound transformative potential for the military. Images of women fighting in the Persian Gulf War, were the first step in that transformation, but can only be viewed as a primary step in fully integrating women into the military. Gender analysis in international relations theory also offers transformative potential for the way international relations is not only theorized, but for the way it is practiced. The same hegemonic masculinity that overtly informs military thinking, has also implicitly informed the discipline of international relations. Polarized thinking about male and female roles characterize this hegemonic masculinity which has resulted in the exclusion of women in many areas of life. This exclusion may often be blamed on biology or physiology (i.e. men are strong, women are weak therefore men are the protectors and women are the protected) however, these are outdated and illogical arguments which have only served to perpetuate women's subordination. In the military, this subordination has been challenged by the many women who have confronted the patriarchal structure of the military, and who have proven their abilities. Further, in taking on the role of protector, women transcend categorical protection and dependency, thereby challenging conventional thinking surrounding gender roles and war.

For the overwhelming majority of women who are not soldiers, however, war serves as a violent reinforcement of patriarchy in which they are placed in subordinate, passive or reactive roles. Women who are figuratively and literally caught in the crossfire of war, experience firsthand the notion that war is a violent reinforcement of male domination over women. War can be seen as a mirror reflecting gender relations in society, reflecting a world in which men possess control in both the public and private spheres. War is a violent reinforcement of patriarchal relations between men and women, and is marked by the control, domination and oppression of women. Without an acknowledgement and examination of the forces that mutually reinforce women's oppression during war, they are fated to perpetuation. The oppression of women during times of war is not monocausal, but rather is mutually reinforced by a number of different factors (including but not limited to patriarchy, capitalism and polarized thinking about gender as seen in gender narratives). It is through many of these forces that women are oppressed during times of war. Culturally pervasive gender narratives remain largely unchallenged in society and as a result, gendered violence and oppression during war is often unacknowledged. Only through the isolation of the ways in which violence is gendered can we begin to dismantle the gender oppression that war and the war system perpetuates.

Though the oppression of women during times of war, as well as the gendered violence it generates, is not monocausal, there is perhaps one key perpetuating element: coercive power. It is through coercive power that the will of the few can be imposed on the many, creating a pyramidal model of power. Alternately, a feminist model of power would be more circular, where no one is always at the top or the bottom (Peterson and Runyan, 86). This model has also been described by Christine Sylvester as a feminist model of "relational autonomy," and contrasted with the masculinist model of "reactive

autonomy," (Sylvester, 93). Reactive autonomy, however, which values independence over interdependence and order over justice, is both the dominating theory and practice of international relations (Peterson and Runyan, 152).

In (re)visioning international relations to be more equal and just for all men and women, there are no easy or definitive solutions. Though there are many different ways in which "the system" needs to be changed before gender equality can be attained, the relational autonomy model provides hope that the system can be changed. Relational autonomy holds that when relations are relatively equal, they will typically be cooperative, but that this cooperation (between states or between men and women) is destroyed by the presence of inequality (Peterson and Runyan, 153). Moving from reactive autonomy (which is epitomized by realism) towards relational autonomy would work towards ungendering international relations far more profoundly than by simply adding women to the power structure as it currently exists. Clearly it would seem that if we are to work towards ending the global oppression of women through war and the international relations system, we must first work towards ungendering the process.

The hegemonic discipline of international relations has been challenged by feminist scholars, critical theorists and postmodernists who argue that realism neither accurately nor adequately addresses "real world" events, and serves only to reinforce existing systemic and institutional inequities. It is through these challenges that a richer understanding of the limits of traditional international relations may be attained. Further, these challenges advance and provide alternative direction to the discipline, one which reflects an analysis of more variables than the positivist focus on states and power.

Postpositivist (re)visioning deconstructs the oppositional dynamics of myriad dichotomies: mind-body, culture-nature, protector-protected, public-private, production-reproduction, reform-revolution. This (re)visioning does not deny the distinctions these dichotomies posit, but resituates them

contextually: in relation to the divisions of labor and identities, institutions, structures, and possibilities for systemic transformation (Peterson:1992,57).

Mere deconstruction of existing hegemonic structures, however, is not enough. By taking gender seriously, as one elucidating variable worthy of attention, we work toward the construction of a more inclusive reality.



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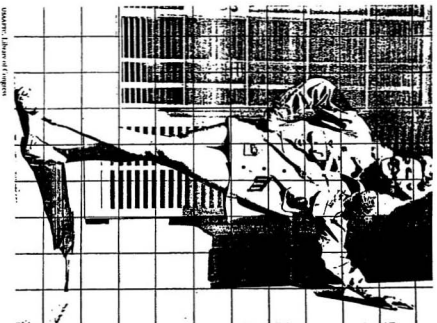


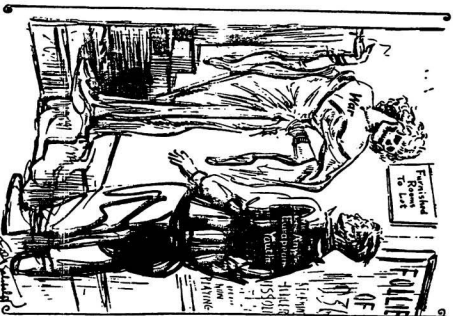
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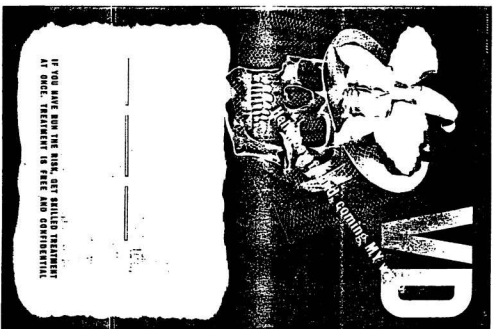






"Come on in, I'll treat you right. I used to know your Daddy."

C. D. Baskin, 1937, courtesy of the Chicago Tribune, New York News Syndicate, Inc.



Reginald Moore, Imperial War Museum, London









