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Review: Globalizing Forces: Review of "Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives"

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# Globalizing Forces: Review of *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*

Francine D'Amico

Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000; 437 pp. \$45.00 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

**O**FTEN IT TAKES JUST ONE CLEAR AND INSISTENT VOICE TO REVEAL WHAT MOST OF us either cannot see or are deliberately kept from seeing. For almost two decades, Cynthia Enloe has been that voice, exposing the intricate ways in which military planners manipulate social conceptions of gender to maintain what they deem to be desirable levels of militarization. Enloe uncovers the *gender maneuvers* that camouflage the calculated choices of not only politicians and military officers, but also drill sergeants, local tavern keepers, and marketing executives. Her unique contribution to the analysis of contemporary world politics consists in drawing our attention to the ways in which the globalizing forces of economic and cultural integration are militarized. She looks at the gendered lessons that NATO soldiers and U.N. peacekeepers learn from one another, and at how multinational corporations, local entrepreneurs, consumers, and tourists navigate the militarized landscape. Yet she does not stop there: she also focuses our attention on women's resistance within militarized societies and on strategizing around the military institution, which she characterizes as our agency "in the spaces available" (Enloe, 2000: 150).

Enloe began this important work on the intersections of militarism and gender in *Does Khaki Become You?* (first published in 1983, revised in 1988), following on her analysis of militarism and race/ethnicity (see Enloe, 1980). In *Khaki*, she focused a critical feminist lens on the ways in which "the military as an institution and militarism as an ideology" depend upon social constructions of gender and people gendered feminine (Enloe, 1983: 8). She expanded this effort in *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases* (1990) to ask, "Where are the women?" She also examines

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gender “on the landscape of international politics,” from the Iran/Contra hearings to global tourism (Enloe, 1990: 3). In *The Morning After* (1993), Enloe sought “to chart more accurately the gendered processes at work in constructing the post-Cold War world,” from U.N. peacekeeping missions to the Gulf War (Enloe, 1993: 14). In her latest work, *Maneuvers* (2000), she deepens and updates her global catalogue of the ways in which militarism employs gender to survive and to adapt to what she has previously characterized as the multiple endings of the Cold War (Enloe, 1993: 3). In her analysis of militarized rape, prostitution, marriage, nursing, mothering, and soldiering, she addresses three new questions: “Which women are there?” “How did those women get there?” and “What do they think about being there?” (Enloe, 2000: 294).

In *The Morning After*, Enloe (1993: 5) demonstrated that *patriarchy* “does not come in one-size-fits-all.” In *Maneuvers*, Enloe demonstrates that *militarization* does not come in one-size-fits-all, and she cautions that what looks like *demilitarization* may be little more than a shell game. For example, she ponders how one woman’s decision to reject militarism, such as a Russian mother’s refusal to surrender her son to state conscription, relates to another woman’s decision to enlist in military service. Here, the demilitarization of one woman may lead to the militarization of another (Enloe, 2000: 245, 258–60). She also explores how military tasks were civilianized during the post-Cold War military cutbacks or downsizing of the 1990s, and she warns that this displacement has removed much of the military’s support structure from public scrutiny and accountability (*Ibid.*: 53, 241). Enloe also considers the unintended consequences of demilitarization, such as the intimate connections between U.S. military base closures and the rise in sex tourism and the mail-order bride industry in the Philippines (*Ibid.*: 72–79).

Enloe’s analytic approach is cautiously comparative: she seeks to understand the particulars of militarism’s maneuvers in different societal contexts and timeframes, but also works to identify patterns and trends across these particular cases. Although she acknowledges her own grounding as a scholar working from the United States, she explicitly rejects Amerocentric myopia:

The American military has been so powerful in its Hollywood, CNN, and NATO versions that sometimes it seems as if it were the only military worth talking about. This dominance poses a risk. It tempts one (me) to think too simply. Treating the American military’s attempts...to secure women’s cooperation in its mission as *the* feature story once again places this institution at the center of the analytic universe.... Such a centering of the American story is, I think, dangerous (Enloe, 2000: xv).

Although the United States is her starting point due to her own location and its role in contemporary militarization and globalization, Enloe seeks to make comparisons across the militarized experiences of women in Britain, South Africa, Canada, Israel, and elsewhere without being parochial. For example, she meticu-

lously charts the gendered terrain of militarized rape, not only by U.S. soldiers in Okinawa, but also by U.N. peacekeepers in Cambodia and by state security forces in the Philippines, Chile, Rwanda, and the former Yugoslavia (*Ibid.*: 108–152).

Enloe draws our attention to the silences about the many different ways in which women are used to sustain what she calls the “Holy Trinity of militarism,” *viz.*, “hierarchy, rivalry, and...masculinity” (*Ibid.*: 32, 84, 289). She argues that we must examine women’s militarized experiences for a complete understanding of militarization: “The militarization of women has been crucial for the militarization of governments and of international relations. The militarization of women has been necessary for the militarization of men” (*Ibid.*: 3).

Enloe’s focus on gender and militarism takes us well past women in uniform, the focal point upon which many policymakers seek to fix our gaze. Enloe argues that such an approach dangerously equates uniformed women’s militarization with our liberation (*Ibid.*: 8–9, 45, 235–287). She urges us to think about all the ways in which:

Women are being used by militaries to solve their nagging problems of “manpower” availability, quality, health, morale, and readiness. Exposing the character and operations of the military as an institution can [best] be done...by focusing on those women most subject to military exploitation: military prostitutes, military wives, military nurses, women soldiers, women defense industry workers, and “civilianized” defense workers. By paying close attention to these women...who straddle military and civilian positions, we can learn how and at what price women become militarized (*Ibid.*: 44).

Enloe traces how militarization depends on keeping militarized women divided from one another. She identifies this as a key maneuver in the maintenance of militarism as an ideology and the military institution as a power center in society:

Women who serve militaries’ needs differently usually do not see themselves as bound together by their shared womanhood or even their shared militarization. In fact, some militarized women will see their own respectability, income, or career chances thrown into jeopardy by the actions of other militarized women....

The more distanced each group of women has felt from the other, the less likely any of them would be to notice how the political manipulations of gender affected them all. Thus, the less likely any of them are to think about militarism (*Ibid.*: *xii-xiii*).

In *Maneuvers*, Enloe explores militarizing maneuvers along with individual and collective responses and resistances to the transformative process of militari-

zation. Moreover, she carefully examines the consequences of political action in militarized societies. For example, in Chapter 1, she discusses the militarization of dissent in terms of tactics and goals (*Ibid.*: 4). She compares the experiences of people in the U.S. gay and lesbian movement with those in the British gay and lesbian movement in challenging sexuality-based military exclusion policies (*Ibid.*: 14–32). Here, Enloe cautions that the equation of soldiering with citizenship “may result in a deepening of militarization” (p. 24), because the military’s central purpose goes unquestioned.

As in her previous works, in *Maneuvers* Enloe writes in comfortable, reader-friendly prose. She presents concrete examples and uses memorable imagery to relate her points. For example, Enloe provides an explicit definition of her use of the term militarization as “a step-by-step process by which a person or a thing comes to be controlled by the military or comes to depend for its well-being on militaristic ideas” (*Ibid.*: 3). She illustrates this by describing how a manufacturer’s decision to include pasta shaped like Star Wars weapons militarizes a can of tomato soup and complicates the consumer’s decision about whether to purchase that soup (*Ibid.*: 1–2). Enloe warns that often unnoticed “civilian” decisions such as this set us in motion “cruising down the ramp onto the militarization highway” (*Ibid.*: 4). This engaging linguistic approach makes this text very useful for courses for undergraduate students — although younger readers may not relate to the knitting metaphor (*Ibid.*: 235) with as much ease as those of us born in the 1950s.

Enloe conveys her meaning with these engaging examples and images, as well as with stories told in first person, through which she relates her own experiences and those of women from Korea forced into sexual slavery during World War II (*Ibid.*: 79–89). Enloe erases the artificial distances between researcher, subject, and audience, and pushes the reader to consider her/his own degree of complicity in global militarization. She accomplishes this by making the reader a partner in the analytic process from the outset, *viz.*: “Over the past decade I have found that it is only by lots of us piecing together all sorts of information that we can make full sense of how militaries rely on women and on presumptions about femininity” (*Ibid.*: ix-x). This is not a lecture, but an ongoing conversation.

The theoretical complexity of Enloe’s argument and the wealth of information she provides also make this text useful for courses taught at the graduate level, and this is required reading for any academic or activist interested in understanding the processes of (de)militarization. *Maneuvers* is intellectually exhilarating and politically exhausting. Enloe makes me think hard about my own assumptions and preconceptions. Her points are not facile, but they are compelling; I found myself saying “Of course!” at intervals. Instructors of undergraduate courses may want to assign this material in small slices to explore all the nuances; Enloe conveniently provides chapter subsections that may be used for this purpose.

The thoughtfulness and breadth of Enloe’s analysis make finding fault with anything in this new work difficult. I have no criticisms regarding the content and

only a few suggestions regarding language and format. First, in her focus on “women as feminists” (*Ibid.*: 289, 293, and *passim*), Enloe examines women’s strategizing from different locations in, at the margin of, and outside the institution. She points out “strategic alliances” among differently situated groups of women and emphasizes missed “alliance opportunities” (*Ibid.*: 96, 119–23, 144–51, 196, and *passim*). (The militarized language here underscores the “pervasiveness of militarized values” Enloe notes in American culture [*Ibid.*: 2]; I can think of no alternative phrasing that conveys her meaning, except, perhaps, to “make common cause.”) Although Enloe acknowledges the varieties of masculinities and their connectedness with other socially signified dimensions of difference, she does not explicitly extend her political strategy of a cross-difference “alliance” to embrace people gendered masculine. Yet men enmeshed in the intersecting hierarchies of gender/sexuality, race/ethnicity/nationality, and class/caste/rank of the institution and the larger society (D’Amico and Weinstein, 1999) would be another vital place for women to look for “allies” (partners? colleagues?) in the task of uncovering and undoing militarism.

Second, some common American linguistic practices that I find troubling appear in *Maneuvers*. For example, in Chapter 7, “Filling the Ranks” (pp. 235–287), Enloe problematizes the term “manpower” (p. 235), but does not subsequently replace it with a more accurate and less gendered term such as “personnel.” Maintaining the distinction clearly throughout our analyses would challenge the politics of the dominant discourse. We also need to be cautious about the use of common gendered and race-d terms like “attractive” (pp. 160, 242) and “black market” (p. 220), because these normalize/naturalize difference and thereby reinforce the hierarchies we seek to expose and undermine. Enloe has excised most such terms from her analysis; only these few have crept through, like resilient weeds.

Third, Enloe’s attention to the many subtle maneuvers used to divide us prompts me to question standard linguistic practices such as identifying activists and scholars by their country of origin. After reading Enloe’s analysis of “nationalist feminism” (p. 88), I am now uncomfortable with terms like “American feminists” (*xiv*), “Korean feminists” (p. 86), or “Serbian feminists” (p. 144), as these combine one’s country of origin with one’s politics, which may be feminist, but not nationalist. Consistent use of the more awkward yet accurate construction of “feminists in Okinawa and the United States” (p. 117) would shift our focus from nationality to gender politics, just as the move from the construction “colored person” to “person of color” changes the emphasis from race to race politics.

Finally, although Enloe’s bibliography provides a wealth of resources drawn from many different scholars, disciplines, and contexts, greater care might have been taken in its compilation. Students and scholars using bibliographic citations from *Maneuvers* might be confounded in their search for texts by Craig Rimmer (p. 392), Christine Eiffert (p. 393), or Winnie Weaver (p. 396), as these ought to

read Rimmerman, Eifler, and Winni Webber, respectively. The bibliographic citation for Lehring (p. 389) gives the publication date as 1999, while note 34 (p. 306) correctly reports that his work, *Officially Gay*, is, as yet, forthcoming; moreover, Janet Halley's insightful legal analysis of the U.S. military's anti-gay policy cited in note 54 (p. 308) was omitted from the bibliography. Though the tedious chore of proofing galleys often falls to others and these errata are minor, greater accuracy might save other researchers some inconvenience and frustration. However, overall the text is very carefully crafted, and these minor problems do not detract from the significance of Enloe's contribution to our understanding of the intersections of gender, militarization, and globalization.

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